EDUCATED ELITE PARTICIPATION IN THE FORMULATION OF PEOPLE ORIENTED POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN Ogun State, Nigeria

Ngozi Nwogwugwu, PhD¹
Abimbola Odunmbaku²
Email: nwogwugwun@babcock.edu.ng

Abstract
Democratically elected governments are expected to formulate and implement people oriented policies and programmes as democracy is regarded as government of the people, by the people and for the people. Though government institutions and officials are expected to formulate policies, such policies are expected to be based on the inputs and demands made by the citizens. Citizens’ participation is therefore a primary requirement for formulation of people oriented policies and programmes. In Nigeria, there have been several poverty alleviation policies and programmes that have been implemented by various governments, still poverty still persists in spite of enormous resources that the country possesses. Some scholars have proposed that the lack of input by the citizens have been a major reason for the failure of some of the policies and programmes in the country. It is the light of this, that the study examined the participation of educated elites in the formulation of people oriented policies and programmes in Ogun State, one of the most educationally advantaged states in the country. Descriptive survey design was adopted as the research design for the study, while stratified random sampling was used to locate respondents for the study. A self constructed questionnaire was the instrument that was used to elicit data from 1720 educated elites who were selected as respondents from eight of the twenty local governments in the state. Descriptive analysis of the data revealed that there was high level apathy among the educated elites in the state, as most of them did not use the various platforms for contributing to the policy formulation process of the state. A group of elderly elites, Ogun State Council of Elders made meaningful contributions to the formulation of people oriented policies and programmes in the state.

Keywords: Educated elites, formulation, Participation, Policies, Programmes.

¹ Ngozi Nwogwugwu, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Babcock Business School, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.
² Abimbola Odummbaku is a Postgraduate Student in the Department of Political Science & Public Administration, Babcock Business School, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State.
Introduction
Governments across the globe govern their nations or states through the instrumentality of public policies that target various sectors of the society. Public policy like other concepts in the social sciences has been subjected to varying definitions. Sambo (2008: 285) cites Klob (1978: 7) public policy or governmental policy “is an authoritative plan of action for the promotion and allocation of selected values, which is deemed by governmental authority to be in the common interest of the people”. Adamolekun (1983: 142) defines policy as “a course setting involving decisions of the widest ramifications and longest time perspective in the life of an organization.” Public policies are the policies that are applicable in the public sector that governments use to deliver their responsibilities to the citizenry.
According to Barret and Fudge (1981), when we talk of public policy, we refer to a policy which:

...Emanates from the public sector including both the institution of central and local government and State created agencies such as water and health authorities, commissions and corporation - it may be implemented through and directed at a wide variety of individuals and organizations which may or may not be part of the state apparatus, and which may be to a greater or lesser degree independent of state influence (Barret and Fudge, 1981:5).

Jenkins (1978) sees public policy as a set of decisions made by a political actor or group of actors that are integrated or woven together, that focus on the selection of specific goals and clearly states the strategies to be adopted in accomplishing them. Public policies are meant to be people oriented as the citizenry are supposed to be those for whose benefit such policies. It is expected that policies should derive from demands made by the citizens of a given nation or state who should consequently be the target of such policies.
Among the reasons why policies should target the people is the fact that the citizens pay the taxes which provide the major funding for the operations of government. Ikelegbe (1996) writes that another major reason why policies should centre on the people is the fact that the citizens are the ones that have the power to elect into office the public officials who make policies.
However, the reality in Nigeria and many other developing countries is that in spite of the fact that the taxes paid by the citizens funds government operations, the policies that are supposed to emanate from the people hardly receives any form of input from the people. Echikwonye and Beetseh (2011) write that over the years, there have been many policies that have been formulated and implemented in Nigeria whose primary aim had been to improve the standard of living in the country through poverty reduction or eradication, including Operation Feed the Nation (1976), Green Revolution (1979), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW) (1986), Family Support Programme (FSP) (1994), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) (1999). However, in spite of the myriad of policies and programmes that have been implemented by various governments, the country has not experienced any corresponding transformation in the status of the ordinary citizen. The failure of these policies to achieve their purpose may largely be linked to the fact that most of the policies were initiated and implemented by the political leadership without due consideration of the necessary input of the citizenry. As such, you have many people-oriented policies that the ordinary person cannot connect with, because the policies address the personal interests of the political leadership and their
collaborators in the private sector. This explains why poverty persists in the country in spite of numerous poverty alleviation programmes that have been implemented over the years.

As Egonmwan (1991) puts in clear perspective the problem of none accommodation of the input of the citizenry in the public policy process, emphasizing that it is worse among developing countries. He captures some of the reasons for this anomaly:

the situation is worse in the developing countries where policy making is not made explicit but dictated, in most cases by men at the top due to low level of literacy of the masses, the weakness or ineffectiveness of the mass media (where they exist), centralization of authority, and the ineffectiveness of interest-aggregating structures (where they exist) because of the thin line of distinction between them and the ruling class... (Egonmwan 1991:164)

The context created by Egonmwan (1991) above, may not be applicable to 21st century Nigeria, where the structures that he referred to, are in place and functional, and a large proportion of the populace are well educated. These educated citizens understand the importance of citizens’ participation to governance as well as the requirements for attainment of good governance. It is from the fore-going, that this study examined the participation of educated elites in the formulation of people oriented policies and programmes in Ogun State during the period 2003–2011. Ogun State, one of the most educationally advantaged of the 36 states in the federation is located in the South-West geo-political zone of the country. As at 2011, Ogun State had 21 higher institutions of learning; owned and operated by the federal government, state government, and private organizations and individuals (the largest location of higher institutions in any state in the country).

The implication of the location of 21 higher institutions in Ogun State, is that the state is expected to have a large number of educated elites, which in this study refers to persons with minimum of masters degree in their various professions. These educated elites given their intellectual capabilities and understanding of the demands of governance should be able to make meaningful contributions to the public policy process in the state. The study is divided into eight sub-sections, introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, relevance of citizens input to the policy formulation process and its consideration by policy makers to attainment of good governance, educated elites participation in the formulation of people oriented policies and programmes, conclusion and recommendation.

**Literature Review**

The Public Policy Process

Sambo (2008: 286) writes that all policies “originate from demands or claims made upon public officials by other actors, private or official, in the political system for action or inaction on some perceived problem”. The making of public policy is a complex process that involves several stages. Ikelegbe (1996: 67) states that the policy process refers “to the methods, conditions, procedures, activities, interactions and stages by which policies are made.” Heywood (2007) sees public policy process from two dimensions. Firstly, it involves a series of actions or events which are intricately linked together starting with originating of the ideas and the initiation of proposals. This is followed by some intense deliberations or
debate on the proposal, which in turn is followed by critical analysis and evaluation, then concluded with the making of formal decisions (policies) and their implementation through designated actions. In this sense, Heywood (2007) uses decision to explain policy, as did Adamolekun (1983). Secondly, another dimension of Heywood’s conceptualization, sees it as a process because it distinguishes “the “how” of government from the “what” of government: that is, it focuses on the way in which policy is made (process), rather than on the substance of policy itself and its consequences (product)” (Heywood, 2007: 426).

Jega (2003) writes that the public policy process is generally recognized as the process through which:

- public policy is conceived, formulated and implemented is one of the most important processes of governance and societal development in modern nation-states; and its importance lies in the fact that it serves as the political, legal and administrative context and framework within which functionaries of government and the institutions of governance interact with a myriad of non-governmental stakeholders, synthesize ideas on how to satisfy identified needs and aspirations of citizens, convert these into executable policies, and then mobilize resources to provide goods, products and services aimed at addressing these identified needs and aspirations as efficiently and effectively as possible (Jega 2003: 19).

Adamolekun (1981) and Olaniyi (1998) identified three stages, policy formulation, implementation and feedback/evaluation. To the scholars, the public policy formulation stage is where the government official charged with responsibility of making policies or policy actors take decisions on what to do and how to do it, based on the information they receive as inputs into the process from various stakeholders. Dimock, et al (1983) provide a detailed explanation of the activities that are involved in this stage to include identification of a problem that needs to be solved, the collection of relevant data or facts concerning the problematic, careful consideration of the possible alternative solutions, selection of the specific alternative that has the best chance of providing the required solution, data on the percentage of the population that would be beneficiaries and specific way that the objectives will be attained.

Echikwonye and Beetseh (2011) write that the public policy implementation stage comes after a policy has been put to action following the passage of the enabling law by the legislative arm of government and the committing of resources to it by the executive arm. Egonmwan (1991) described it as the stage where the government comes to terms with the reality of the situation facing them and requirements for its resolution. Echikwonye and Beetseh (2011) see this stage as a process of interaction between setting of goals and taking action towards the attainment of those goals. It is at this stage that goals and objectives chosen in the formulation stage are translated into concrete achievement to meet the needs of the citizens through well thought out programmes.

The evaluation stage of the policy process is the stage in which comparison of the projected outcome of policy at the formulation stage and the actual achievements following the implementation of the policy are made. The aim is to ascertain if the expectations were fully met or there a mistakes that need to be corrected in order to have a better outcome it terms of
solving the problem that necessitated the formulation of the policy (Olaniyi, 1998; Adamolekun, 1983).

It has been succinctly stated that:

In evaluating policy output, the overall emphasis is on the two enduring concerns in administration and management literature; efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency refers to the relationships between inputs and outputs and the following ratios are commonly used to evaluate efficiency: (a) output generated: resources consumed; (b) actual activities performed; objectives attained: activities performed. Effectiveness refers to the degree to which a programme attains its objectives and the following deliberations can be used to evaluate effectiveness: (a) actual resources consumed: planned use of resources; (b) actual programme activities performed: Planned activities; (c) attainment of objectives attributable to a programme attainment desired (Adamolekun, 1983: 154 – 155).

Several stakeholders play important roles in the evaluation and feedback stage. These include, the policy makers, those charged with the responsibility of implementing the policy, the mass media, civil society organizations, interest groups (such as professional associations) and pressure groups, members of the public that are directly affected by the policy and outside experts or consultants who may be engaged by government to evaluate specific policies from time to time.

Sambo (2008) writes on the importance of the policy cycle or policy process:

An important aspect of the policy cycle is the formal expression or articulation of public policy by public officials through statements and speeches they make indicating the intentions and goals of government and what will be done to realize them. Policy statements are of course sometimes ambiguous. Sometimes public officials pronounce on aspects of policy as a means of ‘testing the turf’ or gauging the public mood concerning actions that government intends to initiate (Sambo, 2008: 286).

Several scholars have proposed the different stages of the policy process including Jega (2003); Eminue (2005); Ezeani (2006) Egonmwan (1991: 4). Anderson (1997) recognizes the policy process as involving five stages instead of the traditional three discussed above: problem identification and agenda setting, formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation. This study adopts the five stage policy process put forward by Anderson (1997) because it provides greater detail of the activities that are involved in the policy process than the traditional three stages elaborated upon by most scholars. The five stage policy process is shown in table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy terminology</th>
<th>Stage 1 Policy agenda</th>
<th>Stage 2 Policy formulation</th>
<th>Stage 3 Policy adoption</th>
<th>Stage 4 Policy Implementation</th>
<th>Stage 5 Policy evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Those problems, among many that receive the serious</td>
<td>Development of pertinent and acceptable proposed courses of action for</td>
<td>Development of support for a specific proposal so that a policy</td>
<td>Application of policy by the government’s administrative machinery</td>
<td>Efforts by the government to determine whether the policy was</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common sense | attention of public officials | dealing with a public problem | can be legitimized or authorized | Applying the government’s policy to the problem | effective and why or why not
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Getting the government to consider action on the problem | What is proposed to be done about the problem? | Getting the government to accept a particular solution to the problem | Did the policy work?


**Theoretical Framework**

This research adopts elite theory as its theoretical construct. Elite theory holds that there exists in each society, “a minority of the population which takes the major decisions in the society” (Parry 1969: 30). Keller (cited in Mahajan, 2007: 820) write that “elites are those minorities which are set apart from the rest of society by their pre-eminence in one or more of these various distributions.” In the present context, the elite whose participation is being investigated are the educated elites, whose classification is based on the attainment of specific level of academic endowment in their chosen disciplines (minimum of masters’ degree). The major proponents of elite theory are Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Roberto Michels, and Jose Ortega Y. Gasset.

Viewed from the perspective of policy making, elite theory holds that public policy mainly reflects the values, interests and preferences a select group in any society that comprise the ruling or governing elites. Dye & Zeigler (1996 cited in Sambo 2008) vividly captures the assumptions of elite theory regarding public policy:

- Society is divided into the few who have power and the many who do not.
- Only a small number of persons allocate values for society; the masses do not decide public policy.
- The few who govern are not typical of the masses who are governed. Elites are drawn disproportionately from the upper socioeconomic strata of society. The movement of non-elites positions must be slow and continuous to maintain stability and avoid revolution. Only non-elites who have accepted the basic elite consensus can be admitted to governing circles. Elites share a consensus on the basic values of the social system and the preservation of the system. Public policy does not reflect demands of the masses but rather the prevailing values of the elite. Changes in public policy will be incremental rather than revolutionary. Active elites are subject to relatively little direct influence from apathetic masses. Elite influence masses more than masses influence elites (Dye & Zeigler 1996 cited in Sambo 2008: 294).

The implication is that it is not the masses or ordinary people whose interest democracy is supposed to serve, who determine the policy thrust of the government through their actions.
and demands, rather, it is the interest of the elites. The governing elite make policies which the various ministries, departments and agencies implement in the name of public interest. The wider implication of this proposition is that even though sometimes the policies in the short run, seem to be in interest of the masses, the elite concede to it because they have no alternative, however, such concessions are made because in the long run, such policies actually further the interest of the elites. This explains why the many poverty alleviation policies that have been formulated and implemented in Nigeria by military and civilian governments have failed to adequately address the needs of the masses leaving a yawning gap between the rich and poor (Eminue, 2005; Olaniyi, 1998; Anderson, 1997; Ikelegbe, 1996). Instead these poverty alleviation policies and programmes have rather increased the wealth of the elite who have been the actual beneficiaries.

In Nigeria, the governing or ruling elite most times, in the process of formulating public policy does not elicit input or demands from the populace; rather they impose policies and programmes that they believe are in the interest of the people. As a consequence the masses cannot directly connect with the programmes even though on paper they are supposed to be pro-people policies and programmes. The elite dominate governance, and policies that are made, and without the input of the masses it becomes difficult to adequately address the interest of masses.

Elite theory has been criticised by various scholars, as standing against the basic principles of democracy, which proposes that power belongs to the people, and government must be by the people and for the people (Kifordu, 2011; Johari, 2010; Birch, 2007). Johari (2010: 264) writes that “elite theory stands on the classical doctrine of the natural inequality of mankind and thereby it leads to the tendency of irresponsibilism and self-perpetuation as conceived by the doctrine of a liberal-democratic state.”

Despite the criticisms of scholars of elite theory being anti-democratic, the theory is relevant for the present study given that its principle subject are group of the elite within the Nigerian society (the educated elites). The educated elites who by virtue of their academic attainment possess the necessary tools to take advantage of some statutory platforms to make contribution to the policy making process. They are highly regarded by the governing elite, masses, and civil society organizations, and this should place them in a vantage position to influence the formulation of public policy for the interest of the larger majority of the populace. Though the educated elites are not part of the governing elite, the masses see them as the repositories of the public goodwill. By their educational attainment, they are in position to know what is best for the society and to serve as unofficial mouth piece of the masses in standing up for them where they cannot enter.

Given that they have no direct access to state resources for their personal benefits as do the governing elite, the masses look up to them to fight for the public good, through ensuring the formulation of people-oriented policies. They body of experts that could be depended upon to evaluate policies can be drawn from amongst the educated elites as well. The expectation is that the educated elites should leverage on the goodwill they have with the governing elite on the one hand and the masses on the order to make genuine input and demands that should form integral part of the policies that are made for the good of the society.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey design. In undertaking a scientific study, it is important to adopt a specific research design in order “to develop an overall plan for relating the conceptual research problem, to relevant-and doable-empirical research” (Ghauri, Gronhaug & Kristianslund, 1995: 26 cited in Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2006: 33). The study location was Ogun State, one of the thirty six states in Nigeria. Ogun State is located in the South-West.
geopolitical zone of the country. The State is bounded to the West by the Republic of Benin, East by Ondo State, North by Oyo State and South by Lagos State (Onakomaiya, Odugbemi, Oyesiku, & Ademiluyi, 2000; Daniel 2003). The field survey was conducted over a nine month period from September 2011 to May 2012.

A self constructed questionnaire was the instrument for data collection which was administered to educated elites from eight of the twenty local governments in the state. Two local governments were selected from each of the four political divisions of the state. The respondents were selected using stratified random sampling technique. 1720 educated elites from Abeokuta South, Ado-Odo Ota, Ijebu Ode, Ijebu North, Ikenne, Odeda, Sagamu, and Yewa South filled and returned the questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Among the secondary data collected were relevant books, scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional papers/reports, and materials downloaded from the internet. These were integrated into the discussion of findings from the questionnaire.

**Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

**Relevance of citizens input in policy formulation and its consideration by policy makers to attainment of good governance**

Table 2: Citizens’ input into formulation of Public policy is a major characteristic of good governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>78.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>78.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>21.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012).

Table 2 above shows that almost all the respondents 1719 (99.93%) agreed that citizens making input into the public policy making process and its consideration by those charged with the responsibility of public policy formulation are essential for attainment of good governance. This finding shows that almost all the respondents appreciate the fact that citizens input in the process of formulation of public policy is a major characteristics of good governance. It can be assumed that the respondents know what is expected of them in terms of formulation of pro-people policies by the State government.

Table 3: Relevant government ministries and agencies, legislature and civil society organizations are viable platforms for contributing to public policy making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1488</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012).

Table 3 above shows that most of the respondents 1488 (86.5%) indicated that they recognize government ministries and agencies, the legislature and civil society organizations as platforms through which they could contribute to the process of making public policy. This
shows a consciousness by the educated elites that there are statutory institutions through which private citizens and groups can contribute to the making of public policy in the state.

Table 4: Implementation of people oriented policies is a major characteristic of good governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1328</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012).

Table 4 above, shows that most of the respondents, 1378 (77.2%) agreed that implementation of people-oriented policies is a major characteristic of good governance. This finding reveals that most of the respondents appreciate the fact that the government officials are expected to implement people oriented policies as exists to serve the needs of the people and not those of the governing elite.

**Educated elite contribution to the formulation and implementation of people oriented policies in Ogun State**

Table 5: Did you write to any ministry, department or agency of government with a view to making input or demand in the policy formulation process of government from 2003 – 2011?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1539</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 5 above shows that majority of the respondents 1539 (89.5%) did not write to any ministry, department or agency of government with a view to making input into the policy formulation process of the State government from 2003 – 2011. Only 181 (10.5%) of the respondents wrote to either a ministry, department or agency of government with a view to making input into the policy formulation process of the state government during the period under review. This shows a high level of apathy by the educated elite in terms of contribution to policy formulation, especially people oriented policies which was identified as a major characteristic of good governance.

Table 6: Did you write to the legislator representing your constituency, with a view to contributing to any specific policy of the state government from 2003 – 2011?
Table 6 above shows that majority of the respondents 1644 (95.58%) did not write to the legislator representing their constituency, with a view to contributing to any specific policy of the state government from 2003 – 2011. Only 76 (4.42%) wrote to their representative to address any specific policy of the state government during the period. This is very disheartening given that almost all of them acknowledged the importance of writing to the legislator representing as one of the vital platforms for contributing to formulation of people – oriented policies and programmes.

Table 7: Did you join any civil society organization in making demands with a view to influencing any specific policy of the government from 2003 – 2011?

Table 7 above shows that majority of the respondents 1689 (98.19%) did not join any civil society organization in making demands with a view to influencing any specific policy of the State government from 2003 – 2011. Only 31 (1.81%) of the respondents indicated that they were able to join any of the many civil society organizations operating in the state, to make demands with a view to influencing any specific policy of the government during the period under review. This shows a high level of apathy by the educated elites, given that they acknowledged that making demands through civil society organizations is a veritable way for contributing to the formulation of policies by government.
Table 8: Reasons why you did not make any input or demand with a view to influencing any specific policy of the government from 2003 – 2011?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politicians focus on their personal interests and not the interest of the masses.</td>
<td>1,221</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy makers are surrounded by their supporters and sycophants that they are not interested in input and demands from educated people or they know can be critical in their thinking</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the level of insecurity, one could be a target if one is regarded as being too forward in criticizing proposed policies of the government</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1,539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012)

The findings in table 8 reveal that the respondents who did not make any form of input to the policy formulation process in the state had reasons that bordered on the lack of interest by the politicians on masses input, and lack of enabling environment for such input to be made. This finding also corroborates Echikwonye and Beetseh (2011) writings that the policy makers in Nigeria do not accommodate input and demands from the masses which they refer to as being part of the problems of policy making in Nigeria.

The findings reveal that majority of the educated elite did not make any form of input in the policy formulation process using the different platforms for making input and demands in the public policy process of the state government during the period under review. This was in spite of the acknowledgement by almost all of them that citizens’ input into the policy making process is a vital characteristic of good governance. The problem becomes what would be the parameter for judging good performance in terms of people oriented policies and programmes if most of the educated citizens do not have any input in policy making process of government. Smith (2003) and Curtain (2003) have emphasized the need for citizens input in the policy making process in order to achieve good governance.

Responsive governance requires that the citizenry become active making input to the process of policy making, which would be utilized by the government in making pro-people policies. The citizens are also expected to provide feedback on the relevance and impact of the implementation of such policies (Reddy, 2009). The inability of the educated elite to make input therefore serves as impediment in the actualization of this important characteristic of good governance in the state.

One vital area where the input of the educated elite is required is in the area of review of budget estimate before they are passed by the legislature. The public protests that arose following the removal of fuel subsidy by the Federal Government of Nigeria, in January 2012 led to several revelations on anomalies in the 2012 Budget. The National Assembly on February 15, 2012 announced through the Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Mohammed Maccido, that they found a mysterious one billion naira in the budget (The Moment, 2012). Shamsudeen A. Tella confirmed that, as a member of a group that worked on the 2012 budget, they had found several duplications in allocations in the budget (an
interview held on 13th March 2012). There is no gainsaying the fact that such anomalies may also be preponderant at the state level. The implication of this is that the educated elite should be active in dissecting the budget estimates sent to the legislature, and make informed professional advice to the legislature before the passage of the bill.

It is not enough for the educated elite to sit back in the comfort of their living rooms and criticize the activities of the government. It is necessary for them to make input in the policy formulation process. Such enlightened input will ensure that people-oriented policies are formulated and implemented by the government. It is also the input by the educated elite that should be used as parameter for judging the level of responsiveness of the government.

The Ogun State council of elders, a group of selected elderly professionals who had distinguished themselves in their chosen vocations, made valuable contributions to the state government, in terms of formulation of people oriented policies and programmes. It was on the basis of the recommendations of the group that the state government created the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperatives. The goals of the Ministry are stated as; reduce poverty and develop partnership for sustainable development, encourage community participation in project design, development, implementation and maintenance, encourage wealthy citizens of various communities to participate in the development of their communities through endowment programmes (Jacobs, 2010).

The notable contributions of the ministry to the developmental efforts of the State government include: The disbursement of N24.3 million as Grant-in-Aid to community Development Associations in the State, to support their self-help projects from 2004 – 2008. This is normally done once a year. Leadership training workshops for 3, 500 leaders of CDAs was organized. There was also a yearly disbursement of subvention of N1 million to Ogun State Cooperative Federation. Others include; Infrastructural development at the Social Development Institute (Shasha) Iperu – One female hostel renovated, a borehole sunk and perimeter fencing for the institute to enhance security, coaster bus donated to the institute. The ministry between 2003 and 2009, registered a total of 3,058 cooperative societies and unions, as well as 1,397 FADAMA cooperatives in the State. The FADAMA departments at the various Local government secretariats coordinate the activities of these cooperatives in the efforts at achieving food sufficiency in the State (Jacobs, 2010).

Conclusion
There was a high level of apathy among the educated elites in Ogun State in terms of contribution to the policy formulation process in the state during the period 2003 – 2011. Despite the fact that the educated elites recognized that citizens’ active contribution was required to ensure the formulation and implementation people oriented policies and programmes, they did not take advantage of the various platforms for contributing to the public policy process.

The inability of a large number of the educated elite to make any input in the process of policy making may have negatively affected the formulation of people oriented policies and programmes in the state. The apathy by educated elites equally negates the principles of responsive governance, as well as collaborative governance. These require the active participation of various stakeholders, especially those who are knowledgeable in different fields of endeavour to actively partner with the government agencies and officials to ensure attainment of good governance.

The contributions of the Ogun State Council of Elders (a group of non-partisan elderly elites, who have distinguished themselves in their chosen careers), in actively making input into the public policy process in the state are highly commendable. Given the massive impact of their contributions, there is a need for the formation of more of such groups. As noted by Emerson,
Nabatchi, & Balogh (2011) collaborative governance goes beyond engagement of formal non-state stakeholders in collective decision making, to include processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, and different levels of government.

Recommendations
There is need for a massive programme of enlightenment by the National Orientation Agency on the necessity of the citizens’ participation in the policy formulation process. This should target especially the educated elites with emphasis on the fact that their non participation has negative impact on the formulation and implementation of people oriented policies and programmes.
Legislators representing different constituencies should organize special interactive sessions with the educated elites in their constituency to encourage them to make input into the policy formulation process of the government.
Civil Society Organizations should make deliberate efforts to engage educated elites in their advocacy programmes targeting specific government policies and programmes.
The government should encourage non partisan elite groups like the Ogun State Council Elders to contribute in different sectors to the formulation government policies and programmes.
The office of Head of Service should organize seminars and workshops to educate public officials on the importance of citizens’ participation in public policy and the need to make deliberate effort to elicit such input and demands and to actually consider them in the public policy process.

References


