Decentralization and Inclusiveness
in the Governance of Ogun State (2003 – 2011)

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Abstract:
Most developing countries have adopted decentralization since the last two decades of the twentieth century as a mechanism of bringing government closer to the people, ensuring greater government efficiency and making the government more inclusive. In spite of operating a federal system of government, Nigeria still manifests some high level of tendency towards centralization especially in some critical sectors. Politics in Nigeria is elitist and highly monetized, as such majority of the population, such as the poor, women and the young people seem to be excluded to a great extent in terms of political participation as well as policy formulation. The study examined decentralization and the inclusiveness of the different segments of the population in the governance of Ogun state, one of Nigeria's 36 states, located in the South West geo-political zone of the country. The study adopted descriptive research design and utilized qualitative data. In-depth interview of the 68 respondents was used to gather data which was content analyzed. There is still tendency towards centralization with the sub-national governments depending on the central government in certain sectors. The state government made meaningful attempts to implement policies and programmes that served the interests of the poor, children, youth, women and the elderly. However, the level of women representation in electable public position was low falling below the United nations recommendation of 30% affirmative action on gender.

1. Introduction

Since the 1980s many developing countries (including those of Africa) have made remarkable inroads in efforts at decentralization, especially in terms of devolution of some central government functions to the sub-national levels of state and local government. The trend has been partly in response to political pressures for greater local autonomy (in terms of taking government closer to the people, as well as the need to deliver public services more efficiently (World Bank, 2001).

Fauget (2012: 1) writes that "decentralization is one of the most important reforms of the past generation, both in terms of the number of countries affected and the potentially deep implications for the nature and quality of governance". Selee (2004) writes that proponents of decentralization from across the globe, cutting across different ideological linings, have argued that strengthening local and sub-national governments through decentralization would lead to improved efficiency of government as well as contribute to quality of democratic governance.

However, in spite of operating a federal system of government, which ordinarily should encourage greater centralization and attendant inclusion of majority of the populace, political participation at the level of contesting election for public office in Nigeria is predominantly an elite game. There is high level of elite circulation, with family members of two to three generations holding public office at different levels becoming a normal occurrence across different states of the federation. The regular trend is for those who have had direct access to state resources to utilize them in their roles as political godfathers to sponsor family members or adopted political god-sons, who occupy public office, while the political godfather rules by proxy through his continual access to state resources through the instrumentality of his surrogates in office.

In Nigeria, politics is highly monetized with ordinary political party nomination form for contesting election into public office costing millions of naira depending on the position being sort for. As a consequence, a large number of the citizens are increasingly being disenfranchised from political participation since they lack the resources to participate at certain levels. The National Bureau of Statistics (2012) reported that the poverty level in Nigeria was about 72%, the implication is that a large majority of Nigerians may find themselves disenfranchised from political processes. This is disheartening in a nation that practices democratic governance, in

which there is supposed to be massive inclusion of the citizens in terms of participation in the political process, as well as in governance at all levels.

A study on democracy and governance of Nigeria commissioned by the USAID (2006) reported that:

Governance in that country has been characterized by inefficient yet authoritarian centralization, a dearth of meaningful political representation, a culture of impunity, and a demoralizing climate of unaccountability dating back to military rule. The combination of aggrieved injustice and the social misery of the majority, in turn, risks producing disillusionment with democracy, creates conditions igniting social conflicts and, most importantly, threatens the stability of Nigeria's political order (USAID 2006: 32).

In spite of the fact that Nigeria operates federalism, there exists massive centralization of power and authority in many sectors. The national government seems to exhibit undue domination of the other levels of government which can be traceable to the long years of military authoritarian rulership of the country. Unfortunately, some of the elected civilian leaders have yet to come to terms with the realities of democratic governance, and the decentralization and inclusiveness that it portends.

Poverty has been one of the major reasons given for exclusion of some segments of the population in many states. Atkinson & Marlier (2010) write that social exclusion is a personal experience affecting directly those who are disenfranchised or marginalized in one way or the other. In democratic societies, there is a need for those suffering poverty and social exclusion to be accommodated especially in the formulation of pro-poor policies and programmes.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2006: 17) writes that "another key barrier to inclusion in Nigerian political process is the widespread discrimination against citizens known as non-indigenes, no matter how strong their ties to the communities in which they live." The subtle exclusion of non-indigenes in political process which occurs in most states in the federation apart from Lagos state is a direct infringement some sections of the 1999 constitution.

Increasingly, there is inherent exclusion of the some segments of the society, at different levels leading for agitations against various kinds of marginalization, by those who feel short changed by the status quo. Some of the agitations led to violent uprisings with implications of instability to the polity. This is why it is imperative to insist on greater level of inclusion of those groups who are not usually favoured by the political elites in the authoritative allocation of values. These include children, youth, women, the elderly and the poor. Given that the youth are reported to comprise about 40% of the population of Nigeria, it means that these groups or segments of the society that are usually excluded from the scheme of things including the formulation of policies actually constitute a clear majority of the population.

It is in the light of the fore-going that this study examined decentralization and inclusiveness in the governance of Ogun state, Nigeria (2003 to 2011) one of 36 states in the West African country. The study focused on appraisal of the efforts of the government in terms of formulation and implementation of policies and programmes targeting the specific needs of the children, youths, women and elderly in the state.

2. Literature review

2.1. Decentralization of Governance

Bardhan (2002) tries to put the differences between decentralization in old democracies as represented by traditional literature on decentralization and that of the developing countries such as Nigeria. He posits that: traditional literature on decentralization, even though not impervious to issues of distribution, is usually preoccupied with those of efficienc in public provision. When a major goal of decentralization in developing countries is to effectively reach out to the poor (or to diffuse unrest among disadvantaged minority groups), often in remote backward areas, targeting success in poverty alleviation programs is a more important performance criterion than the efficiency of interregional resource allocation (2002: 188).

Selee (2004) writes that several proponents of decentralization hinge their argument on the fact that a decentralized government may allow for greater inclusiveness of different sectors of society. In some Latin American countries, it had resulted in increased participation of women in local governments and minority groups as well as the poor have a higher opportunity of having their voices heard and felt in local decision-making and policy making than they do at the national level. Such outcomes are expected of decentralization in emerging democracies in Africa (such as Nigeria) which fall within the same categorization of developing countries as the Latin American countries that were the subject of Selee (2004) study.

An indication of the important of decentralization to the tenets of democracy in terms of meeting the needs of the people, especially the majority who do not have direct access to decision making in governance of their societies has been underscored by the inclination of the scholarly arguments on decentralization. Smulovitz and Clemente (2004) pursue the normative and economic arguments for the promotion of decentralization as a public policy when they write that:

Decentralization, as a public policy, has been promoted on the basis of normative and economic arguments. Normative discussions underline that decentralization promotes democracy and accountability because it brings about an increase in the responsibilities and resources of the population in the local area. On the other hand, economic arguments point out that decentralization results in a greater efficiency and effectiveness of expenditure since it permits a better assignation and control of the same (Smulovitz & Clemente, 2004:101).

Fauget (2012) in his study, undertakes an in-depth analysis of the various theoretical arguments by scholars in favor of decentralization and proposes that:

The strongest theoretical argument in favor of decentralization is that (a) it will improve the accountability and responsiveness of government by altering its structure so as to increase citizen voice and change the deep incentives that public officials face. Other arguments in favor are that it can: (b) reduce abuses of power by transferring certain central government functions and resources to lower levels, (c) improve political stability by giving aggrieved minorities control over sub - national governments with limited power over issues that affect them directly, and (d) increase political competition by creating many smaller arenas that politicians vie to control (Fauget, 2012: 2).

Faugets (2012) as detailed as it appears fails to look that the very important aspect of the inclusion of the usually neglected segments of the society, which is one of the major underlying reasons for decentralization. If decentralization does not lead to social inclusion in which the poor are positively impacted through policies that target their needs, or the women and children are specifically targeted, such decentralization may be seen as being deficient in furthering the ideals of democracy. Attainment of inclusiveness in governance is a major component of decentralization efforts in developing countries, such as Nigeria.

2.2. Inclusiveness in Governance

Good governance requires that all members of a given society feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. In recognition of this, it requires that there should be equitable allocation of resources among all the component parts of the society without undue favouritism to any section. The most vulnerable parts of the populace must have the opportunity to improve their wellbeing, through implementation of programmes that empower them (Diamond, 2004; Mantu, 2006; Nwelih & Ukaoha, 2010).

UNESCAP (2006) claims that the kind of gender responsiveness that is involved in good governance only result from women's (of diverse backgrounds) full entry into decision making, contributing to a deepened socially-aware understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts of a given society.

To be inclusive is a core value of democratic governance, in terms of equal participation, equal treatment and equal rights before the law. This implies that all people – including the poor, women, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged groups – have the right to participate meaningfully in governance processes and influence decisions that affect them. It also means that governance institutions and policies are accessible, accountable and responsive to disadvantaged groups, protecting their interests and providing diverse populations with equal opportunities for public services such as justice, health and education (Dias & Sudarshan, 2007, p 1).

In most developing countries, however, there seem to exist a high degree of exclusion of some segments of the society including the women, the poor and some minority groups. This has been at the root of various agitations against perceived marginalization which ahs in some cases resulted in conflicts and crises of different magnitude.

In the 2005 policy statement, social exclusion was defined as...a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live (DFID, 2005: 3).

According to DFID, social exclusion is major problem that should be tackled in the process of formulating policies by governments because:

a) it prevents people from exercising their rights and opportunities, and b) it hinders poverty reduction by leading to higher rates of poverty among marginalised groups and reducing the productive capacity of the whole society (DFID, 2005: 5). Because it prevents the realisation of rights and exacerbates poverty, social exclusion also affects societies! ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and can lead to conflict and violence (DFID, 2005: 6-8).

Ranson (nd cited in Alofe, Alao, Nwogwugwu & Alao, 2014) argues that in pursuit of inclusion in modern societies the task has been to reconstruct a theory of citizenship which is grounded in the experience of heterogeneity. There is emphasis on the need for different groups and different segments of the society, to enter a discourse in which they freely express the interests of their members which should not only be recognized but also accommodated in the public space. However, despite concerted attempts at ensuring the conduct of free, fair and credible elections and equality of all, most democracies both the old and emerging still engage in one form of social exclusion or the other.

Government inclusiveness can be viewed from different perspective, including; the level of inclusion of people from different segments in the decision making processes, the level of implementation of programmes targeting different segments of the society, as well as the level of implementation of pro-poor policies and programmes by the government. More recently, this concept of inclusiveness has been extended to measure and analyze pro-poor governance as well, i.e., whether or not a government is pro-poor as evidenced from its public expenditure allocation priorities. One strand of this literature focuses on the issue of aid effectiveness. Government inclusiveness is measured from the perspective that foreign aid is likely to be more effective in countries with more pro-poor governments (Mosley et al. 2004). Others, such as Kakwani and Son (2006), have examined this issue from more of a targeting efficiency perspective, i.e., in terms of assessing how well a government is doing in reaching the poor with regard to welfare - enhancing policy interventions (Tandon, 2007: 33).

The importance of Social inclusion has been underscored by the fact that even donor agencies no longer emphasize just the enthronement of democratic government. They equally emphasize ensuring social inclusion by democratic governments. In this regard, Costa & Clark (2011) write that donor organizations are continually emphasizing the need for greater social inclusion by governments in many developing countries as pre-condition for assistance provided by such organizations.

This is an important distinction to make as it determines the expected role that social inclusion work is intended to play in policy design, interventions and evaluations.

While all agencies would ascertain the obvious impact of social inclusion efforts on reducing poverty reduction, DFID's policy programming appears intended to maximize or improve social inclusion policies, whereas SDC and SIDA seem to focus on strengthening the social inclusion component of their decentralization, governance economic development programmes.

According to United Nations (2010) fighting social exclusion in different countries of the world, especially the developing countries where social exclusion is acute should be a deliberate effort of governments at various levels (local, sub-national and national). They write that:

Countries should adopt an *objective-driven* approach to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, encompassing clear social inclusion-related objectives, with related quantitative targets and strategies. They should concentrate on   a carefully   selected shortlist *of* key national policy objectives, expressed in terms of social outcomes. It is essential that these   objectives be the result of an in-depth *diagnosis* of the causes of poverty and social exclusion in the country concerned, based on a thorough multi-dimensional analysis of the national situation with regard to poverty and social exclusion across all important areas. Integrated social inclusion strategies need to be put in place. These strategies should follow a multidimensional approach cutting across and integrating a range of policy domains, one that calls for *joined-up government* at and among the different policy levels) as well as the *active participation* of all the relevant actors or stakeholders (including social partners, non-governmental and grassroots organizations (at international, national and sub-national levels), and the poor and socially excluded   people themselves). In this highly focused framework, the selection of policy measures designed to back the strategies should be based on ex ante impact assessments (United Nations, 2010: 47).

The World Bank (2006) in reviewing the alternative approaches to enhance social inclusion sees community driven development (CDD) as a viable approach to forstering social inclusion at the local level especially in areas that had experienced violent conflict. According to the World Bank (2006):

CDD as an approach that empowers local community groups, including local government, by giving direct control to the community over planning decisions and investment resources through a process that emphasizes participatory planning and accountability. Because public institutions in conflict and post-conflict environments often are weak or nonviable, CDD is increasingly used to help build bridges between the state and its citizens. It also is used to strengthen social cohesion where social groups are divided (World Bank, 2006: 6).

Costa & Clark (2011) observed that when it comes to Building effective delivery networks that would enhance inclusiveness, when there is greater coordination between different government departments, agencies or service sectors (as was the case in Peru) as well as different levels of government, such national, sub-national and local (as was the case in South Africa), some initiatives adopted in these countries suggest that lasting improvements in more inclusive local governance and service delivery would be achieved.

3. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey designs and utilized entirely qualitative data. 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 regarded as one of the most educationally advantaged states in the country, serving host to 21 higher institutions, which is more than any other state in the country. Ogun 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, et al, 2000; Daniel 2003).

The survey was carried out between September 2011 and May 2012. Primary qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interview of 68 respondents from eight out of the twenty local governments in the state. The selected local governments were; Ikenne, Sagamu, Ado-Odo Ota, Yewa South, Odeda, Abeokuta South, Ijebu Ode and Ijebu North Local government areas (two from each of the four geo-political divisions of the state). Among the key informants were a former governor, a former speaker of the state house of assembly, former legislators, some senior civil servants of the rank of Assistant Director and above, community leaders, and leaders of women associations, traditional rulers, as well as educationists and civil society organisation activists. Among the secondary data collected were relevant books, scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional papers/reports and relevant materials downloaded from the internet. The content analysis of the qualitative data gathered was carried out and integrated into the discussion of the findings which are presented according to themes.

3.1. Presentation and Discussion of Findings

3.1.1. Inclusiveness of Different Segments of the Society in Governance

The Ogun State government attempted to create an atmosphere of oneness, incorporating the different sections of the populace, such as the Youths and Children, Women, and the Royal fathers in its programmes. The level at which different sections of the society are included in the political process and governance of a given society to a great extent determines the quality of democracy in practice in such a society. In largely divided societies in terms of configuration regarding the different nationalities, ethnic groups, religious groups, political divisions, (such as Nigeria) it is imperative that deliberate efforts be made to ensure that there is inclusion of all the component units in the governance of the state.

Soleye cited in Oyesiku, (2011a) writes that the Ogun State government during the period under review made efforts to connect with every segment of the society. This required determined effort to ensure the promotion of gender equity across the twenty local

governments as well as at the state level. This involved deliberate efforts to ensure that a large number of women were involved in decision. There were well planned and integrated programmes of ensuring qualitative education at the secondary and tertiary levels across the state. Programmes and projects were targeting empowerment for youth were also implemented. Empowering the youth and maximizing the potentials of the elderly statesmen and women in the State.

3.1.2. Inclusion of Young People through Quality Education and Youth Development
Education is the key component of children and youth development in any society. Any state that that fails to educate its children is planning for disaster, crises, instability and possibly collapse in future. As a consequence, governments that are democratically elected make concerted efforts to provide qualitative, functional and affordable education for all children and youth residing in their States.
Data from Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science & technology (2011), indicate that the State government during the period under review complemented its free education policy at the secondary school level with direct payment of senior secondary school certificate fees (WASSCE) for all students of public secondary schools in the State without regard to state of origin. The sum of one billion, fifty eight million, eight hundred and fifty six thousand, three hundred (N1,058,856,300) naira was expended in the payment of the fees from 2004 to 2010. Table 1 below, shows analysis of payment of WASSCE fees by the State government.

Year	No. of Candidates	Amount Approved/paid (N)
2004	27, 565	90, 964, 000
2005	32, 099	115, 400, 000
2006	34, 598	134, 956, 000
2007	36, 195	146, 045, 000
2008	35, 490	151, 157, 300
2009	35, 939	197, 934, 000
2010	37, 686	222, 400, 000
Total	**239, 572**	**N1, 058, 856, 300**

Table 1: Underwriting of WASSCE FEES for SS 3 students in Ogun state

Source: Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science & Technology cited in Sodipo (2011, p. 55).
The Ogun State government during the period under review, made major achievements in the education sector, including: establishment of the Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu Ode (the first Education University in Nigeria); implementation of the multi-campus system of the Olabisi Onabanjo University (Sagamu, Aiyetoro and Ibogun Campuses becoming fully operational); establishment of four ICT polytechnics (Gateway Polytechnic, Igbesa; Gateway Polytechnic, Sapaade; Adegbenro Polytechnic, Itori; Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo), as well as relocation of the Tai Solarin College of Education to Omu-Ijebu.
The state government committed meaningful resources to infrastructural development of schools in the State with construction, renovation and rehabilitation of various categories of buildings to make the schools conducive for learning. This cut across all the levels of the educational sector. Tables 2 & 3, show the analysis of infrastructural development and renovation of schools in Ogun State from 2003 to May 2011.

S/N	Sub-sector	Description of construction work
1.	Early Childhood care development education	44 classrooms
2.	Primary schools	320 classrooms + 76 VIP Toilets
3.	Junior secondary	206 classrooms
4.	Senior secondary	96 classrooms + 2 Blocks of technical workshops + reconstruction of 4 Hostels. Construction of six storey blocks of eight classrooms each

Table 2: Infrastructural development – construction of new classrooms in public primary and secondary schools from 2003 to May 2011
Source: Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science & Technology cited in Sodipo (2011, p. 58)

S/N	Sub-sector	Description of renovation work
1.	Primary schools	119 classrooms
2.	Junior secondary	269 classrooms
3.	Senior secondary	i. 38 Classrooms ii. 312 Classrooms In 1004 Secondary Schools iii. Renovation Of 24 Buildings (Classrooms, Technical Workshops Blown Off By Rainstorm At RSS Sagamu) iv. Renovation of hostel facilities in 12 secondary schools for 2006 Gateway Games.

Table 3: Renovation of structures in public schools
Source: Ogun State Ministry of Education Science & Technology cited in Sodipo (2011, p. 58)

3.2. Youth Development
Human capital is one of the major criteria for measuring the level of development of any nation, state or society. The United Nations development Program (UNDP) defines human development as: a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical choices are commonly a long and healthy life, acquiring knowledge and enjoying a decent standard of living. Other choices include political freedom, guarantee of human rights and self-respect (cited in Ogun State Government, 2011a: 28).
It has been observed that:
For complete national development, any nation, state, or society that desires guaranteed economic buoyancy and self sufficiency, sustainability, high quality human development indices, social well-being and qualitative life for its citizens must of necessity place high premium on human capital development…. Chronic underdevelopment with its attendant negative symptoms – hunger, poverty, disease, brain-drain, huge debts, political instability and the like-are consequences of paucity of human capital. In all, poor human capital, no doubt, perpetuates underdevelopment and is in itself entrenched by continued underdevelopment (Oyesiku, 2011b: 87).
The Human Capital Development Programme (HUCAP) of the Ogun State government during the period under review was programme that involved the training of critical manpower for the public sector of the state in selected universities in United Kingdom. Some of the respondents interviewed stated that the HUCAP programme which was a unique programme of sponsorship of bright young people from the state for masters and PhDs was a way of providing skilled human resources that would contribute to development of the state.
Oyesiku (2011b: 87 – 88) writes that "globally the purpose of human capital development is to find a niche for activities and markets; equip people to cope with influx of different culture and values; meet rapidly changing global economic environment; and fill skills gap to maintain competitiveness." Considering the contributions that the beneficiaries of the programme have made in governance, especially those absorbed in Gateway Information Communication Technology (GICT), one would state that the State government will reap enormous benefits from its investments in the programme in future.
HUCAP beneficiaries who returned to serve the state at the completion of their Masters programmes have contributed positively to the development of the state in the following areas:
Contribution to the planning and implementation of the State ICT policy;
Led GICT team on the development of software and database for computerization of the Examinations and Records Department of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago – Iwoye; Participation in the designing and development of a central database for Ogun state and the revitalization of the State Web Portal; Led team for the conceptualization and designing of Computerized Housing Information System (CHIS) due to be implemented for the Housing Ministry; Participation in the designing of management information system project for the Ogun State Agricultural and Multi-purpose Credit Agency (OSAMCA); Participation in the training programme for the staff of Regional Plan Office; Preparation of the ICT manufacturing strategy for the state for the State as contained in chapter 12 of the State regional plan; Development of a user-friendly search engine for the Regional Plan office; Participation in the formulation and development of the Ogun state food and nutrition policy and the development of strategic work plan (Ogun state Government, 2011a: 32).
The State government showed its commitment to youth development through massive development of infrastructure in the state. In the area of sports, the infrastructure that the administration provided in the different political divisions of the state, was eloquent testimony of an understanding of the relevance of sports not only to the physical well being of citizens but also as a viable income generating source for governments and citizens alike across the globe.
Ogun State Employment Generation programme (OGEGEP), created by state government succeeded in training over fifty thousand young men and women in both agricultural and non agricultural vocations between 2003 and 2011. Non-agricultural areas included; soap, paint, cream and chalk production, tailoring, bead making, hair dressing and fashion designing. The agricultural vocations were crop production, fishery, piggery, snail production, rabbit rearing, and poultry production (Ogun State Government, 2011a).
OGEGEP had two centres; non agric vocations centre at Sagamu and Agric vocations centre at Odeda and Eweje. A summary of Agric vocations at Odeda and Eweje shows: Poultry – 110; Piggery – 100; Snailery – 50; Rabittry – 50; Animal feeds – 25; fisheries/Pellet production – 520; and crop production – 145; making a total of 1, 000. (Jacobs 2010). Table 4 below, shows OGEGEP skill acquisition beneficiaries both Agric and non- Agric since 2003.

Year	Agric Vocation	Non-Agric Vocation	Total
2003	2, 989	5, 235	8, 224
2004	3, 011	4, 141	7, 152
2005	2, 753	4, 008	6, 761
2006	2, 747	3, 011	5, 758
2007	2, 654	2, 985	5, 639
2008	1, 928	3, 333	5, 261
2009	2, 334	2, 678	5, 012
2010	2, 849	3, 354	6, 203
Grand Total	21, 265	28, 745	50, 010

Table 4: OGEGEP skill acquisition beneficiaries trained between 2003 and 2011.
Sources: Jacobs (2010, p. 271); Ogun State Government (2011a: 54).

The training of young men and women by OGEGEP reduced the unemployment level in the State considerably given the multiplier effect of the indirect employment that would have been generated by the empowerment of over fifty thousand young people. Some of the beneficiaries of the OGEGEP programmes were interviewed in the course of the field survey and affirmed their appreciation of the efforts of the state government in empowering them and making them financially independent for life.

3.3. Inclusion of Women in Governance

UNESCAP (2006) write that a gender analysis of governance highlights the critical interdependence between participation, representation and responsiveness. It is of great importance that no segment of the population is marginalized or excluded from governance. Balanced participation is an important step towards improving the quality of governance. In order to achieve balance in terms of representation of the different segment of the society, there is need for well conceived social inclusion and equity-oriented policies in all sectors and areas.

Women who served as commissioners during the eight year period of the administration were Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello and Abiodun Oduwole for Ministry of Health; Mary Ogunjobi and Folake Marcus-Bello, Women Affairs & Social Welfare from 2003 – 2007. During the second four year term, (2007 – 2011), Jokotade Odebunmi was in charge of Ministry of Housing while Josephine Tomi Soboyejo was at the helm of affairs in the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare (Abosede, 2011; Agunbiade, 2011).

Titi Oseni served as the first female Speaker of a State House of Assembly in Nigeria during the first five years of the period under review (2003 – 2008). It was under her leadership that Ogun State became the first State to pass the Child Rights Act into law in Nigeria. Other women who played prominent roles in politics and governance of the state during the period included Princess Iyabo Odulate, who served as Head of Service; Remi Odubote-Ogunkoya, who served as elected executive Chairman, Ijebu North-East Local Government Area. Several women who served as Special Advisers to the Governor, as well as Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Parastatals and Special Assistants (Abosede, 2011; Agunbiade, 2011).

The Ogun State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare during the period under review activated the States version of the Micro-credit Scheme, Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFEE) which targets women at the grassroots level. The sum of six million was disbursed to WOFEE beneficiaries across the twenty Local Governments of the state, with funds serving as resources targeted at small and medium women entrepreneurs in the State (Jacobs 2010).

The Ogun State government during the period under review may have succeeded in appointing more women into public office than many other states. However, it still did not meet the United Nations quota of 30% of major policy making positions to be conceded to women. Given the fact that women comprise over fifty percent of the population of the State (Abosede, 2011), and with the large number of educated women in the State, the State government should not have difficulty getting more women into public office. In the eight year period under review, only one woman was elected as local government chair person, in one of the twenty local government areas in the State. This was a major shortcoming of the government, given that with the large number of educated women in the state, it should have been able to present more women and get them elected to head different local governments in the State.

However, Gbenga Daniel and Titi Oseni stated at separate interviews (on 6th September, 2011 & 30th September, 2011 respectively) that affirmative action alone is not enough to get a large number of women into public office, especially the electable positions. They stated that it is incomprehensible that though women normally constitute the larger percentage of voters, they seem to prefer to vote for male candidates for public office rather than other women. This means that various NGOs that focus on women empowerment still have a lot of work to do to get women to begin to support other women for electable public offices.

The position of Daniel and Oseni on the perceived unique nature of the problem of women participation in Nigeria, does not in any way negate the viability of adoption of affirmative action, as evidences from other African countries such as Rwanda, Mozambique, South Africa and Namibia show that adoption of affirmative action by all the major parties in a given country ensures the election of large number of women into public office (Powley, 2005; Kethusegile-Juru, nd). Adoption of strategically planned bottom-up programmes targeting greater women participation in decision making and policy formulation including the enlightenment programmes of the NGOs should complement the adoption and implementation of the affirmative action on gender by governments at various levels in the state (Nwogwugwu & Iyanda 2015).

3.4. Inclusion of Traditional Rulers in Governance

The Ogun State government during the period under review provided increased the level of relevance and integration of the traditional rulers in the processes of governance of the state. To facilitate this, it constructed a form of secretariat for the traditional rulers in the state, (the Obas' Complex) at Abeokuta. The Obas' complex was built as a symbol of the unity of the peoples of Ogun State, providing a conducive environment for meetings and other functions of the Obas in the State.

The construction of a befitting complex for the traditional rulers of the State, (the RIYE Complex), provided a sense of inclusion of this group in the plans and programmes of government which had been non-existent; leading to calls for constitutional roles for the traditional leaders. The administration recognized the traditional rulers as unofficial members of the government and as such they had access to the governor regardless of the location of their domain (Daniel, 2011).

The inclusion of the top traditional ruler in each of the four political divisions of the State (Remo, Ijebu, Yewa and Egba), in the Ogun Council of Elders, made them an integral part of the policy making process of the State government. This is a very innovative initiative. There is a need for State governments to tap from the enormous resources available through the traditional rulers some of whom are accomplished professionals, and would be in a position to provide valuable advice to government on various policy issues.

In order to give a sense of belonging to the families of Obas' who join their ancestors, the State government introduced severance/relocation allowance for families of Obas that died on the throne. This was to facilitate the relocation of such families from the palaces (Daniel, 2011). This was redress the gross anomaly that existed before in which such families had to depend on charitable donations to be able to relocate their large families since the Obaship positions are not directly hereditary but normally revolve among the members of the ruling families.

The Obas were also incorporated into the informal policy advisory body of the state, the Ogun Council of Elders, as four of their members, one from each of the four geo-political divisions of the state were members of the council. This way, the traditional rulers had opportunity to articulate the needs of their communities, and in concert with other members translate such into inputs to the policy making process of the state.

4. Conclusion

Nigeria in spite of her being a federation still operates a high level of centralization of some sectors, with the sub-national governments showing a high level of dependence on the federal government, instead of interdependence. However, it terms of inclusion, the state government during the period 2003 – 2011, manifested a considerably positive trend in inclusion of the young, women and elderly. This was carried out through well thought out policies and programmes that targeted these usually marginalized groups including the poor. Among the pro-poor policies was free education up to senior secondary level culminating in the payment of senior school certificate examination fees for all students resident in the state regardless of their ethnic origin.

Efforts at greater women inclusion was majorly in the form of political appointments as few women were elected into public office. This shows that there was no intentional policy of recruitment of female candidates for public policy, this was an obvious weakness in terms of gender equity and inclusion of women who are about half of the population of the state.

There were very genuine in-roads made by the government in terms of youth development and job creation and empowerment. The elderly, using the obas' as a point of focus were equally included to a reasonable extent through novel projects and programmes that are not common in other states in the country.

5. Recommendations

There is need for adoption of affirmative action to ensure greater participation of women in decision making and governance of the state at all levels.

The inclusion of the elderly should be institutionalized, so that their would be continuity in their contributions to the governance of the state regardless of the party that is in control.

The Youth development programmes including HUCAP which has the potential of providing high caliber human resources for cutting edge in public administration to the state, should not be politicized, but rather integrated into the mechanism of the state bureaucracy to make sustainable.

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