

Legislative Oversight and Sustenance of Democracy: An Assessment of Enugu State House of Assembly (2003-2015).

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Abstract: *In a democratic setting, legislature plays a major role in ensuring good governance, defence and advocacy of democracy. Most political pundits in ranking views legislature as the first in essence that without law making there will be no interpretation and execution. Over the years intellectual discourse is being given to legislative studies, agenda and sustenance both in developing and advanced democracies. It is obviously irrefutable that the legislatures in developing countries are anemic and could not creditably perform their statutory functions effectively since they are being "cloned" by the executive. The central thesis of this work is to critically x-ray their responsibilities and activities and also examine the extent through which the legislature can be an instrument of development in public policy for appropriate legislation. For this paper we anchored our theoretical analysis on elite theory approach. The data employed is from secondary sources. The paper affirmed in concrete terms that there is a conflation between legislative oversight, good governance and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria and averred that one of the major hiccups in the actualization of democracy is political aggrandizement, machination, lack of financial autonomy and corruption. The paper alludes that democracy can be sustained through vibrant legislative oversight, control and selfless service.*

Keywords: Legislative Oversight, Elite theory and Democracy, Public policy.

Introduction

Legislature is the law making body of the government, in the words of John Locke's model of separation of powers, legislative, executive and judiciary powers needed to be separated. Fundamentally the primary duty of legislature is to prescribe rules, the power of execution lies with the executive and that of interpretation of the rules lies with the judiciary. As a body that represents the people, legislature is looked on to see that the administration of public policy to meet the needs of the people. One of the instruments used by legislature is oversight. Legislature is an essential tool to democratic setting and the existence of law maker predates the advent of modern democracy. The emergence of legislature dates back to twelve century when the medieval European civilization was transformed to suit the needs of contemporary political systems (Loewe berg 1995). Smith (1980) states that legislature is a symbol of power and legitimacy because its decision is on the collective wisdom of men and women with the constitutional mandate of the people. Jewell (1997) identifies that legislature possesses formal authority to make laws; they are elected to represent various elements in the population. Davies (2004) asserts that representative democracy cannot exist without a healthy legislature. The establishment of legislature rests on the assumption that political power resides on people, and people can choose and exercise their sovereignty through elected representatives. Loewenberg (1995) and Okoosi-Simbine (2010) view legislature as the people's representative, it is an assembly of elected representatives from defined constituencies for law making in the government process. Awotokun (1998) notes that legislature is an ambassadors that serve their constituencies in various ways as intermediaries between the citizens and government officials. Boynton (2001:279) states that colonialism failed and nations grew in number, the constitutions incorporate national legislature to replace government institutions globally in the 21st century. The existence of independent legislature is a hallmark for democratic and good governance from other forms of government. The session of these law makers is composed of one system of government to another depending on their mode of operation. In parliamentary government, members of the legislature are fused with executive but in presidential system; legislature is separated from executive and judiciary to avert domination from one another. In some countries legislatures are elected while in some countries they are appointed based on constitution of the state. In spite of their differences the legislature has the character of making law and this distinguishes them from other machineries of government (executive and judiciary). Odinga (1994:123) noted that:

The parliament is the collective defender and watchdog on the collective will of the people. They advocate for the people and arbiter of the national interest. They protect oracles of political covenant and social contract between people and government.

The Legislature makes law for the welfare of the masses and they ensure that such laws are not violated by other arms of government. Evidently, legislature serves as voice of the people, and watchdog of the government to prove their worth in sustainable democracy. The paper will focus on the conformity of legislative oversight and good governance in Nigeria national assembly during Obasanjo and Jonathan administration.

Clarification of Concepts

Legislature

Legislature occupies a key position in the democratic process of government, with the purpose of articulating the collective will of the people through representative government (Okoosi-Simbine, 2010, Taiwo & Fajingbesi, 2004). Awotokun (1998) states that legislature is an arm of government comprising elected representatives or constituted assembly people whose duty is to make laws, control activities of the executive and safeguard people's interest. Anyaegbunam (2000) define legislature as the role of making, revising, amending and repealing laws for the well-being of its citizenry it represents. Lafenwa (2009) defines legislature as people chosen by election to represent the constituent units and control government. Okoosi-Simbine (2010) asserts that legislature is law-making, and policy influencing body in the democratic political system. The state of the legislature has been identified as the strongest predictors on the survival of every countries democratic development (Okoosi-Simbine, 2010; Poteete, 2010). Edosa & Azelama (1995) states that legislatures vary in design, structure, organization, operation and selection process as well as term of office and nature of meetings.

In a bicameral type of arrangement two legislative chambers exist in a country; one chamber seems to dominate the other. However, they intricate rules adopted usually harmonize the legislative function of the two chambers (upper and lower chamber). Edosa and Azelama (1995) assert that bicameral legislative is common in federal states that stem from the imperative of one house to protect the interests of minority groups in such states. Nigeria operates in a federally bicameral arrangement on the dictates of 1954 Lyttleton Constitution. The House of Senate (Upper House) and House of Representatives (Lower House) jointly called National Assembly of Nigeria. The two chambers act as a check on other arms of government; such checks are minimal because the major policy demand debate is on party affiliations rather than national interest (Edosa & Azelama, 1995). This arrangement enhance passage of law and gives opportunity for division of labour between the two houses (Okoosi-Simbine, 2010). In addition, bicameral legislature provides an opportunity for wider representation of various interests groups in a country from one democracy to the other. Nwabuzor and Muller (1985) assert that countries that operate short-term tenure for legislature do so because the representatives reflect on the betterment of public preference in respect of government policy. The long-term tenure ensures the stability of national interests which has no changing public opinion.

Legislative Oversight

Legislative oversight involves keeping an eye on the activities of then government agencies especially the executive branch, on behalf of the people. Hall (2007) stated that oversight is the legislature's instrument for the review and evaluation of selected activities of the executive branch of the government. The primacy of the instrument is to ensure that existing programs are implemented and Manzetti and Morgenstern (2000) defines oversight as the act of monitoring and control of one person or institution (generally termed by the Agent) by another (the principal), such that the agent acts in the principal's interest. As such oversight encompasses both the principal's ability to verify actions and sanction wrong doers or correct an agent's objectionable decisions. Scholars have proposed different concept for oversight, Maffio (2002), noted that it is not just supervision of what the executive branch of government has done, but also supervision of executive legislative proposals. By contrast, Olson and Mezey (1991) and McCubbins and Schwarz (1984) suggest that oversight refers to the set of activities that a parliament performs to evaluate the implementation of policies. Along the line some scholars, such Doering (1995), Drewry (1989), Blondel (1973) and Olson (2008) distinguish between oversight and scrutiny. National Democratic Institute (2009:19) defined oversight as "the obvious follow-on activity linked to law making. After participating in law making, the legislator's main role is to see whether laws are effectively implemented or whether the laws capture the intent of their drafters. Legislative oversight is a tool used by the legislature to perform the role of checks and balances in a democracy. Oyewo (2007:8) defines oversight more elaborately as "the exercise of constitutional powers by the legislature to check or control the exercise of constitutional powers of other arms of government, and more specifically to check or control the exercise of executive powers or to make the executive accountable and responsible to the electorate. But Madue (2012: 435) argued that oversight can be performed ex-ante during design and implementation of a programme or policy, as well as ex-post, after its implementation"

Democracy:

It is evidently clear that political elites are most researched elite sector and often in most literatures elite is being used as synonym for 'political elite'. Over 193 countries recognized by United Nations worldwide are said to be democratic. Presently there are superfluous fluid connotations of democracy that revalidates its originality and practicality. To Crozier (1975), it is "adversary culture". Intrinsically democracy by perception and conceptualization is adduced as the government of the majority which happens to be the people. This aspect of governance is achieved through freedom and fundamental rights, elections, rule of law; separation of powers, the legislature; strong opposition, political education, public opinion and freedom of press and speech, decentralization of powers and equality among people. (www.freedomhouse.org) Though it was scholarly and intellectually admitted that the best interpretation of democracy was the one credited to Abraham Lincoln, yet most scholars opined that democracy will be viewed from the environmental and cultural milieu being operated in. Democracy can be perceived from two different strands- socialist and liberal democracy. Jega (2007: 17) argued that socialist democracy is a conception of democracy based on Marxist/Leninist principles and popularized by the attempts by the socialist countries to present/represent their political systems as credible alternatives to western liberal democratic model. Essentially the import and conception of these is that democracy is not rooted in western values and capitalist ideology but that also it has roots in the socialist and Marxist/Leninist philosophy and ideologies. The major crux of its existence was that it sought to justify the difference between governance process in capitalist and social countries still retaining its core values and components. Presently it appears correct to say that virtually all of today's so-called democracies are approximation

of good societies that is fulcrum on contradictory resource destruction, over- militarization of the society and pseudo imperialism. However the posture of democracy in Nigeria is acutely illiberal, not desirably participatory, barely representative and constrained by lack of accountability and governance. Democratization may have opened up political space but the space is still highly exclusive and restrictive by the elites that they posed enormous threat to the socioeconomic and political stability, as well as the aspiration for democratic consolidation and socioeconomic development. (Ake, 1994) Espousing on liberal democratic tenets, Igwe (2007:233) was apt to irradiate that “liberalism is a belief of an unimpeded exercise of thought and related activities, whether to the left or to the right, but in the course of time acquired broader and more complex connotations which effectively transformed it into a pseudo socioeconomic and political ideology as well as the state of mind favoring the freedom and liberty of the individual as the fundamental prerequisite for attaining democratic ideals in a society”. Goldstein and Pevehouse (2009: 282) added that liberal democracy is the belief in the possibility of co-operation to realize common gains which may be economic in outlook and mercantilist in adoption. Conversely, both mercantilist and liberal ideology shape state democracies and policies.

Given the prevailing circumstances surrounding Nigeria many questions remained to be addressed. Can Nigeria presently sustain the democratization process where her institutions are being weakened? Can democracy thrive where there is barricading, thuggery and militarization of electoral processes? Can democracy be sustained where justice is being compromised and gotten by the highest bidder? Can democracy be nourished where poverty index is increasingly high?

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopted elite theory as its framework as propounded by theorist like Weber (1922); Pareto (1935); Mosca (1939) and Michels (1915). The concept of ‘elite’ is based on the notion that every society holds a ruling minority, a group that controls and disputes the most important power sources. The present crop of elites not only dispute power but they also enter the game through different mechanisms of recruitment which may be anchored in a violent manner all in the bid to remain relevant in the society. Elite theory relies in explaining the elite behavior, elite interaction, elite transformation and ultimately, the connection and interaction between those instances and state outcomes. Most modern scholars like Dogan and Higley (1998); Higley and Burton (2008) argued that the present day elite behavior is anchored on regime change. This unruly political rascality captured the present crop of elites in Nigeria’s political firmament and as Igwe (2011:28) conducted that “Nigeria’s political system thrives under the atmosphere of mediocrity”. Most elites are ideologically hollow and this is tantamount to their chameleon-like mass movement to identify themselves with the regime that is in power. Classical and current elite theorists share the ambition of explaining the state outcomes through the elite behavior which is dialectically hinged on the general assumption that elite action and inaction has a casual effect on her relationship in the society. To a large extent such relationship has made the society to be hostile. Thus regime types, regime change, liberalization, stateness, secularization and many other phenomena is what Lopez (2013: 44) hoped fits in within the ambit of elite theory. Though many pundits consider Weber in Ndulue (2008:44) to be the originator of elite theory due to domination theory, his concepts of power and domination as well as his theoretical work in political parties and the related affirmation that social classes are not necessarily social actors are clear indicators and fundamental pillars of elite theory. Arowolo and Aluko cited in Okeke (2014: 312) pointedly contend that Nigeria is oscillating between democratic stagnancy and governance backwardness, principally because of elite tendencies that are reflexive of pursuit of personal aggrandizement and promotion of egocentrism rather than altruistic policies that are nationalistic and ‘people centric’ in nature. Yamokoski (2008:45) sees elites as actors controlling resources, occupying positions and relating through power networks. Thus, the state- of –the –art concept of the elite theory is more closely related to Weberian notion of power which is understood as the capability of implementing one’s will even against the will of others. Power can be achieved through material and symbolic resources. Elites in Reis and Moore (2005:89) are those in possession of the resources. All the same elites can as well emerge even among dissident movements and even from dominated classes or groups. Higley (2006:7) argued that elites are persons occupying the top powerful organizations and movements, thus capable of affecting political outcomes both substantially and regularly. Democracy Index (2015:10) aptly captured the situation of Nigeria and other developing countries by stating that in many democracies, political elites worry about their inability to relate to the electorate and fear the challenge that populist parties pose. In some cases, established parties have colluded to exclude or marginalize the populists. In the face of terrorist threats, democratic governments have reacted in anti-democratic ways, calling into question freedom of speech or adopting draconian laws. In non-democratic countries, authoritarian political elites fear the threat from the masses and seek to bolster their rule by imprisoning opponents, restricting the media, limiting popular freedoms and repressing protest. Meanwhile, electorates are ever more anxious—about economic insecurity, about their personal safety, about the consequences of immigration, about the threat of terrorism—and angry that their concerns are not being represented by the established parties. This mood of fear and insecurity represents one of the main threats to democracy today. Almost one-half of the world’s countries can be considered to be democracies, but, in our index, the number of “full democracies” is low, at only 20 countries; 59 countries are rated as “flawed democracies”. Of the remaining 88 countries in our index, 51 are “authoritarian” and 37 are considered to be “hybrid regimes. This is a grave theoretical problem because elite theory acknowledges that elites may come anywhere as long as they found necessary tools to exercise power. Thus elites may come from the state, corporate organizations, guerilla, unions, NGOs, the media or any kind of social movement. Elite size varies in different social contexts from tribal organizations to multi state organizations like European Union.

The Relationship between Policy Making and Legislative Oversight

Scholars like Dewey (1927), Heidenheimer (1990), Dye (1976) and Nagel (1990) view public policy as focusing on the public and its problems. It examines critically how, why and to what effect governments pursue particular courses of action or inaction and the difference it makes. It moves further to excavate the nature, causes and effects of public policy. Public policy is one of the pillars of governance in the modern context. It is about using the public resources by public functionaries rationally, efficiently and effectively to meet the fundamental needs and aspirations of the people in the short, medium and long terms. Denhart (2005) averred that budget is an instrument of public policy. It reflects the public choices of government and others. Penchman (1983) quoted the British economist and scholar John Maynard Keynes who argued that in contrast, all else being equal, positive government action could lead to greater economic stability. If the pattern of government spending is unchecked it will influence the economy in a negative manner. Stretching further, Hugo (2010:44) admitted that cumulative state and local government expenditure affects the economy. State and local government expenditure constitute close to 12 % of the GDP and must be carefully scrutinized in the fiscal policy of the state. Abdulsalami in Ezeani (2006: 289) in his contribution views public policy as “hard patterns of resource allocation represented by projects and programs designed to respond to perceived public problems or challenges requiring governmental action for their solution”. The intent and import of the above definition is that public policy is what the government is actually doing and not what they intended to do. Anderson (1975: 66) stated that Public Policy is predicated on Policy Demands, Policy Decisions, Policy Statements, Policy Outputs and Policy Outcomes. Igwe (2007:365) perceived public policy as a “systematized objectives, methods and principles of conduct of government or any other entity. It can be official when it emanates from the executive, legislature or judiciary. The class theory looks at public policy from the standpoint of what class interests are served, mechanism for realization, and consequences on society.

One of the managerial tools to address and pigeon-hole all the leakages in budgeting as it relates to public policy is effective managerial tool. The authorizing legislation permits the establishment or continuation of a particular program or agency. The legislature is directly involved in public policy. Another means through which they searchlight public policy is through appropriation. This is the medium through which legislators set aside funds and create budgetary authority for the funds expenditure. Budget formulation starts with the executive but its approval ends with the legislature. In most cases the legislature can approve, disapprove or modify, add or eliminate the budget programs. In Enugu State the budget is submitted to the legislature by the governor which is now referred to the standing committees to scrutinize and review the budget before it was eventually collated, approved and sent to the governor for assent. The execution of the budget is the dual function of the executive and legislature.

Enugu State House of Assembly at a glance: Legislative Oversight

For clarity Enugu State House of Assembly adopted three major strands of oversight. They are routine oversight which is regular oversight carried out by the legislature either through the Standing Committees or at the plenary on biennial or quarterly basis depending on the need; appropriation oversight relates to power of the legislature to consider, scrutinize and approve the budget. This form of oversight enjoys both constitutional and statutory flavor; while investigative oversight is where the legislature is empowered to conduct investigation into activities of government agencies either at plenary, or through standing or ad-hoc committees, depending on the resolution of the legislative House. Section 88 (1) and (2) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) provides the scope and rationale of this form of oversight. The investigative oversight powers of the National and State Assemblies are enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in sections 88, 89, 128 and 129. It must be noted the power of the legislature to embark on legislative oversight is not absolute. Any oversight embarked upon that is not within the confines of law remains invalid. Also the conduct of oversight is legalized by various Standing Committees of the National and State Houses of Assembly. The objectives of oversight are to protect the rights and liberties of citizens by curbing the excesses of the government. To detect waste within the machinery of the government and public agencies, improve efficiency, economy and effectiveness of government operations by making the government accountable to the people. Improve transparency in government operations and also enhance public trust in the government. Ensure that policies announced by the government and authorized by the legislature are actually delivered. Determine the extent of compliance with constitutional, statutory and legislative directives. Determine whether the right caliber of parties is in charge of administering programs or policies of government. Evaluate the impact of programs on target and spillover groups. Generate information to develop new legislative proposals or amend existing statutes. Determine the impact of policies, programs, laws on the society and life of the people to create opportunities for legislative intervention. Increase knowledge and understanding of government priorities. Inform the general public and ensure that executive policies reflect the public interest. Enugu State House of Assembly was built and commissioned on 27th May, 1963. It was the first and oldest House of Assembly in the then Eastern region now known as South East geopolitical zone. Since it was the seat of parliament in the old Eastern region, late Rt. Hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe became the first Speaker. The region (State) continued to retain its supremacy until 1967 when the Gowon administration created 12 states in 1967 with two states from the South East namely Anambra and Imo States. Enugu State comprising Enugu and Ebonyi was carved out and created from old Anambra State in 27th August, 1991 by the administration of the Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. The country then was adopting a mixture of the civilian and military form of government and operating a two party system namely Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republic Convention (NRC). After keenly contested election, Dr. Okwesilieze Nwodo became the governor of the state while late Dr. Itcha Ituma was the Deputy Governor. The Speaker of the House then was Rt. Hon. Anthony Agbo from January 1992- August 1993. Below are the chronicles of Speakers that are at the helm of affairs after the creation of old Anambra state.

Table 1.1

OLD ANAMBRA STATE		
1.	Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Enemchukwu	1979 -1983
2.	Rt. Hon. Barr. Benjamin Ekwenchi	Jan- April 1984
OLD ENUGU STATE		
1.	Rt. Hon. Anthony Agbo	Jan 1992- Aug. 1993
2.	Rt. Hon. Prince Jonathan Eze Nwaonuma	Aug 1993- Nov. 1993
ENUGU STATE		
1.	Rt. Hon. Barr. Cletus Enebe	May 1999 – Nov 1999
2.	Rt. Hon. Dr. Festus Uzor	Nov 1999- May 2000
3.	Rt. Hon. Kenneth Ogbozor	23 rd -31 st May 2000
4.	Rt. Hon. Abel Chukwu	May 2000 -1 st June 2007
5.	Rt. Hon. Eugene Odoh	May 2007 – May 2015
6.	Rt. Hon. Edward Uchenna Ubosi	May 2015-Date

Source: www.enu.gov.ng

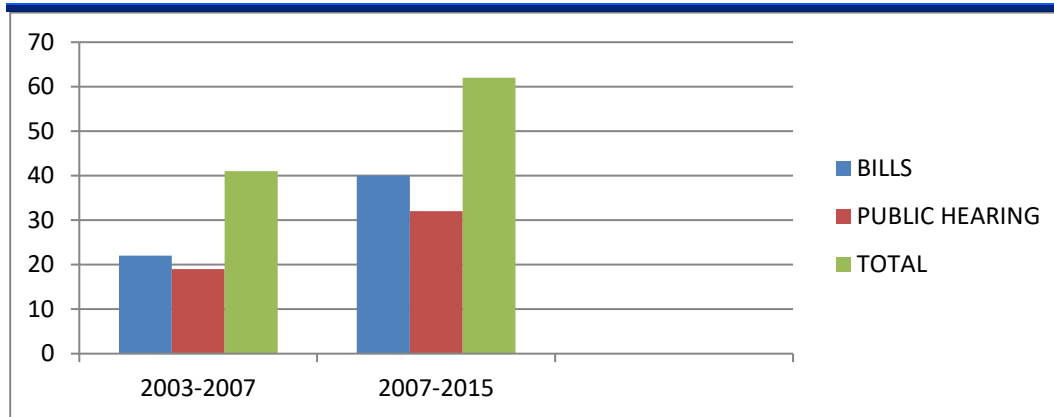
This particular work will pragmatically espouse the activities of the House of Assembly under Rt. Hon. Abel Chukwu and Rt. Hon. Barr. Eugene Odoh, by using their administration as a template, we graphically assess them under the instrumentality of two main platforms which are the bills and public hearings they conducted during their tenure and its impact to the people. Rt. Hon. Abel Chukwu assumed office as the Speaker of Enugu State House of Assembly in May 2000. Under his watch, here are striking features of his activities 2000- 2007.

Bills: Under his leadership, the House enunciated laws ranging from Local Government Areas creation, African Thinkers University, Park Lane Specialist Hospital now ESUT Teaching Hospital, Enugu State Traditional Rulers law, Enugu State Environmental Protection Agency law now ESWAMA, Road Traffic operation (Motorcycle), Citizen Rights and Mediation Center law, Enugu State Health Service Delivery System, Female Violation and Discrimination Bill, College of Education bill, Neighborhood watch bill, Enugu State Emergency Management bill, Gubernatorial pension bill, Anti-Discrimination and protection of people infected with HIV/AIDs, summarily, his administration passed 22 bills that were accented by Governor.

Public Hearings- According to Chukwurah (2014:12) public hearing is a joint Committee meeting established by the House for the purpose of gathering information and public input on a subject matter for legislative purposes. The kernel of the public hearing is for the law to be people-oriented. Almost all the bills mentioned above have undergone public hearings. In addition, Public hearing was conducted on Revised Education, Privatization and Commercialization and accident victims. In all he conducted about 19 public hearings. Rt. Hon. Barr. Eugene Odoh assumed in May 2007 and here are the citations of his administration. Under his tenure laws of Enugu State Management Agency, State Development Area, Landlord and Tenant Bill, Contingency Fund, Enugu State Scholarship and Loans Board, Enugu State College of Agriculture now a Polytechnic bill, Criminal Code law, Enugu State Small and Medium Scale Enterprises fund Bill, Enugu State Hotel Sales Tax, Enugu State Agency for Community and Social Development, Enugu State Agency for the control of HIV/ AIDs, National Health Insurance Scheme, Enugu State Water Corporation Amendment Act, Operation of motorcycle bill, Enugu State Statistics bill, Enugu State Statistics bill, Tourism Bill, College of Education Bill, Enugu State Investment Promotion Bill, Enugu State Nomadic and Cattle Rearing bill, Enugu State Information Communication Agency Bill, Enugu State House of Assembly Service Commission bill, Special needs bill, Enugu State Investment and Human Development Bill. In all he enunciated about 40 bills. Under his tenure he conducted public hearings in the issues mentioned above with the following additive: Council of Elders bill, Landlord and Tenant bill, Contingency Fund Bill, Scholarship Board Bill, College of Agriculture Bill, and Enugu State Capital Territory Development Bill. In all he conducted about 32 public hearings. Graphically it can be represented and tabulated below as thus:

Table 1.2

Year	2000- 2007	2007-2015
Bills	22	40
Public Hearings	19	32
Total	41	72



From the representations above it is evidently clear that the House improved dramatically at the percentage level of 66%. But there is one striking feature as it relates to Table 1.1 where the House in a space of one year had four Speakers. This kind of scenario does not augur well to sustain our nascent democracy. It showcases the level of political immaturity exhibited by the Members attributed to the executive loyalty to the man at the helm of affairs in the state. This situation has adversely affected the input of the House with regards to law making and creditable representation. Despite four year political machinations visible during the tenure of 2003-2007, they were able to make an inroad the political firmament of the state. The 2007-2015 whose tenure spanned for eight years recorded 60% increase. It is quite unfortunate that most legislators in the country is not a product of the ballot box. Most political elites who continued to be relevant in the political firmament of the state continued to hand pick those that will be in the House. For Igwe to conclude that Nigerian democracy thrive under mediocrity is indisputable. The track records of legislators are questionable and this has led them to start the art of lawmaking instead of passing through electoral college. Due to legislative incompetence there is under representation of their constituencies. Since the democratic inception of 1999, Enugu State House of Assembly was comprised of two dominant parties but presently it is one party. Democracy thrives effectively where there is credible and vibrant opposition. This present scenario has made them to be pawn in the hands of the executive that calls the shot. That was the reason why they are tagged rubber stamp. Most states Houses of Assembly do not have operational vehicles to assist them in their legislative work. Another serious issue mitigating the functions of the legislature is that of legislative autonomy. Enugu State House of Assembly under the headship of Rt. Hon. Barr. Eugene Odoh was part of the State Houses of Assembly that called for the legislative autonomy. Due to the interference of governors they could not meet the required two-third so that it will be adopted and implemented. This has pushed them begging from cap to hand. The autonomy allowed the legislature to a large extent be financially independent to carry out their legislative duties. As at this moment the law backing it has not been effect whatever assistance is as a result of benevolence and loyalty.

All the 24 members of Enugu State House of Assembly has constituency offices equipped with staff. That is the vital area through which the law maker could be reached by his constituents. The functionality and sustenance of the offices depend on the individual. The irony of it all is that the moment the law maker step aside, the office remained moribund. It is advisable that parliamentarians have a website through which their impact will be felt at the global level. Of the 36 State House of Assembly in the federation, only 14 has a functional website. Presently Lagos State has been on the lead in terms of robust legislative dominance in the country. This is attributable to legislative autonomy they were granted. Enugu state House of Assembly is one of the State Houses of Assembly that has a functional legislative budget office and civil Society NGO office. The budget office is an avenue where the executive and the legislature synergize to scrutinize and improve on the budget process and implementation. The NGO office was an avenue where the House partners with the Civil Society organizations so that their impact is felt in the state. From table 1.1 we could deduce that Enugu State House of Assembly within the space of May 1999 – May 2000 has four Speakers. Such phenomenon does not augur well for our democracy. Some pundits termed the development as ‘executive interference’. It was at that period that there was a serious contention over the control of the party by the power brokers. Presently that scenario is no longer obtainable but we could not rule out the invisible in the affairs of the House.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusively, Nigerian lawmakers are shady politicians, corrupt and opportunistic wheeler-dealers; their concern is self-aggrandizement and perpetuation to power” their ineptitude was pressure from the larger overtures to the legislators through lobbying. The paper reveals that national assembly has failed to perform its constitutional roles to control revenues of government. Specifically, the actions of some legislators are not in the interest of the constituents they represent. The lawmakers have continued to collude with executive arm to squander national resources; the tenet of separation of powers, checks and balances is to restore confidence of the populace. National assembly must look inwards and exonerate itself from corruption, greed among other and show seriousness to the citizenry with the moral justification to oversight and make laws for good governance. Evidently, Nigerians are happy for these honorable members for passing freedom of information bill (FOI), but the question remains is it practicable? Finally,

the legislature should exercise fiscal discipline and anti-corruption agencies to open investigations to the scandals in the national assembly and prosecute those involved in the scams.

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