



Nigeria's  
**50** Legislative  
**ICONS**

The story of a  
**Transformative Legislature**  
(1999-2009)

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**Nigerian Legislature: Challenges And Prospects**

By

**Aniekan S. Brown**

**Introduction**

**F**or obvious reasons, the legislature is regarded as the First Estate of the Realm. The legislature which may be defined as a body of persons in a country or state vested with power to make, alter and repeal laws in the realm of representation and the state of sovereignty is indispensable for democracy (Egwu, 2005:19).

The above underscores the ideal functions of the legislature and presents it as the fulcrum, pivot, and the very essence of democracy. It sets the requisite background for the appraisal of the challenges and prospects of the Nigerian legislature from 1999 to 2010 - the Fourth Republic's democratic experiment in Nigeria. It should be noted that Nigeria is a geo-political sovereign entity in its fiftieth year since political independence (1960-2010). Though fifty as an independent nation state, it has only been under civil rule for forty percent (40%) of the time frame (twenty years). Interestingly, this is the longest uninterrupted democratic experience (1999-2010). Thus, having regards to the many lengthy cases of military interruptions, Nigerian democracy as epitomized in her legislature, is bedeviled by the dearth of firm establishment or entrenchment. It is still toddling with enormous challenges, though not without some prospects. This scenario calls for evaluation.

For a vivid and exhaustive study, therefore, the key questions raised in the discussion include:-

- (I) What are the historical and conceptual issues and backgrounds in the challenges and prospects of contemporary Nigerian legislature?
- (ii) What factors militate against an effective legislature in Nigeria?
- (iii) What lessons can be learnt about the current legislature for a better future (prospects)?
- (iv) What is the way forward?

Answers to these questions will be attempted in this paper with a view to necessarily repositioning the legislature for a better and sustainable democratic experience in Nigeria.

**Background: Historical and Conceptual Issues.**

Conceptually, the legislature is the arm of government that makes laws which guide the operations of government. Its existence makes democracy

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unique. It is usually composed of elected representatives of the people, mandated to make, modify, and repeal laws for a definite geo-political sphere, namely:- country, constituent units (states) and in the Nigerian case, local government councils. Expressed in the forms of bi-cameral (federal) and unicameral (states and local government levels), the legislature in Nigeria functions in electoral, financial, judicial, and oversight spheres.

Historically, at independence, Nigeria fashioned its legislature after the British-styled parliamentary system. The experience, however, came to an abrupt end on January 15, 1966 when Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu led four other Army Majors to interrupt the then civilian government via a quasi-successful coup. It should be noted that the legislature was compelled to “necessarily” hand-over the reins of government to the military (Dr. Nwafor Orizu to Major General J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi). It was an unenviable responsibility of that legislature. Barely six months later, General Aguiyi-Ironsi was overthrown for reasons related to his attempt at making Nigeria a unitary state by Decree 34 of 1966 (Aniwofeso, 1999;247). Then came Colonel (later, General) Yakubu Gowon; on August 1, 1966 who introduced a transition which was to terminate on October 1, 1976. The Gowon regime later changed the nation's political map by increasing the number of constituent units from four (regions) to twelve states on May 17, 1967. Regrettably, the mismanagement of political tensions resulted in a thirty-month long civil war (1967-1970). After the civil war, General Gowon reneged on the proposed handing over date on the arguments that the politicians had learnt nothing, and that challenges of reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation were too pressing and needed serious attention. Scholars posit that this renege was pivotal to the toppling of the Gowon regime on July 29, 1975 which led to the emergence of Brigadier (later General) Murtala Mohammed as the Head of State. General Mohammed instituted a transition programme which was to terminate on October 1, 1979. Dode (2007) notes that though the regime's terminal date was realized, a failed coup attempt led by Colonel Bukar Sukar Dimka on February 13, 1976 assassinated General Mohammed. This paved the way for General Olusegun Obasanjo, who pursued the Murtala Mohammed policy with tangible zeal, to assume office as the Head of State. Thus, on October 1, 1979, Alhaji Shehu Shagari was sworn-in as a democratically elected Executive President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This signaled the beginning of the Second Republic.

The Second Republic lasted for four years and three months (October 1,

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1979- December 31, 1983). It was terminated by a coup which brought General Muhammadu Buhari as the Head of State. The Second Republic politicians were accused of impropriety, excessive corruption, economic recklessness, and general irresponsibility. The purpose of that military regime was to restore discipline among Nigerians. It also handed down excessive punishment on the Second Republic politicians who were found guilty.

Accused of high-handedness and lack of clear vision to hand over to a democratically elected administration, the Buhari Administration was toppled by General Ibrahim Babangida who preferred to be addressed as a "Military President". The Babangida regime was characterized by a seemingly endless transition programme. His annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential Election induced vocal calls for his exit. He then offered to "step aside" after raising an Interim National Government (ING), headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan on August 26, 1993. It should be noted that several options were experimented, the end point of which was a diarchy (where the states were completely democratized, but the federal level had the legislature with a military Head of State).

The Shonekan-led ING was compelled to resign in November, 1993 upon the emergence of a full-pledged military regime led by General Sani Abacha. The regime proscribed all political institutions; announced a new transition programme, but proved too draconian. The body polity witnessed a tilt towards Abacha self-succeeding himself as a civilian president. General Abacha, however, died on June 8, 1998.

The vacuum created by Abacha's death was filled by General Abdulsalami Abubakar who purposefully initiated a transition programme, and followed through. As such on May 29, 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn-in as the nation's President, hence, the end of another lengthy series of military rule (over fifteen years). Interestingly, this democracy has proved the longest democratic dispensation ever experienced in Nigeria.

Emerging from many years of military rule, the democratic structures and institutions had been negatively impacted upon. This is most evident in the bastardization of the constitution and the legislature. While the 1999 Constitution was facilitated by the military, the legislature which was hitherto non-existent is now nascent and toddling. Hence, Dode (2007) notes that the legislature remains an undeveloped arm of the state. Stemming from the fact that the legislature functions to enhance the

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executive and judicial arms and presents a picturesque of the popular will of the people, it also proves the most important feature in a democracy. Invariably, the failure or success of the legislature translates into same for the entire democratic experiment. Admittedly, the current quality of the Nigerian legislature is predicated on the strong military background that explains its history. The legislature had suffered in the military era and so even after ten years, it is still faced with serious impediments which are not unconnected with the process of growth.

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

Arguably, the legislature grants frame to democracy, a system of government in which power is vested in the people. As classically put by Abraham Lincoln, democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. But beyond the participatory advantage is the reality of governmental administrative powers among the three organs of government, the executive, legislature, and judiciary.

The reality of government finding expression in these three perspectives brings to bare the importance of the theory of separation of powers. Pivoted by Baron de Montesquieu in his *The Spirit of Law* (1748), Montesquieu questioned the concentration of the three governmental powers in one institution or person. As such to avoid tyranny and repression in governance, the principle of separation of powers becomes of immense importance. As postulated by Montesquieu:

...there is no liberty, if the judiciary power be not separated from the legislature and executive, were it joined with the legislature, the life and liberty of the subject would be exposed to arbitrary control.

Thus, added to the democratic attributes of periodic free and fair elections, Montesquieu argues that democratic governments should be built in such a way that governmental powers and responsibilities must be shared between the three arms of government. However, to concentrate more than one class functions in any one organ is a threat to individual liberty and freedom. By this argument, the primary responsibility of the executive is the implementation of laws made by the legislature, while the judiciary interprets such laws, especially when conflicts arise. The rationale behind separation of powers, therefore, is in the enhancement of checks and balances, which ultimately leads to the guarantee of individual freedom and liberty; the very basis for democracy. This places a nascent legislature at a disadvantage when considered in the context of an antagonistic executive

arm.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria underscores a strong spirit of separation of powers. The constitution thus, considers it needful for our democracy. The extent to which this provision has applicably aided the majority of the Nigerian legislature is, however, questionable as the executive arm; more often than not seems over-bearing on the legislature in the latter's bid to independently play its constitutional role. All in all, the importance of the doctrine and practice of separation of powers cannot be over-emphasized.

### **Challenges Of The Nigerian Legislature**

Generally, Udokang (2006) argues that the powers of the legislature have been on the decline. This stems from: the increasing functions of government; exercise of delegated legislation; lack of technical expertise by the legislature; time constraints; influence of pressure groups and public opinion; judicial review and party discipline, among others. These also point to factors that militate against the Nigerian legislature.

However, in the opinion of Aniwofeso (1999) courtesy of the doctrine of separation of powers, the legislature in most countries exercises some degree of control and influence over the executive organ and by so doing act as checks to the dictatorial tendencies of the executive arm. In an ideal situation, these are normally done by way of authority to raise and spend funds by the executive; conducting investigation into the conduct of executive activities; screening of ministerial nominees and other oversight functions. However, these roles are seldom expressed in the Nigerian democracy. Thus, Dode (2007) identifies Nigeria as practicing “partial democracy”.

Relying on Epstein, et al (2005:555), in “partial democracies”:

...the Chief Executive may be elected, but then face weak constraints, and his selection may not result from open and organized competition, but ... from selection by a committee of a ruling party. Alternatively, the election itself could be uncompetitive, either because of political manipulation by the authorities or because political parties were highly factionalized.

This is the case of Nigeria, where “selectocracy” has largely replaced democracy. Nigeria, therefore, is in transit to real democracy. Its democracy is not yet stable and predictable; but has dictatorial dispositions and tendencies. The situation is made worse by corruption. In the light of the above background, the following paragraphs are advanced as factorial

challenges to the Nigerian legislature.

### **(i) Educational Challenges:**

Here a good number of legislators are not sufficiently equipped with the requisite education for effective law-making responsibilities. This is particularly evident in the state and local government council levels. Though the 1999 Constitution in section 65, sub-section 2 (a) stipulates the minimum educational qualification for legislative positions, the realities of certification have frustrated the measure for education. As a result, people who barely can communicate and prove quality literacy find themselves as legislators who do not know their constitutional roles. Beyond the “uneducated” legislators, are the people (masses) who expect executive behaviour from the legislators. The people are not educated enough to know what to expect from members of the legislature (which is law-making). Rather, they expect the provision of projects, floating of poverty alleviation programmes, etc which ordinarily should have been appropriated to the executive arm for implementation. This is an unnecessary distraction for the law makers and law making in the country.

### **(ii) Political Challenges:**

The issues of god-fatherism, lack of internal democracy in political parties, partisanship, and unstable leadership are some of the political problems militating against the contemporary Nigerian legislature.

For instance, god fathers to candidates for legislative positions frustrate the internal democracy of the political parties by selecting (against all odds) the candidates of their choice as flag bearers of the parties. The Independent National Electoral Commission also compromises a great deal to perpetuate this sordid ritual. By so doing, those who are 'less representative' of the people become their representatives and so rarely represent the interest of their constituents. Added to this is the problem of unstable leadership in the various legislatures. Classical examples were in the Olusegun Obasanjo years (1999-2007), the Senate had five Presidents, namely: Evan Enwerem, Chuba Okadigbo, Anyim Pius Anyim, Adolphus Wabara, and Ken Nnamani. This was an average of 1.6 years for each - a grossly inadequate length of time for a possible firm establishment of the legislature. Within the same period; the House of Representatives also had three Speakers; namely: Salisu Buhari, Ghali Umar Na'Abba and Aminu Bello Massari. In the Yar'Adua years, only David A. B. Mark has been the Senate President; while Patricia Etteh and Dimeji Bankole have been the Speakers of the House of Representatives. There has been a case of relative stability in the latter dispensation. For the most part, executive interest and



corruption / fraud were fingered as reasons for the instability in the legislature. The various State Assemblies and the Local Government Legislatures have shared in the experience.

### **(iii) Economic Challenges:**

Common knowledge tends to suggest that majority of the members of the legislature have been blinded by the economic challenge of making money fraudulently in the chambers. Apart from one Speaker of the House of Representatives who was removed for certificate forgery, and those whose tenure ended but could not return to their legislative responsibilities, every other legislative leader at the National level was removed due to financial impropriety. Cases of reference here include: one involving a former Senate President and a former Minister for Education in a bribery scandal, and a former Speaker of the House of Representatives' unapproved investment on the repairs of the Speaker's official residence, to mention but a few.

Again, legislators at the National level were variously accused of being mobilized financially to support the ill-fated third term/tenure elongation bid of President Olusegun Obasanjo. This also serves as a derailing factor to an otherwise effective legislature.

### **(iv) Cultural Challenges:**

Culture, according to Sociologists, is the totality of the way of life of a people. It is what distinguishes a people from another and cements a people together. Nigeria is a plural state with many cultures. This scenario serves as a negative input in our legislature. Discussions in our legislatures are seen to drift towards ethnic and religious lines. Ethnic and religious sentiments, therefore, characterize the discussions in the chambers. Female laws makers are seen to be passionate about gender issues, irrespective of the existing facts. The debates on the botched "Miss World" project that Nigeria was to host in 2002; the various religious crises; issues of the Niger Delta, and the impasse created by the ailment of former President, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua speak volumes of the cultural challenges.

### **(v) Partisanship:**

This presents the undue influence of a political party on their legislators. Party discipline has been on the rise and as such legislators are sometimes compelled to sing the party tunes. Thus the political parties exert much pressure on the legislature. It is not unusual to have legislators resort to party caucus meetings in order to consult their political parties on issues of

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common concern and interest. The cases of third term / tenure elongation; removal of Madam Speaker, Patricia Etteh; the “impeachment” of Peter Obi as Governor by the Anambra State House of Assembly which was dominated by the members of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) are glaring presentations and manifestations of partisanship negation of effective legislature in Nigeria.

### **(vi) Constitutional Challenges**

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was actually modeled by the Nigerian Military and not freely by the civil populace of Nigeria. Arguably, the Constitution was hurriedly put together, undoubtedly, to meet the needs of the military at the time. As a result, many lapses have been realized. For instance, in a bid to constitute joint committees for the Senate and the House of Representatives, there has been the challenge for seniority and/or equality of status. In the case of constitution review, the Senate assumes the position of Chairman while the House of Representatives would serve on a deputy's capacity in the joint committee; the House of Representatives, on the contrary has rejected such assumption with preference for co-chairmanship. This is a constitutional problem.

Also in the Obasanjo years, attempts were made at amending the constitution. Such attempts were made most serious when the third term/tenure elongation possibilities were considered. When the attempt failed, the entire process of amending the constitution at the time was placed in jeopardy and finally put on hold. And quite recently, the poor health of the late President, Umaru Yar'Adua created an impasse in the presidency. The political situation called for the need to have an Acting Presidency. The president, however, did not fulfill the demands of the Constitution by transmitting a written declaration to the National Assembly as provided for by the Constitution. The members of the Federal Executive Council did not also come forward with any resolution that should fit the spirits of the Constitution. Put differently, the provisions of the Constitution in the relevant sections 144, 145, and 146 were not met. In the quagmire, the National Assembly rose to resolve as informed by expediency that the Vice President, should translate into an Acting President to avoid a seemingly imminent vacuum. This act was viewed by some as necessary but not constitutional. This is yet a clear example of challenge to the legislature in Nigeria.

### **(vii) Moral/Constituency Challenges**

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Our electoral politics is currently cash-driven. And, the dearth of gainful employment has aggravated people's dependency on a few legislators who have undoubtedly joined the class of the rich as evident in their wealth, wares and ostentatious expressions. To this end, it is not unusual to notice the influx of people to the residences of legislators any time they are accessible. Such constituents and visitors seek for all kinds of assistance. The legislators, in turn, do their best to meet such needs. Such pressures easily enhance "donor fatigue" and subsequently become a moral challenge to the legislators.

Closely related to this is the pressure of expectations from the members of their constituencies. Legislators are expected to fix infrastructure and other facilities. Yet, this is outside the purview of the legislature but in the domain of the executive. This pressure necessitated the concept of constituency projects, a clear example of an aberration on the principles of separation of powers. The executive should totally handle such projects while the legislature should concentrate on playing her oversight functions and positively influencing appropriation. By venturing into involvement in constituency projects, the legislature runs the risk of compromising the ethics inherent in the doctrine of separation of powers, hence, an invitation to tyranny. This development in our legislature is ultimately negative and should be scrapped.

### **(viii) Friction with other Organs**

The legislature most times experiences frictions with the executive arm. It is sad that any time the legislature pushes to address issues with the executive, in line with the 1999 Constitution, it is usually seen as an affront on the executive. Such actions are enormously seen as a cog in the wheels of progress in the process of governance. The media and opinion leaders are usually employed to whip up sentiments. In such engagements, the legislature most time loses. Dishearteningly if the legislature decides to shy away from frictions, they are usually termed as rubber stamps to the executive. Beyond this vilification by the populace is the fact that governmental brinkmanship would be the worse-off because of the negligence of the principles of checks and balances.

Any executive arm without the necessary checks by the legislature runs the risk of being tyrannical. Tyranny is most unacceptable in a democratic setting. Irrespective, therefore, of the pressure from the executive arm, the legislature should secure relevance in the provisions of the Constitution by

playing her constitutional roles.

### **(ix) Inexperience on the Part of Most Members**

In established democracies, representation in the legislature is more or less a case of professionalism. Thus, the likes of Joe Biden (the current Vice-President of the United States) had served in the US Senate since 1972 till he became the Vice President in 2009. Late Ted Kennedy also served in the US Senate for nearly fifty years. This is, however, doubtful in the Nigerian legislative politics. The zoning principle has made the situation worse. It is, therefore, very difficult for legislators to return to their seats beyond a tenure. The few who have done so have been aided by challengeable and questionable means. Little wonder, many of such seats were judicially determined. The cases of the Senate President, David Mark; the Chairman, Senate Services Committee, Senator Effiong Bob; the Chairman, House Committee on Narcotics and Money Laundering, Hon. Basse Etim of Uyo Federal Constituency are just a few of such tribunal/judiciary cases which emanated from the April 2007 election. At best some of such cases call for re-run elections. An example is that of Senator Iyiola Omisore from Osun State.

The end point of this is that the legislature would lack experienced hands which would enhance effective law-making. When green horns make it to the legislature, they need time to study the rules and assert themselves before settling into positive contributions to the process of law-making and thereby effecting worthy representation to their constituencies, districts and wards.

### **(X) Dearth of Highly Informed Legislators:**

Perhaps because of the many years of military rule and the seeming subterfuge of the military in their bid to embark on transition, good professionals shied away from being actively involved in the political process and thus did not venture into elective positions. As a result, only a few successful but gutsy professionals got involved. Ultimately, there has been a dearth in professional and technical expertise. Having regards to the fact that most bills are technical in nature, and require expertise in handling, the few expert legislators would be under overwhelming pressure while the less knowledgeable would merely ingratiate and grant shallow contributions to technical matters.

### **(xi) Temporal Challenges:**

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The legislature seems to lack sufficient time to devote to the legislative process. This is evident when issues that demand urgent and prompt attention are presented. Ours is a nation of too many public holidays and long term recesses. During any celebrations, national or religious, the legislature embarks on lengthy holidays. They devote ample time for constituency politics, and also attend to social and otherwise functions as principal players in our society. In the light of these, the legislators have limited time for the actual processes of law-making, law-modifying, and law-repealing. The situation is worse when one considers the rigorous process of amending the Constitution. Lately, there have been much calls for electoral reforms, but the legislature does not seem to have created enough time for such because of interest in some other issues. Of the same status with electoral reforms bill is the freedom of information bill. Time should be redeemed to legislate on these matters as elections are due by next year. (2011).

### **(xii) The Constituency Office:**

Every legislator is expected to have a constituency office fully run with qualified administrative staff. And periodically, they are expected to address the people on matters affecting them as informed by the process of organizational communication which is made possible by the constituency office. Regrettably, most legislators do not have these offices. Where available, they are not manned; where manned, not with qualified staff. As such, there is no systematically viable line of communication with the requisite feed-back loop between the law makers and their constituents.

Rather, what holds is that those offices, where available are most of the time under lock and key. When opened, the principal officers would be there to host the constituents and present them with over rated gift items. This is usually done during the festive periods, and particularly as a strategic messenger for possible reelection. This is indeed, a challenge to the legislature.

(xiii) Finally, executive arms at the higher levels sometimes use their apparatus to impose their positions on the lower tiers of government. The manner with which the federal executive organ forced D. S. P. Alameysiagha of Bayelsa State, and Joshua Dariye of Plateau State out of office as Governors of their respective states was unconstitutional. Evidences abound that state governments have sacked local government councils under their jurisdiction. It is interesting to note that the judiciary has helped to tackle this

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anomaly through some landmark judgments.

### **Towards A Better Future**

In all fairness, the Nigerian legislature(s) have not been all low as certain pluses have definitely been recorded in the course of this Fourth Republic. For instance, the invitation by Dr. Nwafor Orizu to the military, to take over the government in the face of hopelessness in the First Republic was, by some reckoning, an act of historical responsibility, no matter how unenviable.

Also worthy of mention here is the maturity with which the federal legislature conducted herself in the diarchy experimented by General Ibrahim Babangida who offered to “step aside”. In addition to this is the tenacity of the Federal legislature to resist the third term bid of the first administration of the Fourth Republic via an inordinate approach to constitutional amendment. The legislators did well to have rejected the move.

In the same vein, worthy of commendation is the maturity with which the Senate President, David Mark has conducted the affairs of the Senate. To have served as Senate President since the inauguration of the 6th National Assembly without impeachment or any serious alarming case deserves commendation. The House of Representatives also deserves acknowledgment for, against all odds, show-casing her integrity by enforcing the sanitization of the leadership of the current House.

Finally, both Houses have proved some mettle as they rose together to (though unconstitutionally) restore the dignity of our presidency by resolving to make Dr. Goodluck Jonathan the Acting President. This was also an act of historical responsibility. In the light of the above, it could be said that the future of the Nigerian legislature is bright. In order to guarantee a bright future, however, the following are advanced as recommendations.

- (i) There is need for internal democracies in political parties as well as free and fair elections into the legislatures and beyond. To this end, electoral reforms are a prerequisite.
- (ii) There is need for serious citizenship education. This would make the citizenry actually know what is expected of the legislature and not misconstrue such roles with those of the executive. Otherwise, we run the risk of misunderstanding the values of the judiciary in the

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long run. This will also help in playing down on the earlier-mentioned moral and constituency challenges.

- (iii) There is need to consciously consider the intellectual qualities of prospective legislators. This will help proliferate the professional and technical members in the legislature. As a result, time constraints and sentiments would be curtailed as expertise would enhance the quality of debates and bills passed.
- (iv) Tested members should be elected into leadership positions so as to enhance the integrity, stability, and sustainability of the legislature and its leadership. Incessant changes in the leadership of the legislature will not allow room for concentrated focus on constitutional roles.
- (v) The adoption of the doctrine of separation of powers as strengthened by the principles of checks and balances should be the pivot of our legislatures. Here-in lies the source of respect to the legislature by all.
- (vi) Statuses of fraudulent and corrupt members of the legislature should be legally determined. This would serve as a deterrent to prospective offenders within the chambers.
- (vii) Civic education and evidential representation should enhance return tickets to the legislature. This, in turn would shore-up experience and ultimately better the lot of the Nigerian legislature.
- (viii) The practice of the constituency office should be emphasized. Such should be manned by certified professionals who would enhance sound channels of communication between the principal and the constituents, as well as effective feed-back loop. This would guarantee a complete process of communication which is the very essence of human social existence.
- (ix) Difference should be drawn between politics and governance. This would discourage partisanship along party lines and reduce tension when the executive and legislature are led by opposing parties. Anambra State suffered this fate in the early days of Peter Obi as Governor. Currently, the Edo State legislature is under pressure as the balance of power is switching from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to Action Congress (AC). When the PDP was in-charge,

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the Action Congress- led executive experienced a case of motion without movement.

- (x) Finally, the judiciary should intervene in matters of conflict between the letter and spirit of the constitution. This would solve and forestall many puzzling developments such as the superiority- equality friction between the House of Representative and the Senate, and the relative vacuum that was created by late President Yar'Adua's sickness as earlier reported.

### **Conclusion**

The legislature is the very basis of democratic system of government. Its quality translates into the quality of a nation's democracy. The Nigerian situation has, however, been incapable to do more. This challenge of room for improvement is traceable to the many years of military incursion into the body polity of Nigeria. As a result, while in the years of military rule the executive and judicial arms are visible, the legislature usually goes under. To this end, democratic experiments in Nigeria have also met the legislature as a toddler. This is a sordid ritual.

Emerging from military rule in 1999, the legislature has struggled to establish itself and strengthen our democracy. This struggle has, however, been challenged by educational, economic, moral, political, cultural, constitutional and constituency challenges, among others. In the face of this, though, the legislature in this Fourth Republic (1999-till date) has proved to be dogged and is soldering on.

On many occasions the legislature has failed, particularly in area of leadership stability and quality debates; but it has also risen to the occasion a couple of times by self-purging as well as acting as a matter of expediency and necessity in some occasion as evident in the frustration of the tenure elongation bid of the last administration; and the emergence of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan as the Acting President.

It is here-in submitted that with citizenship education, internal democracy in political parties, free and fair elections, multiple return to legislative seats, leadership stability, scrap of constituency projects, and religious attention to the constitutional role of the legislature, as driven by the doctrine of powers, the Nigerian legislature is bound to improve. By this, our democracy will be sustained.



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