

State and Government Institutions in Nigeria: A Study of Bayelsa State House of Assembly in the Fourth Republic 1999 – 2012

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Abstract: *The legislature is the most important institution of governance in a democratic state as it mediates and manages the interest of, at least, two major categories of stakeholders-governing (legislators and executive) and non-governing (electorate and opinion leaders) elites. The synthesis is important for the socio-economic and political development, as well as stabilization and consolidation of democracy. Despite its importance among the three arms of government, the legislature in Nigeria, especially at states' level is the least developed due mainly to interference of the military, least understood, and least researched. This study examines the effects of prolonged military rule on the legislature in improving the standard of living of the people as well as democratic governance and security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, with emphasis on Bayelsa state. It adopts the 'political elites' framework propounded by Pareto (1848-1923), and applies a combination of 'questionnaire and interview methods to elicit data from both the governing and non-governing elites. The paper demonstrated that the prolonged military interference in civil governance, inexperience/immaturity of members of the house, PDP dominance, executive interference on the selection and election of members adversely affected the performance of the state legislature. The lesson shared is that there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift in governance so that government will become an institution for effective service delivery.*

Keywords: *Democracy, dividends of democracy, governing - legislature and executive, non-governing-electorate, elites, government, security, state.*

I. Introduction

The public impression of the legislature is that of an over-bearing influence of the executive on its activities characterized by impeachment and instability with attendant negative consequences on the nation's nascent democracy. This may not be true because a lot has happened, and is still happening in the state houses of assembly since inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999. This study examines the effects of prolonged military rule on the legislature in improving the standard of living of the people as well as democratic governance and security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, with emphasis on Bayelsa state.

Bayelsa state was carved out of the old Rivers state by late General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's 6th Head of State and Government (HSG), on 01 October 1996 (Alagoa, 1999). The name was an acronym of the then three Local Government Areas (LGAs) – Brass, Yenagoa and Sagbama. The number of LGAs was increased from 6 to 8 at the time of creation and the pioneer indigenous civilian governor, Diepreye Solomon Peter Alamiyeseigha created 24 additional development centres from the 6 LGAs to facilitate grassroot development in 2000. When Goodluck Jonathan succeeded him in 2005, he also, created another 8 centres, making it a total of 40 LGAs. Incidentally, the 32 centres have not been recognized by the National Assembly, leaving the initial 8 LGAs for analysis in this study. This shows how the state has been under represented and marginalized in the nation's politics and governance.

Each of the 8 LGAs has 3 constituencies, and each constituency is represented in the State House of Assembly by a member. The Bayelsa State House of Assembly (BSHA) has 24 members elected periodically after four years from the registered national political parties in Nigeria. Going forward, the state has 5 federal constituencies and 3 senatorial districts for the purpose of electing members into the Federal House of Representatives (Reps) and the Senate (Aguda, 2000).

The state is the centre of the Niger Delta where most of the contradictions in Nigeria are found, that is the economic live-wire and at the same time the least developed state in the country; the hub of oil and gas activities but yet the people are shut out of participation, benefits and control of the industry; and has the worst indices of human and social infrastructural development in the country.

Within the 18 years of existence, the state has had 8 governors – 4 military administrators and 4 civilian governors, as follows:

- 1) Navy Captain Philip Ayeni – Military administrator, 07 October 1996 – 28 February 1997;
- 2) Commissioner of Police Habu Daura – Military administrator, 28 February 1997 – 27 June 1997;
- 3) Navy Captain Omoniyi Caleb Olobolade – Military administrator, 27 June 1997 – 19 July 1998;
- 4) Col Paul Edor Obi – Military administrator, 19 July 1998 – 29 May 1999;
- 5) Dr. DSP Alamieyeseigha – Civilian governor, 29 May 1999 – 09 December 2005;
- 6) Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan – Civilian governor, 09 December 2005 – 29 May 2007;
- 7) Chief Timpre Sylva – Civilian governor, 29 May 2007 – 14 February 2012; and
- 8) Hon. Henry Seriake Dickson, Civilian governor, 14 February 2012 - date.

The array of governors within the short existence shows that the state has been having problem of effective leadership to fast track sustainable development of the people and democratic institutions, especially, the legislature.

The problem of governance became pronounced in the Fourth Republic when indigenous governors took over the helms of affairs. The governors compromised with the legislature during appropriation bills, extra-budgetary expenditures, and confirmation of political appointees. In the process, they created brigandage in governance that eventually led to the impeachment of two of the speakers of the state house of assembly, and a governor (DSP Alamieyeseigha) in the Second Assembly. The insecurity and instability spilled-over to the Third Assembly and eventually climaxed during Timpre Sylva's tenure in the early part of the Fourth Assemblies Table 4.

Sylva usurped the powers and functions of the house of assembly by taking advantage of the inexperience/immaturity of the members in legislative business, dominance of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) where he as the governor was the leader, and political docility of the people Etekepe, (2011b). It became clear by 31 December 2011 that the House of Assembly had not impacted much on the people and the dividends of democracy were far-cry. The House rather became more or less a rubber-stamp institution for the executive organ of government and derailed from its constitutional responsibilities. This created crisis in governance that affected the Niger Delta struggle, as well, since the Niger Delta struggle is to a large extent more of a Bayelsa problem. This is because the state is at the centre of it.

Thus, the people at both state and deltaic levels began to oppose imposed 'orders or policies' from the governing elites (i.e. executive and legislative arms of government) and demanded for active participation to contribute to the formulation and implementation of political decisions that affect them. The essence of their demand is to induce greater sensitivity on the part of the governing elites to improve the welfare of the people (Appadorai, 1975; Elaigwu, 2005; and Umamah, 2013; Okolo, 2014).

This is where Henry Seriake Dickson (2013:17), 4th executive governor of the state, comes in. He took over from Sylva on 14 February 2012 and is presumed to be the symbol of the desired positive change where he will strengthen the legislature to perform the important roles of consolidating democracy and impacting positively on the electorate. Olagunju (2000) has given two reasons for the importance of the legislature. First, its members represent the different constituencies in the state and are empowered to make good laws and perform oversight functions to bring about responsible/accountable governance; and second, the stability, security and consolidation of democracy, whether in developed or developing country, have been directly linked to the strength of the legislature.

In spite of its strategic importance, Aiyede (2005:65-8) argues that both at state and federal levels, "the legislature has been the least developed, least understood, and least stable democratic institution in Nigeria in particular, and Africa, in general". He then gave three reasons for it. First, the legislature is usually the main casualty of military rule as it is usually disbanded. Secondly, the long rule of the military, ruling for 30, out of the 54 years of post-independence Nigeria. This accounts for the general ignorance about the activities of the legislature in both state and federal levels. For Salim (2004), Nigeria's Clerk of National Assembly, 1999 – 2007:

The ignorance led to the influx of mostly new members into the local, state and national parliaments without any knowledge in democratic lawmaking process. The predicaments of these new and inexperienced legislators are compounded by lack of funds and necessary facilities for effective legislative business.

For Nwabueze (2007), this accounted for their antagonistic response towards the executive at the slightest provocation. He then pointed out how former President Obasanjo's administration in 1999 – 2007 took advantage of the inexperience of the members of the National Assembly (NASS) to apply the 'unitary command culture' to order the seizure of money due to the Lagos state government from the Federation Account without recourse to the judiciary. And when the Supreme Court of Nigeria (SCN) ruled that the president had 'no such constitutional power to seize the fund', Obasanjo refused to comply and nothing happened to him. It was his successor, former President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua that eventually released the funds.

The third reason adduced was that, it is the least studied and researched institution of government, especially the state houses of assembly. Thus, the few available information on legislature in Nigeria is about the National Assembly (i.e., Senate and Reps). Yet, Olorunnisola (2010) argues, “those familiar with the Nigerian politics since 1999 will hardly contest the fact that a lot has happened (and are still happening) in the state legislatures”. As Omotola (2010:40-5) puts it, “what is normally known of the state legislature is the overwhelming and overbearing influence of the executive on legislature. This plays itself out in the excruciating politics of impeachment that characterized the state (and federal) parliaments in the Fourth Republic”.

The foregoing discussion has raised several important questions, such as: how has the legislators been conducting their business in the Fourth Republic? What factors shaped the relations between the legislature and executive arms of government? What are the impacts of the legislature on the lives and properties of the people, as well as socio-economic and political development of the state? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the legislature? And how has the character of the state governors affected governance in the Fourth Republic (Dahl, 1961; Adekoya, 2013; Okolo & Etekpe, 2011, 2014; Okolo & Inokoba, 2014). These questions lead us to the central aim of this paper.

Thus, the central aim of the study is to examine the effect of prolonged military rule on the legislature as an institution of government in enhancing democratic governance and security in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic, using Bayelsa state as a case study. The specific objectives are to:

- (a) Critically assess the positive impacts of the Bayelsa State House of Assembly (BSHA) on the conditions of living of the people and socio-economic and political development of the state;
- (b) Evaluate the performance, achievements and challenges of the assembly; and
- (c) Make suggestions to improve legislative business in the state and country.

The study has two propositions, namely:

- 1) That the performance of the legislature was determined by the character of the executive arm; and
- 2) That the quality of the legislators affected the level of dividends of democracy derivable to the state

II. Review Of Related Literature

The history of modern legislature is traced to the Greek city state where the Athenians were organized and legislated for by the assembly or ecclesia (Anyaeibunam, 2008). Anyaeibunam went further to discuss how the assembly comprised all the citizens above the age of 20 years and met 40 times in a year. Rome improved on the Athenian model and developed a formal constitution to guide and regulate the activities of the assembly in 3BC. The Roman constitution provided for 4 classes of lower assemblies – comitig curiata, comitia, centuriata, comitia tribute, and concilium plebes; as well as an upper legislative chamber (Senate). The Senate reviewed the decisions of the lower assemblies, directed the magistrates (judiciary), and deliberated on important matters on democratic governance.

Ball and Peters (2005) contend that “the practice then spread to Britain after the Norman conquest in 1066 where an advisory body was constituted for William the Conqueror and subsequent Kings”. The body graduated to a formal assembly, known as the ‘Great Council’ or ‘Magnum Concillium’ to help the King in public administration and enactment of laws (Anyaeibunam, 2008:2).

The turning point in the advancement to the representative governance in Britain was the initiative of King Edward I in 1295 when he invited a wide spectrum of representatives to advise him on state matters. The peculiar and impressive composition of the body earned it the name ‘model parliament’ as it resembled modern representative parliaments. By mid-1300s, the parliament was divided into two chambers, that is, the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

De Tocqueville (1948) asserts that “by 1660s, the concept of representative assemblies moved to the United States of America (USA), and became a dominant platform for the expression of popular opinions”. On 05 September 1774, USA organized the ‘First Continental Congress’. The Congress laid the foundation for the First National Assembly and Continental Convention in May 1787. The Convention approved a constitution hung on the principle of separation of powers, i.e. independent legislature, executive and judicial institutions of government, and checks and balances. The constitution provided a two-chamber congress – Senate (Upper) and Congress (lower) chambers. The ‘political wind’ of representative parliament then moved to Europe, beginning with France (1789) and Germany (1919) (Erskine, 2004).

The first semblance of a legislature in Nigeria was the defunct Nigerian Council in 1913. The Council had jurisdiction only on the colony of Lagos and the protectorate of southern Nigeria. Clifford Constitution in 1922 then expanded the jurisdiction and established the first legislature, known as the ‘legislative council’ for the entire country. MacDonald (2007) argues that the Council had limited powers and legislated only on financial matters. It was Richard’s Constitution of 1946 that eventually brought the entire country under a central legislative council, and created 3 regional legislative assemblies for the North, East and West. Subsequent constitutions (i.e. Macpherson, 1951; Lyttleton, 1954; and Independence, 1960) improved on it. Unfortunately, the military coup terminated the democratic experience of the First Republic on 15 January 1966.

By the time democratic governance was restored on 01 October 1979, the country had moved away from the British parliamentary model to the United States' presidential system.

In discussing the presidential system, Nwabueze (2003) emphasized that "it is superior to the Westminster's model as it addresses the thorny issues of separation of powers, rule of law and autonomous national assembly – the Senate and Reprs. This system 'trickles' down to the state and local governments levels...." "Unfortunately", he added, "the military struck again in 1983 and truncated the Second Republic. The military then remained in power, alternating between Buhari (1983 – 1985) and Babangida (1985 – 1993) for another 16 years until the death of Sani Abacha as Head of State/Government on 08 June 1998. Between Babangida and Abacha was three months of interim government (i.e. Third Republic) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. Abacha was succeeded by General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who then returned Nigeria to civilian rule, with a presidential constitution on 29 May 1999 (Fourth Republic). The bi-cameral structure of the Senate and the House of Representatives (Reprs) was retained at the centre and unicameral houses at the state and the present composition of the assemblies are presented in Table 1. The Fourth Republic has experienced the longest uninterrupted democratic governance (i.e.; 15 years in a stretch). Within this period, the country has conducted four general elections in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 (George, 2012).

Table 1: Composition of National and Bayelsa state assembly in Nigeria in 2011

S/N	NAMES OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA	NO OF MEMBERS		
		SENATE	REPS	BAYELSA
1	People Democratic Party (PDP)	75	197	24
2	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACP)	18	71	-
3	All National Political Party (ANPP)	7	27	-
4	Congress for Progressive Change (CPC)	6	40	-
5	All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA)	1	7	-
6	Labour Party (LP)	4	11	-
7	Democratic People's Party (DPP)	1	2	-
8	Accord Party (AP)	-	5	-
	TOTAL	109	360	24

- Some of these parties merged in July 2013 to form the All Progressive Congress (APC).

In writing the forward to the Handbook on Legislative Practice and Procedure in Nigeria, Salim (2004), former Clerk of Nigeria's National Assembly stated:

One of the principal obstacles faced by the legislature at the commencement of the current democratic government in 1999 was lack of requisite knowledge by members of the National Assembly which would have enabled them to begin their lawmaking responsibility with ease and clear understanding...

He then enumerated several factors responsible for this; the most prominent of them is being 'lack of continuity'. This, as earlier stated, was due mainly to the incessant military intervention in governance. Each time the military intervened, the legislature was disbanded and it ruled by decrees that required the approval of the Supreme Military Council (1966-1979, 1983-1985) and the Armed Forces Ruling Council (1985-1992, 1993 - 29 May 1999). The executive and judiciary institutions were, on the other hand allowed to perform their duties. That is why the executive (and judiciary arms) are more experienced in governance than the legislature.

It was, therefore, not surprising that there were only few experienced personnel versed in the legislative processes at the commencement of the Fourth Republic on 29 May 1999 in the state and national levels in Nigeria. "And virtually", Salim (2004) wrote, "all members of the National Assembly were new and inexperienced. The situation rendered the legislature unsure of itself and easily manipulated by the Executive Organ..." This was more pathetic at the state houses of assembly (SHsA), particularly in Bayelsa state that was created barely two years before the Fourth Republic.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, George (2012:27-31) pointed out that the business of the legislators is to "make good laws, mediate and manage interests of several actors/players, oversight functions, screening and confirmation of appointments". These activities are organized in such a way that, alongside the political functionaries (i.e. legislators) are legislative officers who provide the services required by the political functionaries. What this means is that there are two types of functionaries in NASS and SHsA (Aguda, 2000).

- 1) political functionaries (legislators); and
- 2) legislative and administrative functionaries.

The two houses of NASS (Senate and Reprs) are headed by the President and Speaker and their deputies. The SHsA operate a unicameral legislature (single house) with the Speaker and his deputy, and the other principal officers of the assemblies elected by the members on the day of the inauguration. In both the NASS and SHsA, there is a Clerk, who is also the Accounting Officer. The Assemblies have committees and subcommittees that are assigned specific responsibilities. By their contributions in committees, members play a more significant role in the formulation and consolidation of public policy than they do in open debates on the floor of the house.

In assessing the performance of the legislature at the central and state levels in the Fourth Republic, Anyaegbunam (2008) wrote:

In Nigeria, the executive arm often interprets the legislature as overstepping its constitutional boundaries in the performance of oversight duties. The Legislature is perceived as ‘meddling institution’ whose activities hinder the government from speedily executing electoral promises. The legislature, on the other hand, sees the uncooperative attitude of the executive as a direct affront to their constituencies’ mandate.

Oleszek (2010:202-12) has argued that the ‘wrong perception’ has strained executive – legislature relations, leading to three identifiable patterns of conflicts that characterized the Fourth Republic include:

(i) **Polarized Relationship:** In this pattern, the legislature is antagonistic to the executive. The experience of Balarabe Musa’s government in Kaduna state before his impeachment in 1980; Senate Presidents’ Chuba Okadigbo (2000 – 2001) and Anyim Plus Anyim (2002); and the Reps under Ghali Mmar Na’aba (1999-2003) are pointers. In Anambra state, it was the Speaker, Michael Balonwu-led faction of the legislature against governor Peter Obi (2006-2007); and in Bayelsa state the house impeached two Speakers – Heineken Lokpobiri, and Boylayefa Debekeme between 1999 and 2004 and eventually the governor, DSP Alamieyeseigha in 2005; Ayo Fayose (Ekiti state) and Joshua Dariye (Plateau state). The spate of impeachment so threatened the security and stability of most of the states, including Bayelsa state that the assemblies literally stopped sitting (Table 3). For Anyaegbunam (2008:83-4) “this pattern characterized the First to Third Assemblies (1999-2010) in Bayelsa and other states in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic”.

(ii) **Cordial Relationship:** This pattern is about resolution of executive – legislature conflicts over policies by means of consultation. What readily comes to mind here are cases of the Senate during Evans Enwerem and the initial period of Anyim’s reign. At the state level, the relationship between most SHsA and their governors were not cordial between 2003 and 2007.

“This development”, as Nwabueze (2007) pointed out, “is an outcome of the 2003 general elections where the governors as party leaders controlled the party primaries and selection of candidates (for elective offices)”. It meant that members of the assemblies where the governor influenced the selection processes lost their legitimacy and did not perform their oversight functions. This hampered the principle of ‘checks and balances’ and militated against the socio-economic and political development of the people and state.

(iii) **Mild Hostility:** Here, there is an inconsistent hostility, and it characterized the relationship between the Reps and Presidency, especially during President Obasanjo’s administration in 1999 to 2007 (Nwabueze, 2007). Based on the general poor performance of the national and state parliaments, especially in the Fourth Republic, several Nigerians have come to believe that ‘violent revolution’ is the answer to the continued mal-administration in Nigeria. This thinking has been reinforced by the recent ‘Arab spring’ where those in government have been forced out of offices. According to Agomuo (2013:44a):

This may happen in Nigeria, too... for 14 years (i.e. 4th Republic), governance in Nigeria has failed to positively impact on the lives of the citizenry. Those who occupy the power tool have continued to make promises that are never fulfilled. Whereas figures showing the increasing wealth of the country are being bandied, poverty walks the land.

Aminu Tambuwal, Speaker of Nigeria’s House of Reps, 2011- date predicted ‘Nigerian spring’ at the 2013 Distinguished Management Lecture of the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered), Lagos, that the answer to the perceived mis-governance may be located in violent revolution. Tambuwal, emphasized that “the legislature is in the right position to cause the desired revolution given its functions in democracy” (Agomuo, 2013:44). He went further to state the two ways this can be achieved: through a complete change from one constitution to another, or by the modification (amendment) of the existing constitution. “In a way”, he continued, “the National Assembly is already at the fore front of a revolution with the massive work we are doing in amending the 1999 constitution”. He acknowledged that although the country is at a precarious stage, “we must effect drastic changes now or later face terrible consequences of bloodshed for not getting the needed change....”

It is believed that as a democrat, Tambuwal did not advocate for the conventional type of ‘violence, bloodshed or war’, but a positive revolution through annual appropriation bills and oversight functions. The appropriation bills is at the root of the economy and the legislature’s critical analysis to ensure that priority attention is made for equitable distribution of projects, poverty-reduction programmes and effective legislative oversight functions will engender the desired dividends of democracy in Nigeria (Davies, 2004 and Agomuo, 2013b). No wonder, we could see an example of that bloodshed recently when Tambuwal deflected from the PDP to APC and the subsequent drama that ensued at the National Assembly Complex where honourable members scaled the fence in a manner that makes a big mockery of the legislature.

III. Research Method And Framework

The study adopts 'political elites' theoretical framework propounded by Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca in 1939. Pareto (1845-1923), Homans and Curties (1934), believe that every society is ruled by a minority of people that possesses the qualities for its accession to full social and political power. He went further to categorize the "elites into two main classes, i.e. a higher stratum of governing and non-governing elites, and lower stratum of non-elite" Handerson, (1935). The focus of this enquiry is on governing (i.e. legislature-executive) and non-governing (i.e. electorate and public opinion leaders) elites that rule by a mixture of force and cunning.

The theory became very popular in the United States after World War II. The popularity resulted from the idea that every society, including that of Bayelsa state and Nigeria, consists of two broad categories of people:

- (i) The selected few, who by virtue of their privileged position of being in government (governing elites), have the right to supreme leadership; and
- (ii) The vast masses of people (non-governing elites) who are destined to be ruled.

The Americans adapted the theory to explain the political processes that existed in the country, especially how within those who constituted the ruling elites (class), there was counter-elites (Dicey, 1885 and Akande, 2002). The counter-elites are raised to power by the masses if the ruling elites lose their capacity to rule. In Nigeria, this is done through the process of recall (Walson-Jack, 2007). By this way, the masses (non-governing elites) exercise some measure of control over the ruling elites (Dahl, 1961 and Davies, 2004).

The basic method of data collection was personal interviews, using an opened 'projective questionnaire' between February and July 2013 in Bayelsa state. It applies 'judgmental sampling' technique to carefully select 295 knowledgeable respondents for the interviews. Out of the number, 211 interviews were conducted. This represented 72 percent and is considered reasonable in view of the sensitive nature of the subject matter. The respondents were selected from three broad categories (Table 2):

- a) governing elites (BSHA): serving and former principal officers / members, clerks and senior legislative aids (SLAs);
- b) governing elites (executive arm): serving and former political appointees; and
- c) non-governing elites: opinion leaders, community development committees(CDC), market men/women groups, youth groups, organized private sector(OPS), and community-based organizations (CBOs).

The research addresses the following eight (8) questions:

- (i) the effect of prolonged military rule on the performance of the legislature;
- (ii) experience of members of the house on legislative performance;
- (iii) single party dominance on legislative activities;
- (iv) executive arm's involvement in the selection and election of assembly members;
- (v) executive arm's interference on the legislature;
- (vi) frequent changes in the leadership of the legislature;
- (vii) executive-legislature's relations; and
- (viii) others

The 'others' covered the following characteristics of the state / legislature:

- the genesis and functions of Bayelsa State House of Assembly (BSHA);
- the purpose of its creation;
- the date of inauguration of the assembly;
- the process of growth of the institution;
- the means by which the institution is perpetuated;
- the manner of operations in the assembly;
- the internal and external structures of the assembly;
- the relationship of the assembly with other arms of governments, constituencies and the general public;
- the distribution of principal officers and members along party lines; and
- the implications of such distribution in terms of:
 - i) approval of list of political appointees-commissioners, special advisers, etc,
 - ii) oversight functions of the house, vis-à-vis, effectiveness,
 - iii) impeachment threat on the executive(i.e; how many times and the reasons adduced),
 - iv) number of bills passed between 1999 and 2012 – private and public(government) bills, and
 - v) the role of the legislature in budgetary approvals.

The interviews were complimented by secondary method, (i.e; government gazettes and white papers, proceedings/votes of the state house of assembly, and specialized publications). The data were analyzed and

presented in tables in line with the legislative assemblies - 1999-2003, 2003-2007, 2007-2011, and 2011-2012 (mid-term).

Table 2: Sampled Population

S/N	Category	Characters	Sampled Size	
			Total	Retrieved
1.	Governing elites(legislature)	1) Serving principal officers / members	30	25
		2) Former principal officers / members	60	35
		3) Serving and former Clerks & Senior Legislative aids (SLAs)	30	24
		Sub-Total	120	84
2.	Governing elites (executive arm of government)	1) Serving political appointees (commissioners and special advisers – C&SA)	10	8
		2) Former political appointees (C&SA)	28	20
		Sub-Total	38	28
3)	Non-governing elites (electorate)	1) Opinion leaders	60	30
		2) Community Development Committee (CDC)	28	25
		3) Market men / women groups	5	5
		4) Youth groups	20	15
		5) Organized private sector (Bayelsa Chamber of Commerce, National road transport owners/workers, and indigenous contractors association)	4	4
		6) Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)	20	20
		Sub-Total	137	99
Grand Total			295	211

The major difficulties encountered in the study were in the areas of finance to have increased the sampled sized beyond 295 and tracking down respondents for the interviews, especially former house officers/members and political appointees who have changed their locations. Nevertheless, through perseverance, the authors located and secured the cooperation of 211 respondents.

IV. Analysis And Results

There were eight (8) questions, out of which, the responses of seven (7) were presented in tabular forms in Tables 3-5 while the ‘others’ were analyzed separately. The responses were further grouped into three perspectives-governing (i.e., legislature and executive) and non-governing elites, and were in form of ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to suit the busy schedules of the respondents. Thereafter, the study discusses the findings and results.

• Analysis

a) **The Governing Elites – Legislature’s Perspective:** The lawmakers and their aids overwhelmingly agreed that the prolonged military rule in Nigeria had profound effects on their performance and was responsible for the inexperience of members of the assembly in the Fourth Republic. They also agreed of the negative effects of single party (PDP) dominance, especially in the areas of selection and election of members of the assembly in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 general elections, and annual budget appropriation bills.

While acknowledging the low performance, the legislators felt that the electorate and the general public were ignorant of most of the functions of the SHA. Responses on the influence of the executive on the legislature (except the SLAs) were divided. Those that disagreed felt that the house has done well by withstanding undue executive influence that is normal in democracy and ought to be appreciated, especially the timely passage of appropriation bills, screening and confirmation of appointees, etc. They blamed the inadequate public hearings and oversight functions on poor funding. This was, however, not the position of SLAs who maintained that prior to Heineken Lokpobiri impeachment as speaker in the First Assembly, the state legislature had enjoyed financial autonomy and ought to have budgeted for its activities (Table 3). It should be stated that prior to the impeachment incidence, some of the legislators led by the minority leader (Hon Target Sekibo) rejected the self-accounting bill due to the high handedness of the speaker (Hon Lokpoibiri) who applied the fund to favour his loyalists at the detriment of legislative efficiency. Thus, the executive arm led by DSP Alamieyeseigha withdrew the financial autonomy bill. This has not been reinstated by previous governors, including the current Dickson led executive arm of the Fourth Assembly.

The respondents acknowledged legislature-executive conflicts that resulted in frequent changes in the leadership of both the legislative and executive arms (Table 5) but were quick to point out that it has overcome it especially in the Fourth Assembly (2011-2012) and its activities impact positively on the people. This was not correct because the Speaker of the Fourth Assembly (Benson Konbowei) was impeached in March 2012. It was the intervention of the governor that brought him back as Speaker (Table 5).

b) **The Governing Elites – Executive’s Perspective:** The executive, especially those serving, seems to protect themselves in most of the issues raised to create the impression that they had little or no adverse

consequences on the performance of the legislature, in particular, and governance, in general. Interestingly, this was not the case for the former political appointees who seemed to be more liberal minded. Areas of divergence were on the impact of inexperience of members and the weight placed on executive-legislative conflicts (Table 3). They agreed that the legislature had performed well and impacted on the people.

c) The Non-Governing Elites' Perspective: The respondents agreed in different propositions that all the issues raised in Table 3 had negative effects on the performance of the state legislature. They were, however, particular about how the inexperience of members and frequent changes in the house leadership (Table 5) led to strained relationship between the legislature and executive between 1999 and 2012. This resulted in the shabby ways bills were passed and later returned to the assembly for amendments within one to two months, absence of oversight/investigative activities, ineffective representation, and abandonment of their role of watch dog of public funds.

Another area of contention was on the dividends (i.e. legislature's positive impact) of democracy (Umanah, 2013:7; Etekepe & Okolo, 2011: 377 – 393; Okolo & Inokoba, 2014: 11 - 27). While the legislature had orchestrated on it, the non-governing elites said they were yet to experience improvements in their conditions of living. This means, there is a fundamental error on what constitutes 'dividends of democracy'. For the people, dividends of democracy should mean: job creation, security of lives and property, poverty reduction, steady supply of power and efficient health care delivery, etc, that are yet to be in place (Etekepe, 2011a; Etekepe & Okolo, 2011: 424 -434). Thus, their position was that the legislature in the period under study did not perform well and/or impacted positively on the people and state.

V. Discussion Of Findings

The discussion here also encompasses the 8 questions and others (numbered a-j). The BSHA was inaugurated on 02 June 1999 to among several functions, make good laws, including conducting public hearings to enrich the process, perform oversight/investigative activities, and confirm appointments. The house had 24 members – PDP (22), AD (1) and ANPP (1) in the first assembly. They were elected from the registered national political parties operating in the state for an initial period of 4 years. In view of the single party (PDP) dominance, the principal and house officers were basically PDP members, and it had serious implications on approval of lists of political appointees as the governor's nominees were hardly rejected even when they were misfit, appropriation bills, and checking corruption and waste in government (Elaiwu, 2005; Okolo, 2011; Okolo & Akpokighe, 2014: 99 – 109)).

The Standing Orders No. 12 of BSHA 2007 states that:

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the House shall meet at 10am and unless previously adjourned shall sit until 6:00pm... On Fridays, the House shall meet at 9:00am... and members shall regularly attend sittings of the house and those of the committees of which he is a member.

Table 3: Responses

S/N	Questions	Governing Elites (BSHA)				Governing Elites (Executive)				Non-governing elites		Total		
		Principal Officers / Members		Clerk/ SLAs		Political Appointee				Yes	No			
		Serving	Former	Yes	No	Serving		Former						
						Yes	No	Yes	No					
1.	Effect of prolonged military rule on performance of legislature	25	-	35	-	24	-	8	-	20	-	99	-	211
2.	Effect of experience of members of the house on legislature performance.	20	5	33	2	24	-	6	2	15	5	85	14	211
3.	Effect of single party (PDP) dominance on legislative activities.	15	10	30	5	24	-	5	3	16	4	90	9	211
4.	Effect of executive organ's involvement in the selection and election of assembly member.	20	5	30	5	20	4	8	-	18	2	88	11	211
5.	Impact of executive organ's interference on the	14	11	25	10	20	4	4	4	15	5	80	19	211

	legislature.													
6.	Effect of frequent changes in the house leadership on legislature.	22	3	28	7	18	6	8	-	17	3	85	14	211
7.	Executive – legislature’s relations (conflict)	14	11	20	15	14	10	5	3	12	8	56	43	211
	Total	130	45	201	44	144	24	44	12	113	27	583	110	1,477

Source: Fieldworks, 2013. Note: Yes – 1,216, No – 262, Total 1,477 responses.

The study finds that the house did not adhere to the sitting arrangement, and rather sat for less than the statutorily required 181 days/year throughout the period of the study. Table 4 shows that apart from 1999 and 2000 in the first assembly where members sat for 179 and 162 days - close to the 181 days, the gap of ‘legislature deficiency’ widened, especially in the third assembly (2007-2011). This accounted for the house’s inability to improve the welfare and security of the people.

The institution is created by the Nigeria constitution and is perpetual. It grows with the experience/maturity of the members, especially in public hearings that was neglected throughout the period under review. This deprived the house of essential inputs from the general public that would have enriched the law making processes. In the presidential system, there are checks and balances, and in the process of exercising it, the house had conflicts with itself and the executive. The areas of conflict that were very pronounced included the annual appropriation bills, oversight activities, screening and confirmation of appointments.

The study also found that the legislature, especially during the fourth assembly (2011-date) is becoming increasingly concerned about the over celebration of input-oriented budget from the executive arm that does not incorporate a feedback mechanism for output and out-come (Agomuo, 2013b:25). The fourth assembly at the state and national levels are addressing the error to minimize legislature-executive conflicts. The other area of conflict was with the communities (constituencies) that were generally abandoned after electioneering campaigns. The legislators, like the executive, hardly met with the constituencies for feedback or input to policies that affected them.

Table 4:No. Statutory and Actual Sitzings in BSHA, 1999 – 2012

Days	Years													
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
No. days sat	179	162	140	101	112	140	161	151	98	100	84	76	70	100
Minimum No. Statutory Sitzings	181	181	181	181	181	181	181	181	181	181	181	181	181	181
Legislature Deficit	(2)	(19)	(41)	(80)	(69)	(41)	(20)	(30)	(83)	(81)	(97)	(105)	(111)	(81)

Source: Fieldworks, 2013.

In Bayelsa state, the people are no longer passive-receiving piece-meal information and orders from the governing elites. Rather, they are demanding as a right to be actively involved in the law making processes (Dahl, 1961 and Davies, 2004). This is where the absence of public hearings becomes worrisome. The data shows that except three times in the present fourth assembly in the state, there has never been a public hearing conducted by BSHA since 1999. The new attitude is expected to lead to a greater sensitivity on the part of the governing elites, considering their performance between 1999 and 2012, given the amount of resources at its disposal (Table 6).

❖ **1999 - 2003:** This was the first assembly inaugurated on 02 June 1999. It had the semblance of a legislature as inspite of PDP (22) dominance, there was one member each from ANPP and AD, as well as a

female member (Table 5). The period experienced turbulences, following the impeachment of the pioneer Speaker, Heineken Lokpobiri on the 'ground of high handedness, lack of team spirit, and undue romance with the executive'. His successor, Peremabowei Ebebi completed the remaining part of the tenure, and re-contested to become a member of the house. At this time Boyelayefa Debekeme became the Speaker. The spate of impeachment so frightened him that the house hardly sat unless on the instance of the governor to consider government bills that required urgent attention. Thus, it sat for a total of 582 days, as against the statutory 724 (i.e. 181 days/year) days in the period and out of 80 bills received, it passed only 33 bills. This meant that the bulk of the bills (43) were left for the second assembly 2003-2007 (Tables 4 and 5). This level of performance was considered unimpressive.

❖ **2003 – 2007:** The instability spilled over to the second assembly and Debekeme, too, was impeached as speaker for his 'reluctance to impeach the governor-Alamiyeseigha'. He was replaced by Ebebi. The spate of impeachment then moved to the executive organ where the governor, DSP Alamiyeseigha was 'unceremoniously' impeached for reasons that ranged from money laundering, embezzlement to corruption on 05 December 2005. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, who was his deputy, became the substantive governor on 09 December 2005, with Ebebi becoming the deputy. Following this development, Werinepre Seibarugu, deputy speaker of the house, became the speaker. The second assembly witnessed the emergence of three speakers, and it affected legislative business, resulting in huge 'legislature deficit of a total of 160 days'. Thus, out of 58 bills received, it passed only 43 (Tables 4 and 5).

❖ **2007 – 2011:** The activities of the third assembly further deteriorated to the point where it received and passed only 30 bills in four years from the executive arm of government in an 'unprofessional' manner. Unprofessional in the sense that in a bid to forestall impeachment, the assembly sat at the pleasure of the speaker, instead of maintaining the statutory sitting requirement of 181 days/year. The practice then was for the speaker to instruct the clerk to summon the house for setting only when he was satisfied that his opponents had traveled. The house would then sit to 'rush' bills through first, second and third readings, and then passed them out rightly – all within 2 – 3 hours, and thereafter took an indefinite adjournment. By the time the opponents got wind of it and returned to the house, the sitting would have been adjourned. This accounted for both the abysmal 'legislature deficit' of 330 days (Table 4), and "terrible reality of failed promise in the state as the legislative and executive institutions of government worked against the fundamental strategic interest of the people" (Adegbamigbe and Ofiebor, 2013:20-6; Okolo & Inokoba, 2014: 11 - 27).

The period witnessed 'collapse' of governance and leadership, and the state became one of the most indebted states in Nigeria to the tune of N4.55 billion for Dickson's government to inherit on 14 February 2012 (Mbam, 2013). Going forward, it was in the third assembly the three senatorial roads awarded, paid for and started by Chief DSP Alamiyeseigha's government were abandoned. Also abandoned were Bayelsa College of Arts and Science (BYCAS), the school for gifted and talented children, College of Education and Niger Delta University. There were also decay of infrastructure in primary and secondary schools, absence of potable water, negligent of agriculture and health care delivery, and non-payments of students WAEC and NECO examinations fees. This was in total variance with the revenue profile of the state in Table 7 where the state received a total of ₦676,850,000,000 within that period. This informed the non-governing elites' position that the state has not experienced improvement (dividends of democracy) in the Fourth Republic.

❖ **2011 – 2012:** Although it is midterm assessment for the fourth assembly, the characteristics of previous assemblies spilled over to this period, and the 'legislature deficit' was still as large as 81, out of 362 days. The impeachment saga resurfaced, and Benson Konbowei (Speaker) was removed based on incompetence and misappropriation of fund on 15 March 2012. The governor (Henry Seriake Dickson) had to intervene to reinstate Konbowei. The governor then pledged to reverse the poor performance of legislators in the fourth assembly as to impact positively on the lives and security of the people. The new attitude of the governor might have accounted for the reason why the entire 21 bills of government received by the house were passed into law in a record time.

Results

The results of the study pointed at seven main issues, namely:

(i) that the legislature is yet to improve on the conditions of living, security of lives and property, as well as engendered socio-economic development in the state in the Fourth Republic. The index for socio-economic development has to hinge on qualitative and quantitative education, poverty reduction, job creation and employment, efficient transportation and health care delivery systems, etc. These performance indices were not achieved mainly due to the character of the state governor(s), especially their poor track records, inexperience of members of the house, single party (PDP) dominance, etc. The case of Taraba State is a classical example.

In Taraba State, it was the Governor Danbaba Suntai and the State House of Assembly over his (Suntai) resumption of duty from 10-month sick leave. The problem arose when the SHA considered him unfit to resume duty; but in an effort to maneuver it, he dissolved the cabinet on 28 August 2013, instituted legal

action against the SHA, and assumed duty without the usually consideration of his letter to that effect by the SHA. His action was to forestall the cabinet from constituting a medical board to examine him, as well as intimidate the assembly. The assembly prepared for battle and insisted on its constitutional rights and forced him to continue with the sick leave. The SHA then reinstated the cabinet, and obliged the Deputy Governor, Garba Usman to continue to act until the governor is physically fit to perform his duties. In commenting on this and similar cases, Okey Wali, former President of the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) said "one of our greatest challenges of nation building is the challenge of institution (legislature) building" (Benson and Anaba. 2014: 54.)

These and similar cases contributed to the political apathy (docility) of the people (Adegbamigbe and Ofiebor, 2013:18-21). Thus, based on this, proposition one is vindicated.

Table 5: Performance Index of BSHA, 1999 – 2012

S/ N	Period	(a) No. Member		(b) Principal Officers	(c) No. Bills			(d) No. Sittings		
		PDP	Others		Received	Passed		Public Hearings	Regular	
						Private	Public (Govt)		No. Sat	Min. Required
1.	First Assembly 2 June 1999 – 10 May 2001	15	3(AD) 6(ANP)	*Heineken Lokpobiri (Speaker, PDP), *Ayebaesin Edoghotu (PDP, Deputy Speaker), *Duba Ayibana (Leader, PDP), *Ado/Phus Jackson (Chief Whip, PDP), *Vivian Imanangha (Deputy Whip, PDP), *Target Segibo (Minority Leader, ANPP), *Bright Erewari (Deputy Minority Leader ANPP)	80	10	23	-	582	724
	11 June 2001 – 01 June 2003	14(m) 1(f)	*Peremobowei Ebebi (Speaker, PDP), *Jephithah Foinga (Deputy Speaker, PDP), *David Obuma (Leader, PDP), *Samuel Boy (Chief Whip, PDP), *Target Segibo (Minority leader, ANPP), *Boloubowei Indiamowei (Dep. Leader, PDP), *V. Imananagha (Dep Whip, PDP), *Nein Ebiakpo (Monitory Whip, ANPP), *Kenigbolo Ogilvie (Dep Whip, ANPP).							
2.	Second Assembly 02 June 2003 – 14 November 2005	23		*Boyelayefa Debekeme (Speaker, PDP), *Foingha Jephthah (Dep. Speaker, PDP), *Steve Ereboh (Leader, PDP), *Imomotimi Fanama (Dep. Leader, PDP), *Johnson Alalibo (Dpe. Whip, PDP), *Robert Enogha (Chief Whip, PDP).	58	5	38	-	564	724
	09 December 2005 – 29 May 2007	22(m) 1(f)	1(LP)	*Wereinepre Seibarugu (Speaker, PDP), *Nestor Binabo (Dep Speaker, PDP), *Nadu Karibo (Leader, PDP), *Kalabo Hawkins Dio (Dep. Leader, PDP), *Dein Benadoumene (Chief Whip, PDP), *Ruby Benjamine (Des. Whip, PDP), *Angos Lugard Dide (Min. Leader, PDP).						
3.	Third Assembly 09 June 2007 – 09 June 2011	22 21(m) 1(f)	1(LP) 1(KOWA)	*Nestor Binabo (Speaker, PDP), *Fini Angaye (Dep Speaker, PDP), *Amalanyo Yousuo (Leader, PDP), *Friday Benson (Chief Whip, PDP), *Walama Igrubia (Dep Whip, PDP), *Victor Prezi (Min Leader, PDP).	30	-	20	-	330	724
4.	Fourth Assembly 12 June 2011 – 2012	24 23(m) 1(f)	-	*Benson Konbowei (Speaker, PDP), Victor Sam-Ateke (Dep Speaker, PDP), *Akpe Peter (Leader, PDP), *William Igrubia (Chief Whip), *Emma Isenah (Dep Leader), *Omonibeke Kemelayefa (Dep Whip), *Abraham Ingobere (Min. Leader, PDP).	21	-	21	-	170	362

Source: Authors compilation, 2013 Key M – Male, F – Female, LP – Labour Party, ANPP– All Nigerian Progressive Party .PDP-People Democratic Party

(ii) That the house lacked democratic principles of tolerance, foresight and productivity (Wheare, 1966 and Olorunnisola, 2010). Thus, in a bid to avoid conflicts, the speakers of the various assemblies conducted legislative business in unprofessional manners to neglect statutory sitting requirements, public hearings, and frivolous adjournments (Anayaegbunam, 2008). For instance, out of the 80 bills received in the first assembly, only 10 were private bills. The number fell to 5 in the second assembly, and thereafter zero. This suggests that members were there to seemingly rubber stamp executive bills (Table 5).

(iii) In corollary, the issue of immaturity of members of the house cannot be overemphasized as it was responsible for the spate of impeachments and counter-impeachments that characterized the legislature and executive institutions in the Fourth Republic. This made the government unstable and the state insecure to consolidate democracy. Thus, proposition two is also vindicated.

(iv) Whereas the study was on BSHA the performance of the other 35 state houses and national assembly's in Nigeria were poor, as well. They failed the citizenry, particularly, in terms of integrity, improving the conditions of living of the people, effective representation, and delivery of the dividends of democracy (Lawal, 2013:1). Former President Obasanjo attributed the failure to inexperience of the governors and legislators of the various states and national houses of assemblies in the Fourth Republic. As he puts it (Lawal, 2013:2):

the younger (inexperienced) generation leaders have failed the citizenry.... The performance of the current younger generation of leaders has not been impressive..., so we got some of them impeached (i.e. DSP Alamiyeseigha (Bayelsa state), James Ibori (Delta state), Joshua Dairye (Plateau state), and Salisu Buhari (Speaker, Reps, etc).

Linking the poor performance of Nigeria's Legislatures to leadership, Adekoya (2013:38) argues that as long as the legislators and governors in the Fourth Republic were not adequately prepared for the 'sacred chambers', the people should not have expected meaningful dividends of democracy. But, Umanah (2013:4), took an exceptional position for the Akwa Ibom House of Assembly(AKSHA) and the state governor, Godswill Akpabio, for high performance as the citizenry experienced 'season of dividends'. The dividends ranged from construction of roads and bridges to building of 3 senatorial security villages, etc. For Agomuo (2013:25b), "these may mean so much to those in the corridor of power; but to the ordinary citizens in Akwa Ibom state or else where, it makes no sense" as long as they have not experienced improved life style occasioned by functional social infrastructure, employment, qualitative education and security, etc. Thus, these and similar statistics released by the state and federal governments from time to time would not convince the people that government is, indeed, working for them.

(v) The spate of impeachments and anti-democratic activities of the state governors to 'conquer' the legislature shall continue to threaten the security and stability of the Fourth Republic. This replayed itself on 09-10 July 2013 in the Rivers State House of Assembly (RSHA), Port Harcourt. The speaker of the house, Otelema Dan Amachree, as characteristic of his predecessors, directed the clerk after a very long recess to reconvene the house to consider 'an amendment to the 2013 appropriation laws' as he was satisfied with security arrangements to stop the 5-anti-governor Amaechi members from entering into the chamber (Chukwu, 2013:28). The plan failed as the state commissioner of Police directed that all the legislators be allowed to enter and partake in the deliberation. By the time members were about to commence proceedings, Evans Bipi (anti-Amaechi) went close to Chidi Lloyd (pro-Amaechi) and hit him down with the house's mace.

This resulted in a free-for-all fight between the two factions on the 'sacred floor' and the 5-anti-Amaechi members were chased away. The remaining 27 pro-Amaechi's members, including the speaker then "sat and heard the amendment and swiftly passed it into law, and took another indefinite adjournment"(Chukwu, 2013:38). This had happened in Anambra, Bayelsa and Ekiti states, as well in the fourth assembly in Bayelsa State (2011). This shows that state legislatures in the Fourth Republic are drifting into anarchy or thugocracy; and in the case of RSHA, the National Assembly took over legislative business of the house.

(vi) The National Assembly also failed and had backlog of 'unfinished businesses'. This has attracted an increasing public disapproval of the huge amount of money spent to maintain it (Table 6). The Table 6 shows that the NASS spent N5.2 (US\$3.2) billion on an average to pass a bill between 2010 and 2012 and yet, passed less than 10 percent of the bills. By 31 December 2012, it has passed only 69 bills, out of a total 725 bills before it. This is not impressive or commensurate with the level of money (N360.74 (\$225.46) billion spent in 2011, and ₦150 (\$92.6) billion in 2012 and 2013 (Table 6). Atuanya (2013:1&8) has formulated failure indices, for national assemblies, with emphasis on the 7th NASS in Nigeria along with financial and related implications on national development and displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: NASS failure indices as at December 2012

S/N	INDICE	FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS
1.	Total No bills	725 bills
2.	Total No bills passed	69 bills (i.e, 9.5 %)
3.	Cost of passing one bill	N 5.2 (US \$ 3.2) billion
4.	Cost of maintaining one legislator per year	N 319.8 (US \$ 119.8) million
5.	Annual cost of running 7 th Assembly	N 360.74 (US \$ 225.46) billion
6.	NASS budget as o/s National budget	9.2%
7.	Corruption rate	73%

Sources: Atuanya (2013:1) Research Intelligent Unit, Business Day

Recently, The Economist of London rated Nigerian legislators as the highest paid lawmakers in the world, earning far higher than the counterparts in developed economies and older democracies, such as Britain, America, France Canada, Italy and Germany. There is no way the benefits (dividends) of good governance can get to the people when the cost of governance is as high as it is in Nigeria. This is worrisome as the people have not benefited from this level of expenditure. Corruption, for example, has become pervasive and social

infrastructure has collapsed because of the failure of the lawmakers in their oversight duties to hold the executive arm accountable. Thus, the executive arm has mismanaged ₦1.5trillion (\$937.50 billion) of the Stabilization Account, Ecological Fund, and National Resources Account between 2002 and 2012 without ‘an eye-brow’ from the NASS (Adekoya,2013). In functional democracies, lawmakers ensure that the executive arm remains focused on its vision for the people. The inefficiency of reps with its negative consequences on the electorate resurfaced on 17 September 2013 when Aminu Tambuwal, Speaker, invited Kawu Baraje and 6 others (new PDP) governors to “shift the battle for control of the National Assembly to the floor of the House of Representatives” (Nwosu, 2013:5). This is the height of inefficiency and lack of tactics as the house comprised members of other Political Parties namely PDP (197), APC (145), LP (11) and APGA (7). The senate on the other hand, also comprised: PDP (75), APC (29), LP (4) and APGA (1). Tambuwal’s action resulted in a ‘free-for all’ physical fight with the then Bamanga Tukur led main PDP and non-PDP members. This paralyzed proceedings for one hour. Earlier at the plenary, a similar scenario took place. Nwosu (2013:16) captured the mood of the non-governing elites when he wrote, “Nigerians are yarning for good governance and not flexing of political muscles”. For Wale (2013:21), “it is a crisis of selfish pursuit of power (and complacency from jumbo remuneration by lawmakers) at the expense of the electorate”.

(vii) The failure of the national and state houses assemblies in their oversight functions resulted in financial recklessness. The budgets within the period were, for example, miserably implemented with about 68 percent squandered on recurrent expenditure on 17,474 governing elites (Benson, 2013)

- 472 federal executives;
- 469 federal lawmakers;
- 2,664 state executives;
- 1,152 state lawmakers;
- 3,096 local government council executives;
- 8,692 local government council lawmakers; and
- 936 federal and state judiciary.

In the Fourth Republic, the bulk of state and federal governments funds allocated to capital expenditure for provision of social amenities, poverty reduction, employment, and health care delivery, etc to improve standard of living were looted by the governing elites and civil servants (Mbam, 2013). This left the citizenry worst off in terms of high maternal mortality – 10th highest in the world and Nigeria becoming 142 out of 169 poorest countries in global human development index (HDI). The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported in May 2013 that ‘more than 112.518 million, out of the 160 million Nigerians are living below the poverty line of US\$1.25/day. The percentage of those living in absolute poverty also rose from 54.7 percent in 2004 to 60.9 percent in 2010’. Considering the increasing revenue profile of Bayelsa state (Table 7), there was no justification for abandonment of the projects earlier highlighted (Adegbamigbe, 2013). Instead, states like Katsina, Gombe, Lagos, and recently Edo that received far less than Bayelsa state recorded improvements. The revenues of Rivers (₦2.717trillion) and Akwa-Ibom (₦1.806trillion) states were also far more than what the 5 states of South-East geo-political zone (₦3.345trillion) and 6 states of North-East zone (₦3.752trillion) received within the period. Across the zones, the South-South (Niger Delta) zone received ₦1.503 trillion, and again, there was very little to show for it, and this is displayed in Table 7.

Table 7: Summary of Revenue Allocation to Bayelsa and selected states from Federation Account June 1999-December 2013

S/N	Period	State (N000)					
		Bayelsa	Rivers	Akwa Ibom	Edo	Katsina	Gombe
1	June-Dec 1999	2,175,913	3,013,114	2,832,046	2,240,479	2,875,491	1,907,995
2	Jan-Dec 2000	17,071,428	17,805,479	21,853,249	7,66,962	9,378,785	6,164,556
3	Jan-Dec 2001	22,473,385	22,128,460	30,858,062	9,730,083	11,874,006	8,459,413
4	Jan-Dec 2002	18,082,601	30,169,481	18,793,377	7,436,316	12,149,858	7,588,933
5	Jan-Dec 2003	32,855,591	40,928,182	32,415,240	10,775,582	15,003,057	9,478,609
6	Jan-Dec 2004	62,268,056	57,554,867	53,187,248	17,774,295	20,674,069	14,485,690
7	Jan-Dec 2005	104,955,275	114,795,506	78,036,445	22,970,917	24,869,282	17,509,376
8	Jan-Dec 2006	119,497,339	155,609,423	93,263,916	29,048,919	30,900,394	21,539,500
9	Jan-Dec 2007	148,200,000	183,380,000	184,030,000	46,980,000	55,000,000	50,000,000
10	Jan-Dec 2008	186,000,000	377,000,000	265,150,000	60,660,000	83,000,000	65,290,000
11	Jan-Dec 2009	164,130,000	432,280,000	283,813,000	80,590,000	69,180,000	51,640,000
12	Jan-Dec 2010	178,520,000	429,000,000	288,834,000	99,250,000	81,200,000	55,600,000
13	Jan-Dec 2011	214,590,000	415,900,000	419,785,000	163,860,000	100,000,000	79,400,000
14	Jan-Dec 2012	238,158,000	438,000,000	533,113,000	150,045,000	113,000,000	93,535,000
	TOTAL	1,317,707,578	2,717,564,512	1,806,599,348	709,028,544	629,104,942	451,580,587
	US\$	8,235,672	16,984,778	11,771,246	4,431,428	3,931,906	2,822,379

Source: Federal Ministry of Finance, Abuja, July 2013.

Note: The revenue profile is made up of net statutory allocation, crude oil excess proceeds / additional allocations, value added tax, and recently **SURE-P**, excluding internally generated revenue (IGR). Foreign exchange rate: US\$1 = ₦160.00

VI. Summary, Conclusions And Suggestions

The study examined the positive impacts of the Bayelsa State House of Assembly (BSHA) on the standard of living and security of the people, as well as, the socio-economic and political development of the state in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999-2012. It also assessed the relationship between the legislature and executive. The examination is important because in the presidential system that Nigeria is practicing, the legislature is the bedrock of governance. And yet, the institution is the least developed and studied by scholars, especially in the Fourth Republic that has experienced the longest stretch of democratic governance in the country. In Bayelsa state, for example, this is the first time of such an empirical study.

Adapting the governing and non-governing elites theory, the study applied personal interview method with an open-ended questionnaire to elicit information from a total of 211 governing (i.e., legislature and executive) and non-governing elites (Table 2) on 8 essential performance indices of the legislators (Table 3).

The study lasted for 6 months and found that the prolonged military interference in civil governance, inexperience/immaturity of members of the house, PDP dominance, executive interference on the selection and election of members adversely affected the performance of the state legislature. These resulted in spate of impeachments, counter-impeachments and legislature-executive conflicts that characterized the period under study. This whittled down the powers of the legislature in discharging its constitutional role of checkmating executive excesses. Accordingly, the position of the respondents (i.e., yes – 1,216 and no – 262 in Table 3) is indicative of the fact that the legislature did not impact positively on the people and state; and the two propositions were vindicated. The poor performance cut across the remaining 35 state houses and the National Assemblies in the country, and the trend is likely to continue (Etekpe, 2011b).

Based on the findings and results, the paper suggests:

- (i) A paradigm shift in legislative business, in particular, and governance in general, in Bayelsa and other state houses of assembly in Nigeria to make politics a platform for service delivery. This is achievable by making legislature a part-time activity and committing the members to performance bond to deliver specific and measurable services (dividends), namely: job creation, full employment, poverty reduction, steady supply of power, free and compulsory primary and secondary education and efficient transport and healthcare delivery systems. The mechanism for realization is the "appropriation bills, effective oversight/ investigative functions, regular public hearings and interactions with the constituencies" (Agomuo, 2013:44a);
- (ii) An independent legislature to stimulate visible and sustainable dividends of democracy for the citizenry; and
- (iii) The strengthening of the capacity of legislators through regular training and retraining programmes to consolidate democratic practices in the state and country in the Fourth Republic.

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