

## DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

Democratic processes refer to the important activities that are part of democratic practice

These processes include

- Elections
- Rule of law
- Separation of Powers
- Popular participation
- Impeachment

**Elections:** A lot of people mistakenly believe that elections mean the same thing as voting but this is so wrong. An election is a process by which the citizens of a country choose their leaders. The process of elections which is very important to the practice of democracy includes registration, campaigning, party primaries, voting, counting of votes and declaration of results.

**REGISTRATION:** The registration process is the act of taking the bio data of voters and placing them in constituencies. The registration process determines the identities of voters and determines where they would vote. It is usually done by the electoral body

**CAMPAIGNS/ ELECTIONEERING:** This refers to the series of activities through which contestants in an election make effort to win the confidence, support and eventually votes of the people. Campaign activities include adverts, rallies as well as public speeches and lectures.

**PARTY PRIMARIES:** Party primaries are a very important part of the election process. The party primaries are the elections that are conducted in political parties to determine the candidate that would represent the party out of all the persons who signify interest to contest the election. In every election there are usually many candidates in every political party out of which only one would be allowed to represent the party. So the process of conducting an election within the party to determine which of its members would be the candidate of the party is known as party primaries

**VOTING:** The very important activity of voting is the stage in the election process when the entire electorate/ citizens of the country select their leaders by casting their votes for their preferred candidate. The act of casting one's vote is like expressing your choice for a particular candidate either through the ballot paper or by signifying by raising up your hands

## THE RULE OF LAW

The concept of the rule of law was given to the world by a professor named AV Dicey who has become very popular for this. This concept refers to a situation where the activities of the citizens, government and institutions of a country are controlled by the established laws/constitution of the country. In the view of AV Dicey we can never talk about practicing democracy where there is no rule of law or where one man or a small group of persons rule instead of the constitution. The concept of the rule of law can be considered the opposite of dictatorship where activities of citizens and institutions are determined by the wishes of a single person or a few group of persons

## SEPARATION OF POWERS

This is another very important principle/ idea that determines the process of democracy. It

refers to a situation where the main functions of government are separately performed by three different institutions. These arms of government are the legislature which performs the role of making laws, the executive which performs the role of implementing the laws and the judiciary which performs the role of settling disputes amongst the people.

#### POPULAR PARTICIPATION:

Popular participation involves the involvement of a large number of people in the activities of government through rallies, campaigns, voting, protests and so on. As democracy is usually defined as a form of government in which the political power rests with the majority of the people it is very important to the democratic process that the people actively participate in the major activities of governance

#### IMPEACHMENT

Impeachment is a very important activity in the practice of democracy. Just as democracy is unique because it gives the common people the ability to choose their leaders so also is it unique because it gives people the choice to remove bad leaders from office. This is what is known as impeachment.

It can simply be defined as the process by which the president of a country can be removed from office. In Nigeria a president or Governor can be impeached from office for committing crimes, not ruling according to the constitution, acts of corruption, etc

*EVALUATION : Have you experienced any of the features of democracy discussed above being practiced in Nigeria. If yes kindly describe the experience and your observations*