

WEEK 5 and 6

TOPIC: FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

DEMOCRACY

Democracy is a system of government based on popular consent. Abraham Lincoln in his 1863 Gettysburg address defined democracy “as the government of the people by the people and for the people”

TYPES OF DEMOCRACY

1. Direct /Classical Democracy: This is a form of democracy where the right to make political decisions is exercised directly by the whole body of citizens, acting under procedures of majority rule.
2. Modern/Representative Democracy: Citizens exercise the right to make political decisions, not in person, but through representatives chose by the people and accountable to them.
3. Liberal/Constitutional Democracy: Powers of the majority are exercised with in a framework of constitutional restraints designed to guarantee the minority in the enjoyment of certain individual or collective rights.

Features of Democracy

1. Regular and Periodic elections.
2. Equality before the law.
3. Existence of party systems.
4. Free and fair elections
5. There must be an independent Judiciary
6. And a free press.
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Merits of Democracy

1. It promotes political participation: it encourages citizens to be involved in their government and politics.
2. The electorates are given the opportunity to elect leaders of their choice.
3. There is political stability through periodic elections.
4. Decision making: Persuasion and argument are used in making decisions rather than violent means.
5. The Rule of Law: Democracy promotes equality of persons, protection of their possessions and their fundamental human rights.

Demerits of Democracy

1. The representative of the people may be representing their own interest.
2. Rule of Ignorance: Democracy does not pay attention to quality but quantity. Votes are not weighed but are counted.
3. Elections are often manipulated to favour self-centred and irresponsible representatives through thuggery and the use of money.
4. It is very expensive to operate.
5. Inadequate political education may make voters to collect money for their votes.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Political socialization refers to process by which the citizens are educated on the values, attitudes and beliefs of the political system

AGENTS OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

1. The Family: Children from politically conscious families tend to be more politically aware and interested in politics
2. The school: Educational institution play significant role in the political socialization of the citizens of a country
3. The peer groups the peer group of an individual tends to socialize the individual politically
4. Political parties educate their members and the public through their manifestoes and campaign
5. The mass media: The mass media include radio, news papers, television and magazines people are socialized through what they read, listen to and watch in the mass media

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation could be defined as the process of voluntary involvement of the people in the political activities of their country. i.e. when they take active participation in chosen their rulers and also involve in decision making in the government of their country.

FORMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- **Belonging to political parties:** This is an active political participation in which activist come together to form political parties. Members of the parties do take active part in electioneering campaigns, political rallies and other forms of political meetings.
- **Contesting elections:** some active political participants' stands as candidates seeking elective public offices on the platform of political parties or as private candidates if the constitution allows it.
- **Sponsoring of political parties:** sponsoring political parties financially is another form of political participation. Some wealthy citizens sponsor political parties as their own way of political participation.
- **As a voter:** voting in an election gives one an opportunity to participate in the election of people's representatives in government .
- **Polling agents:** by acting as government representative at the polling, a person is directly involved in the political activities of his country.

THE PURPOSE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.

- **To write the wrong of those in power:** some people desires participation in politics in order to correct atrocious activities of those in power.
- **For equitable distribution of resources:** if the resources of a country are inequitable distributed, many people may be forced to take part in politics in order to equitably distribute such resources.
- **The need for self- actualizing:** these are those who have made it in order fields of human endeavour that seek participation in politics as self- fulfillment.

- **As a status symbol:** some other people desire political office in order to increase their self- image. These groups of people are not after the material and economic gains of political office but as status symbols.

ASSIGNMENT

1. List five (5) features of democracy.
2. Explain political socialization.
3. Highlight five (5) forms of political participation