**OSUN STATE UNIVERSITY, OSOGBO**

**OKUKU CAMPUS**

**CENTRE FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCES**

**COURSE TITLE: CITIZENSHIP AND ELEMENTS OF GOVERNMENT**

**COURSE CODE: POL 102**

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**Course Overview**

This course provides an introductory study of topical and scholarly perspectives in citizenship with a special focus on Nigeria. In addition to the overview on citizenship, the course will introduce learners to basic themes and instruments of the state that facilitate the actualization of the will of the state, and also help keep it running.

**Course Objective**

This course is an introductory course designed for beginners and new intakes admitted into the Political Science and International Relations programme of the Department of Political Science, of the University. It introduces students to the nitty-gritty of citizenship and elements of government/the state. Students would, at the end of this module, be able to; define citizenship, appreciate the concept and institution of citizenship, its rights, duties and obligation; and accept responsibility of government to the citizen and the duties and obligations of citizen to the government and the state and present the principle of political obligation, point out the need and basis of freedom, loyalty and patriotism.

**Course Contents**

1. Citizenship
2. The State and Sovereignty
3. Power, Authority and Influence
4. Public Opinion, Public Interests and Public Policies
5. Liberty, Social Justice and Political Obligations/Civic Duties
6. Democracy and Democratic Consolidation
7. Interests Groups and Civil Society

**Study Session One**

**Citizenship**

**Introduction**

Every individual in a particular state or another enjoys rights and privileges either as a citizen or an alien. For example, a person whose parents came from Nigeria but live in Ghana, which is another country from where he/she was born, is a Nigerian, no matter how many years he/she has lived in Ghana. Citizenship could be through Birth, Naturalization, Marriage, Dual citizenship or Honorary.

**Learning Outcome**

At the end of this study session, students would be able to demonstrate adequate understanding on what citizenship entails, who a citizen is, ways of acquiring citizenship and benefits of citizenship.

**Content**

Citizenship can be taken to mean a legal privilege that confers on an individual a membership of a country with all its accruing privileges and responsibility.

Citizenship further connotes the constitutional provision that grants every qualified member of a country the right and privilege to be a citizen and enjoy both the rights and responsibilities arising from such membership.

Citizenship through birth implies that a person is born by parents who are legal citizens of a particular country and has a birth certificate from that country too.

Citizenship through naturalization is invoked and enjoyed when a person who has lived in a country other than his own for a certain period of time applies to the government of that country for citizenship. When the government grants such an individual citizenship, it means the person has naturalized himself/herself with that particular country. And under this condition, an individual may or may not claim the country that he came from again depending on the rules guiding the process in each country.

Citizenship through marriage implies the type of citizenship acquired by the virtue of marrying a citizen of another state. A Nigerian woman that is married to an American Man will automatically acquire the American citizenship.

Citizenship by honorary conferment comes to fore when an individual is either by the standard of his charisma or humanitarian services or leadership or excellence is conferred a citizenship of a country that is different from his or her original country of birth. For instance, Nelson Mandela was an honorary citizen of many countries of the world because of his selfless service to his people and humanity.

**Benefits of Citizenship**

1. It helps one to enjoy full political, social, economic, civil and educational rights and privileges that accrue to all holders of citizenship. For instance, A Nigerian citizen by birth can become the president of the nation.
2. A citizen can be part of every sector of the Nigerian economy. He or she can buy into government shares.
3. A citizen enjoys government protection both within and outside the country.
4. As a citizen, one can boast of a permanent place of abode and lay claim on legally and culturally inherited inheritances and possessions.
5. Conferment of rights and privileges
6. Performance of civic responsibilities
7. Sense of National belonging and patriotism
8. Facilitate National cohesion and harmonious relations amongst citizens
9. Facilitate distinction between citizens and non-citizens

**Differences between a Citizen and an Alien**

1. A citizen enjoys full civil and political rights, which an alien does not enjoy. For example, a citizen can vote and be voted for, but an alien cannot enjoy such a privilege.
2. A citizen has the right to perform all the known legal jobs in the country while an alien is exempted from basic jobs for security reasons. A citizen of a country can be recruited into the Nigerian Police and can work with the Nigeria Minting Company, but an alien cannot be considered for such security jobs.
3. A citizen takes his/her country as his/her permanent home of abode and can refer to it in case of an emergency but an alien cannot claim the country where he is not a citizen. A citizen of Nigeria residing in Ghana can seek full-compliment from the Nigerian embassy in Ghana, but an alien cannot enjoy such a privilege.
4. A citizen owes allegiance to his/her country while an alien cannot do that. More importantly, a citizen of a country is a legal member of his/her country and he/she enjoys full privileges that go with such a legal right in and outside his/her country. Unfortunately an alien is exempted from such rights granted to citizens as a legal member.

**Conditions Necessary for the Acquisition of Citizenship**

Conditions under which an alien can become a citizen of another country include the following:

1. The person must have stayed or resided in that country for a period of fifteen years upward.
2. S/he must have married a citizen for a period of five years.
3. S/he must have contributed to the growth and development of the country.
4. S/he must have good character that must have been tested and proven over-time and at least two persons must attest to his conduct.
5. S/he must renounce his former nationality.
6. The applicant of citizenship must take an oath of allegiance.
7. He must be of a mature age.

**Assessment Questions**

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting.

1. What do you understand by the term citizenship?
2. Explain how a Ghanaian can become a Nigerian citizen.
3. Who is an Alien?

**Study Session Two**

**Duties and Obligations of a Citizen**

**Introduction**

This lesson discusses the duties, obligations and rights of citizen in any country, and conditions where citizens’ rights can be suspended.

**Learning Outcome**

At the end of the lesson, students would be able to identify, their rights as citizens and the corresponding duties and obligations to their country.

**Content**

In every country, a citizen has some duties or roles to perform. All the roles, duties and obligations of the citizens are written in a country’s constitution. These roles, obligation and duties shall be our focus in this section. Duties are roles that are expected to be performed by an individual in a country. The roles can either be moral or rational. It is through the duties that an individual that resides in a country can show his/her sense of belonging or loyalty. Thus, duties are different from rights in the sense that Rights are privileges that are enjoyed by an individual in a country. And, they are backed by law.

**Some of the duties that are expected of an individual in a country include the following:**

1. Payment of taxes. A citizen is expected to pay taxes regularly as at when due. It is through these taxes that the government realizes money that it will use for developmental purposes, and this actually gives each citizen the right to question government spending, especially when he/she realizes that the government is spending more than necessary or when the government embezzles public fund. A citizen has to vote during elections.
2. Every citizen is duty bound to vote and be voted for in an election. When a citizen is not considered a lunatic or a criminal and he/she is 18 years of age and above, he/she can vote and be voted for in an election. That is why men and women are being encouraged to participate in the political matters of the state. Through voting a citizen can equally perform his/her civic duty.
3. A citizen must be a law abiding citizen, and respect the law of the land. That means that whether you are rich or poor, every citizen is duty bound to obey the law. This attitude encourages orderliness in the society.
4. Must be loyal and patriotic to the cause of his/her country. When a citizen is considered as being loyal and patriotic in the state that means that the citizen has totally committed himself to the cause, growth and development of his fatherland and the state can vouch for such an individual as a dependable citizen of the state.
5. Citizens should show respect for national symbols. There are some national symbols that each state of the world cherishes and values. Citizens are expected to value such National symbols both within and outside the country. The National Anthem and pledges are to be respected whenever and wherever they are being recited.
6. He/She must report any security risk matters to the government. Reporting security matters to the government is a way of showing sense of belonging and patriotisms to the cause of our fatherland. Only the security agents such as the police cannot uphold the integrity or maintain law and order. It is therefore our responsibility as a good citizen of the state to support the security agents in maintaining peace. One can do this by giving useful information to the security agents, which might help them to perform their duties efficiently.
7. He/She must respect other people’s right. There is an adage which states that where one’s right stops is where another man’s right begins. What this connotes is that one should not infringe upon the rights of others in the state. That is why the constitution promotes rule of law and equality of all citizens before the law. No citizen should be above the law of the land. All must be treated equally.
8. He/She must protect national integrity. Every citizen is considered as an ambassador of his country both within and outside his country and he should be able to defend his country wherever the need arises. For example, every citizen is expected to offer useful information or display good character and attitude that would promote the good image of his fatherland. That is why the government discourages criminal acts such as drug pushing among its citizens for these acts bring shame and dishonor to the country.

**Rights of Citizens**

As noted earlier, rights are privileges that are enjoyed by an individual in a country and it is backed by law. In this section, we will explore some of the rights you enjoy as a citizen in the country; discuss some of the factors that promote individual rights; and explain the conditions under which Rights of an individual can be withdrawn.

**Fundamental Human Rights**

These are rights that individuals in the country cannot do without. They are often stated in every country’s constitution, and they include the following:

1. Right to life.

2. Right to private and family life.

3. Right of Association.

4. Right to freedom of movement.

5. Right of fair hearing in the law court.

6. Right to personal liberty.

7. Right to dignity of human person.

8. Right to freedom of expression and the press.

9. Right to quality education.

10. Right to hold public office no matter how sensitive.

11. Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

12. Right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sex, race or creed or political opinion and association.

**Factors that Protect Individual Rights**

1. Supremacy of the Constitution: The constitution of an individual country gives strength and legal backing to the rights of an individual. If the rights of an individual are to be protected, the constitution must be supreme. That is, it must be the all in all of the land without any one being able to influence it.
2. Equality before the Law: Rights of an individual can only be protected when there is an equality of all individuals before the law. Everybody rich or poor must be treated equally in legal matters.
3. Independent Judiciary: When the Judiciary, which is the custodian of the law is independent of all forms of influences then individual rights can be protected.
4. Separation of Power: Another factor that protects individual rights in a country is that, there should be a separation of power among the organs of government. The organs are the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. The separation of power would enable organs to serve as watchdogs for one another and prevent reckless arbitrariness on individual rights.
5. Freedom of the Press: If the freedom of the press is guaranteed, the press will fearlessly protect and safeguard the rights of citizens.
6. Enhanced Democratic Rule: Rights of citizens will be more protected and safeguarded better under the influence of democratic rule where votes and voices of an individual counts for good governance in the country.

**Conditions under which Individuals’ right could be withdrawn or suspended**

Even though the constitution allows certain privileges or rights for individuals, there are still certain conditions under which such rights can be withdrawn and they include: When the person is insane (lunatic); a person that has been adjudged a criminal by the law court; an Alien is equally exempted from certain rights e.g. security jobs such as Police and Civil Defense Corps; citizens’ rights could be denied of their rights during emergency periods or health pandemic as witnessed during Covid-19 pandemic.

**Assessment**

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting.

1. What do you understand by the term duties of an individual in the country?
2. List some duties of an individual in the county.
3. What are the factors that promote individual rights?
4. What are the conditions under which the rights of an individual can be withdrawn?

**Study Session Three**

**The State**

**Introduction**

State is to existence of an individual, as the human body system is to the existence of a ‘living man’. But for the human body system, the living organisms and other functioning systems (Digestive, Excretory, Respiratory) housed within the human body system would not have had the enabling environment they needed to thrive and perform their functions in making the existence of the living man possible. The State may not necessarily be the ‘soul’ of the socio-economic and political existence of man, but surely it is the most important necessity needed for human organization, the pursuit and actualization of the good life and the prevention of the kind of life Thomas Hobbes once dubbed a life of state of nature. This therefore underscores the reason why Aristotle, the father of the discipline once theorized that no human existence is capable of taking place outside the confines of the State, except of course, those of the Beasts and the gods, if they had ever existed.

**Learning Outcome**

Students would have by the end of the end of this Study Session learned the systematic evolution of the State; its importance; the contending theories of its evolution; arguments for and against its continued existence.

**Content**

**What is a State?**

A State is defined as a community of people occupying a geographical location, having its own laws, government and sovereignty against external influences or incursions. Nigeria as a state occupies a geographical territory covering over thirty-six states with the Federal Capital Territory. The Nigerian State equally accommodates people with over two hundred ethnic nationalities, more than four hundred languages, a distinct federal government etc.

However, when qualifying a place of location as a state, certain features must be present and they include the following:

1. A defined territory

2. Government

3. Population

4. Sovereignty

5. Permanence

6. Indivisibility

7. International Recognition

Nigeria is not a nation, because in a nation the people there must have the same language, culture and be located in a defined space territory. In Nigeria, there are more than 250 languages and their culture equally differs. We have Yoruba Nation, Hausa Nation and many more Nations, within the Nigerian State.

**Theories of the state include:**

* Family theory: Family theory is a sociological theory that holds that family is the smallest unit of human organization. The general assumption of this theory is the fact that it believes the systematic evolution of the state began from the family. Due to increase in population, Family developed into a community, from community to a society and then, to a state.
* Force or Conquest theory: Force or Conquest theory took off from the point that all states are products of conquests. The logic here is that no state was naturally bestowed on ma. The history of the emergence of the state is thus the history of conquest. United States, France, United Kingdoms, Germany (during the era of the East and West Germany), and all other states were founded by either force or conquest.
* Divine theory: Divine theory holds that states are divinely created and freely bestowed on humanity divinely.
* Social Contract theory: The social contract theory holds that state is the consequence of an agreement entered into by. Thomas Hobbess, John Lock, Jean Jacquaus Rousseau.
* Evolutionary theory: Evolutionary theory on the other hand believes in scientific development of state.

**The Attributes of the State**

There are certain features, which are peculiar to the state. This is to say that no other association shares these attributes and they include the following:

1. Ubiquity of the State: The state is found everywhere and there is hardly any part of the world that is not within the confines or jurisdiction of any state.

2. Universality of State Jurisdiction: Within the recognized boundary of a state and this includes the air space, land frontiers, territorial waters and vessels carrying its flag, the state has universal authority. This means that a state has the right to exercise control over all activities within these boundaries.

3. Compulsory Nature of the Jurisdiction: Within state frontiers, there is no choice available to all or anybody in respect of the abeyance of the law. No one can choose which laws to obey or when to obey. All laws must be obeyed by all.

**Functions of the State**

The state is responsible for the maintenance of order as well as the security of life and order within its area of jurisdiction.

**The functions are further grouped into two:**

Negative functions of the state include the maintenance of law and order.

The positive functions include the molding of the moral, integrity of the citizens, the provision of social goods such as food, housing, clothing, education etc.

**Assessment Questions**

1. **Examine briefly the various theories of State.**
2. **Why do you think the State is the most important organization in the society?**

**Study Session Four**

**Sovereignty**

**Introduction**

This lesson session will explain the concept of sovereignty, its features and types and its relevance to the formation and sustenance of State.

**Lesson Outcome**

At the end of the lesson, the students would be able to identify and explain sovereignty and its importance in a political system.

**Content**

Sovereignty can be described essentially as supremacy and separations of a state, over the citizens. It is the greatest power of command of the state. A state is sovereign when it has absolute and final authority in its area of jurisdiction. Its power is not subject to any higher authority. The idea of sovereignty originated from Jean Bodin, a French politician philosopher. Sovereignty has two major elements and they are:

* Supremacy
* Separateness

By supremacy, it means that the state enjoys absolute jurisdiction; while its separateness element indicates that the state is separate within certain territorial entities and it enjoys supreme authority.

**Types of Sovereignty**

There is what is called Legal and Political Sovereignty. Legal sovereignty refers to either the power of the legislature to make laws or it can be used to describe the constitution which must be supreme. Political sovereignty refers to the ultimate power of the electorates who are the people that vote a particular government into power.

**Location of Sovereignty in a State**

In a domestic setting, the sovereignty of the state resides with the persons or institutions that exercise power. In a monarchical system, sovereignty is located in the king or queen.

In a democracy, sovereignty is exercised by the following institutions:

1. The legislature – that makes laws.

2. The Judiciary – that adjudicate.

3. The Executive – that implement the laws.

**Limitations to the Sovereignty of a State**

1. The sovereignty of the state can be restricted or limited in the following areas: The type of government in power: The exercise of sovereignty is best achieved in a unitary state than the federal systems of government, because power is constrained among states under the federal system of government.
2. The Constitution: It defines the power exercised by the various levels of government. It therefore limits the powers of the government.
3. The Military in Power: The removal of democratic government is a limitation to the sovereignty of the state. The military often suspend the constitution of the state after taken over power.
4. Customs and Traditions: Customs and traditions of thea people are mostly considered by the state before or when making laws.
5. Military Agreement or Pacts: Two or more countries can agree to cooperate militarily e.g. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

**Paradoxical Relevance of Sovereignty**

About the relevance of the concept ‘sovereignty’ in modern day politics, certain factors have made the state to trade part of its sovereignty with other states. And this is because of the interdependent nature of the states of the world today. Many states have come together under one or more umbrella organizations i.e. United Nations, and they have submitted parts of their sovereign powers to the union especially when taking a common international decision that would be binding on all member states.

But by and large, each state still appreciated their sovereign power for mutual cooperation and co-existence. There is an adage, which says that no country is an island on itself. What this means is that no country can stand on its own. More especially, in the contemporary world, the issue of globalization has made many countries realize that they cannot stand aloof.

In the area of economy, each country would have to trade with other countries, in order to boost their economic gains. And, that is why each region of the world today encourages unions that would boost their image, both economically and politically. Unions such as the European Union and African Union have become an International Organizations in which their members use to promote their economic and political ties.

In the area of defence, each state equally belongs to different unions, in order to boost their military might and protect their territorial landscape against external aggression. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is one of such unions where powerful countries of the world belong to in order to boost their military strength.

It should be realized at this junction that even though each state belongs to different unions for economic, political and defense ties, their sovereignty matters and it is respected for the common good of all and for mutual co-existence around the world.

**Assessment Question**

**Do you think there are limits to sovereignty of States in the contemporary world?**

**Study Session Five**

**Nation, Nation-State and Society**

**Introduction**

This lesson explains the concepts of nation, nation-state and society. This is done to bring out the similarities and differences of these concepts to the State.

**Learning Outcome**

The lesson will give the students a clearer and better understanding of the differences that exist between related and similar concepts of nation, nation-state and society.

**Content**

Nation and nation-state

A nation is often erroneously used to refer to a State, however, a nation may extends beyond a State while a State may contains more than one nations. A nation is a group of people with common history, language, ancestors, customs, traditions, culture and descent. Nigeria, for instance, has three major nations amongst others – Igbo Nation, Yoruba Nation and Hausa-Fulani Nation which makes Nigeria a multi-national state (Nwankwo 1992). A nation is an association or a community of people united by common ties. This community of people is associated with a particular, usually speaking a single language having the same political aspiration and consciousness. It is this consciousness of unity that is referred to as nationalism or a sense of nationality (Anyaele, 1994).

Another school of thought regards the nation as a product of affinity among people who share the same language, history, culture and traditions and are skeptical of multi-cultural, multi-racial and socially plural societies. A nation in the ethnological sense is commonly defined as a group of people who form distinct community by inhabiting a definite territory and recognized themselves as possessive of a relatively homogeneous set of cultural traits; these include a common or related blood, a common language, a common religion, a common historical tradition and common customs and habits. The desire to continue in their fellowship and distinctiveness in the future is a basic ingredient of a nation. It may be pervaded by a sense of nationalism – a spiritual sentiment or feelings of a special unit which marks off those who share in it from the rest of mankind (Anifowose, 2005). In summary a nation could be regarded as an association of “all minos”, that is, an association having homogeneous characteristics.

Evolution/development of a nation

The importance of the concept of nation, today in political science, is highly appreciated. This importance may be as a result of the idea of nationalist under-tone caught effectively and achieve much. What brings people together naturally has to be a common phenomenon, something they have a common belief and perspective about and on which they have joint agreement.

Features of a nation

A nation possesses all the characteristics possessed by the state except sovereignty. For a nation to attain the status of statehood, it must gain independence and therefore have supreme power to enable it make and enforce its own laws. Even though, a nation possesses the attribute of a territory but unlike a state, a nation has no definite territory.

Nation-state

A nation-state refers to a state which in spite of its differences in national historical origin, common language, culture, common ethnicity, and common religious beliefs of its people and still characterized by a strong sense of national unity is described as a nation, state. Examples are the United States of America and the defunct U.S.S.R.

In other words, a nation-state has been described as a context in which a geographical area that is the homeland for people who identify themselves as a community because of share culture, history and probably language and ethnic character is governed by one political system (Nwaorgu, 2002:93). When people identify with others who live within the state, they constitute a nation. Nationalism supplied reason for people to set aside the internal division within a state. Thus, to another scholar, a nation-state means political institution that combines the concepts of nation (an anthropological idea) with State (a legal nation). All modern states are nation-state (Shushila, 2005).

Society

Society represents all human associations and groups and it suggests the whole intricate relations among men, groups and institutions. There are several groups in the society whose affiliations could be based on a wide range of criteria including family, ethnic cultural, religious, professional, trade, ideological and social status. The internal dynamics of the society is propelled by social forces and social motives such as customs, initiation, friendship, jealousy and competition (Kukah, 1999). The society is an embodiment of all institutions involving human and human properties.

Society does not only refer to the fundamental union between human beings that the state establishes but a network of interaction and exchange formed by individuals exercising the right to pursue the satisfaction of their particular needs in their own way (Sushila, 2005). Hume considers interest rather than the contract as the factor that cements individual to the society. Smith together with his contemporaries shares the perception that advantages secure by commerce and mutual support are the bones for forming society. Some scholars (the conservatives and idealists in particulars) see society as an aggregate of individuals pursing their self-interest. They conceive the individuals in the context of groups and stress the importance of family and neighborhood community for the security and meaning they provide. They regard society as natural for the fulfillment of human needs with each part – family, church, work and government playing a particular role in sustaining and maintaining the health of the social fabric. Each part understands it role and perceives society as a whole that is continuously evolving and changing. They understand authority as a hierarchy with each level playing a major role in society.

In another sense, society is a wider term than the state. It is the nation, socially organized and assuming the aspect of a plurality of association. Society, thus suggest many social relationships, it consist of the complex network of groups and institutions expressive of human association (Anifowose, 2005). Society exists for a number of purposes, educational, economic, religious, cultural, etc. Society uses the method of voluntary action and the process of persuasion to achieve its wills or objectives.

Evolution and development of society

Human societies have existed for thousands of years. Development in all countries of the world without exception, reveals a general conformity to a law, a regularity and consistency; that at first we had a society without classes (the original patriarchal, primitive society) in which there were no aristocrats; then we had a society based on slavery (a slave-owning society). The whole of modern civilized Europe has passed through this stage (slavery ruled supreme two thousand years ago). And according to Lenin (1975) the vast majority of people of the other parts of the world also passed through this stage.

Aristotle points out that society arises naturally out of the union of male and female for the satisfaction of daily needs. Within the household, there is natural hierarchy of the husband over the wife and master over slave. A cluster of households form a villages and several villages together constitute the society in which the state ensures economic and political independence.

However, one could say that the emergence of the society started from the family to the clan, village, and tribe and to the large human population having certain mutual interest and giving birth to such other institutions as the church, state community etc. which are embedded in as products of relationship.

Features of society

The attributes of a society are the same as those of a state with excerption of sovereignty. The sovereign power in any society is entrusted with the state. The state possesses the supreme power of the state which it uses to achieve both its internal and external objectives.

As earlier said, the attributes of the society include population, territory, government (machinery through which the will of the state is achieved). More so, a society is characterized by culture, norms, belief, values, etc. which could be plural or homogenous.

**Differences between State and Nation**

1. In the state, the people share homogeneous and heterogeneous attributes, that is a state can either boost of people that have divers culture and languages; however, the people that make up the nation share homogeneous features, that is they are people with the same custom and language. These attributes of a nation promote a sense of unity.
2. Another salient feature that distinguishes the state from a nation is that of sovereignty. This is the supreme power of the state to exercise authority within its territorial boundary. The nation does not have such an attribute. And that is why some nations within the state clamor for independence from the larger state. The civil war that was recorded in the early 1970s in Nigeria came up when the Igbo nation tried to fight for their independence from larger Nigerian state.
3. Again, even though a nation can be found within a territory, it does not however possess a definite territory. That is why Yoruba nation can be found both in Nigeria and Benin Republic. The present Palestinians too are struggling for a definite homeland.

**Assessment Questions**

1. **From your understanding, how does a nation differs from a state?**

**Study Session Six**

**Power, Authority and Influence**

**Introduction**

This lesson introduces the students to the related concepts of power, influence and authority; these concepts are central to understanding the subject matter of political science.

**Learning Outcome**

At the end of this study session, students would be able to explain what the three concepts entails and what makes power different from authority and influence. Authority is taken to mean the right to rule or compel obedience from others.

**Content**

**Power**

Power, in any form, is the greatest possession of man. It is his ability to make others do what ordinarily they would not have done without being compelled. It is the ability and capacity to compel obedience and sanction disobedience. It is the possession that keeps its possessor alive and relevant in the real world. It is, for Harold Lasswell, what determines who get what, when and how. In essence, power is the most important object that continues to keep humanity and the world intact and alive. Man and the world cease when it is no longer in existence!

Basically, there are various strands of power: the military power, the economic power, the cultural or social or ideological power, physical power, scientific and technological power, bio-technological power (as recently revealed by covid-19), spiritual or supernatural power, traditional or customary power. All these powers except spiritual strand combine to form the power capability of an individual or a state in their relations with others. The use of military, scientific and technological powers to exert influence and compel obedience in others may be classified as the application of hard powers, whilst resorting to the use of culture, tradition, ideology and systems of ideas are practically the employment of soft powers. In any case, both hard and soft powers come to play in the deployment of power capabilities of an individual or a state in relations among men and other states respectively.

**Typologies of Power**

**Political Power:** This is the type of power that is derived from the virtue of holding a constitutionally recognized political office. This is the classical definition of what a political power is world-over. But then, if we were to go by what politics is about according to David Easton that says politics is the authoritative allocation of values, coupled with the fact that at all levels, everyone engages in politics either by allocating values and functions or by determining who gets what, when, and how, then, we may be empirically correct to rationalize that all human beings exhibit “political power”, in contrast to the classical definition that restricts political power to only those within the corridor of governance or those occupying political offices. In essence, we can adduce here that political power comes to play whenever we engage in politics by allocating functions or values to others or by determining who gets what, when and how or by jostling and competing for the scarcely available resources within our community. In sum, political power may not necessarily be an exclusive prerogative of political office holders or those within the corridor of state governance but rather it can be seen as the type of power we all exhibit at the family level, group level, community level, societal level and state level where allocation of values and function takes place. For instance, when a father authoritatively allocates functions to his wife and children, as the head of the family, he has engaged in politics (politics is now at play) and exhibited the type of power that is political (the type of power that comes through politics).

**Economic Power:** This is the type of power that emanates from the material, financial or monetary possessions of an individual which s/he could bring to bear in compelling his/her biddings.

**Traditional or Customary Power:** This type of power is the type of power being exercised by traditional institutions. It stems from the tradition, culture and belief system of the people.

**Physical Power:** This is the type of power that has to do with the deployment of one’s physical endowments such as physique or gymnastic capabilities in compelling obedience in others.

**Mental or Intellectual Power:** This is the variant of power that comes to play when one uses his or her intellects or mental capacities to sanction obedience in others and make others do what ordinarily they would not have done without being compelled.

**Military Power:** This is the type of power that comes from the barrel of gun. It is the type of power military institutions and their personnel deploy in compelling obedience or making their adversaries succumb to their biddings.

**Religious Power:** This is the type of that stems from faith and religious injunctions. It is the variant of power usually exercised by religious institutions. For instance, when the Vatican city through pope tells catholic believers worldwide to observe lent (Fast) and the believers complied, the Vatican authority has only exercised its religious power.

**Authority**

Authority could also be taken as the application of power that is backed by the law. It is the constitutional right to perform a constitutionally assigned task or compel obedience in others.

Max Weber has however come up with three categorizations of Authority:

* **Legal-rational Authority:** This, for Weber, is the type of authority derived from the law of the land. It is the authority that is backed by the constitution. For instance, the authority of President Muhammed Buhari to govern Nigeria as the Head of State and Head of Government is Legal-rational authority, an authority that is constitutionally provided for.
* **Charismatic Authority:** This is the type of authority that is derived from the special natural endowments and qualities of an individual. These qualities are usually endowments and charismas that are not common. Thus, they give their possessor some leverage.
* **Traditional Authority:** Basically, the type of authority that stems from the traditional institutions and custodians of the traditions, customs, ethos and the belief systems of the people. For instance, the Ooni of Ifee, Sultan of Sokoto, Alaafin of Oyo, Olubadan of Ibadan, and Emir of Kano exercise this type of authority. Their authority and right to rule their kingdoms and emirates stem from the intergenerational age-long traditions and customs which are also recognized by the law.

There are two other ways through which authority can be acquired; aside the first three that were earlier mentioned. These are:

**De-Jure Authority:** This presupposes the existence of rules by reference to which a person acts or ought to act. In the words of Thomas Hobbes, a person acts with “de jure” authority if he does so, on behalf of others who have commissioned him. Such action has the same valid if it has been performed by the consenting person.

**De-facto Authority:** This implies the situation where one acknowledges another person or groups right to issue commands and to have them obeyed. This authority derives from recognition of superior power expertise or bravery.

**Influence**

Influence is the ability to persuade or affect other peoples’ behaviour or worldview without the use of force. It is usually persuasive and non-violent.

**Types of Influence**

* Charismatic Influence
* Traditional Influence
* Political Influence
* Positional Influence etc.

**Assessment**

1. What are the differences that exist between authority, power and influence? What are the different sources of authority?

**Study Session Seven**

**Public Opinion, Public Interests, and Public Policies**

**Introduction**

Public interest is another political concept, which is commonly used by all. In this Study Session, therefore, we would examine what makes an interest to be public and why is it that the public have interest in an issue. We will also discuss the concept of public opinion because of its relevance to the first section of this session. This Study Session would further discuss those factors that influence public opinion formation and how to determine public opinion in a political setting and its relevance in the political environment or the making of public policies that are of public interest.

**Learning Outcome**

When you have studied this session, you should be able to: point out factors that can make an interest a public interest; outline the uses of public interest; explain the meaning of public opinion; discuss the factors that influence public opinion; point out the major determinants of public opinion; discuss the importance of public opinion; present how public opinion can be encouraged in the country.

**Public Opinion**

Public opinion, unlike public interests is referred to what members of the public think or feel about governments proposed policy or action already taken by government, while public interests are interests that are germane to the common good of all in the society. Public opinion may be defined as the collective beliefs, judgments or political views held by majority of citizens of a country about public policy or action of the government. It is referred to as what people think or feel about government actions and inactions. Opinions about the people differs considerably at every point in time, but majorly when the basic social amenities and essential commodities are available, the opinion of people tends to be in favour of the government’s actions, and because of this, there is no need to oppose any action of policy of the government no matter how.

But in a situation where government actions or inactions differ from the opinion of people that is when the government’s actions is different from what the people propose or belief, the people tend to criticize government actions and they use different means and ways to alter government decisions. Thus, public opinion may enable the government to be able to judge the peoples’ acceptability or otherwise on a public policy formulated out of public interest which may end up not actually being of public interest.

Public opinion is therefore critical for the success of the task of governance. It is an essential necessity in a democratic government. And, it further gives sense of direction to government on the task of governance.

However, the level of literacy rate in the country determines how many people will be interested in public issues. That means public opinion may not always be the opinion of majority of the citizens in the country.

**Factors that Influence Public Opinion Formation**

Some of the factors or the agencies that actually influence public opinion in a country include the following:

**Public Interest:** The interest of the public can shape and influence the general opinion of the people. For instance, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the general opinion of the people was that government should tackle the pandemic. And, the government on public interest, decided to take some drastic though excruciating steps to arrest the spread of the Covid -19 virus in Nigeria.

**Societal Needs or Public Needs:** This can also influence the generality of the peoples’ opinion. For instance, A community of people ravaged by high level of insecurity would never present an opinion of provision of adequate security by the government. Invariably, whatever need the people are lacking would generally affect their public opinion.

**The Mass Media:** Mass Media like radio, magazines, newspapers, television, journals and hand bills among others act as agencies through which public opinion is formed. The opinion of people can be raised and doused through effective communication from these agencies of the mass media. The mass media can even help to sample people’s opinion about government actions and inactions.

**Pressure Groups:** These are the organized social interest groups that tend to influence government decisions in favour of their group interest. They employ different methods in trying to influence public opinion and government policies. For example, pressure groups serve as an organized body through which government sample people’s opinion with their demands and decisions. The group can even organize Study Sessions for the people to be more enlightened about the government actions and inactions.

**Political Parties:** Political parties with the help of their manifestoes, rallies and campaign act as the basis of public opinion formation in the country.

**Propaganda:** When there is a communication gap between the people and the government, people tend to listen to rumors and gossips, and they make use of the information gotten from these avenues as basis for their opinions.

**Influential Citizen:** There are some people in the country that tend to serve as moulders of public opinion. Traditional rulers, intellectuals, tycoons and artistes form parts of the influential citizens that help form public opinion through their speeches and political statements.

**Government Policies and Intervention:** The type of explanation and education the government gives to members of the public about its policies and actions go a long way in influencing public opinion.

**Major Determinants of Public Opinion**

Every government needs to be sensitive to the opinion held by the public from time to time. It is through this medium that the government can assess its policies and actions, especially in a democratic setting. Public opinion can therefore be measured or determined through the following ways:

1. **Election:** Election serves as a means through which public opinion is measured. In a free and fair election, the government’s popularity is tested.
2. **Opinion Poll:** Opinion poll is conducted when certain government actions or inactions are thrown to the selected number of people to judge its efficiency or otherwise. Methods such as questionnaires and interviews can be used to sample people’s opinion. In an organized society like the U.S.A., opinion polls are being conducted even to decide who might likely win an election.
3. **Referendum:** This is a method of referring a political question or government policy to the electorate for approval or disapproval by saying yes or no.
4. **Mass Media:** The mass media have become a very useful instrument through which public opinion is determined through newspapers and magazines, people make their views known.
5. **Public Response:** Public opinion can also be measured or determined through the way members of the public respond to government policies through mass protests and demonstrations for or against such policies or programmes.

**Importance of Public Opinion**

The major advantages or the importance of public opinion are going to be stated below:

1. It helps direct government in knowing what the public thinks about its policies and actions. That means it serves as feedback to government policies.
2. It helps the government to know the needs and aspirations of its citizens.
3. It brings about the need for government to formulate policies and carry out actions that are in the best interest of majority of the citizens.
4. It serves as an avenue through which public views are channeled to the government.
5. It helps government to moderate her actions or inactions that might want to pull down the government.
6. Public opinion wakes up government and its agencies from their inactions.
7. During election periods, public opinion helps voters to cast their votes for popular candidates.
8. It can be used to ascertain the general mood of the people.
9. It can be used to gauge the acceptability or otherwise of a public policy by the people.
10. It helps in the determination of what policies are to be formulated and those not to be formulated in the interest of the public.

**How Public Opinion can be Encouraged Public opinion can be encouraged through the following means**

1. **Press Freedom:** When the constitution and the government in power allows press freedom in the country, it will encourage constructive public opinion, by means of making the policies and actions of the government known to members of the public in their true form.
2. Raising Level of Literacy: Educating members of the public in order to raise the level of literacy in a country is another way in which public opinion can be encouraged. A larger percentage of literate people in a country help the government to measure majority opinion.
3. Freedom of Speech and Association: It members of the public are allowed to air their views on government policies and actions and are also allowed to associate freely with their chosen legal groups in the society, public opinion will be more encouraged.
4. Encourage Pressure Groups: Pressure groups through their activities if encouraged, will guarantee healthy climate of public opinion.
5. Establishment of Information Bureau: Information bureau where information about government policies is being assessed and stored should be established and made more efficient in order to bridge the communication gap between the government and the people. With this formation on ground, public opinion can be encouraged.

**Public Policies**

Public policies are generally well-thought and well-deliberated stated governmental intended course of action or set-out objectives legally formulated by the government to meet a specific or a general need of the people or the society. All government’s actions or inactions begin with a policy. They are the soul of governance. The difference therefore between a successful government and an unsuccessful one is the quality of the public policy. For instance, the N-Power Policy of the Federal Government was a public policy designed and implemented to empower unemployed youths or graduate across the country.

**The Intersection or Relationship between Public Opinion, Public Interest and Public Policies**

Basically, all public policies are formulated and implemented in the interest of the public (public interest) but not all public policies end up serving the interest of the public interest. Some public policies might look rosy on paper and end up being producing an unpleasant outcome. This is therefore why opinion of the people (public opinion) matters and remains crucial in the intertwined relationship between public interest, public opinion and public policies. For instance, the proposed RUGA policy of the Federal government was eventually jettisoned due to the widespread criticisms (public opinion) that greeted the policy. Apparently, public interest is a constant factor in the making of public opinion and public policy. It is a canditio sine qua non for the making of both public opinion and public policy. Similarly, to gauge the general acceptance of a public policy by the people or to ascertain what the people consider public policies that are of public interest, then public is a great instrument to achieving that.

**Assessment**

1. What is Public Interest? What are the uses of public interest?
2. What is public opinion? What are the uses of public opinion?
3. What are the factors that influence the formation of public opinion? What are the various ways of measuring public opinion?
4. What is the intersection between public opinion, public interest and public policies?

**Study Session Eight**

**Political Obligation and Civic Duties**

**Introduction**

Basically, constitutionally constituted authorities, especially the government always swear an oath to perform their tasks amongst which are the responsibilities to ensure adequate guarantees for the liberties and freedoms of the citizens as well as social justice. This is the case with all constitution-practicing states world-over where the responsibilities of both the government and the governed are well-spelt out. In situations and circumstances where the liberties of the citizens and social justice are practically non-existent or have been shortchanged, the citizens are always generally likely to flop in the performance of their political obligations or civic duties. Needless to say that in order to realize a situation where there would be high rate of performance of civic duties or political obligations, the government must not have been found wanting in the performance of its own responsibilities, and made adequate provisions for the guarantees of the citizens’ liberties and social justice.

**Learning Outcome**

On this Study Session, you would learn and understand why the people obey authorities, perform their political and civil obligations.

**Political Obligation**

Political obligation or civic obligation is the direct opposite of authority. We have discussed why those in power have the right to command. Political obligation in another sense is about those conditions, factors, or forces, which make people to obey the law. It explains why the people of the country obey authorities and also perform their duties as citizens.

To appreciate this concept, we have to turn to some theories of political obligation, which will make the concept to be better understood. And some of the theories of political obligation that we are going to discuss include the following:

1. **Prudent Theory of Obligation:** This theory, which is otherwise known as the theory of enlightened self-interest was introduced by Thomas Hobbes. His explanation was that, people obey the law of the land out of prudence or enlightened self-interest. This is because in all societies government exhibit the instrument of coercion with which they can visit law offenders. It is the fear of discomfort, pain or harm which makes people to obey. In other words, people obey for fear of punishment.

**Weakness of the Prudent Theory of Obligation:** That people obey because of fear cannot be regarded as the valid theory of obligation. Similarly, following this theory means that people obey out of coercion, but in obligation, there must be an element of voluntariness. People should obey the law voluntarily and not out of coercion.

1. **The Theory of Consent:** The central idea behind this theory is that people live in societies, which have evolved or emerged out of social contract. Social contract is another theory, which states that people that occupy certain societies surrender part of their right to the common good of the society. Thus all who live in the society are either directly or indirectly parties to the social contract. That means, they are duty bound to obey the law of that same society.

**Weakness of the Theory of Consent:** It is a big illusion to imagine that all within a society are party to a social contract; or that there is a social contract at all. The fact is that many states emerged artificially out of the imposition of war or superior power.

1. **Theory of the General Will:** This theory is propounded by Jeremy Bentham. This is the idea that all in the society have a common will or interest, which is the responsibility of those who govern to promote and protect in order to achieve the collective good of the society. And, because of this responsibility vested in the government, it is important that all should obey the rules in order to facilitate the attainment of that end. This theory is similar to the theory of the common good.

**Weakness of the Theory of General Will:** It is not in all societies that the rulers articulate the interest of the society or does what is good for all. Many rulers are for the most part, selfserving and often pursue their own interest even if this means defying the common good or rights of an individual.

1. **The Theory of Habit:** Jeremy Bentham argues that men obey because of the habit of obedience. Political obligation derives from the gentle and persistent induction of individuals in the society into the moral values of that society. As individuals grow within the society, they internalize and manifest the basic moral and religious values, which form the basis for a willingness to obey.

**Weakness of the Theory:** This theory unfortunately is about the mechanism of obedience rather than the reason for obedience. It describes how people acquire the will to obey government and not why they obey.

**Examples of Civic Duties**

Payment of Tax

Protection of National Properties

Reporting potential threat to National Security to the Security Agencies

Patriotism

Voting

Protection of Public Properties and a host of others

**Assessment Questions**

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting.

1. What do you understand by the term Political Obligation or Civic duties?

**Study Session Nine**

**Liberty and Social Justice**

**Introduction**

This lesson discusses the concepts of liberty and social justice in that the two terms are connected to the extent that adequate liberty translates to freedom which ensures justice for citizens of any particular country.

**Learning outcome**

At the end of the lesson, students would be able to understand and appreciate the concepts of liberty and social justice and their relevance to adequate functioning of a modern state.

**Content**

The concept of liberty is discussed on the basis of human’s nature of free-will. It is believed that, a normal human being has the capacity and the right to choose and determine his or her own actions. In essence, liberty is often used interchangeably with freedom.

**Assumptions on the Concept of Liberty**

The first assumption of the term liberty is that man is free to choose his/her actions because he is capable of making choices that are beneficial to social existence. That means that man is rational to choose an action that is in the interest of all.

The second assumption is that freedom in a social context necessarily involves a certain level of limitation. This goes with the general saying, which says that where one’s freedom ends another person’s freedom begins.

Social freedom can be limited in two ways and they are: (a) Freedom from (b) Freedom to.

‘Freedom from’ entails the absence of restraint to do what one wants to do. Whilst ‘Freedom to’ pertain to actions, which are restrained but which many political philosophers argue ought not to be restrained. Some activities that could be restrained include drug taking, homosexuality, incest and prostitution. In every society, one cannot rule out the possibility of conflict of individual interests within that society. In such a context, absolute freedom is neither possible nor desirable. This is why laws exist to regulate individual relationships with the state and vice versa. An unlimited liberty of individuals therefore poses serious danger to social existence as this can promote chaos in the society.

If there is going to be a need for relative freedom for an individual in the state, there must be justice.

The definition of Justice seems to be frequently given by philosophers of all ages with different meanings. Thrasymacus defined justice as the interest of the stronger. That is, an ability to do what one wants to do, irrespective of the objection or resistance of others. For anything to be just, the minimum requirement is that it does not involve any act, which brings injustice to others. Justice entails the existence of a relationship and it is not an attribute of the actions of a person alone. For an action to be just, it must be perceived to be so by all those who are linked in that relationship. It was for this reason that the existentialist’s definition of justice is unacceptable.

**Existentialists** defined a just action as that which is most enabling of the species as measured with the most advanced man. The problem here is that justice is regarded as an individual attribute whereas it is a social web.

**The Naturalists** equally defines justice as an action or arrangement, which is in harmony with nature. The problem with this definition is that the natural order involves cruelty and deprivation. Animals and plants need to consume other things in nature in order to survive.

**Utilitarianism** **principle** equally calls for each individual to perform those actions, which will do more good for more people than any other. That means, only that which maximizes the amount of good and the numbers of people who benefit from it can be regarded as good, just or desirable. The problem with the principle of utilitarianism is that justice was defined intuitively. But justice should rather be defined in relation to actions or policies and their consequences.

**John Rawls**, in his book “A Theory of Justice”, said justice is the foundation of social structure, that is, of all institutions and relationships. To him, justice operates essentially in the area of distribution of goods i.e. wealth, positions, opportunities, liberty and self-respect

For a principle of justice to be beyond reproach, it must take note of certain human character or nature. He stated them as following:

* That every man has a good nature.
* That whatever those goods may be, their attainment requires primary goals such as wealth, position etc.
* That the satisfaction or the attainment of human goals depends on the possibility of engaging in social interactions.

The problem with this explanation, however is that, this hypothetical route to getting an ideal principle of justice can only apply in a new society. But it is not possible for established societies to revert to the state of innocence, which is required for the attainment of this ideal.

In sum, we have discussed that political obligation is concerned with the reason why people obey the law of the state. On the other hand, freedom is defined in terms of the positive attributes of self-constraints. This is the argument of Plato. Liberty must therefore be identified with what is good or right, that is, with the performance of moral duties. The state, therefore, constitutes the most important barrier to the exercise of freedom.

**Assessment**

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting.

1. What are the assumptions underlining the concept of liberty?

1. Explain why Liberty and Social Justice should be guaranteed and actualized by the Government?
2. Can Social Justice ever be achieved in the world?

**Study Session Ten**

**Democracy and Democratic Consolidation**

**Introduction**

World over, every tribe and race yearn for justice, liberty, equality and fundamental human rights; Democracy has been the major ground on which those conditions or virtues can be easily attained. Even though it is not every state of the world that practices democracy, some government that practice parts of democratic features equally claim to be democratic. Democracy, as it is being practiced in the United States of America, which symbolizes a perfect democracy, equally lacks some basic tenets of democracy. We will therefore explore the concept of democracy in this Study Session, in a bid to clear the misconceptions surrounding it.

**Learning Outcome**

At the end of this session, you would be able to: explain the components of democracy; point out how democracy is practiced in contemporary time; discuss the importance of democracy; explain the factors that promote democratic principles in any state.

**Democracy**

The most widely known definition of democracy is the one articulated by the former American President, Abraham Lincoln. He described democracy as government by the people of the people and for the people. Do you agree with this position? Identify five authors / literatures / academic resource that buttress your position.

Democracy, in Ancient Greek means ‘rule by the people’. It is now universally accepted that democracy requires more than elections and majority rule. In addition to the exercise of basic political rights, like the right to vote and holding of free and fair elections, democracy involves respect for legal entitlements; respect for the right to free expression (and uncensored media); the right to associate freely and hold public discussions; the right to organize political movements of protests. Another classical definition of democracy was offered by Samuel P. Huntington who conceives a political system as being democratic; “to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections, in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote’’. This became the dominant way in which democracy was conceived. Despite the fact that scholars might have emphasized different aspects of it, there is a general consensus that liberal democracy has some basic principles, namely; citizen participation, equality, political tolerance, accountability, transparency, regular free and fair elections, economic freedom, control of the abuse of power, a bill of rights, the separation of the powers of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, accepting the result of elections, human rights, a multiparty system and the rule of law. No doubts, electoral democracy advances social and political rights. However, this concept tends to give greater premium to the professionalization of public policy, with a strong emphasis on political parties and civil society. This approach loses sight of the fact that citizens make democracy. It can also be aptly captured the adverse implications for citizens. According to him; “When politics become the property of professional elites, bureaucrats and consultants, most people are marginalized in the serious work of public affairs. Citizens are reduced to secondary roles as demanding consumers or altruistic volunteers. Moreover, with the transformation of mediating institutions…, such as civil society think-tanks … this became technical service providers – citizens lost all stake and standing in the public world.” Consequently, the question of democracy has largely neglected issues of economic justice - basic needs, such as access to food, shelter, medical care and housing. In the absence of equal opportunity for all citizens to these essentials for human existence, the equality being stressed in liberal democracy is defeated. Gordon (1998) poignantly captured that danger for democracy:

“Democratic citizenship is undermined if there is too great a contradiction between the egalitarian norms of a democratic polity and the inequalities of individuals and groups in civil society. Glaring inequalities undermine democracy in two basic ways; first, by fueling social discontent and political instability and, second, through the persistence of poverty, by excluding more or less extensive sections of the population from access to the political process and its fruits.”

Democracy must be made to deliver some economic empowerment and a higher state of living for the people. A democracy that cannot deliver on the basic needs of the people will be short-lived. Thus in the view of some scholars, socio-economic justice is at the heart of democracy. To maximize results, however, citizens will have to organize themselves to be able to participate in networks of consultative decision-making. The CSOs have a task of not just ensuring that liberal democracy thrives. They must ensure that it also encompasses improving the citizens’ socio-economic conditions in a way that will lead to a qualitative improvement in their material conditions.

**Elements or Properties of Democracy**

There are several elements of democracy. These amongst many are: (a) Liberty (b) Equality (c) Constitutionalism (d) Periodic, Free and Fair Elections (e) Fundamental Human Rights (f) Transparency and accountability in governance (g) Free Press (h) Independent Judiciary

1. **Liberty** connotes the opportunity to choose or participate in choosing
2. **Equality** connotes that the choice of a citizen or his opportunity to choose is as good as that of any other person.

Schumpeter for example argued that liberty and equality are not necessarily part of democracy and that in all democratic systems; there are necessary limitations with respect of the qualification and circumstance of voters.

And as for equality, Schumpeter argued that the relationship between the voter and the candidate is that slightly more affluent people in the society are able to make claims either directly or indirectly.

1. Constitutionalism refers to strict adherence to the provisions of the constitution irrespective of whose ox is gored. Constitutionalism is therefore a necessity in any democratic system.
2. Periodic, Free and Fair Elections implies that the citizens or electorates are constitutionally permitted to freely choose by way of elections their representatives in governance periodically. There must be a constitutional and statutory periodic date chosen for the elections of peoples’ representatives into political offices.
3. Fundamental Human Rights, just as liberty and equality, imply that the constitutionally provided rights of the citizens and resident aliens are well respected by the government.
4. Transparency and Accountability require that the activities and workings of governance must not be shrouded in secrecy. The government must be transparent and open to the people on how it is carrying out its task of governance that has been committed in his hands by the people. More importantly, the government must be accountable to the people that have given it the mandate to govern and rule of their behalf.
5. Free Press remains one of the important necessity to sustain and consolidate democracy. Without free press, the system of government in operation cannot then be regarded as a democracy.
6. Independent Judiciary implies the right of the judiciary without any fear or favour is free to entertain cases and adjudicate in legal disputes.

**Typologies of Democracy**

The two major types of democracy are (a) Direct (b) Indirect Democracy.

**Direct Democracy**

This is the government formed through the general consent of everybody living in that society. The historical location where this form of government took place was in Greek City – State – Athens. Here everybody young and old, female and male gather together to take decisions. This was made possible because of their population, which was not too large at the time, but despite this some people such as slaves were exempted.

**Indirect Democracy**

This is the government formed through the people’s representatives. In fact, this form of democracy is the most common today. The representatives that are elected by the electorate (people that vote) take decisions on behalf of the larger populace. In Nigeria, we practice indirect democracy because we often elect one representative either to the

**Practice of Democracy in Modern Times**

Democracy, which has been described as government through the consent of the people has some limitations. For instance, due to the large number of people in the system, everybody cannot participate in taking decisions. This section would therefore explore an alternative form of democracy, that is, representative democracy.

Democracy today either in a one party or in a multiparty system involves the delegation of powers to consenting individuals by the majority, essentially through the process of election. The representatives elected by the voters are supposed to serve the interests of the voters. This makes the government to be described as a **trust** with the elected and the representatives as **trustees** and the voters as **trustors**. That was the explanation of liberal theorists represented by John Locke and J.S. Mill.

The major challenge of representative democracy is that the representatives sometimes develop ideas and interests, which are not necessarily compatible with that of those who vote for them. In fact, the tendency is that the longer a representative serves the more the likelihood of his deviation from the direction preferred by his electors. That means, the representative may use his superior knowledge of government to define for the people what their interests should be rather than the people determining for the representatives what interests he should pursue or promote.

It is worthy of note to state here that a representative is different from a delegate. A delegate is empowered by the higher power to carry out certain specified duties. The representative in another sense is elected for a specific period of time to serve his own people.

Another major problem with the representative democracy is the interference of political parties and associations i.e. Pressure Groups. Either in the one party or multi party systems, political parties and pressure groups have become instruments for aggregating opinion. They equally mobilize the people for participation in the affairs of the state. The influence of these groups has limited the ability of people to express their interest, as well as their ability to participate.

**Justification for Democracy**

Let us examine some of the reasons why many citizens and government of the world prefer democracy to other forms of government. The reasons include the following:

1. It helps to safeguard the Fundamental Human Rights.
2. It leads to the emergence of political parties which create the avenue for majority rule.
3. The election that is periodically conducted to elect representatives’ gives the people power of choice.
4. The existence of political parties in a democratic setting makes the changing of government less cumbersome.
5. Because of the power of choice in democracy, it promotes equality of all citizens.

**Factors that Promote Democracy**

1. The supremacy of the constitution: For democracy to be promoted in the country, the constitution, which embodied all the laws, rules and principles that guide the general conduct of the citizens and the government, must be supreme. That means everybody in the state must be subjected to the laws in the constitution. There should be nobody that would be above the law of the land. The law must be the all in all of the land and must be seen to take effect on all and sundry.

2. Rule of Law: In every organized society where democracy is practiced, rule of law is being followed. This is a principle where the law is made to take its cause, both on the poor and the rich. Nobody is made to be exempted from the actions of the state laws, for there is what is called equality before the law.

3. Separation of Power: Separation of power takes effect when the three arms of government that is the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary functions separately, though for the common good of all citizens. When this is obtainable in government administration, one arm therefore tends to serve as check or watchdog to another arm of government. This way, people are not denied of their rights and privileges. Democracy is therefore encouraged in this circumstance.

4. Existence of many Political Parties: Democracy is about the choice of the common good for the majority of people. That is why the existence of many political parties will further enhance the choice of people in a political setting. The existence of many political parties will promote democracy in the country.

**5.** Periodic Election: Democracy will further be promoted in the country when elections are conducted periodically to change government in a smooth manner. This way tyranny and despotism is discouraged in government.

1. Independent Electoral Commission: An umpire that will monitor and conduct a free and fair election must not be under the control or influence of any governmental administration. When this is done, the people or the electorates are encouraged to trust and depend on the activities of the electoral commission. This will further promote democracy.
2. Independence of Judiciary: The body that interprets the laws should be a given free hand to operate without any interference from both the executive and legislature. The judiciary is vested with the responsibility of interpreting the laws in the country. When this body is given a free hand to operate without any interference from both the executive and the legislature, democracy is more protected and promoted.

**Study Session Summary**

In this Study Session you learned that in spite of the limitations that surround democracy, it is still the most**-**rational form of government. It is the form of government that gives the same opportunity to everybody in the state. That is why it is regarded as the government through the general consent of people. The two major types of Democracy are direct and indirect democracy. The most feasible way of attaining democracy in modern times is through representative government. However, there are some limitations, which may reduce the ability of the electorate to control their representatives. Political Parties, Pressure Groups and Mass Media are some of the instruments that limit the interests and ability to participate directly in the governance by the people. Every practiced democracy is expected to exhibit equality and liberty.

**Assessment**

1. What are the elements of democracy?

2. “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried” - Winston Churchill. Discuss

3. Describe the factors that promote the existence of democracy in any state.

4. What problems confront the democracy of Nigeria / democracy in Africa?

**Study Session Eleven**

**Interests Groups**

**Introduction**

In every organized society, there are categories of people who are bound together by common interests to hear their views at any particular period in time in order to achieve a common goal. Majorly, these people come under a common umbrella, generally called Pressure Groups. Pressure groups will form the basis of our discussion in this Study Session.

**Learning Outcome**

When you have studied this session, you should be able to: discuss at least four types of pressure groups; highlight the importance of pressure groups to the society; outline the mode of pressure groups’ operation; explain the meaning of Pressure group.

**Interest Group/Pressure Group**

A Pressure group is defined as an organized group, which influences government decisions socially or economically without necessarily entering into election activities for the control of government. Pressure Groups attempt to reinforce or change the direction of government policy, but they do not try as it were, to be in government. They are sometimes referred to as Interest Groups.

**Types of Pressure Groups**

Some of the specified Pressure Groups that can be noticeable in any organized state include the following:

1. Economic Pressure Groups: These are mostly manufacturer associations like Chambers of Commerce and Cocoa Farmer’s Union. They mount pressure on government and at the same time influence the government on issues affecting their members.

2. Professional Pressure Groups: They are organized professional associations like Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Nigeria Bar Associations (NBA) and Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) among others.

3. Educational Pressure Groups: This group deals with matters affecting the education of the country.

4. Promotional Pressure Groups: This group is out to champion the course for an improved condition of living or the people’s welfare. This action may not necessarily benefit its members, but is usually of benefit to the less privileged in the society. For example, the Nigerian Bar Association gives free legal services to the less privileged in the society.

5. Religious Pressure Groups: This body includes the Christians, Moslems and Traditionalists that influence government decisions on religious matters.

6. Social Pressure Groups: They are generally out to promote the general welfare of their members. Some of these groups are Boys Scout and Rotary Club.

**Importance of Pressure Groups**

Some of the functions or the importance of Pressure Groups includes the following:

1. They offer useful suggestions and advice to the government.

2. They promote the general welfare of their members.

3. They act as an important link between the government and the people.

4. Pressure Groups act as watchdogs over public policies and administration.

5. They help to educate their members on their political rights especially when these rights are infringed upon by government’s decision.

6. Even though pressure groups do not contend in elections, they help to ensure smooth elections by showing concern at every stage of the elections such as endorsing candidates, issuing campaign propaganda, raising money etc.

7. Pressure groups like Chambers of Commerce, Mining, Agriculture and Industry and Trade Associations contribute immensely to the economic growth and development of a country.

8. Pressure groups influence and help to change some obnoxious policies of the government.

9. Some expert members of pressure groups serve government in different categories like tribunals, panels and committees.

10. Pressure groups serve as a platform through which people can express their public opinion.

11. They help in disseminating information on government policies to both their members and members of the public through their activities thereby, bridging the communication gap between the government and the people.

**Pressure Groups’ Modes of Operation**

Here, we are referring to the instruments the Pressure Groups employ to influence government decisions. These include the following:

1. Strike: A strike takes place when workers stop work and keep away from any activities of government.

2. Demonstration, which could be peaceful or violent.

3. Lobbying: Pressure groups lobby members of the legislature in order to pass laws that are favorable to their members.

4. Boycott: This is when the workers are ordered not to participate in government activities. This action makes government unpopular.

5. Consultation: Pressure groups consult and are consulted by government officials before some policies are made and executed.

6. Campaigns and Propaganda: It is not only the political parties that campaign. Pressure groups too mount effective campaigns and propaganda by giving useful information in order to win and influence public opinion and achieve their goal.

7. Alliance with Political Parties: Pressure groups associate, join or unite with political parties in order to influence election results and for certain programmes to be incorporated into the political parties manifestoes.

Study Session Summary

You have learnt that pressure Groups are groups with common interests whose major goal is to influence government decisions. Various Pressure Groups employed various means to influence government decision on behalf of their members for improved welfare services. They serve as a voice to the majority of the unheard members of the public.

**Assessment Questions**

1. What is the relevance of pressure groups in Nigeria?

**Study Session Twelve**

**Civil Society**

**Introduction**

This lesson builds on the lesson on pressure groups; it specifically examines the operation of diverse groups as civil society in the consolidation of Democracy in the Nigerian State.

**Lesson Outcome**

At the end of the lesson, the students would be able to understand and appreciate the activities of society in contribution to Democracy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria

**Content**

Scholars generally agree that civil society occupies an important place in the process of democratic consolidation and economic development (Falola et al., 1986). For this reason, researchers have shown considerable interest in the role being played civil society in the process of democratic consolidation.

The concept of civil society in Nigeria and the struggle for political independence dated back to the colonial era, though repeated attempts to sustain and consolidate democratic government faltered. However, the 1980s witnessed the activation of their operations in the quest for democratic governance. Governments, hitherto unaccountable and despotic, became even more authoritarian as they embarked upon unpopular, belt-tightening programs. The abuse of office, executive lawlessness and reckless political decisions became the order of the day, as the state became the property of the ruling class. This activated a civil society, determined to check the erosion of rights, freedom and civic values. The conjecture was characterized by intense restlessness among citizens and civic groups, which demanded for democracy, participation and justice. Many of these groups like the Campaign for Democracy (CD), Civil Liberties Organizations, (CLO), Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR), Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), etc, were instrumental in the restoration of civil rule. It would be recalled that between 1993 and 1999, in collaboration with the Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC), these groups fought the Nigerian military to a standstill. They mobilized students and workers for civil disobedience, strikes and protest marches across the country. Many in their ranks were killed and maimed, while some lucky few were able to make good their escape into exile.

**How Civil Society can aid Democracy and bring about Democratic Consolidation (The Role of Civil Society in the Development of Democracy and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria)**

In recent times in Nigeria, CSOs executed diverse programs such as voter education, election observation, campaign finance monitoring, election tribunal monitoring, electoral reform advocacy, conflict mitigation, access to justice, public interest litigation, budget tracking, constituency outreaches as well as research and documentation in thematic areas of democracy and governance. These initiatives have made some impact on Nigeria’s nascent democracy, as reports of activities carried out by CSOs have become the barometer through which international organizations and governments assess the democratic temperature of the country. The resurgence of ethnic and religious conflict all over the country has once again fueled pessimism concerning not only the future of democracy in Nigeria, but also the existence of Nigeria as a political entity. The way the Nigerian government resolves these challenges will determine whether Nigeria’s fledgling democracy is transient or sustainable and, more importantly, whether Nigeria disintegrates or reconfigures itself as a nation-state. In the light of these concerns, it has become imperative to reconsider the concept of civil society as a possible catalyst to Nigeria’s democratic consolidation.

Larry Diamond, one of the leading authorities in democratic studies, views civil society as that realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, largely self-supporting, autonomous from the state and bound by a legal order and a set of shared rules. He further stated that it is distinct from society in general and that it involves citizens acting together and collectively in the public sphere, to express their interest, passion and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state and hold local state officials accountable. Diamond thus distinguished civil society from the society in general. Basically “interest” remains the defining factor, because it is the defined interest that constrains members to act collectively in actualizing their objectives. These interest in some cases runs contrary to state policies. Diamond further ascribes certain functions to civil society in a democratic set-up. These include providing the basis for the limitation of state power. It is supposed to supplement the role of political parties by stimulating political participation, promote the development of political attribute and creating channels other than political parties to articulate, aggregate and represent their interests. However, civil society is rooted in the notion of “natural law”. The central hypothesis being that man is not by nature ordered towards society, rather he orders himself towards society and promoted by self-interest. These could be seen from the view expressed by the social contract theorists as Thomas Hobbes, John Locks and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Civil society is therefore an indispensable tool in the consolidation of democracy due to the fact that citizens can actualize their goals through their operations in the state. It has been able to show too, that the law of natural right is the precursor to the development of civil society, though in Nigeria and other third world nations, they came up as a result of dissatisfaction with the state.

To understand the role of civil society in consolidating Democracy in Nigeria, certain indicators would be studied here. They include;

A. Ensuring credible Elections

B. Guarding against democratic threats.

C. Influencing public policy

D. Responding to Social Interests/ Empowering citizens

E. Ensuring credible Elections

It has been noted that the 1999 and 2003 elections saw CSOs conducting voters’ education programs. Citizens were mobilized to come out to vote for candidates of their choice. Unfortunately, citizens came out but were disappointed when they realized that in some cases, votes did not count. Despite this, there is a need for CSOs to build more efforts on voters’ education, because, it is basic to engaging other strategies. CSOs indeed trained some citizens and communities on the protection of mandate in preparation for the 2007 elections. This, according to him, involved a series of tools and strategies that citizens could use to engage political parties, security agents and electoral officers to prevent manipulation of electoral franchise. It has equally been revealed that the 2007 elections and bye-elections were characterized by massive rigging, ballot snatching, violence and other corrupt practices. The late President, Musa Yar’Adua, actually admitted that the elections were flawed, despite the inputs of CSOs in the system. Furthermore, during the preparations for the 2011 elections, CSOs embarked on voters’ education. Some other CSOs deployed thousands of observers to follow through and report on the electoral process. It has been noted that some members of the civil society also shed the toga of being armchair critics by joining the political fray to contest elections.

Examples are; Governors Adams Oshiomole and Kayode Fayemi. Nevertheless, it was observed that there were violent protests in the North, as the Northern political elites claimed that the elections were rigged by the ruling party. Many lives and properties were lost in the carnage. This implies that the CSOs need to step up on voters’ education in Northern Nigeria. The challenge in this regard, however, has been the persistent religious crisis and insecurity in that part, which has made it difficult for CSOs to have the needed results.

**Guarding against Democratic Threats**

Ojo (2011) stated that ex-President Obasanjo’s administration had attempted to tinker with the

Nigerian constitution in 2005/2006, to insert a tenure elongation clause, but the plot was primarily shot down by the parliamentarians with pressure from the civil rights groups. Thereafter, in 2010, CSOs rose to the occasion to demand for the recognition of the then Vice President G. Jonathan as the Acting President, when late President Musa Yar’Adua was ill disposed abroad. CSOs such as the Save Nigeria Group and Enough is Enough Group actually seized the initiative and demanded for a resolution that will give due recognition to vice president as acting president. This led to the adoption of the now popular ‘Doctrine of Necessity’ by the National Assembly in March 2010. It should be noted that the CSOs need to cover more grounds in this role. For instance, they have not done much to curb the unprecedented corruption among the ruling class, which has become a great threat to the survival of democracy in Nigeria.

**Influencing Public Policy**

Five key policy areas will be examined;

i. Human Rights-Child Labor and Human

Trafficking: - Here, children are exploited and forced to work to supplement family incomes. The consequence is that the child is unable to access education, which hinders his or her development.

CSOs working on human rights and children’s rights issues partnered with the state for the enactment of the Child Rights Law. The legislation has been passed in 11 states of the Federation. The CSOs need to work towards success in the remaining states. Secondly, People involved in the human trafficking, export young people across for purposes of prostitution and related forms of exploitation. The establishment of the National Agency for the Prohibition in Trafficking of Persons (NAPTP) in the prevention of illegal trafficking of persons for forced labour indicates some success by CSOs. This notwithstanding, it is strongly expressed that state actors need to recognize CSOs as partners for meaningful impact in other spheres of human right abuses such as the boom in the sale of new born babies in parts of the country.

ii. Right to Life and Properties; Reacting to the spate of bomb blasts by the Boko-Haram Islamic sect and the wanton destruction of lives and properties in northern Nigeria in recent times, Nigerian CSO, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), said the federal government's failure to prevent the continuing violence and unnecessary loss of lives was a serious breach of its international obligations to protect citizens’ rights. The organization’s agitation has received international attention. However, it has been observed that the CSOs were unable to embark on aggressive street protests, which could have drawn more support in the fight against terrorism, which is now the greatest threat, not only to democracy, but the corporate existence of the Nigerian state.

iii. Monitoring the National Budgeting Process According to CSI (2007), CSOs have established the Budget Law and the fiscal responsibility initiative to help monitor the process. They are also working with the legislature to develop inclusive budget laws at national and regional levels. Despite these initiatives, it is still early to evaluate the effectiveness of CSOs in the national budgeting process, since they have only been active in this area since 2003.

iv. Campaign for Legal Reforms in the National

Assembly: - The recently passed Freedom of Information Act would have been a mirage but for a CSO called Media Rights Agenda, which alongside others, sponsored a private member bill on the issue at the National Assembly. An ongoing struggle of CSOs is the campaign for a new constitution for the country through the convocation of a sovereign national conference (SNG). This has not been achieved because the issue has been given an ethnic coloration among the CSOs.

v. Guarding Against Unpopular Policies-; It is observed that when the federal government unilaterally removed subsidy on petrol or Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), with its attendant increase in fuel prices and hardships on the citizens in January 2012, CSOs, led by the NLC, mobilized Nigerians from all walks of life for what they described as the “mother of all protests”. The government reversed the policy to N97.00 /litre, in favor of the citizens, thereby forestalling unnecessary pressures that could jeopardize the democratic process. However, nothing has been done on the issue of gross mismanagement and corruption in the oil sector, which prompted the fuel crisis in the first place.

**Responding to Social Interests/Empowering Citizens**

CSOs have been involved with issues related to poverty, illiteracy, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, environmental degradation. For instance, past studies show that CSOs were involved in the provision of micro-credit programs for women, building networks and coalitions of women at local level, to encourage participation in governance, provision of home care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). However, this success is mainly in the southern part of the country, as the north has to contend with numerous religious and socio-political unrests, which hinders these initiatives there. Notably, the activities of CSOs have led to increased awareness among widows’ rights and the elimination of traditional laws relating to widows in the South-East region. More efforts geared at ensuring better gender related legislation would ensure more sustained positive outcome.

**Assessment Questions**

1. What are the roles of Civil Society in Democracy in Nigeria?

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