

TOPIC: ELECTIONS AND VOTERS RESPONSIBILITIES

WEEK: 6

Meaning of Election, Voter and Voting

Election is a process of selecting the representatives of the people in government through ballots. It is the process in which the qualified citizens of a democratic nation come up to contest for political offices and the citizens vote for candidates of their choice.

Voters or electorates are the qualified citizens who can vote in an election to choose their representatives.

Types of Election

- i. Direct election: This is a form of election whereby electorates cast their vote directly without any intermediaries.
- ii. Indirect election: This is a form of election whereby the electorates vote for representatives who will in turn vote in a final balloting for their political leaders.
- iii. Secret ballot: It is a system of voting in which electorate cast their votes for their choice candidates without anybody knowing their choice.
- iv. Open ballot: This is the method of voting where by electorates vote openly to choose their candidates. Through raising of hands or queuing behind their choice candidates.
- v. General election: This is a form of election where all political offices are contested for.
- vi. By-election: This is an election that is usually conducted to fill a vacant executive position or seat in the Parliament.
- vii. Referendum: Here the people vote either “yes” or “no” to make a decision on a particular burning issue. It is not to choose any candidate but to ascertain the position of the citizens on a particular public issue that will affect their lives.
- viii. Run-off election: This type of election is conducted to decide a winner in an election when there is no clear winner.

Basic Qualification for Election

A citizen is said to be qualified to contest for a political office or vote for someone if he or she meets the following criteria:

- a. He must be a citizen of Nigeria.

- b. He/ she has attained the age of 18 years and above.
- c. He or she has resided/ worked or an indigene of the local government area where the registrations centre is situated.
- d. He or she presents himself or herself to registration officers of INEC for registration as a voter.
- e. The person is not mentally unstable.
- f. He or she has not register in more than one registration centre.

Importance of Election

- i. It is the only avenue where all the electorates participate in government by choosing their leaders who will represent their interests.
- ii. It provides the only avenue for electorate to accept the authority of their leaders after they are elected by popular votes.
- iii. It helps citizen to be politically educated on the electoral processes.
- iv. Through elections a serving government can know the mind of the electorates and test their popularity in election.
- v. It brings development of social amenities in the society.