

**CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND ITS EFFECTS ON
LEGISLATIVE OUTCOMES IN OGBARU FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY OF
ANAMBRA STATE**

BY

Azubuike Michael AGWUNOBI

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**BEING A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
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DECLARATION

I, Azubuike Michael Agwunobi, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled: ‘‘Citizens’ Participation in Democratic Process and its Effects on Legislative Outcomes in Ogbaru Federal Constituency of Anambra State’’ has been carried out by me, conducted under the supervision of Dr. John Olanrewaju. All information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and list of bibliography provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for the award of degree at NILDS/UNIBEN postgraduate programmes or any other institution.

Azubuike Michael AGWUNOBI

.....

Name of Student

.....

Signature

.....

Date

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this dissertation is original and was written by Azubuike Michael Agwunobi. It has been examined and found to have met the requirements for the award of a Master's in Parliamentary Administration of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies/University of Benin Postgraduate Programmes.

.....

Dr. John Olanrewaju
Supervisor

.....

Sign and Date

.....

Dr. Wali Usman
Internal Examiner

.....

Sign and Date

.....

Dr. Asimiyu Gbolagade ABIOLA
Director Department of Studies/Chief Examiner

.....

Sign and Date

.....

External Examiner

.....

Sign and Date

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation entitled: ‘‘Citizens’ Participation in Democratic Process and its Effects on Legislative Outcomes in Ogbaru Federal Constituency of Anambra State’’ by Azubuike Michael Agwunobi meets the regulations governing the award of a Master’s Degree in Parliamentary Administration of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies/University of Benin Postgraduate Programmes. And was approved for its contribution to knowledge.

.....

Dr. John Olanrewaju
Supervisor

.....

Sign and Date

.....

Dr. Wali Usman
Internal Examiner

.....

Sign and Date

.....

Dr. Asimiyu Gbolagade ABIOLA
Director Department of Studies/Chief Examiner

.....

Sign and Date

.....

External Examiner

.....

Sign and Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Almighty God in Heaven, from whom my help comes.
For I know that I will live to see the LORD's goodness in this present life. Trust in the LORD.
Have faith; do not despair. Trust in the LORD.

I also dedicate this research work to my lovely family.

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed Citizens' Participation in Democratic Process and its Effects on Legislative Outcomes in Ogbaru Federal Constituency of Anambra State. The study was provoked by the need to evaluate the effects of citizens' participation on the legislative outcomes. The specific objectives of the study were to: examine the mechanisms that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process; assess the effects of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcomes; determine the mechanisms that would bring the citizens' closer to Members of the Parliament and its processes; find out the mechanisms that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public and finally, determine the factors that would discourage citizens' participation in democratic processes.

This research adopted a descriptive survey research design. To ensure comprehensive and accurate findings, this study adopted both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Primary sources of data were employed, meaning that information was obtained directly by the researcher from original, firsthand respondents. For the quantitative aspect, structured questionnaires served as the primary data collection instrument. Meanwhile, qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

The findings of the study revealed that an average of 97.4% of the respondents believed that Good Governance, Openness, Active Participation, Accountability and Effective Policy are strong mechanisms that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. However, an average of 2.6% had a contrary opinion.

It was also ascertained that the effects of citizens' participation in the democratic process on the legislative outcome cannot be overemphasized, having considered an average of 96.8%. The effectiveness and quality of laws churned out from the parliament as the

custodian of democracy largely depends on the effect of citizens' participation in the democratic process, which in turn breeds Timely, Efficient and Effective legislative outcome that meets the needs and aspirations of the people.

It was observed that Town Hall Meeting, Constituency Office, Keeping In Touch, and Constituency Casework with an average of 98.2% were the effective mechanisms that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its process.

It was ascertained that Outreach Approach, Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements, Special Events and Holiday Activities, Conducting Opinion Polling and Surveying Constituent Needs and Social Media with an average of 98.2% strongly agreed that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. Also, an average of 1.8% had a contrary opinion.

Overall, the findings reveal a consensus among the majority of respondents on the critical challenges affecting democratic engagement in Ogbaru Federal Constituency. With an average of 98.6% of participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the identified factors, it is evident that these issues require urgent attention. The data affirms that any barrier to citizen participation must be systematically addressed, as democracy is rooted in the sovereignty and active involvement of the people. Meanwhile, only a marginal average of 1.5% of respondents opposed these assertions, indicating widespread recognition of the existing obstacles. The study concluded that, Citizens' participation in the democratic process involves engaging in various political activities such as voting in elections, participating in decision-making, attending public hearings, and protesting. These activities are fundamental to the democratic process, as they contribute to collective responsibility (Botwinick 1992).

Despite challenges such as poor leadership, corruption, lack of electoral reforms, inefficient judicial systems, a faulty constitution, and electoral violence, citizens continue to demand good governance. This includes meeting their needs and aspirations without

corruption, impunity, or disregard for the rule of law. A proper evaluation of good governance should focus on how well it ensures human rights, provides infrastructure, social amenities, healthcare, education, affordable housing, and works towards lifting citizens out of poverty, ultimately improving their quality of life.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In democratic societies, citizens occupy a central position as they can influence governance either directly or via elected officials. This involvement enables them to contribute to the formulation, adoption, and execution of laws and policies that directly impact their lives. Therefore, active public involvement is a vital feature of the relationship between citizens and the state in democratic settings (Roberts, 2004; Jacobs et al., 2009; Bryson et al., 2013). However, the scope of citizen engagement extends beyond this dynamic. Governance itself includes both formal and informal mechanisms for decision-making and the management of issues affecting the collective welfare (Kooiman, 2003; Bevir, 2013). These processes often unfold through complex and evolving networks composed of governmental bodies, private enterprises, non-profits, and civil society organizations (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004; Agranoff, 2007; Provan & Kenis, 2008). As governance has increasingly moved beyond the traditional bounds of government, the breadth and necessity of citizen engagement have expanded as well (Osborne, 2010; Bryson et al., 2014; Morgan & Cook, 2014). This study primarily examines the interaction between citizens and governmental institutions in this evolving governance framework.

Public participation in a democratic context cannot be meaningfully assessed without accounting for the broader constitutional and institutional settings in which it takes place, particularly the electoral processes that enable such participation. Elections are fundamental to modern democratic systems, serving as the principal mechanism through which governments remain answerable to the people. The effectiveness of this system hinges largely on the rules that structure electoral competition and access to political office (Powell, 2000).

Although citizen engagement is widely encouraged in governance discourse, both theoretical and practical challenges persist. These include defining the standards of meaningful and legitimate participation, ensuring inclusivity and fair representation, balancing expert knowledge with lay perspectives, and designing participatory mechanisms that are suited to specific governance environments.

Citizen involvement touches upon critical concepts like transparency and accountability, which are often seen as core motivations behind encouraging public input. Issues surrounding representation, legitimacy, power dynamics, and mechanisms to mitigate exclusion are central to evaluating the quality and legitimacy of participatory processes (Young, 2000). The attention given to public participation in governance gained prominence during the 1960s, becoming a routine aspect of policymaking by the early 2000s (Bingham et al., 2005). Over time, the debate shifted from whether public participation is necessary to how it can be optimized to enhance decision-making, democratic citizenship, and social inclusion (Bryson et al., 2013). The variability in participatory methods has since spurred significant interest in the design and implementation of engagement processes (Sandfort & Quick, 2013).

The phrase “citizen participation” was once commonly interchanged with “public participation,” but the former has lost traction due to its exclusion of individuals without formal citizenship and its limitation in capturing broader forms of civic involvement. Participation is now increasingly viewed not just as a right but also as a tool for civic empowerment, public value creation, and societal learning (Pateman, 1970; Mansbridge, 1999; Nabatchi, 2010; Boyte, 2011; Reich, 1990; Ansell, 2011). M. Moore (2014) suggests that in democratic systems, the collective citizenry defined through participatory processes is the most legitimate determinant of public value, particularly when public assets are at stake.

Not all participatory approaches involve deliberation; however, those that do emphasize dialogue, mutual understanding, and joint decision-making rather than mere

aggregation of opinions through voting or surveys (Reich, 1990; Roberts, 2004). Many of the practices found in citizen engagement overlap with collaborative public management strategies, where multiple stakeholders including government, non-profits, businesses, and community groups work together to address societal challenges and foster collective benefits (Bryson et al., 2006; Cooper et al., 2006; O’Leary & Bingham, 2009; Innes & Booher, 2010). This study is therefore motivated by the vital role of citizen participation in deepening democratic governance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The potential benefits of citizens’ participation in democratic processes are most evident when such engagement is well-structured and meaningfully implemented. However, despite a substantial body of research and practical experience, numerous instances of participatory failures continue to occur. A recurring issue relates to the legitimacy of public participation, often questioned in terms of representativeness, technical feasibility, and procedural fairness. When citizens perceive that participation is tokenistic or ineffective, it undermines trust in government and jeopardizes the implementation of policy decisions (Innes and Booher 2004; Ozawa 2012).

One core rationale for encouraging citizen involvement in governance is the pursuit of legitimacy in public policies measured through equity, effectiveness, and public acceptability (Fung 2006). For instance, the recent change of the Nigerian National Anthem did not reflect the wishes or inputs of a majority of citizens, particularly those in Ogbaru Federal Constituency of Anambra State. This act exemplifies how top-down policy changes can alienate citizens and discourage democratic engagement.

Trust is another crucial element of democratic participation, especially in settings marked by diverse and unequal interests. Although managing power imbalances in participatory processes is challenging (Huxham and Vangen 2005), the inclusion of

marginalized voices can enhance legitimacy, improve decision quality, and foster smoother implementation. Studies suggest that people are more likely to support policies if they perceive the process as procedurally just, even when the outcomes do not align with their personal preferences (Tyler and Degoe 1996). Conversely, when participation mechanisms such as public hearings or elections are perceived as mere formalities lacking genuine influence, they may be dismissed as “window dressing,” further eroding trust (Innes and Booher 2004; Arnstein 1969).

Moreover, participation in Nigeria’s democratic processes has increasingly become unequal, reflecting and reinforcing socio-economic disparities. Research shows that political engagement is disproportionately dominated by elites, with wealth and influence determining access and impact (Bartels 2016; Gilens 2014; Solt 2008). This imbalance limits representational equity and undermines the democratic promise of inclusive governance. Citizens’ participation is essential for curbing elite capture, preventing oligarchic tendencies, and sustaining equitable political institutions.

Participation is not just a procedural right; it is interlinked with social justice. As Parvin (2015) notes, democratic participation requires both the opportunity and capacity to engage. In more egalitarian societies such as Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, citizen engagement is high and stable, owing to low socio-economic inequality. Conversely, countries with higher income disparities, such as the USA, UK, and Canada, experience lower rates of political participation and more exclusionary democratic processes (Hay 2007).

In the Nigerian context, democratic participation, particularly in electoral processes, it is frequently undermined by clientelism and “machine politics,” where political positions are secured through prebendal arrangements and coercion (Ibeanu 2007). This system discourages broad-based participation and produces leaders who lack legitimacy and accountability.

It is against this backdrop that this study examined Citizens' participation in the democratic process and its effects on legislative outcomes in Ogbaru Federal Constituency of Anambra State.

1.3 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- (i) What are the mechanisms that would enhance active involvement of citizens in the democratic process?
- (ii) What are the effects of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcomes?
- (iii) What are the mechanisms that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes?
- (iv) What are the mechanisms that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public?
- (v) What are the factors militating against citizens' participation in democratic processes?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess citizens' participation in the democratic process and its effects on the legislative outcomes. The specific objectives of the study are:

- (i) To examine the mechanisms that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process;
- (ii) To assess the effects of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcomes;
- (iii) To determine the mechanisms that would bring the citizens' closer to Members of the Parliament and its processes;

- (iv) To ascertain the mechanisms that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public;
- (v) To investigate the factors that would discourage citizens' participation in democratic processes.

1.5 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study focused on citizens' participation in the democratic process and its effects on legislative outcomes in Ogbaru Federal Constituency of Anambra State. It looked at the mechanisms that would bring the citizens' closer to parliament and its processes, mechanisms that would increase communication between the legislators and the public, and finally, mechanisms that would enhance information flow between the citizens' and parliamentarians. In view of this, the study was limited to the scope of citizens' participation in the democratic process; the choice of citizens' participation is deliberate so as to understand its effects on legislative outcomes and the factors that increase citizens' participation in the democratic process. The study will focus on Ogbaru Federal Constituency.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The major constraint that militated against this study was the difficulty in accessing the instruments that could be used to measure citizens' participation in the democratic process and its effects on legislative outcomes. There were also constraints of understanding the factors that would increase communication between the legislators and the public. Finally, material on mechanisms that would enhance information flow between the citizens' and parliamentarians was limited, and combining my office work with the study was time-demanding and tasking.

However, to overcome these challenges, I was assisted with some documents from the library of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies and on my own, I was able to source some documents that assisted me in the study online. I was also able to

combine my official duty in the office with my studies, but sometimes it led to the late submission of my work in the office.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study would be useful to Legislators/Policy Makers, Civil Societies Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, the General Public and Students of National Institutes for Legislative and Democratic Studies to understand the importance of citizens' participation in democratic process, to foster good governance and hold the government accountable and the effects it has on the Legislative Outcomes. Also, it will provide a practical source of ideas that the Parliaments can adopt to measure the effects of the laws they made on the lives of the citizens.

It would further be a useful tool for institutions that are involved in programmes intended to strengthen citizens' participation in the democratic process. In addition, the study will expose and stimulate the citizens' need for active participation in the democratic process, most especially in electing Members of the Parliament both at the National Assembly and at the State Assembly because laws made by the Parliament are for the peace and good governance of the state which have effects in their (citizens') lives. This research work will also spur the General Public to further study, which will encourage active citizens' participation in the democratic process.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

A study of this scope would be incomplete without clearly defining the key concepts that serve as its foundation. The central terms relevant to this research include citizen, citizens' participation, democratic process, effect, legislative outcome, and legislative process.

Citizen: Citizenship refers to the status of being a full member of a country or political community, with corresponding rights and duties. A citizen is one who pledges loyalty to the state in exchange for protection, engaging in a reciprocal relationship where they fulfill obligations to the state in return for civil, political, and social rights.

Citizens' Participation: This term refers to community involvement in public decisions, especially in areas like elections, policy-making, planning, and implementation that directly affect the public. Roberts emphasizes that citizen participation involves citizens and administrators working together in leadership and decision-making roles.

Democratic Process: This refers to the practices that uphold democratic principles, including participation in decision-making, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. It encompasses the entire electoral cycle, from political party registration to election dispute resolutions.

Legislative Outcome: Legislative outcomes are the laws or resolutions passed by the legislature, aimed at benefiting the citizens.

Legislative Process: The legislative process involves the steps through which a proposed law becomes law.

1.9 Organization of Chapters

The study was structured into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study's background, the problem statement, the objectives, research questions, scope, delimitations, significance, conceptual analysis, and the study's organization. Chapter Two presents a review of related literature and the theoretical framework. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology. Chapter Four is the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. Finally, Chapter Five concludes the study with a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the study conducted an in-depth review of related literature based on the focus, concepts and nature of the study. It also presents the theoretical framework adopted by the study. Chapter two consists of conceptual review, empirical review and theoretical review.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1a Citizen: Overview

Sections 25, 26, and 27 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended) establish the various categories of citizenship in Nigeria, including those acquired by birth, registration, and naturalization. This means that any individual, regardless of their place of residence, is considered a Nigerian citizen if their parents or grandparents are Nigerian citizens. In addition, as a citizen, the individual is entitled to live, work, and fully participate in the democratic processes of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Citizenship refers to an individual's status as a full and responsible member of a political community. A citizen is defined as "a person who pledges allegiance to a state and, in return, receives protection from it. This relationship is reciprocal, where the individual must meet certain duties and obligations toward the state, in exchange for the civil, political, and social rights granted by the state" (Gauga, 2003:26).

Despite its importance, the implementation of citizen participation is often debated. It intersects with concepts of accountability, representation, and power. For citizen participation to be effective, the processes need to be designed in a way that ensures legitimacy and inclusivity, addressing concerns about exclusion and influence (Young 2000). Public

participation became a central focus in governance in the 1960s, and by the 2000s, it had become an expected feature in policymaking (Bingham et al. 2005). Today, there is widespread agreement that when executed well, citizen participation can significantly enhance decision-making, inclusion, and citizenship (Bryson et al. 2013), though the methods and implementation vary widely (Sandfort and Quick 2013).

2.1.1b Citizens' Participation in the Democratic Process

Democratic Process refers to the practices that uphold democratic principles, including participation in decision-making, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. It encompasses the entire electoral cycle, from political party registration to election dispute resolutions.

In democratic societies, citizens are regarded as vital participants, either directly or through elected representatives, in shaping the creation, adoption, and execution of policies and laws that impact them. The concept of citizen participation is, therefore, a crucial element in the relationship between the government and the public (Roberts 2004; Jacobs et al. 2009; Bryson et al. 2013). However, the scope of citizens' participation extends beyond this fundamental relationship, involving formal and informal decision-making processes within the context of governance. Governance includes not just government bodies but also various networks involving public agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and other entities working together to address collective societal issues (Kooiman 2003; Goldsmith and Eggers 2004; Agranoff 2007; Provan and Kenis 2008; Bevir 2013).

As governance evolves beyond traditional governmental structures, the need for citizen involvement also expands (Osborne 2010; Bryson et al. 2014; Morgan and Cook 2014). The focus of this study is on the role of citizen participation within government activities. As Botwinick (1992) asserts, "Participation encompasses various political actions such as decision-making, voting, protests, and involvement in public hearings, with a shared sense of collective responsibility." Citizen participation can either be direct or indirect, often through

representatives, in making decisions on policies, plans, or programs that affect them. Stakeholders, those individuals, groups, or organizations with an interest in the policy decisions, play an essential role in this process (Freeman 2010). Participation may take place through methods like town hall meetings, surveys, or public consultations, all of which are part of the broader governance engagement.

Furthermore, citizen participation cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader constitutional and institutional frameworks that define the democratic process. According to Powell (2000), “Elections, which are central to democracy, serve as a critical mechanism for ensuring governments remain accountable to their citizens.” They offer a structured way to elect leaders into political positions, which are crucial to maintaining a responsive government.

Despite its importance, the implementation of citizen participation is often debated. It intersects with concepts of accountability, representation, and power. For citizen participation to be effective, the processes need to be designed in a way that ensures legitimacy and inclusivity, addressing concerns about exclusion and influence (Young 2000). Public participation became a central focus in governance in the 1960s, and by the 2000s, it had become an expected feature in policymaking (Bingham et al. 2005). Today, there is widespread agreement that when executed well, citizen participation can significantly enhance decision-making, inclusion, and citizenship (Bryson et al. 2013), though the methods and implementation vary widely (Sandfort and Quick 2013).

While the term "Citizen Participation" has historically been used interchangeably with "Public Participation," there is a growing recognition that it excludes many participants, especially those without formal citizenship, and overlooks other forms of civic engagement. Citizen participation helps to refine public understanding, generate lasting public value, and foster social learning (Nabatchi 2010; Boyte 2011; Mansbridge 1999; Pateman 1970). In

democratic contexts, as Moore (2014) argues, it is through collective democratic processes that citizens, defined by their participation, determine what constitutes public value.

Some forms of citizen participation also involve deliberation, where decisions are made through dialogue and mutual learning rather than just the aggregation of individual preferences through voting (Reich 1990; Roberts 2004). Techniques for engaging stakeholders in public participation also intersect with collaborative public management and planning practices, where multiple entities work together to solve public issues and create public value (Bryson et al. 2006; Cooper et al. 2006; O’Leary and Bingham 2009; Innes and Booher 2010).

2.1.1c Importance of Citizens’ Participation in the Democratic Process

The International Peacebuilding Advisory Team in Public Participation and Citizen Engagement (Geneva, Inter Peace, 2015) itemized the importance of citizens’ participation as follows;

- (i) **Better sense of citizens’ priorities:** Governance actors must handle numerous issues simultaneously, and while this is often a theoretical ideal, understanding the priorities of the population can provide better guidance than relying solely on national elites or international development partners for the ‘sequencing’ of policies. While elites in capital cities may believe they understand the needs of the people, participatory efforts often reveal this assumption to be inaccurate or at least oversimplified. For example, during the 2003-2004 period in Macedonia, the political focus of elites was on minority ethnic issues triggered by a violent clash with armed Albanian groups. However, public consultations demonstrated that, for the citizens of Macedonia, the primary concern was unemployment and underemployment;
- (ii) **Clear comprehension of problems:** The way solutions are formulated often depends on how the problem is understood. In some cases, there is a lack of shared

understanding about both the problem and its contributing factors, which makes it difficult to reach a consensus on how to address it. For instance, public consultations conducted in Mali in 2014 revealed that the people of Mali did not view the issue of repeated armed rebellions in the North as stemming from the perceived marginalization of the northern populations. Instead, they saw it as a broader issue of state failure that equally affected people in the central and southern regions of the country;

- (iii) **Better insights in addressing a problem:** People who experience problems firsthand often have valuable insights into potential solutions. Limiting decision-making to the perspectives of elites or foreign experts can overlook a wealth of innovative ideas from those directly affected, thus missing out on creative suggestions that could effectively address the challenges at hand;
- (iv) **Reduced risk of elite interests or ‘special group interests dominating the policy priorities and the shape of the public policies:** Active civil society engagement with the parliament at the federal and state levels, protect the interests of the public at large against the influence, in new legislation, from private security companies and from the sellers of arms and ammunition;
- (v) **Public support for implementation:** Deciding new policies or policy changes or reforms is the easy part. The real challenge is implementation. The implementation gap is typically caused by a multitude of factors. But broad public involvement in the understanding of the problem and the process to decide a solution also builds a broad support base for implementation, which will continue to urge for the implementation obstacles to be overcome. Continued public participation may also draw timely attention to new problems that come up during the implementation itself. The just recently concluded protest of end to bad governance nationwide, for example, showed

people's deep unease about bad governance which has impoverished the citizens, leading to poverty, hunger and low standard of living;

- (vi) **Educate the public and develop a sense of citizenship:** People need information to develop a sense of confidence in the government before they will start demanding and exercising their rights as citizens. Education is the only weapon which you can use to change the world;
- (vii) **Builds trust in the authorities:** Governance becomes more effective when there is mutual trust between the authorities and citizens. In such an environment, cooperation is more likely, reducing the need for coercive measures. Unfortunately, a lack of trust in governmental authorities is common, often stemming from poor communication and perceived deficiencies in transparency, responsiveness, and accountability. Public participation plays a crucial role in bridging this gap, as it fosters trust between the government and the citizens. For instance, an Open Budgeting approach, where citizens are informed about public finances, involved in prioritizing projects, and hold authorities accountable for fund usage, can directly tackle distrust and strengthen civic engagement;
- (viii) **Contributes to the establishment of a more responsive and accountable state:** The relationship between rulers and the ruled is built on a socio-political contract that evolves through ongoing dialogue and negotiation. Public participation, which is a vital aspect of this contract, acts as a catalyst for national development. Moreover, the forces of globalization continue to reshape what national governments can achieve and how they operate. In more developed states, socio-political contracts, such as those governing healthcare or pensions, require periodic renegotiation to adapt to changing circumstances.

Similarly, Bryson et al. (2013) provided a list of the roles and importance of citizen involvement in a democratic society. The roles include:

- (i) Fulfilling legal requirements;
- (ii) Embodying the ideals of democratic participation and inclusion;
- (iii) Advancing social justice;
- (iv) Informing the public;
- (v) Enhancing understanding of public problems and exploring and generating potential solutions; and
- (vi) Producing policies, plans and projects of higher quality in terms of their content.

One of the core justifications for promoting public participation lies in its intrinsic value within democratic societies. Beyond influencing outcomes, participation is essential for expressing and shaping the ideals of citizenship, the public sphere, and shared societal values. Although engaging the public requires investments in time, skills, and financial resources, it yields substantial benefits (Roberts, 2004; Feldman & Quick, 2009). Citizens involved in participatory processes often bring fresh perspectives, valuable information, and a strong drive to tackle pressing issues (Renn et al., 1993). Fung (2007) added that “their input can broaden the understanding of both policymakers and the general public, leading to more informed and holistic decision-making.”

Moreover, public participation fosters a fairer allocation of limited public resources by ensuring that diverse voices are heard in the decision-making process (Abers, 2000; Simonsen & Robbins, 2000). Ansell (2011) concurred with Feldman and Quick (2009) in his assertion that public participation also “helps build a foundation for future governance challenges by cultivating trust, enhancing the legitimacy of policies, strengthening social ties, and

generating civic interest and policy knowledge.” These outcomes make public engagement not only a democratic necessity but a strategic investment in effective governance.

2.1.1d Key Features of Citizens’ Participation in the Democratic Process

- (i) **Legitimacy:** The effectiveness of public participation hinges on the quality and integrity of the process. When well-executed, participation can yield substantial benefits, but legitimacy remains one of the most debated aspects of participatory governance. Legitimacy involves several dimensions, including the inclusiveness and representativeness of the process, the feasibility and acceptability of its outcomes, and the fairness with which the process is conducted. If citizens perceive public participation as lacking legitimacy, it can lead to disillusionment and increased alienation from government institutions (Innes & Booher, 2004; Ozawa, 2012).

Evaluating legitimacy can be approached in multiple ways. One common lens is that of deliberative democracy, which emphasizes the quality of dialogue and interaction. Under this perspective, legitimacy requires that participants articulate their views clearly, reason logically, and rely on sound criteria when assessing options (Gastil, 2000; Jacobs et al., 2009). Another perspective focuses on the legitimacy of the policy outcomes themselves—whether the decisions are equitable, efficient, and practically implementable. From this standpoint, one of the strongest rationales for public participation is its potential to produce policies that align with the needs and expectations of the public (Fung, 2006).

A further dimension of legitimacy relates to the procedural quality of participation. Processes are seen as procedurally just when they embody core democratic principles such as fairness, transparency, responsiveness, and openness to a broad range of voices. When a process is seen as procedurally just, it increases public acceptance of decisions, even when the outcomes do not align with every stakeholder’s preferences (Innes & Booher, 2010). Procedural rationality, on the other hand, involves using relevant data and careful analysis to

guide decision-making. It enhances the substantive rationality of final decisions, ensuring they are coherent not only technically and legally, but also in terms of ethical standards and stakeholder support (Dean & Sharfman, 1993; Simon, 1996).

Trust is another critical factor tied to the legitimacy of participatory processes. In any setting involving diverse interests and power imbalances, establishing trust can be challenging (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Yet, inclusive processes that give real influence to marginalized groups can enhance trust, boost the quality of decisions, and improve implementation. Research shows that people are more likely to accept decisions they perceive as arising from a fair and inclusive process, even if the outcomes are not their ideal choice (Tyler & Degoe, 1996). This sense of ownership can reduce post-decision conflict, errors, and legal challenges (Laurian & Shaw, 2008).

Conversely, when participatory mechanisms are seen as superficial or manipulative, they often provoke public dissatisfaction and protest. Tokenistic efforts, where decisions are predetermined and participation is merely symbolic, undermine democratic credibility (Arnstein, 1969; Flyvbjerg, 1998). A common example is public hearings widely used as a tool for transparency and accountability, yet frequently dismissed as ceremonial exercises when the substantive decisions have already been made (Innes & Booher, 2004);

(ii) **Diversity and Inclusion:** Excluding the public from decision-making highlights ongoing struggles over who gets to participate in democratic processes and who is left out. One of the most persistent challenges in public participation is ensuring that a genuinely broad and diverse range of interests is represented, particularly those systematically marginalized by longstanding structural inequalities (Abers, 2000; Young, 2000; Parekh, 2002; Schlozman & Brady, 2012). Despite the rhetoric of inclusion, many participatory initiatives frequently engage only a narrow set of actors, the so-called “usual suspects.” These individuals are often those already familiar with

institutional languages, norms, and procedures and who are at ease within formal public settings.

Rather than fostering deep, inclusive deliberation, many participatory efforts tend to be superficial exercises focused on consultation and gathering feedback from the public without necessarily creating space for collaborative learning or mutual understanding (International Association for Public Participation, 2014; Innes & Booher, 2004). This limits the potential of participation to transform policy by integrating diverse perspectives in meaningful ways.

To counter this pattern, stakeholder analysis and the deliberate management of power dynamics and potential conflicts are essential. Such efforts help ensure that voices often excluded due to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, or other factors are at least acknowledged and, ideally, actively engaged in shaping outcomes (Bryson, 2004).

Traditional understandings of inclusion often focus on demographic representation, emphasizing the need for ethnic, racial, gender, or economic diversity among participants. This approach aims to match the participants to the broader population that will be affected by a policy. While important, this view can be complemented by an alternative that defines inclusion not just by who is present but by *how* diverse perspectives are engaged. According to this framework, inclusion is a dynamic process of integrating different viewpoints, institutional affiliations, and issue framings into a shared effort to better understand complex problems and co-create new solutions (Quick & Feldman, 2011; 2014). Based on this framework, Quick and Feldman (20014) asserted that inclusion becomes not just a matter of demographic presence but a purposeful process of dialogue and negotiation across lines of difference. It requires designing participation mechanisms that actively invite and accommodate diverse perspectives and encourage participants to reflect, adapt, and work

collaboratively. Only through such intentional and inclusive practices can public participation fulfill its democratic promise.

(iii) **Expertise and Participation:** Incorporating a wide array of perspectives into decision-making through citizen participation often raises apprehensions about the quality and legitimacy of outcomes. A central tension lies in balancing expert authority with public input. Governance processes have historically prioritized expert knowledge, formal, codified, and institutionally validated over lay knowledge, which is grounded in local, experiential, and context-specific understanding (Scott, 1998; Yanow, 2004; Ozawa & Susskind, 1985; Fischer, 2000). Critics argue that allowing public involvement in technical matters traditionally reserved for professionals may compromise outcomes. For instance, community members may support traffic solutions that engineers deem unsafe or economically unfeasible. Moreover, public forums can be dominated by vocal, well-resourced interest groups such as "Not In My Backyard" (NIMBY) movements who oppose socially beneficial initiatives like group homes or affordable housing (King et al., 1998).

Despite these concerns, experiential knowledge conveyed through public engagement brings essential values and insights to the table. Public participation enables civic learning, fosters empathy, and enriches policy decisions with diverse lived experiences (Feldman et al., 2006; Thacher, 2009; Innes & Booher, 2010; Ansell, 2011). As Fung (2006) emphasizes, understanding the “design space” of participation involves not only assessing the extent of influence participants have on decisions but also examining who is included and how they are engaged. Participation is not a monolithic act but a dynamic and multifaceted process that shapes and is shaped by democratic interactions.

Different participatory formats whether open to the general public, targeted at interested parties, or limited to select stakeholder representatives engender different senses of

ownership, identity, and legitimacy in governance (Quick & Feldman, 2011; Dewey [1927] 2012). For example, providing testimony at a one-time public hearing creates a distinct form of engagement compared to sustained deliberative dialogues. These divergent approaches influence how inclusive or exclusive the process becomes. When recruitment and facilitation fail to mitigate power imbalances, participation efforts can inadvertently reinforce elitism and marginalization (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Dasgupta & Beard, 2007).

The question of who participates and who is left out is not merely procedural but fundamentally political it determines which voices are deemed part of the public discourse and influences how citizens perceive their rights and agency (Young, 2000; Disch, 2012; Soss, 2005). This is especially significant in contemporary governance, which occurs not only within traditional bureaucratic hierarchies but also across complex networks of state and non-state actors.

Two of the most influential models in participatory governance the Arnstein Ladder (1969) and the International Association for Public Participation's spectrum (2014) highlight the distinction between government agencies and the public, focusing primarily on how the latter can influence the former (Nabatchi, 2012). Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" remains a seminal contribution, offering a framework for understanding varying degrees of citizen power in governance. Her model, shaped by the civil rights and grassroots organizing movements of the 1960s, called for empowering marginalized communities through direct action and structural transformation (Boyte, 1989; Polletta, 2012; Kahn, 1970; Alinsky, 1971; Pateman, 1970).

Yet, skepticism about the efficacy of public participation emerged early. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1969) questioned whether efforts to ensure "maximum feasible participation" might worsen existing racial and class disparities. Similarly, Arnstein (1969) was critical of participatory practices that appeared democratic on the surface but were in

reality superficial, manipulative, or tokenistic. These debates continue to shape contemporary discussions about inclusion, representation, and legitimacy in participatory governance, underscoring the need to critically assess who gets to participate, under what conditions, and to what effect.

2.1.1e Ladder of Citizens' Participation

Sherry Arnstein's seminal *Ladder of Citizen Participation* (1969) remains one of the most influential theoretical frameworks in the study of democratic engagement. In this model, Arnstein critiques how power is traditionally concentrated in the hands of public institutions and officials, often at the expense of genuine citizen involvement. Her framework challenges both practitioners and scholars to re-evaluate what constitutes meaningful participation in democratic processes. She argues that authentic citizen engagement necessitates a real redistribution of power, whether through fiscal resources, policy authority, or decision-making control. Without such structural shifts, participatory initiatives risk being performative, allowing elites to claim inclusivity while preserving existing power dynamics.

Arnstein provocatively asserts that citizen participation must be equated with citizen power. Participation that does not translate into tangible influence or benefits for marginalized groups, she contends, merely sustains the status quo under the guise of democratic inclusiveness. Her critique is particularly pointed when addressing how calls for participation are often embraced in theory but resisted in practice especially when such calls come from historically disenfranchised communities, including racial and ethnic minorities. As she notes, “participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless.” in the words of Arnstein.

The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you. Participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually

everyone. The applause is reduced to polite handclaps, however, when this principle is advocated by the have-not blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Eskimos, and whites. And when the have-nots define participation as redistribution of power, the American consensus on the fundamental principle explodes into many shades of outright racial, ethnic, ideological, and political opposition.

The Ladder of Citizen Participation *metaphorically illustrates varying levels of public influence*. The eight rungs of the ladder represent a continuum of power, moving from manipulative forms of non-participation at the bottom, through symbolic gestures of tokenism, and finally to authentic, empowered participation at the top. This continuum reflects the extent to which citizens can shape policy outcomes, access public resources, and exercise control over governance processes. For Arnstein, only the upper rungs marked by partnership, delegated power, and citizen control truly embody democratic ideals.

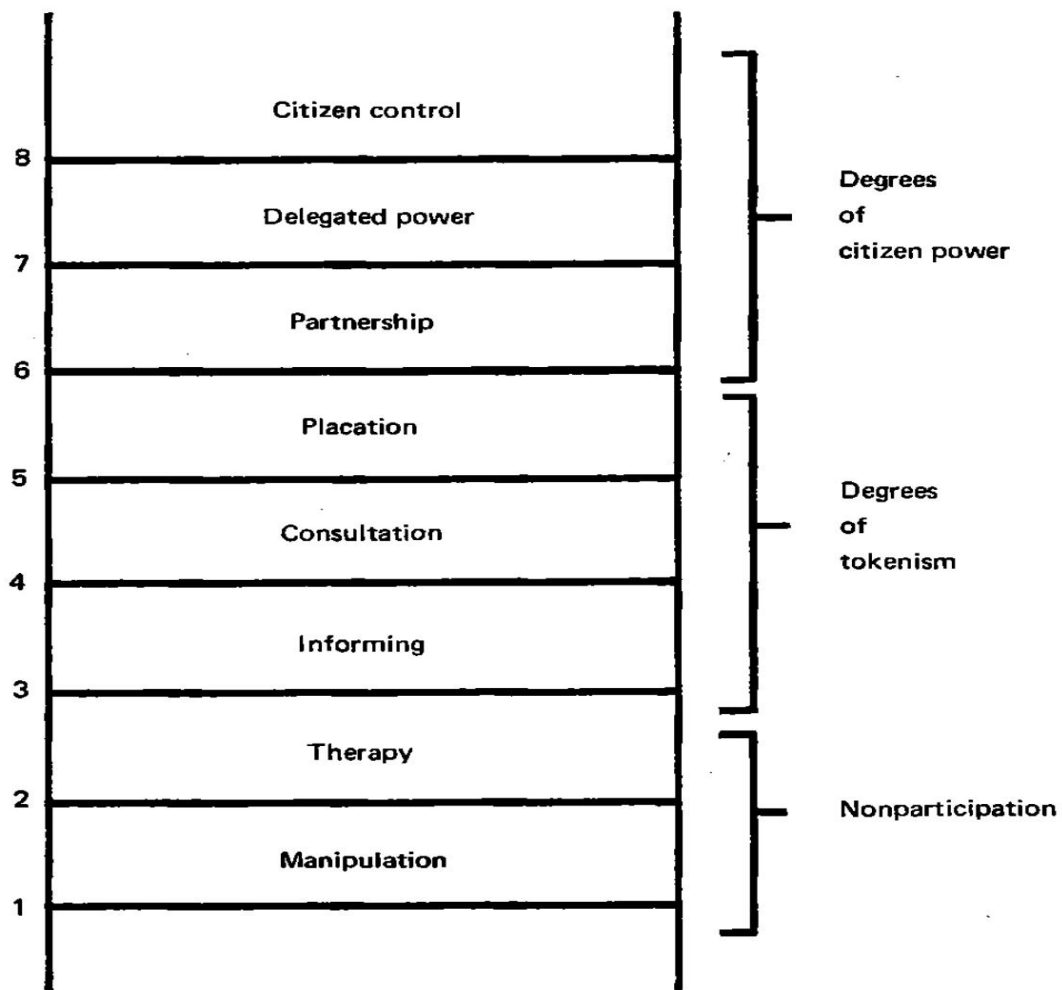
Importantly, Arnstein's work serves as both a diagnostic and prescriptive tool for those committed to inclusive governance. For local officials, community organizers, and participatory facilitators, her ladder encourages a critical assessment of how participatory mechanisms are designed and implemented. It emphasizes that participation must go beyond consultation and involve deliberate efforts to elevate the voices and influence of marginalized citizens. The model remains particularly relevant in contemporary debates about civic engagement, social justice, and equity in public administration. Tus Arnstein says.

My answer to the critical what question is simply that citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. In short, it is the means

by which citizens' can induce significant social reforms which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. Participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless.

Through her groundbreaking typology, Arnstein fundamentally redefined how we understand and evaluate citizen involvement. Her work compels ongoing reflection on the political, racial, and structural barriers that hinder true democratic participation and reminds us that the legitimacy of participatory governance rests not in the invitation to participate, but in the power that participation confers.

Ladder of Citizens' Participation in the Democratic Process



Source: Sherry Arnstein 1969

Sherry Arnstein's 1969 depiction of the *Ladder of Citizen Participation*, originally published in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, outlines eight hierarchical levels of public involvement in democratic decision-making. These levels are grouped into three broad categories of civic influence: **Nonparticipation**, representing a complete lack of public power; **Degrees of Tokenism**, where participation is largely symbolic and lacks real influence; and **Degrees of Citizen Power**, where the public gains genuine authority and control over decisions.

- (i) **Manipulation:** Manipulation represents a deceptive form of participation in which public institutions, officials, or administrators create the false impression that citizens

are being granted influence, while in reality the process is deliberately designed to exclude them from any actual power or decision-making authority. In Arnstein's words: "In the name of citizen participation, people are placed on rubber stamp advisory committees or advisory boards for the express purpose of 'educating' them or engineering their support. Instead of genuine citizen participation, the bottom rung of the ladder signifies the distortion of participation into a public relations vehicle by powerholders."

- (ii) **Therapy:** Therapeutic participation arises when public officials and administrators equate citizens' lack of power with personal or psychological deficiency. In such cases, they design pseudo-participatory programs that shift blame onto the citizens themselves, implying that they are the source of societal issues, while ignoring the role of entrenched institutional structures and policies that actually contribute to the problems affecting those citizens. As Arnstein stated: "What makes this form of 'participation' so invidious is that citizens are engaged in extensive activity, but the focus of it is on curing them of their 'pathology' rather than changing the electoral violence and victimization that create their 'pathologies';
- (iii) **Informing:** While Arnstein acknowledges that informing "citizens of their rights, responsibilities, and options can be the most important first step toward legitimate citizen participation," she also notes that "too frequently the emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information from officials to citizens with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation. Meetings can also be turned into vehicles for one-way communication by the simple device of providing superficial information, discouraging questions, or giving irrelevant answers." In informing situations, citizens are "intimidated by futility, legalistic jargon, and prestige of the official" to accept the information provided as fact or endorse the proposals put forward by those in power;

- (iv) **Consultation:** Similarly, Arnstein notes that “inviting citizens’ opinions, like informing them, can be a legitimate step towards their full participation.” However, when consultation processes are “not combined with other modes of participation, this rung of the ladder is still a sham since it offers no assurance that citizens’ concerns and ideas will be taken into account. The most frequent methods used for consulting people are attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings, and public hearings. When power holders restrict the input of citizens’ ideas solely to this level, participation remains just a window-dressing ritual. People are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions, and participation is measured by how many come to meetings, take brochures home, or answer a questionnaire. What citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have ‘participated in participation.’ And what powerholders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving ‘those people that is the citizens.’”
- (v) **Placation:** Participation as placation occurs when citizens are granted a limited degree of influence in a process, but their participation is largely or entirely tokenistic; citizens are merely involved only to demonstrate that they were involved. In Arnstein’s words: “An example of placation strategy is to place a few handpicked ‘worthy’ poor on boards of Community Action Agencies or on public bodies like the board of education, police commission, or housing authority. If they are not accountable to a constituency in the community and if the traditional power elite hold the majority of seats, the have-nots can be easily outvoted and outfoxed.”
- (vi) **Partnership:** Participation as a partnership occurs when public institutions, officials, or administrators allow citizens to negotiate better deals, veto decisions, share funding, or put forward requests that are at least partially fulfilled. In Arnstein’s words: “At this rung of the ladder, power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities

through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees, and mechanisms for resolving impasses. After the ground rules have been established through some form of give-and-take, they are not subject to unilateral change.” Arnstein does note, however, that in many partnership situations, power is not voluntarily shared by public institutions, but rather taken by the citizens through actions such as protests, campaigns, or community organizing;

(vii) **Delegated Power:** Participation as delegated power occurs when public institutions, officials, or administrators give up at least some degree of control, management, decision-making authority, or funding to citizens. For example, a citizen board or corporation that is tasked with managing a community program, rather than merely participating in a program managed by a city, would be an example of delegated power. In Arnstein’s words: “At this level, the ladder has been scaled to the point where citizens hold the significant cards to assure accountability of the program to them. To resolve differences, powerholders need to start the bargaining process rather than respond to pressure from the other end.”

(viii) **Citizen Control:** Citizen control, as described by Arnstein, represents the highest level of participatory power, where residents or participants hold full authority over a program or institution. They manage both policy-making and administrative decisions, and possess the autonomy to determine the terms under which external actors may engage or intervene. In such scenarios, public resources such as funding are directed straight to community-based organizations, which then exercise complete discretion over how those resources are used.

2.1.1f Major Factors Militating Against Citizens' Participation in a Democratic Process

A government that ascends to power through flawed or manipulated electoral processes lacks legitimacy and fails to reflect the will of the majority. Such regimes often become breeding grounds for corruption and poor governance, lacking the ethical responsibility to prioritize the welfare of the populace. Without a genuine electoral mandate, these governments cannot be expected to deliver good governance. When electoral malpractice undermines democratic processes, it discourages active citizen engagement, weakening the democratic fabric of society. In contrast, a truly democratic system, one grounded in transparency, rule of law, and inclusivity, offers a viable platform for good governance to thrive.

This distinction between a functional democracy and the current state of democracy in Nigeria has led many concerned citizens to emphasize the concept of “true democracy.” The democratic experience in Nigeria, often marked by impunity and manipulation, has been criticized as democracy in name only, resembling authoritarianism more than participatory governance (Chabal, 1992). Good governance, in its real sense, involves meeting citizens' aspirations through justice, transparency, equity, accountability, and respect for the rule of law. Assessing good governance requires evaluating how well a government upholds human rights and provides essential services such as quality education, healthcare, infrastructure, affordable housing, and poverty alleviation programs. This is the critical challenge facing Nigeria's democratic experiment. The persistent calls by Nigerians for “democracy dividends” are essentially demands for tangible improvements in their quality of life manifested through better roads, functional schools and hospitals, reliable telecommunications, enhanced security, and affordable housing.

Beyond infrastructure, the country faces an urgent need for basic social amenities such as clean water, constant electricity, efficient public transportation, and job-creating industries.

The continued absence of these necessities has made good governance appear unattainable and has eroded public confidence in democratic institutions and processes. Thus, after more than two decades of civilian rule since 1999, the pertinent question remains: Why has Nigeria not experienced the fruits of good governance? Addressing this question involves a critical examination of the persistent obstacles, such as electoral fraud, corruption, institutional weakness, and citizen exclusion, that have hindered both democratic consolidation and effective governance in Nigeria.

Some of the factors militating against citizens' participation in the democratic process, which impedes good governance in Nigeria, include the following:

- (i) **Bad/Poor Leadership:** The leadership in Nigeria is primarily responsible for the current state of democracy and governance in the country. At all levels of government federal, state, and local many officials have become disconnected from their duties, engaging in illegal and corrupt practices. In certain states, local governments are reportedly used as channels for massive public funds embezzlement. Adegboyega (2009) expressed deep concern about the nation's leadership, stating, "This is one huge joke of a country that needs deliverance. Blessed with abundant human and natural resources, yet so impoverished. I often wonder sometimes to the point of asking God why Nigeria was given such resources but lacks the leadership to manage them." Until Nigeria's leadership shifts towards a positive, results-driven democratic approach, true citizen participation and good governance will remain out of reach;
- (ii) **Corruption:** Corruption is a major barrier to active citizen participation in the democratic process, as it is carried out with impunity, severely hindering the development of democracy and the establishment of good governance in Nigeria. Corruption has become deeply ingrained within the fabric of Nigerian society, with

corrupt leadership fostering a corrupt followership and vice versa. This vicious cycle continues to undermine the progress needed for democratic growth;

(iii) **Lack of Electoral Reforms:** Nigeria is often perceived by many as a country with a deeply flawed electoral system that has failed to conduct truly free, fair, and credible elections. The nation urgently requires comprehensive electoral reforms, as most elections have been plagued by violence, irregularities, and malpractice, leading to the election of individuals who are both unpopular and questionable. Once in positions of power, these individuals engage in unethical and illegal activities that hinder the progress of democracy, citizen participation, and good governance. There is a pressing need for electoral reforms that will ensure the credibility of future elections. Despite the promise offered by the Electoral Act of 2022, which raised hopes among Nigerians for better electoral participation, the law fell short when the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) failed to electronically transmit some election results as initially promised;

(iv) **Freedom of Information (FOI):** The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, which was reviewed and passed by the National Assembly, has the potential to play a crucial role in enhancing transparency and accountability in Nigeria. In many advanced democracies such as the U.S., the U.K., and Canada, there is a strong culture of free speech, expression, and the press, which allows citizens to easily access information about government actions. By facilitating the free flow of information, the FOI Act can provide valuable insights into the qualifications and backgrounds of candidates running for political office, which is essential for fostering democracy, promoting active citizen participation, and ensuring good governance in Nigeria. For instance, during the 2019 presidential election, questions were raised regarding the academic qualifications of former President Muhammadu Buhari. He submitted an affidavit to

the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) claiming that his original documents were missing and that they were still with the Secretary of the Military Board (Punch Newspaper, 2nd November 2018). Similarly, the academic credentials of the current President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, have also been scrutinized. A clearly defined FOI Act could help resolve such issues, thereby strengthening public trust and encouraging more citizen involvement in the democratic process;

- (v) **Ineffective and Inefficient Judiciary:** The judiciary plays a critical role in maintaining the stability of a democracy. As the interpreter of the nation's constitution and laws, it is essential that the judiciary utilizes its authority to safeguard the public's interests by delivering balanced, just, and impartial rulings. Such actions are crucial for fostering an environment in which citizens can actively participate in democratic processes. When the judiciary upholds fairness and justice, it not only strengthens democracy but also encourages greater public engagement in the democratic journey of Nigeria;
- (vi) **Faulty Constitution:** Many concerned Nigerians have consistently called for constitutional reform, arguing that the Nigerian constitution needs a comprehensive review. They believe that certain sections should be revised or removed entirely to align with the evolving demands and needs of the population. One of the main points raised is the removal of the "immunity clause," which shields certain high-ranking government officials from prosecution while in office. Proponents of this change argue that the clause enables these officials to accumulate significant wealth, which they use to avoid accountability once they leave office. Additionally, the issue of resource control has remained a key topic of debate, with calls for states to manage their natural resources and remit an agreed percentage to the federal government;

- (vii) **Inefficient and Ineffective Legislature:** The legislative branch is tasked with ensuring proper checks on executive power and preventing political recklessness. A functioning legislature plays a critical role in fostering good governance. According to Ogundiya (2010), a “legislative body should not only be responsible for creating laws that protect the welfare of the people but also be accountable for managing finances to improve the lives of all citizens.” Unfortunately, the legislature in Nigeria has failed to fulfil this duty, thereby depriving the people of the benefits of democratic governance, commonly referred to as the "dividends of democracy." Additionally, it has not been able to foster good governance by ensuring equitable resource distribution. The judiciary, meant to complement good governance, is also seen as inefficient and ineffective. Oyeboode (1996) noted that the Nigerian judiciary is largely influenced by the executive and has been highly politicized. Corruption within the judiciary further undermines its effectiveness. These failures across key branches of government hinder citizens’ participation, as the legislature, being the custodian of democracy, is essential for empowering the public in the democratic process;
- (viii) **Forms of Abuse:** The disregard for human rights in Nigeria, highlighted by issues such as unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killings like those during the EndSARS protests, police brutality, child trafficking, and the marginalization of women, all contribute to the erosion of democracy and discourage citizens from engaging in the democratic process. The recent #ENDBADGOVERNANCE protests, which had little impact, especially in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), saw the Nigerian Police Force using tear gas and live ammunition to disperse protesters. These actions, which targeted peaceful demonstrations, undermine the constitutional right of citizens to participate in the democratic process;

- (ix) **Illiteracy:** Nelson Mandela once said “no country can progress without an educated populace,” emphasizing that education is the most powerful tool for transforming the world. Human development, particularly the acquisition of skills and knowledge, is essential for fostering and sustaining democracy and good governance in Nigeria. To strengthen democracy, it is critical to eliminate illiteracy by enhancing basic education so that citizens understand their roles in a democratic society. This should be a priority for the government, as it can significantly contribute to the advancement of democracy in the country;
- (x) **Unemployment:** The unemployment crisis in Nigeria has reached critical levels, yet successive governments have only offered superficial solutions to what has become a deeply entrenched problem. Every year, hundreds of graduates enter the labour market, eager to work but unable to find meaningful employment. Meanwhile, political leaders and parties allocate significant resources to election campaigns and personal interests. Aspiring politicians are often required to pay exorbitant fees for nomination forms, amounting to tens of millions, a stark contrast to the dire situation of the unemployed who struggle even to meet basic needs, let alone participate in the money-driven politics of the Fourth Republic. Unemployment is closely tied to poverty and inequality, which further dissuades citizens from engaging in the democratic process (Okolie, Nnamani, Ezirim, Enyiazu, and Ozor, 2021);
- (xi) **Institutional Challenges:** One of the key challenges facing citizen participation in Nigeria's democratic process is that its educational institutions are not aligned with the demands of the modern economy. These institutions lack the necessary tools to produce high-quality graduates capable of managing national affairs effectively. Most graduates and workers lack the skills that are essential for driving human productivity. A boost in productivity would not only expand the nation's economic potential but also

help alleviate poverty and reduce crime. The environment in which businesses and nations operate plays a crucial role in determining their success. No nation can achieve significant socioeconomic and political progress without strong educational institutions, which include a capable workforce, sufficient instructional resources, appropriate teaching and learning facilities, and high-quality academic programs. According to the World Bank's 2010 report on "Doing Business in Nigeria," the country ranked 125th out of 182 economies surveyed in the Global Doing Business Report. Furthermore, around 90% of Nigerian businesses in the informal sector lack access to credit. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ranked Nigeria 157th out of 177 countries in its 2008 Human Development Index, placing it among the "Least Liveable" nations. For Nigeria's economy to grow and for businesses to thrive, institutions responsible for human capital development must be adequately funded, equipped, and managed to produce skilled manpower capable of managing national affairs effectively;

- (xii) **Governance Challenges:** Leadership issues are closely tied to bad governance. Governance is generally defined as a system of values, policies, and institutions that guide how a society manages its economic, social, and political affairs through interactions between the state, civil society, and the private sector (Shabbir, 2004; UNDP, 1997; UNDP, 2000). It involves the mechanisms and processes that allow citizens and groups to express their interests, collaborate, resolve differences, and exercise their legal rights and obligations, all within the framework of rules, institutions, and practices that set limits and provide incentives for individuals, organizations, and businesses. Good governance focuses on how a society organizes itself to ensure equal opportunity and social and economic justice for all citizens (Shabbir, 2004). Active citizens' participation in the democratic process fosters

people-centred development. To build a strong economy or rejuvenate a sluggish one, a society requires resources. Nigeria must encourage citizen participation, wisely utilize its resources, invest in advanced technologies, and rebuild institutions and infrastructure to unlock the potential for growth and productivity. A nation enjoys higher living standards when workers produce large quantities of goods and services for local consumption and export. Economic deficiencies result in low productivity, poor-quality products, and challenges in competing on the global stage. Without sustainable growth and meaningful employment opportunities, citizens will become disillusioned and disengaged from society;

- (xiii) **Electoral Violence:** Violence refers to the unauthorized or illegitimate use of force to impose decisions contrary to the will or desires of others (Kolawole, 1988). According to Nwolise (2007), “electoral violence encompasses various forms of organized acts or threats whether physical, psychological, or structural aimed at intimidating, harming, or blackmailing political stakeholders before, during, or after an election to influence, delay, or alter the electoral process.” In simpler terms, it involves using force or threats to intimidate, harass, coerce, and influence voters' decisions at any stage of the election. This form of violence further deters citizens from participating in the political process.

However, the following factors can also work against citizens' participation in a democratic process.

- (i) Lack of mutual trust between the citizen and the government;
- (ii) Limited access to information for the citizens;
- (iii) Lack of motivation and commitment to cooperation (from both sides);
- (iv) Limited knowledge and awareness among citizens of their rights and responsibilities;

- (v) Lack of skills, culture of participation and experience;
- (vi) Unrealistic levels of expectations;
- (vii) Confusion between participation and actual decision-making authority;
- (viii) Lack of resources;
- (ix) Limited skills and capacities to facilitate participation.

Since 1999 May 29 has been recognized as Nigeria's National Democracy Day, although it was later moved to June 12 by former President Muhammadu Buhari. The true essence of celebrating democracy in Nigeria should be measured by tangible improvements in the living standards of the people, advancements in healthcare, education, and other key sectors. Nigerians can no longer be swayed by politicians who falsely claim to champion democracy. The country is fortunate to have a democracy and must work toward nurturing it to maturity, which will ultimately encourage greater citizen participation in the democratic process. Democracy is widely considered one of the best forms of government today, promoting values such as freedom, equality, participation, representation, justice, and transparency. Despite Nigeria's democracy still being in its early stages, it should have already begun delivering the dividends of democracy, which are grounded in good governance (Chabal, 1992).

2.1.1g Mechanism that Would Enhance Citizens' Participation in a Democratic Process

Political elections, as a democratic process is vital for peace and nation-building, hinge on the active participation of citizens, who are essential stakeholders in the entire procedure. This process includes a range of participants, such as the electorate, the government, election observers, political parties, the electoral management body, civil society, and the media. For an election to be inclusive, fair, legally legitimate, and a means of fostering peace, all sectors of society must engage from the outset to the final stages. This

aligns with the views of Lijphart (1997) and Verba et al. (1995), who argue that citizen participation is the cornerstone of democracy, peace, nation-building, and stability. Citizens, particularly during the voting phase, are recognized as agents of transformative development and as key drivers of peace and security.

In the context of the European Union (EU), there has been growing emphasis on enhancing the quality of interaction between public institutions and citizens. This is done through regular consultations and public involvement in shaping and delivering the benefits of democracy. The European Commission, in its "White Paper on European Governance" (2001), introduced measures to strengthen the culture of consultation and dialogue, aiming to foster greater openness, accountability, and responsibility among those involved in the democratic process. The White Paper highlights five key principles that underpin democracy and the rule of law within member states, applying across all levels of government central, state, and local.

- (i) **Good Governance:** This refers to “how a society organizes itself to ensure equal opportunities and social and economic justice for all its citizens” (Shabbir, 2004). It involves meeting the needs and aspirations of the population while avoiding abuse, corruption, and impunity, and ensuring adherence to the rule of law. A true evaluation of good governance in any democracy must focus on how well it upholds human rights and provides essential infrastructure, social amenities, healthcare, education, poverty alleviation, affordable housing, and other factors crucial for improving the citizens' quality of life. This is the challenge that Nigeria's emerging democracy faces;
- (ii) **Openness:** Openness involves actively communicating the actions and decisions of an institution in a way that is clear and understandable to the general public. This is especially crucial when aiming to build public trust in institutions, which in turn encourages greater citizen participation in the democratic process;

- (iii) **Active Participation:** It is important to ensure active engagement throughout all stages of the electoral process, from the registration of political parties and voters, electioneering campaigns, and party rallies, to the provision of voter education, conduct of elections, resolution of disputes in courts and tribunals, and the swearing-in of elected officials. It also includes citizens' participation in governance and other related activities (Rosenje & Moliki, 2008; Elekwa, 2008 cited in Ajagba, Gberevbie & Agbu, 2020). Raising awareness about voter registration, the registration process itself, obtaining Permanent Voter Cards, and taking part in elections is essential. Furthermore, allowing citizens to express their discontent with government policies through peaceful protests is a vital aspect. Increased participation is likely to build greater confidence in the results and the institutions responsible for making laws and delivering policies. Effective participation largely depends on institutions adopting an inclusive approach;
- (iv) **Accountability:** The importance of accountability in a democratic system cannot be overstated, as democracy is based on governance by and for the people. It is crucial that the roles of various institutions are well-defined and transparent, especially in managing public funds. Accountability demands that public funds be used for the benefit of the people and that the government is responsible for informing the public about how these funds are spent. This level of transparency is key to fostering trust and confidence in the government, which in turn encourages greater citizen participation in the democratic process;
- (v) **Effective Policy:** This approach ensures that policies are implemented promptly, effectively, and efficiently, aligning with clear objectives and evaluating their future impact. By addressing the needs and aspirations of the people, such policies contribute to improving citizens' standards of living. Moreover, when citizens see that policies

reflect their desires, it encourages greater participation in the democratic governance system;

- (vi) **Coherent Policy:** This means that policies and actions designed for public welfare must be clear and consistent. The demand for coherence becomes even more critical as the government's responsibilities increase in response to a growing population. Citizens are more likely to engage in democratic activities when they can comprehend government policies aimed at addressing their needs, such as providing quality education, healthcare, and infrastructure (EU toolkit, 2001).

On this premise, the following are also the integral parts which can serve as catalyst to citizens' participation in a democratic system of government.

- (i) Public education and training;
- (ii) Public awareness and campaign;
- (iii) Implementation of communication strategies;
- (iv) Development of partnerships;
- (v) Adequate information sharing;
- (vi) Share of experience and practices among the local people;
- (vii) Initiation of actual implementation of participating tools.

In Udeuhele (2022), *Unemployment and Political Participation in Africa: A Study of Nigeria*, *African Journal of Social Issues*, 5(1): 396-309, it was highlighted that one of the central aspects of contemporary political behaviour is the wide range of ways in which citizens engage in the democratic process, including both legal and illegal efforts to influence government decisions. Participation goes beyond simply voting in elections, encompassing various methods through which citizens seek to affect government personnel, policies, and

overall conduct. This broad view of participation forms the basis for exploring the diverse ways in which citizens actively engage with the political system.

2.1.1h Mechanisms that would bring the Citizens' closer to Members of the Parliament and its processes

As noted by NDI (2008), “effective communication with constituents plays a key role in demonstrating a legislator’s responsiveness and dedication to their community, ultimately enhancing their public image. This is crucial not only for securing office but also for maintaining ongoing service as an elected representative.” In light of this, elected officials use various methods to interact with their constituents on a large scale, primarily utilizing print and broadcast media, including television, radio, and electronic platforms.

(i) Town Hall Meetings

Town hall meetings serve as a vital tool for fostering and preserving local identity within a district, while also effectively disseminating messages to constituents. However, bringing together a diverse audience presents both advantages and challenges. On the positive side, these public meetings offer legislators the opportunity to engage directly with a large group of citizens, gaining valuable insight into community's characters, concerns, and values. On the downside, representatives often face tough and potentially hostile questions, or are overwhelmed with requests that may be impossible to fulfil within their role as public servants.

To address this, certain legislators find it beneficial to organize tours across key areas within their constituency, holding multiple gathering in a short time frame. When planning such tours, it is important to engage with a broad range of interest groups and ensure the tour schedule is well publicized through local media. Additionally, collaborating with local party officials or a local NGO can be helpful. These organizations can assist with logistics and

organization, and they offer a better understanding of the key issues that voters care about, as well as the prevailing attitudes toward political parties and ideologies;

(ii) **Constituency Office**

In many countries, legislators maintain constituent relations without relying on district offices or other designated spaces for direct interaction with citizens. Instead, meetings between legislators and constituents often occur in informal settings such as homes, offices, or cafes.

In a democratic society, elected officials should actively promote activities that reinforce the idea that government exists to serve the people. One common practice in many parts of the world is organizing tours of legislative buildings and government offices. These tours allow constituents to engage with the political process by visiting a legislator's office, meeting staff members, and asking questions. This direct exposure humanizes the legislative process and creates lasting memories for constituents, often fostering loyalty to the individual legislator, if not the political party they represent.

In some countries, legislators receive budgets to establish constituency offices closer to the people they represent. These offices are typically staffed separately from those in the capital and have distinct financial resources for purchasing equipment and funding outreach efforts. Constituency office funds are often allocated by the legislature and can be provided to individual legislators or political parties represented in the legislature. These offices are usually located in municipal buildings, stand-alone locations, or occasionally within local party branch offices, though the latter can create perceptions of partisan bias. It is crucial that constituency offices maintain a nonpartisan atmosphere to ensure that all constituents, whether they supported the legislator or not, feel welcome to visit and voice their concerns.

A well-managed constituency office can significantly boost a legislator's visibility and create a sense of continuity in their connection to the community. It also enhances the

efficiency of constituent outreach, offering a central location for meetings and handling casework or individual requests for assistance.

(iii) **Website**

In many countries, the Internet is transforming the way politicians and political parties' function. The use of the World Wide Web for creating personal websites, writing political blogs, and gathering input from constituents is revolutionizing how politicians engage with electors. The Internet is also reshaping how voters interact with their representatives. Although its impact has not yet reached the level seen in the United States and Western Europe in many other countries, the Internet's potential to reshape the political landscape should not be overlooked.

A personal homepage that showcases a representative's achievements, vision for their constituency, and allows for public engagement will become increasingly essential to political success in the digital era. A well-designed homepage should go beyond serving as a mere political advertisement; it should also reflect the distinctive characteristics of the legislator and the constituency they represent.

(iv) **Keeping in Touch**

After all the effort that goes into running a successful electoral campaign, providing effective constituent service is key to maintaining success as an elected official. In many areas, it is rare for citizens to receive direct communication, such as a letter or phone call, from an elected official or government representative addressing their personal needs. Regular interaction with constituents is essential for maintaining a strong connection with the community and its members. Over time, and with proper tracking of constituent requests, a legislative office can develop standardized templates to address a variety of concerns. A simple letter can significantly demonstrate a legislator's commitment to a constituent, showing that they care about "people like them," something that many might not expect from their

elected officials. This task can be managed through constituent casework software or manually from a logbook of recent requests.

In some countries, legislative staff are required to follow up in writing at every stage of an investigation into a constituent's case. A brief letter outlining the actions taken on a constituent's behalf or a phone call can translate into votes during election time, keeping the legislator at the top of the mind as an active and effective representative. The value of staying in regular contact with constituents cannot be overstated.

(v) **Constituent Casework**

In essence, "constituent relations" involve addressing the fundamental needs of the local community. Whether it is arranging trash collection, ensuring electricity service, resolving pension issues, or attracting new businesses, collaborating with local authorities to address citizens' concerns is crucial for success as a representative. Effective constituent relations not only help resolve the everyday problems of ordinary people but also improve a legislator's chances of garnering support during elections.

Casework refers to the "process of assisting individuals in navigating bureaucratic systems to resolve personal issues" Many people are often unaware of the specific ways legislators can assist them. While citizens recognize that legislators and their staff possess more in-depth knowledge of public administration and have connections that can expedite lengthy processes, they may not fully understand the scope of legislative intervention.

What qualifies as a "case" can vary among legislators. Some may only consider matters that require action or information from government agencies as cases, while others may include any constituent request, even those that only require a straightforward answer. Although handling casework is more streamlined from a district office, it is still feasible to track and manage constituent requests without one.

2.1.1i Mechanisms that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public

(i) Outreach Approach

The outreach strategy was designed to enable lawmakers to effectively engage with citizens and constituents on policies that are relevant at both national, states and local levels. Through outreach, legislators can inform and educate the public about government policies while also gaining insights into how these actions are perceived or received by society. Such programs are practical tools for capturing the attention of the people, whether conducted through in-person meetings or media platforms. However, despite the various innovative methods of communication, it is often emphasized that face-to-face interaction remains the most effective form of dialogue or consultation between legislators and their constituents;

(ii) Local Radios or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements

A well-rounded communication strategy should incorporate various methods of both conveying messages to and listening to constituents. Elected officials often spend significant time in the capital, and local radio and TV stations provide an essential platform for maintaining a connection with their home constituency.

By diversifying communication approaches, legislators can ensure a broader audience is informed about their activities. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are a powerful tool in this regard. These brief, non-commercial adverts aired on radio or television aim to raise awareness about specific issues impacting the community, thus shifting public attitudes for the better. Typically lasting no more than a minute, PSAs serve as an effective means of increasing a legislator's profile and demonstrating their commitment to the issues at hand.

Television and radio interviews also play a crucial role in building name recognition among voters. These interviews offer legislators the chance to speak directly to the public, sharing their perspectives on various matters without media interpretation or bias. This direct

communication helps strengthen their connection with constituents while fostering a clearer understanding of their stances on key issues;

(iii) Special Events and Holiday Activities

Special events are a common and effective strategy for legislators to connect with constituents across various countries. These occasions provide representatives with the opportunity to engage informally with the public, boost their visibility, and enhance their party's standing. Events such as state fairs, agricultural festivals, community gatherings, Nigeria's Independence Day celebrations on October 1st, Democracy Day on June 12th, and parades serve as prime occasions for outreach. Politicians often use holidays to engage with voters, as these times allow individuals to be less preoccupied with their everyday responsibilities and more open to festive interactions, creating a conducive atmosphere for connection.

(iv) Conducting Opinion Polling and Surveying Constituents Needs

Public opinion surveys provide legislators and political parties with crucial insights into the needs, priorities, and perceptions of their constituency. As representatives of the people, it is essential for legislators to understand the concerns and viewpoints of the citizens they serve. Often, the issues that legislators or their parties prioritize may not fully align with what the voters consider most important.

One advantage of public opinion research is that it signals to citizens that their views are valued and that they have a role in the political process. Surveys can vary in complexity, from a simple one-page questionnaire gathering general concerns to more sophisticated methods aimed at obtaining detailed data. If legislators seek scientifically accurate results, hiring an external polling firm might be the best option, as it can yield more honest and unbiased answers to sensitive questions, such as those regarding a legislator's performance or stance on specific issues.

(v) **Social Media**

The use of social media for political communication among legislators has significantly increased in the past decade (Ngange, 2020; Narasimhamurthy, 2014; Babac & Podobnik, 2018; Dzisah, 2018; Barnhart, 2022; Mare & Matsilele, 2022; Jibrin, 2023; Jonathan, 2023). Social media platforms have become key spaces where legislators and constituents can interact, offering a central hub for political activism and discussions about local issues (Peterside, 2022). Legislators leverage social media for various purposes, including communication, voter engagement, and campaigning, thanks to its unique features like accessibility, connectivity, interactivity, speed, wide reach, and large storage capacity (Dennis & Merrill, 2006; Graham & Schwanholz, 2020). The rise of social media has also decentralized communication, breaking down barriers and allowing both constituents and legislators to interact freely without geographical limitations (Livitckaia et al., 2023). This decentralized nature enables legislators to share political views, promote themselves, and mobilize support for elections across different locations (Ortiz, Young, Myers, Bedeley & Carbaugh, 2019; Segado-Boj & Díaz-Campo, 2020; Zhuravskaya, Petrova & Enikolopov, 2020).

Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok have proven to be effective tools for political communication and engagement. Legislators use these platforms to gather quick feedback from the electorate, assess public opinions on specific issues, evaluate their popularity and approval, and disseminate tailored political messages to various demographics in a cost-effective manner compared to traditional media.

2.1.1j Scope of Citizen Participation in a Democratic System

Political participation encompasses a wide range of activities that individuals can engage in, all of which are considered forms of involvement in the political process. For example, when individuals campaign for a candidate during an election, attend constituency

meetings, or cast their votes, these actions are viewed as political participation. However, it is important to recognize that abstaining from these activities or choosing not to participate for specific reasons is also a form of political participation. A common phrase in election campaigning is, "failing to vote for a candidate is like casting a vote for their opponent."

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended, explicitly recognizes the right to participate in politics in various ways. For instance, it guarantees the right to belong to a political party (Section 40) and the right to be registered as a voter and vote (Section 77, Sub-Section 2). Section 7 Sub-Section 4 of the 1999 Constitution provides that:

The Government of a State shall ensure that every person who is entitled to vote or be voted for at an election to the House of Assembly shall have the right to vote or be voted for at an election to a local government council.

This constitutional provision ensures the participation of every citizen in political activities, which includes the right to vote and the right to contest for public office at the Chairmanship and Councillorship elections at every Local Government in Nigeria.

Section 14 Sub-Section 2 And Paragraph (C) of the 1999 constitution further provides:

The participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

The use of the word shall in this section implies an obligation which must be fulfilled by the government. A country like Nigeria, being a democratic state, must recognize her citizens' right to participate freely in choosing people who will represent her in power.

According to Filani (2002), political participation can be divided into two main categories: direct or action-based political activities and indirect or attitude-based political activities.

- (i) **Direct or Action-Based Political Activities:** These are the actions that individuals deliberately engage in as part of their active participation in politics. They include activities like voting, attending political meetings, protests, public hearings, campaigning, sponsoring candidates, making financial or material donations, and participating in rallies and committee meetings. These activities are straightforward and easily identifiable as political participation. Participants in these activities usually have specific political objectives, even if those goals are not explicitly stated;
- (ii) **Indirect or Attitude-Based Political Participation:** This form of political engagement pertains to people's attitudes and dispositions, which indirectly influence the political landscape around them. These activities are not always as evident, and it may not always be clear whether those displaying these attitudes recognize their impact on politics. Such attitudes include agitation, resistance, apathy, endorsement, passivity, scepticism, and cynicism. For example, individuals who show resistance to politics may unwittingly support candidates outside of formal electoral processes, while apathetic individuals may allow others to dominate political decision-making. An apathetic voter's choice to abstain from voting could have an impact by reducing the number of potential votes for certain candidates, thus indirectly affecting the electoral outcome.

Highlight on Some Forms of Citizens' Political Participation

These are some of the political activities in a democratic process which the citizens' participate in:

- (i) **Voter registration:** It is the requirement that a citizen who is eligible to vote must enroll on an INEC electoral register, which is usually a prerequisite for being permitted to vote;

- (ii) **Voting:** It has to do with a process by which citizens' who are of the age (18 years and above) come together in order to elect their preferred candidate through election;
- (iii) **Protest/Demonstration:** Protest refers to the act of expressing dissent, frustration, or resistance against a specific issue or phenomenon. Demonstrations are the most common form of protest worldwide today. However, according to Auvinen (1996), protest encompasses more than just demonstrations; it also includes riots and strikes that have a clear political objective or involve conflict with the political system (p. 78). Auvinen identifies three primary types of protest: political demonstrations, riots, and political strikes. He further explains that a political demonstration is a peaceful, organized protest by a group of citizens; a riot involves violent protests or clashes between citizens; and a political strike refers to any industrial strike carried out by workers, government employees, or students (1996:383, in Eesuola, 2012). Protests provide citizens with an opportunity to demand political change or express anger about political issues they oppose. Such actions often take the form of rallies, strikes, street marches, sit-ins, and similar activities;
- (iv) **Elections:** Elections provide eligible citizens with the opportunity to influence the governance of their country, primarily through the act of voting in regular elections. Dye (2001) views elections as a crucial tool for the recruitment of political leaders within any democratic society;
- (v) **Public Hearing:** A public hearing is essentially a meeting organized to gather public testimony, feedback, or comments from interested and invited participants. According to Sen. Jonathan Silas Zwingina (2012), public hearings play a key role in the law-making process. The term "public hearing" refers to a range of activities through which the public can participate in discussions about proposed legislation referred to specific parliamentary committees;

(vi) **Political Apathy:** Nwafor (2011:4) was of the opinion in his study that Political apathy deals with the negative attitudes of the Nigerian citizens' towards political activities, which threaten Nigerians' political system.

2.1.1k Effects of citizens' participation on the legislative outcomes in Ogaru Federal Constituency of Anambra State.

The National Assembly of Nigeria, often referred to as the Parliament, is a bicameral legislature established under Section 4 of the Nigerian Constitution. According to Section 4(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the legislative power of the country is vested in the National Assembly, which consists of two chambers: The Senate and the House of Representatives (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, as amended). This Constitution grants the National Assembly and the State Houses of Assembly the authority to make laws for the peace, order, and good governance of Nigeria on any matter.

Beyond being a crucial government institution, the National Assembly also plays a vital role in upholding democratic governance, which is widely regarded as the best form of government worldwide. The primary role of the government in any state is to protect its citizens' lives and property while ensuring their welfare and overall well-being. As the guardian of state sovereignty, the government is responsible for ensuring the peaceful coexistence of its citizens through the creation of laws and policies. To maintain public support, the government must adopt effective forms of governance that benefit the population.

Good governance is a key concern for all citizens of any nation, as well as the international community. The social contract between the citizens and their government is meaningful when the core principles of good governance, such as accountability, transparency, participation, and the rule of law, are upheld. The legislative process is central to achieving peace, order, and good governance, leading to improved infrastructure, facilities, and services as outcomes of laws, policies, and regulations, along with the necessary oversight. As Okoro

(2012) notes, the ultimate goal is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of governmental operations, ensuring good governance. Haider (2008) emphasizes that good governance is not a luxury but a fundamental requirement for sustainable socio-economic development, which includes the transparent and equitable management of public resources through established procedures.

The Legislature

Lafenwa (2009) defines the legislature as a body of elected individuals tasked with representing their constituencies and overseeing the government. For a democracy to thrive, the legislature is essential not only for enacting laws that promote societal well-being (including appropriation laws) but also for ensuring that other branches of government, such as the executive and judiciary, adhere to these laws (Poteete, 2010).

Legislative outcomes are typically reflected through Bills, motions, debates, and resolutions.

Bill

This is a legislative proposal for a new law or to amend an existing one, drafted by legislators or the executive branch to be debated and voted on the Floor of the House. If passed by the legislature, a bill becomes an Act or a statute, which is the law itself.

Motions

According to Robert (2011), a motion is a formal proposal put forward by a legislator or a group of legislators requesting that the legislature take specific actions or express a stance on an issue. It serves as an official statement by the legislature regarding a matter of importance. A motion can be a legislative, budgetary, supplementary, or petitionary request. If the motion receives majority support from members, it becomes a resolution or order of the House. Motions can be amended, their notice waived, and they must be seconded.

Additionally, other motions can be introduced while the main motion is pending, and if passed, these may influence the consideration of the primary motion.

Debate

The debate process occurs between the member proposing the motion and the House's decision-making process, which is managed by the Speaker, Chair, or Senate President, often a judge or moderator. The presiding officer recognizes speakers and settles any disputes during the debate. Debates may either focus on predetermined topics or proceed without prior notice, depending on the nature of the discussion. Clear definitions of issues help ensure productive debates (Braham, 1991).

Resolutions

A resolution is a motion that has been formally adopted by the legislature. It represents a decision made by the body after securing the necessary majority vote. Resolutions often seek action from the executive, particularly in response to national or international emergencies, such as conflicts or disasters. Their purpose is to pressure governments to take corrective or palliative actions on behalf of their citizens or to address global issues. Resolutions are binding decisions of the legislature on issues affecting both local and international concerns as they relate to the welfare of the people or global causes such as climate change or terrorism (NILS, 2003–2013). According to Subhash Kashyap, former Secretary General of Lok Sabha, all resolutions must be voted upon in the Sabha (2014), distinguishing them from motions, which do not necessarily require such a vote.

It is against this backdrop that the following are recorded as the effects of citizens' participation on the legislative outcomes, hence the day to day activities of the executive which affects the lives of the citizens' relies on the resolution of the Parliament (National and States Assembly); who are the custodian of democracy and the parliament represents the citizenry:

- (i) **Good Governance:** The concept of governance dates back to the early days of human civilization, particularly during communal living when decisions and laws were implemented to maintain order and harmony in society. Governance involves the decision-making process and how those decisions are carried out, or not. A core aspect of good governance is prioritizing the perspectives of minorities and vulnerable groups when making decisions. Naveed (1998) describes governance as the management of resources and the organization of individuals and groups into formal and informal bodies, institutions, and businesses through political, social, administrative, and economic mechanisms. Similarly, Johnston (2004) defines good governance as the effective management of a country's resources and affairs in a way that is transparent, accountable, equitable, and responsive to the needs of the people. This includes political freedoms, equity, the rule of law, protection of individual rights, improved living standards, a stable economy, education, infrastructure, healthcare, and accountability from the executive to a freely elected legislature. Raj (1996) emphasizes the decentralization of political and economic power as the foundation of good governance, as it ensures democracy and development. In essence, governance strives for free, fair, and transparent elections, fostering a quality relationship between the rulers and the ruled. Good governance promotes human development through participation, security, and social and economic equality, ultimately working towards a civil society;
- (ii) **Popular Sovereignty:** This doctrine asserts that sovereignty resides with the people, and those elected to govern act as trustees of this power, which must be exercised in alignment with the general will. Popular sovereignty means that no law or rule is legitimate unless it is based on the consent of the people. It refers to the idea that the

people are the ultimate rulers, and laws are only valid if they derive from the consent of the governed;

- (iii) **Increased Citizens' Participation:** Sargent (2009) argues that the essence of democracy lies in citizens actively participating in political decision-making, either directly or through their elected representatives. This involvement can also extend to participating in political parties or interest groups, attending public meetings, engaging in political discussions, or lobbying officials about issues of importance;
- (iv) **Rule of Law:** The principle of the rule of law suggests that laws should govern society, providing a framework to which all behaviours must adhere, equally applying to both private citizens and government officials. It is a core democratic value, advocating for constitutionalism and limited government (Heywood, 2007). In a democracy, elected representatives may create laws, but once passed, these laws are Supreme, and all members of society, including lawmakers, must obey them until they are amended. This principle ensures that no individual or institution is above the law (Sargent, 2009);
- (v) **Electoral System Based on Majority Rule:** The electoral system defines the rules by which voters select their representatives, typically based on the distribution of votes. Systems are categorized into plurality, majoritarian, and proportional systems. In a democracy, the majority rule often prevails, meaning the will of the majority overrides that of the minority. However, this can lead to what is referred to as "the tyranny of the majority" (Heywood, 2007);
- (vi) **Freedom and Liberty of Citizens:** Citizens' rights are a fundamental component of any democratic government. These rights must be safeguarded by the government and include the right to life, human dignity, personal liberty, a fair trial, privacy, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, freedom of expression and the press, the right to

peaceful assembly and association, freedom of movement, freedom from discrimination, and the right to acquire and own personal property;

- (vii) **Popular Consultation and Accountability:** This refers to the process of engaging in discussions or consultations, often between two or more people, to make decisions. A key aspect of democracy is that public officials are accountable and responsive to the people's preferences. This implies that the government should follow clear, publicly known procedures and allow public opinion to influence decision-making at appropriate stages;
- (viii) **Equality Among Citizens:** Equality involves the fair distribution of rights and resources, but does not necessarily mean identical treatment. Heywood (2007) explains that equality covers four key types: political equality, equality before the law, equality of opportunity, and economic equality. Some view the attainment of equality as crucial, while others believe it is impossible or even undesirable (Sargent, 2009).
 - (i) **Political Equality:** This concept embodies the principle of "one person, one vote." While citizens may not be biologically identical, they all have equal rights to vote on societal laws and policies, and to run for office;
 - (ii) **Equality Before the Law:** This principle means that all individuals should be treated equally under the legal system. Although socio-economic disparities may undermine this ideal, ensuring equality before the law remains one of the primary objectives of democracy (Sargent, 2009:72);
 - (iii) **Equality of Opportunity:** This refers to a situation where all individuals have access to the same social opportunities or conditions, irrespective of their race, tribe, gender, skills, or wealth;

- (iv) **Economic Equality:** According to Sargent (2009), economic equality advocates for a minimum level of economic security for every individual in society. The focus is on ensuring security, which would allow citizens to become fully active participants in society. Without some level of economic security, individuals may struggle to engage in civic duties like voting, and extreme poverty can prevent people from fully participating in their community, perpetuating social inequalities.

2.1.2 Theoretical Review

In the modern world, representative democracy is the most common form, where citizens elect officials to make decisions, create laws, and manage programs for the public good. Elections, therefore, are seen as crucial to the democratic process, serving as the means through which citizens select their leaders. The electorate, a body of citizens authorized to vote, exercises political sovereignty primarily through voting (Heywood, 2007:253).

However, some argue that voting alone constitutes minimal participation in politics. Classical pluralists, for instance, contend that participation should extend beyond voting to include ongoing engagement in political processes. In their view, elections alone are insufficient for meaningful democracy, and interest groups offer additional avenues for participation outside of political parties (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004:545).

Political participation, therefore, should encompass more than just voting rights, including broader forms of control over leaders and their actions. While elections remain essential, fundamental political decisions should ultimately be subject to the will of the people. Whether democracy is practiced directly or indirectly, it must be based on the principles of equal access to power for all members of society and the recognition of freedoms and liberties as guaranteed in the constitution.

For the rational actor model theory, it emphasizes that the quality of decisions made by policymakers is pivotal to the growth and progress of a society. It suggests that the

effectiveness of a government is largely determined by its law-making capabilities, which should prioritize productivity and the welfare of both the state and its citizens. Moreover, legislation rooted in institutionalized law-making processes is essential for good governance, as it forms the foundation of the laws that govern societal equilibrium. The legislative body, which is constitutionally responsible for law-making, plays a critical role in shaping society.

In line with this theory, parliamentary resolutions must undergo careful deliberation, considering the cost-benefit analysis, to ensure that decisions will have a positive impact on citizens' lives. If the legislature fails to consider these factors, it could lead to complications and dissatisfaction among the public. Consequently, the quality of legislative deliberation and the decisions made through it are crucial to fostering societal harmony and progress.

2.1.3 Methodological Review

The study adopted a Case Study Methodology. It is defined as a formal research approach that utilizes triangulation across multiple sources of evidence to systematically assess complex phenomena, particularly in contemporary contexts, in order to address research questions framed as “how” and/or “why.” It aims to maximize the validity and reliability of findings by enabling evidence-supported reporting of results.

This methodological choice enabled a focused examination of civic involvement within a specific constituency, facilitating a deeper understanding of its impact on legislative developments.

A case study, as a research strategy, provides a comprehensive means of investigating a current phenomenon within a clearly defined context. It is widely applied in disciplines like the social sciences and humanities to delve into multifaceted issues and offer detailed insights into real-world scenarios. This approach often integrates various data sources such as interviews, field observations, and document reviews to construct a rich narrative about the subject of inquiry. The primary objective of case study research is to build an in-depth and

contextualized understanding of the topic under review, while also contributing to theoretical development or practical insights. According to Crowe et al. (2011), case studies are particularly effective when a researcher seeks to explore complex situations within their real-world settings. Similarly, Stake (2010) emphasizes that such an approach allows for an extensive and detailed exploration of a given subject. Yin (2018) also underscores the suitability of case studies when the research questions center around “how,” “why,” or “what,” often necessitating a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

2.1.4 Empirical Review

In the 1999 presidential election, 29.8 million Nigerians participated, bringing President Olusegun Obasanjo into office. However, by 2023, the number of voters had dropped to 24 million, reflecting a decline of 5.8 million. The highest voter turnout was recorded in 2003, when 39 million people, or 69.1 per cent of registered voters, cast their ballots. This figure sharply contrasts with the 2023 election, where only 26.71 per cent of voters participated, marking the lowest turnout ever, with just one in four registered voters and one in eight Nigerians overall casting their votes.

Since the peak turnout in 2003, the percentage has steadily declined: 57.5 percent in 2007, 53.68 percent in 2011, 43.65 percent in 2015, and 34.75 percent in 2019. While the absolute number of voters increased from 35.4 million in 2007 to 38.2 million in 2011, it has been decreasing since then: 28.6 million in 2015, 27.3 million in 2019, and 24 million in 2023 a drop of about 3.3 million votes. In the 2011 election, Goodluck Jonathan defeated Muhammadu Buhari by 10.4 million votes, while in 2015, Buhari won by just 2.6 million votes, following the introduction of card readers.

Buhari was re-elected in 2019 with a margin of 3.9 million votes, though still far from the 18 million votes against him in 2007, when Umaru Musa Yar'Adua won. Obasanjo's 11.6 million votes in 2003 came next, but the lowest margin was seen in 2023, when Bola Tinubu

received just 2,010,206 votes, outstripping Atiku Abubakar. The 2023 turnout is seen by many as a clear indication of increasing citizen alienation from democratic participation in Nigeria (TheCable, March 3, 2023, 7:55 AM).

In addition, at the end of the supplementary election of Ogbaru Federal Constituency in the 2023 general elections, results collated by the INEC showed that the PDP candidate scored the highest number of votes, while the APGA candidate followed, with the LP candidate coming third, even though with very little margin. But when the results were merged with the result collated by INEC during the February 25 election, the LP candidate, Hon Victor Afam Ogene, carried the day.

The Returning Officer for the election, Professor Kingsley Ubaorji, of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, who announced the result at Atani, the headquarters of Ogbaru LGA, said Ogene of the Labour Party polled 10,851 votes of the total votes cast, followed by the candidate of the PDP, who polled 10,619 votes, while APGA came third with 10,155 votes. Other candidates scored as follows: Nkechi Ismade of APC scored 303 votes, Nwachukwu Victor of ADC scored 39 votes, Obunne Celestine of NNPP scored 124 votes, and Nwadiakor C of SDP scored 27.

The LP, PDP, and APGA candidates all gathered over 10,000 votes. However, Ogene of LP has been declared the winner with a leading margin of 232 votes. Kingsley Ubaorji, INEC's Returning Officer, said Ogene polled 10,851 votes to defeat Onyema, who polled 10,619 votes.

2.1.5 Gap in Knowledge

In democracies, citizens are considered crucial participants, as they have the opportunity to engage either directly or indirectly through elected representatives in the development, adoption, and implementation of laws and policies that impact them. Citizens' participation is thus a key aspect of the relationship between the government and the public in

democratic systems (Roberts 2004; Jacobs et al. 2009; Bryson et al. 2013). While the importance of citizen involvement in the democratic process is widely recognized by scholars, there has been limited research on citizens' participation and its impact on legislative outcomes, specifically within Ogbaru Federal Constituency in Anambra State. Most studies have focused on general citizen participation across Nigeria.

This study, therefore, aims to explore citizens' participation in the democratic process and its influence on legislative outcomes in Ogbaru Federal Constituency. In doing so, it contributes to the body of knowledge on this topic and adds to the existing literature on how citizens' engagement in the democratic process affects legislative decisions in Nigeria.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical perspective of this research was underscored by the Participatory Theory of Democracy and the Rational Actor Model Theory.

Participatory Theory of Democracy

The theory is the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, and G.D.H. Cole. Rousseau advocated for a “participatory society” where citizens actively shape their governance. He was of the opinion that participation in self-governance was crucial for citizens to learn the art of active citizenship. John Stuart Mill built on Rousseau’s ideas, he emphasized the educational value of participation, especially at the local level. He argued that engaging in local governance is important for developing the capacity for broader political participation. While, G.D.H Cole concentrated on the application of participatory democracy in industrial settings, proposing the concept of civic guilds as a means for citizens to participate in decision-making within their workplaces and communities.

Periodic elections define every modern democracy existing worldwide. Consequently, democratic governments are mostly focused on fair and clean behaviours during elections.

Egbewole (2010) said that "periodic elections serve as the basis for selecting candidates for office because they are essentially the only means by which a nation can smoothly change governments" Regular elections are essential for choosing candidates for political office since they are essentially the only way a nation can gently and amiably change governments. The quality of a democratic state's voting system is one of its key indicators (Ochi, Ezech & Akowu, 2023).

The term "democracy" is derived from the Greek words "Kratos" (rule) and "Demos" (people), signifying the rule of the people. It refers to a government system that began in Greek city-states, notably Athens, during the 5th century BCE. In this system, adult citizens had the freedom to participate in political matters and hold public office, often through a lottery system (Barber and Watson, 1998:9). In its classical sense, democracy is a form of government where political sovereignty rests with the people, exercised directly through their active involvement. Influential figures such as J.J. Rousseau, J.S. Mill, and G.D. Cole advocated for the participatory democracy model, emphasizing the importance of genuine, active, and direct involvement in governance.

However, critiques of classical democracy theory have emerged, particularly the "myth of the classical doctrine of democracy," as suggested by scholars like Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl. Schumpeter (1943:269) argued that the classical model was empirically flawed, asserting that the competition between elites for popular votes is the defining characteristic of democracy. His modern interpretation defines democracy as a system for making political decisions through a competitive struggle for votes. Robert Dahl, in "A Preface to Democratic Theory," noted that classical theory was inadequate in modern contexts. He proposed "polyarchy," a system of rule by multiple minorities, as a more appropriate model for contemporary democracy, stressing that elections are central to democracy as they allow non-leaders to hold leaders accountable (Dahl, 1956:84).

The critics of participatory theory also argued that, regardless of debates on alternative determinants of participation, that its proponents carry little theoretical ammunition to support their analytical claim regarding the impact of political institutions on participation and that this strand of democratic theory remains purely normative in character. Participatory theory is criticized for failing in three respects: first, its critics argue that it fails to tell us which particular institutions could have a positive effect on participation; second, it is criticized for being silent on the contextual conditions under which these institutions might affect political behavior; third, participatory theory is denounced for lacking a plausible explanation of how and why particular institutions foster which type of political behavior. All in all, critics of participatory democracy claim that it is solely driven by normative concerns without opening itself up to empirical inquiry and to empirical testing of its claims. Proponents of participatory theory are pictured as utopian dreamers obsessed with the question of how things should be rather than how things can be in real world settings (Pieterse 2001; Offe 1997)

Rational Actor Model Theory

The concept of rational actor theory is associated with Adam Smith in his 1776 book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of a Nation*.

The Rational Actor Model Theory is rooted in economic theory and utilitarianism. It revolves around the concept of the "economic man," who makes decisions based on rational thinking and the pursuit of maximum utility. This "rational man" is driven by the belief that the choices he makes will yield the greatest possible benefit. Thus, rationality and utility are central to the decision-making process. The decision-making procedure typically follows these steps: identifying the issue for policy development, determining the objective of the policy, gathering necessary resources for policy formulation, and selecting only the relevant materials when not all resources can be utilized.

2.2.1 Application of the Theories to the Study

Nigeria struggles with the inability to manage the ongoing conflicts and disparities that exist among its various states and groups. This has resulted in political and economic inequality that permeates most sectors of society, leading to widespread marginalization and disempowerment. These inequalities are especially evident in political and economic structures, where a significant portion of the population is politically disempowered and economically disadvantaged. This framework, therefore, captures and explains the socio-economic and political struggles within Nigeria, particularly highlighting issues such as unemployment and political participation.

To address these disparities, the Federal Character Commission was created to enforce the principles of federal character. However, in practice, the federal character is often overstated, with political affiliations undermining merit and promoting mediocrity and nepotism, particularly in economic sectors. This is why Nigeria continues to rely on Western guidance for political and economic strategies, often at the expense of human dignity, the rule of law, and due process across various policy processes. This cycle perpetuates political and economic inequality, which is central to the focus of this study.

For this analysis, the "Marxist theory of democracy" was chosen as the theoretical framework. According to this theory, under the influence of bourgeois ideology, the masses are made to believe they are governed by their consent, while in reality, they are coerced into following the interests of the bourgeois class. Lenin (1917) argued that in capitalist societies, democracy is limited by capitalist exploitation, serving primarily the interests of the propertied classes, while the working class remains oppressed by poverty. In capitalist democracies, the working class is granted the illusion of participation by being allowed to vote for representatives of the oppressing class in government.

The foundation of bourgeois democracy is the capitalist system, where the means of production are controlled by the capitalist class, creating a divide between the exploiters and the exploited. Elections, often multi-party, are seen as a sham for the working class, where money plays a pivotal role, and the poor are incapable of gaining political power. Even after elections, government policies continue to serve the interests of the wealthy, with the poor appeased by slogans and empty promises (Mahajan, 2006:829). This type of democracy fosters ideological misconceptions, setting up representative institutions that appear to serve the interests of all but actually work to maintain the dominance of the capitalist class. The poorly educated masses, susceptible to government-controlled propaganda, are led to believe in the legitimacy of a system that ultimately serves the ruling elites.

Public decisions are often made to safeguard the interests of the elites, who use the state's resources to maintain social order and manage a consensus that benefits their position. To preserve their power, elites manipulate political discourse, suppress dissent, and impose restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly under the guise of law and order (Cochran and Malone, 1999:101; Dye and Zeigler, 2003:22). Thus, governance must be people-oriented to ensure that citizens are meaningfully involved in democratic processes. Legislators should strive to serve the interests of the people, as the parliament is the custodian of democracy, and its actions must reflect the collective will of the citizens.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, it deals with the methodology covering the research design, the study area, sources of data collection, study population, sample size and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, method of administration and method of data analysis

3.1 Research Design

This research adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey was used by designing a questionnaire, which was used to elicit information from the electors and the data was analyzed. An interview was also used to ascertain the feelings of people towards citizens' participation in the democratic process and its effects on the legislative outcomes. The research explored the dynamics of citizen engagement in democratic governance and how such involvement influences legislative outcomes, with particular reference to Ogbaru Federal Constituency in Anambra State. Descriptive research design is mostly used when the goal is to give a comprehensive picture of an event as it exists in its natural settings, without manipulating variables. Due to the expansive scope of democratic participation across Nigeria and the practical constraints associated with analyzing it on a nationwide scale, the study adopted a case study approach. This methodological choice enabled a focused examination of civic involvement within a specific constituency, facilitating a deeper understanding of its impact on legislative developments.

A case study, as a research strategy, provides a comprehensive means of investigating a current phenomenon within a clearly defined context. It is widely applied in disciplines like the social sciences and humanities to delve into multifaceted issues and offer detailed insights into real-world scenarios. This approach often integrates various data sources such as interviews, field observations, and document reviews to construct a rich narrative about the

subject of inquiry. The primary objective of case study research is to build an in-depth and contextualized understanding of the topic under review, while also contributing to theoretical development or practical insights. According to Crowe et al. (2011), case studies are particularly effective when a researcher seeks to explore complex situations within their real-world settings. Similarly, Stake (2010) emphasizes that such an approach allows for an extensive and detailed exploration of a given subject. Yin (2018) also underscores the suitability of case studies when the research questions center around “how,” “why,” or “what,” often necessitating a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

3.2 Study Area

Ogbaru Federal Constituency of Anambra State is one of the eleven federal constituencies as well as one of the twenty-one Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Anambra State, and is geographically positioned between latitudes 5° 42' N and 6° 08' N, and longitudes 6° 42' E and 6° 50' E. The area experiences a bimodal climate characterized by a wet season stretching from March to October and a dry season occurring from November to February. The peak of the rainy period is observed between June and September, with the average annual rainfall ranging from 1800 mm to 2000 mm. Temperature levels are typically high, with an average daily temperature of around 30°C and an annual mean of approximately 27°C. Relative humidity is also significant, averaging between 60–70% in January and 80–90% in July.

Ogbaru is known for its seasonal flooding during the rainy months, often lasting at least two months before receding. The flood-prone areas are primarily on low-lying plains with gentle slopes of about 1° to 3°, making them particularly susceptible to overflow from the River Niger. The region's terrain and topography, particularly its flat landscape, contribute to this pattern. The flooding is most intense in locations near the point where the

River Niger discharges heavily, causing water to spill over into the adjacent floodplains a prominent feature of the region's geography.

The terrain is generally flat, with elevations ranging from sea level up to 50 meters. Swampy areas are common due to the presence of alluvial mud deposits. The geology is predominantly composed of alluvium, with the River Niger and its major tributary, the Uiasi River, serving as the main water bodies. Additionally, numerous smaller creeks and ponds are dispersed throughout the area. The vegetation pattern is a mix of riverine forest along the River Niger and Guinea savannah vegetation further inland.

Aquifers in the constituency are relatively shallow, averaging about 25 meters above sea level. Climatically, the area falls within the tropical wet climate classification (AF) as per Köppen's system. It is influenced by two principal air masses, the tropical continental (CT) and the tropical maritime (MT), which fluctuate seasonally with shifts in the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), pressure zones, and isotherms.

According to Nigeria's 2006 National Population Census, the population of Ogbaru LGA stood at 221,879. However, applying the 3.2% annual growth rate suggested by the National Population Commission for Anambra State, the estimated population by the year 2025 is projected to reach approximately 403,674.

Ogbaru is uniquely situated along the banks of the River Niger, with most communities clustered close to the river. Major towns in the federal constituency include Atani (which serves as the administrative headquarters), Akili-Ozizor, Akili-Ogidi, Amiyi, Mputu, Obaogwe, Ohita, Odekpe, Ogbakugba, Ochuche Umuodu, Ossomala, Ogwu-Aniocha, Umunankwo, Umuzu, Okpoko, and Ogwu-Ikpele. The area is bounded by Onitsha South and Idemili LGAs to the north; Imo and Rivers States to the south; Ekwusigo and Ihiala LGAs to the East; and the River Niger and Delta State to the West.

3.3 Sources of Data Collection

To ensure comprehensive and accurate findings, this study adopted both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Primary sources of data were employed, meaning that information was obtained directly by the researcher from original, firsthand respondents. For the quantitative aspect, structured questionnaires served as the primary data collection instrument. Meanwhile, qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit relevant information on several key area: the socio-demographic profile of respondents, public perception of the dividends of democracy, the types and distribution patterns of these democratic benefits, factors responsible for the lack of access to such benefits, and recommendations on how to ensure the general populace fully enjoys the dividends of democratic governance.

3.4 Study Population

The population for this research consists of all registered male and female voters ranging from 18 years and above across the sixteen (16) Electoral Wards within Ogbaru Federal Constituency, Anambra State. According to available electoral records, the total number of registered voters across these wards stands at 272,989. The table below provides a breakdown of registered voters by each electoral ward.

Table 3.1 Number of Registered Voters in Each of the Sixteen (16) Electoral Wards

NAMES OF ELECTORAL WARDS	NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS
Akili Ogidi/Obeagwe	3,097
Akili-Ozizor	5,380
Atani I	8,023
Atani II	4,795

Iyiowa/Odekpe/Ohita	21,846
Ochuche-Umuodu/Ogbakuba/Amiyi	7,633
Ogwu Aniocha	6,427
Ogwu Ikpele	3,582
Okpoko I	13,100
Okpoko II	12,684
Okpoko III	12,370
Okpoko IV	11,043
Okpoko V	16,097
Okpoko VI	39,734
Ossomala	4,462
Umunankwo/Mputu	3,316
Total	272,989

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Office in Ogbaru

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

To ensure that the sample drawn was reflective of the overall population, the study adopted a probability sampling approach. A total of 320 respondents (electorates) were selected, comprising 200 males and 120 females. Due to the relatively large population size, a multi-stage cluster sampling method was utilized to effectively reach the targeted participants.

Ogbaru Local Government Area consists of sixteen (16) electoral wards. In the initial stage, streets within each ward were identified, followed by the identification of households along those selected streets. From these households, thirty-two (32) were randomly chosen, with two (2) individuals selected from each, yielding thirty-two (32) respondents per street. In total, each ward contributed twenty (20) respondents, which altogether resulted in a sample size of 320 participants drawn proportionately from the sixteen wards.

The table below presents the distribution of the sample size across the wards.

Table 2. Sample Size of the Study

NAMES OF ELECTORAL WARDS	SAMPLE SIZE
AKILI OGIDI/OBEAGWE	20
AKILI-OZIZOR	20
ATANI I	20
ATANI II	20
IYIOWA/ODEKPE/OHITA	20
OCHUCHE-UMUODU/OGBAKUBA/AMIYI	20
OGWU ANIOCHA	20
OGWU IKPELE	20
OKPOKO I	20
OKPOKO II	20
OKPOKO III	20
OKPOKO IV	20
OKPOKO V	20
OKPOKO VI	20
OSSOMALA	20
UMUNANKWO/MPUTU	20
Total	320

Source: Fieldwork December 2024.

3.6 Instruments for Data Collection

The study utilized both questionnaires and interviews as primary tools for gathering data. The eligible registered voters, ranging from 18 years and above, were interviewed and they were drawn from the 16 electoral wards. Ogbaru Local Government Area consists of sixteen (16) electoral wards. In the initial stage, streets within each ward were identified, followed by the identification of households along those selected streets. From these

households, thirty-two (32) were randomly chosen, with two (2) individuals selected from each, yielding thirty-two (32) respondents per street. In total, each ward contributed twenty (20) respondents, which altogether resulted in a sample size of 320 participants drawn proportionately from the sixteen wards. This was done by using a multi-cluster sampling method.

The questionnaire was specifically designed to obtain relevant responses from participants and was structured into two main sections. Section A focused on capturing the demographic details of the respondents, while Section B addressed the core research questions guiding the study.

To measure respondents' opinions, a four-point Likert scale was adopted. The scale included the following response options: "Strongly Agreed," "Agreed," "Disagreed," and "Strongly Disagreed."

3.7 Validation of Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was carefully constructed to align with the research questions outlined in the earlier chapter. Upon completion, the instrument was submitted to the project supervisor for thorough review and necessary adjustments. Following this process, the questionnaire was validated and confirmed to be a reliable tool for data collection.

3.8 Method of Administration

The questionnaire was administered through electronic means by using E-mail and WhatsApp to send to the respondents by the researcher. The filled questionnaires were received back from the respondents through the same medium.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

The simple percentage method was adopted for the analysis of data. The items were presented in tables and further analyzed using the formula below:

$$\frac{R}{N} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Where R = number of responses for each option

(Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed).

N = the total number of respondents, while

100 = the percentage

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this Chapter, it deals with the presentation of data collected from primary and secondary sources. The data collected were presented in a table and analysed in accordance with the objectives of the study and the research questions stated in chapter one, which are aimed at assessing the citizen's participation in the democratic process and its effects on legislative outcomes in Ogbaru Federal Constituency of Anambra State. However, for the purpose of the analysis, the simple percentage method formula was adopted for the analysis.

4.1 Presentation and Analysis

Research Objective One:

Table 4.1.1 Mechanisms that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
2	Good Governance	200 (63%)	110 (34.4%)	4 (1.3%)	6 (1.9%)	320 (100%)
3	Openness	206 (64.4%)	111 (34.7%)	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.6%)	320 (100%)
4	Active Participation	186 (58.1%)	126 (39.4%)	3 (0.9%)	5 (1.5%)	320 (100%)
5	Accountability	225 (70.3%)	93 (29.1%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)
6	Effective Policy	199 (62.2%)	101 (31.6%)	14 (4.4%)	6 (1.9%)	320 (100%)
	Average Percentage	63.6%	33.8%	1.4%	1.2%	100%

Source: Fieldwork December 2024.

From table 4.1, it was observed that 200 respondents, representing 63%, strongly agreed that Good Governance is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. 110 respondents, representing 34.4%, agreed that Good Governance is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. Also, 4 respondents, representing 1.3%, disagreed that Good Governance is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. While 6 respondents, representing

1.9%, strongly disagreed that Good Governance is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes.

In addition, 206 respondents, representing 64.4%, strongly agreed that Openness by the government is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. In the same vein, 111 respondents, representing 34.7%, agreed that Openness is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed that Openness by the government is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. Also, 2 respondents, representing 0.6%, strongly disagreed that Openness is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes.

186 respondents, representing 58.1%, strongly agreed that Active Participation is also a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. However, 126 respondents, representing 39.4%, agreed that Active Participation ensured by the electoral umpire is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. 3 respondents, representing 0.9%, disagreed that Active Participation is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. Lastly, 5 respondents, representing 1.5%, strongly disagreed with item number 3.

On the other hand, 225 respondents, representing 70.3%, strongly agreed that Accountability on the side of the government is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. 93 respondents, representing 29.1%, agreed that Accountability is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. Also, 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed that Accountability is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. In the same vein, 1 respondent, representing the same 0.3%, strongly disagreed that Accountability is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes.

199 respondents, representing 62.2%, strongly agreed that Effective Policy is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. And 101 respondents, representing 31.6%, agreed that Effective Policy is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. 14 respondents, representing 4.4%, disagreed with item number 5. Also, 6 respondents, representing 1.9%, strongly disagreed that Effective Policy is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes.

From the foregoing, it was concluded that an average of 97.4% of the respondents believed that Good Governance, Openness, Active Participation, Accountability and Effective Policy are strong mechanisms that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. However, an average of 2.6% had a contrary opinion.

Research Objective Two:

Table 4.1.2 Effects of citizens' participation in the democratic process on the legislative outcomes

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
7	Popular Sovereignty	195 (60.9%)	100 (31.3%)	9 (2.8%)	16 (5%)	320 (100%)
8	Rule of Law	205 (64.1%)	109 (34.1%)	3 (0.9%)	3 (0.9%)	320 (100%)
9	Increased Citizens' Participation	189 (59.1%)	128 (40%)	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.6%)	320 (100%)
10	Electoral System based on Majority Rule	220 (68.8%)	90 (28.1%)	6 (1.9%)	4 (1.3%)	320 (100%)
11	Equality among the Citizens	202 (63.1%)	111 (34.7%)	2 (0.6%)	5 (1.7%)	320 (100%)
	Average Percentage	63.2%	33.6%	1.3%	1.9%	100%

Source: Fieldwork December 2024.

From table 4.2, 195 respondents, representing 60.9%, strongly agreed that Popular Sovereignty is an effect of citizens' participation in the democratic process on the legislative outcome. 100 respondents, representing 31.3%, agreed that Popular Sovereignty is an effect of citizens' participation in the democratic process on the legislative outcome. In addition, 9

respondents, representing 2.8%, disagreed that Popular Sovereignty is an effect of citizens' participation in the democratic process on the legislative outcome. While 16 respondents, representing 5%, strongly disagreed that Popular Sovereignty is an effect of citizens' participation in the democratic process on the legislative outcome.

In addition, 205 respondents, representing 64.1%, strongly agreed that Rule of Law is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. In the same vein, 109 respondents, representing 34.1%, agreed that Rule of Law is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. While 3 respondents, representing 0.9%, disagreed that Rule of Law is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. Also, 3 respondents, representing 0.9%, strongly disagreed that Rule of Law is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome.

189 respondents, representing 59.1%, strongly agreed that Increased Citizens' Participation is also an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. However, 128 respondents, representing 40%, agreed that Increased Citizens' Participation is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed that Increased Citizens' Participation is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. Lastly, 2 respondents, representing 0.6%, strongly disagreed with item number 9.

On the other hand, 220 respondents, representing 68.8%, strongly agreed that Electoral System based on Majority Rule is considered as an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. 90 respondents, representing 28.1%, agreed that Electoral System based on Majority Rule is considered as an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. In the same vein, 6 respondents, representing 1.9%, disagreed that Electoral System based on Majority Rule is an

effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. 4 respondents, representing the same 1.3%, strongly disagreed that Electoral System based on Majority Rule is seen as an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome.

Conclusively, 202 respondents, representing 63.1%, strongly agreed that Equality among Citizens is considered an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. And 111 respondents, representing 34.7%, agreed that Equality among the Citizens is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. 2 respondents, representing 0.6%, disagreed that Equality among the Citizens is considered as an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. Finally, 5 respondents, representing 1.7%, strongly disagreed that Equality among the Citizens is considered an effect of citizens' participation in the democratic process on the legislative outcome.

From the above analysis, it was ascertained that the effects of citizens' participation in the democratic process on the legislative outcome cannot be overemphasized, having considered an average of 96.8%. The effectiveness and quality of laws churned out from the parliament as the custodian of democracy largely depends on the effect of citizens' participation in the democratic process, which in turn breeds Timely, Efficient and Effective legislative outcome that meets the needs and aspirations of the people.

Research Objective Three:

Table 4.1.3 Mechanisms that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
12	Town Hall Meeting	210 (65.6%)	105 (32.8%)	3 (0.9%)	2 (0.6%)	320 (100%)
13	Constituency Office	218 (68.1%)	100 (31.3%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)
14	Web Site	183	121	7	9	320

		(57.2%)	(37.8%)	(2.2%)	(2.8%)	(100%)
15	Keeping In Touch	209 (65.3%)	108 (33.8%)	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)
16	Constituent Casework	205 (64.1%)	112 (35%)	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.6%)	320 (100%)
	Average Percentage	64.1%	34.1%	0.9%	1.1%	100%

Source: Fieldwork December 2024.

From table 4.3, 210 respondents, representing 65.6%, strongly agreed that Town Hall Meeting is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. 105 respondents, representing 32.8%, agreed that Town Hall Meeting is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. Also, 3 respondents, representing 0.9%, disagreed that Town Hall Meeting is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. While 2 respondents, representing 0.6%, strongly disagreed that Town Hall Meeting is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes.

In addition, 218 respondents, representing 68.1%, strongly agreed that Constituency Office is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. In the same vein, 100 respondents, representing 31.3%, agreed that Constituency Office is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. While 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed that Constituency Office is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, strongly disagreed that Constituency Office is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes.

183 respondents, representing 57.2%, strongly agreed that Web Site is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. 121 respondents, representing 37.8%, agreed that Web Site is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. 7 respondents, representing 2.2%, disagreed that Web Site is a

mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. Lastly, 9 respondents, representing 2.8% strongly disagreed with item number 14

On the other hand, 209 respondents, representing 65.3%, strongly agreed that Keeping In Touch is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. 108 respondents, representing 33.8%, agreed that Keeping In Touch is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. In the same vein, 2 respondents, representing 0.6%, disagreed that Keeping In Touch is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, strongly disagreed that Keeping In Touch is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes.

Conclusively, 205 respondents, representing 64.1%, strongly agreed that Constituent Casework is considered a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. And 112 respondents, representing 35%, agreed that Constituent Casework is considered a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed that Constituent Casework is considered a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. Finally, 2 respondents, representing 0.6%, strongly disagreed that Constituent Casework is considered a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes.

From the above analysis, it was observed that Town Hall Meeting, Constituency Office, Keeping In Touch and Constituency Casework were the most effective mechanisms that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its process more than the Website. This is because most of the electorate in Ogbaru Federal Constituency do not have access to effective internet due to poor telecommunication infrastructure. Also, most of the constituents are traders and farmers, and because of that, they lack interest in some internet-related democratic activities.

Research Objective Four:

Table 4.1.4 Mechanisms that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
17	Outreach Approach	220 (68.8%)	98 (30.6%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)
18	Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements	200 (62.5%)	115 (35.9%)	3 (0.9%)	2 (0.6%)	320 (100%)
19	Special Events and Holiday Activities	190 (59.4%)	112 (35%)	8 (2.5%)	10 (3.1%)	320 (100%)
20	Conducting Opinion Polling and Surveying Constituent Needs	218 (68.1%)	100 (31.3%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)
21	Social Media	215 (67.2%)	103 (32.2%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)
	Average Percentage	65.2%	33%	0.9%	0.9%	100%

Source: Fieldwork December 2024.

From table 4.4, 220 respondents, representing 68.8%, strongly agreed that Outreach Approach is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. 98 respondents, representing 30.6%, agreed that Outreach Approach is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed that Outreach Approach is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. Also, 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, strongly disagreed that Outreach Approach is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public.

Additionally, 200 respondents, representing 62.5%, strongly agreed that Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. In the same vein, 115 respondents, representing 35.9%, agreed that Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. While 3 respondents, representing 0.9%, disagreed that Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements is a mechanism that would enhance

communication between the legislators and the public. 2 respondents, representing 0.6%, strongly disagreed that Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public.

190 respondents, representing 59.4%, strongly agreed that Special Events and Holiday Activities is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. 112 respondents, representing 35%, agreed that Special Events and Holiday Activities is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. 8 respondents, representing 2.5%, disagreed that Special Events and Holiday Activities is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. Meanwhile, 10 respondents, representing 3.1%, strongly disagreed that Special Events and Holiday Activities is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public.

On the other hand, 218 respondents, representing 68.1%, strongly agreed that Conducting Opinion Polling and Surveying Constituent Needs is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. 100 respondents, representing 31.3%, agreed with item number 20. In the same vein, 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed with item number 20. 1 respondent, also representing 0.3%, strongly disagreed that Conducting Opinion Polling and Surveying Constituent Needs is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public.

Conclusively, 215 respondents, representing 67.2%, strongly agreed that Social Media is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. 103 respondents, representing 32.2%, agreed that Social Media is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed that Social Media is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. Finally, 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, strongly

disagreed that Social Media is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public.

From the foregoing, it was deduced that an average of 65.2% of the respondents strongly agreed with items 17-21. Also, an average of 33% agreed with the items. However, an average of 0.9% had a contrary opinion and also disagreed that Outreach Approach, Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements, Special Events and Holiday Activities, Conducting Opinion Polling and Surveying Constituent Needs and Social Media are mechanisms that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public, and an average of 0.9% also strongly disagreed with the assertion of item 17-21.

Research Objective Five:

Table 4.1.5 Factors militating against citizens' participation in the democratic processes

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
22	Lack of Electoral Reforms	216 (67.5%)	99 (30.9%)	2 (0.6%)	3 (0.9%)	320 (100%)
23	Inefficient and Ineffective Legislature	218 (68.1%)	100 (31.3%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)
24	Institutional Challenges	200 (62.5%)	108 (33.8%)	5 (1.6%)	7 (2.2%)	320 (100%)
25	Electoral Violence	212 (66.3%)	105 (32.8%)	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)
26	Inefficient and Ineffective Judiciary	214 (66.9%)	104 (32.5%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	320 (100%)
	Average Percentage	66.3%	32.3%	0.7%	0.8%	100%

Source: Fieldwork December 2024.

From the data presented in Table 4.5, a total of 216 respondents (67.5%) strongly agreed that the absence of meaningful electoral reforms hinders citizens' active participation in democratic processes. An additional 99 respondents (30.9%) also agreed with this assertion. In contrast, only 2 respondents (0.6%) disagreed, while 3 respondents (0.9%) strongly disagreed.

Regarding legislative inefficiency and ineffectiveness, 218 respondents (68.1%) strongly agreed that this is a barrier to democratic engagement, and 100 respondents (31.3%) agreed. Only 1 respondent each (0.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively.

On the issue of institutional challenges, 200 respondents (62.5%) strongly agreed that this factor impedes citizens' involvement in democratic processes, while 108 respondents (33.8%) agreed. However, 5 respondents (1.6%) disagreed, and 7 respondents (2.2%) strongly disagreed with this view.

In terms of electoral violence, 212 respondents (66.3%) strongly agreed that it undermines public participation in democracy, with 105 respondents (32.8%) agreeing. Conversely, 2 respondents (0.6%) disagreed, and 1 respondent (0.3%) strongly disagreed.

On the role of the judiciary, 214 respondents (66.9%) strongly agreed that a weak and inefficient judiciary is a deterrent to citizens' participation in democratic processes. Additionally, 104 respondents (32.5%) agreed, while just 1 respondent each (0.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Overall, the findings reveal a consensus among the majority of respondents on the critical challenges affecting democratic engagement in Ogbaru Federal Constituency. With an average of 98.6% of participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the identified factors, it is evident that these issues require urgent attention. The data affirms that any barrier to citizen participation must be systematically addressed, as democracy is rooted in the sovereignty and active involvement of the people. Meanwhile, only a marginal average of 1.5% of respondents opposed these assertions, indicating widespread recognition of the existing obstacles.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The study finds that 120 respondents, representing 37.5%, strongly agreed that the extent to which Ogbaru citizens' participate in electing their representatives is low. Additionally, 100 respondents, representing 31.3%, agreed with the low level of participation. 30 respondents, representing 9.4%, disagreed with the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed that the level of participation was low. In addition, 70 respondents, representing 21.9%, strongly disagreed that the level of participation is low.

In the study, it was discovered that 200 respondents, representing 63%, strongly agreed that Good Governance is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. 110 respondents, representing 34.4%, agreed that Good Governance is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. Also, 4 respondents, representing 1.3%, disagreed that Good Governance is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic process. While 6 respondents, representing 1.9%, strongly disagreed that Good Governance is a mechanism that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes.

The study revealed 205 respondents, representing 64.1%, strongly agreed that Rule of Law is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. In the same vein, 109 respondents, representing 34.1%, agreed that Rule of Law is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. While 3 respondents, representing 0.9%, disagreed that Rule of Law is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome. Also, 3 respondents, representing 0.9%, strongly disagreed that Rule of Law is an effect of citizens' participation in democratic process on the legislative outcome.

In addition, 218 respondents, representing 68.1%, strongly agreed that Constituency Office is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. In

the same vein, 100 respondents, representing 31.3%, agreed that Constituency Office is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. While 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed that Constituency Office is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes. 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, strongly disagreed that Constituency Office is a mechanism that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its processes.

The findings also proved that, 200 respondents, representing 62.5%, strongly agreed that Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. In the same vein, 115 respondents, representing 35.9%, agreed that Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. While 3 respondents, representing 0.9%, disagreed that Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. 2 respondents, representing 0.6%, strongly disagreed that Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements is a mechanism that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public.

Regarding legislative inefficiency and ineffectiveness, 218 respondents (68.1%) strongly agreed that this is a barrier to democratic engagement, and 100 respondents (31.3%) agreed. Only 1 respondent each (0.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. In terms of electoral violence, 212 respondents (66.3%) strongly agreed that it undermines public participation in democracy, with 105 respondents (32.8%) agreeing. Conversely, 2 respondents (0.6%) disagreed, and 1 respondent (0.3%) strongly disagreed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this Chapter, it presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations for the study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that approximately 69% of the respondents believed that the level of citizen participation in the democratic process, particularly in electing representatives within Ogbaru Federal Constituency, remains significantly low. This low level of engagement was largely attributed to the prevalence of bad governance.

Key findings from the study identified various democratic principles and values as direct outcomes of active civic participation. These include good governance, the realization of popular sovereignty, increased political engagement, adherence to the rule of law, electoral systems grounded in majority rule, the promotion of equality among citizens, respect for civil liberties, and the fostering of accountability through public consultation. These elements were seen to have a positive influence on legislative outcomes when citizen participation is robust.

However, several obstacles were identified as hindrances to meaningful citizen involvement in democratic governance. Among the major challenges are ineffective leadership, widespread corruption, insufficient electoral reform, a lack of implementation of the Freedom of Information Act, a weak and ineffective judiciary, constitutional deficiencies, a non-performing legislature, abuses of office, widespread illiteracy, high unemployment rates, systemic institutional failures, governance-related issues, and electoral violence.

The study also evaluated mechanisms that could effectively bridge the gap between legislators and their constituents. It was discovered that town hall meetings, constituency offices, personal interactions, and constituency casework were perceived as more effective

means of engagement compared to digital platforms such as websites. This preference was due to limited access to internet services in Ogbaru, compounded by poor telecommunications infrastructure. Furthermore, many residents are predominantly engaged in trading and farming and have minimal interest or familiarity with internet-based democratic engagement. As a result, strengthening physical platforms such as constituency offices and town hall meetings was recommended to improve communication and representation.

In terms of mechanisms that foster communication between the legislature and the public, an average of 65.2% of respondents strongly agreed with the effectiveness of initiatives like outreach programs, local media engagement, public service announcements, participation in community events, and constituent surveys. Another 33% agreed with these strategies, while a marginal 0.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with their effectiveness.

Finally, the study highlighted a strong consensus on the necessity of addressing barriers to citizen participation in democratic governance. With an average of 98.6% either strongly agreeing or agreeing to this assertion, it became clear that overcoming these obstacles is essential for the growth and sustainability of democracy in Nigeria. Only 1.5% of respondents expressed disagreement, reinforcing the widespread recognition of the importance of public involvement in political decision-making.

5.2 Recommendations

With reference to the findings and conclusions, the study recommends the following:

Accountability and transparency of government are common motivations for public participation, which will eliminate corruption; hence, the study recommends that the government should be accountable and transparent to the people in all their activities, and the country needs electoral reforms that can ensure free, fair and credible elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The National Assembly should amend

the 2022 Electoral Act, which will encourage the conduct of true, free, fair and acceptable elections and deal with electoral offenders;

It is essential for stakeholders to effectively implement the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, enabling citizens to easily access information about government activities. The FOI Act can facilitate the transparent sharing of information regarding political candidates, which is crucial for democratic development, citizen involvement in governance, and promoting good governance in Nigeria;

The National Judicial Council (NJC) and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) should work towards ensuring a robust and efficient judiciary. As a critical branch of government, the judiciary plays a stabilizing role in a democracy by interpreting the nation's laws (constitution). It must exercise its authority to safeguard public interest through fair, balanced, and acceptable judgments, which is necessary for active citizen engagement and democracy to thrive in Nigeria's political landscape;

The National Assembly should consider revising the constitution, as many concerned citizens have advocated for constitutional reforms. They argue that a comprehensive review of the Nigerian constitution is necessary, with some sections needing modification or removal to meet the evolving needs of the populace. One significant recommendation is the elimination of the "immunity clause" that shields top government officials from prosecution while in office. Proponents of this change believe it enables officials to amass wealth and evade accountability after leaving office;

A strong and effective legislative body is essential for ensuring oversight of executive power and addressing political misconduct. A competent legislature not only has the responsibility to create laws that ensure the safety and welfare of citizens but must also manage public funds to improve the quality of life for all. Failure to fulfil this responsibility limits the benefits that citizens should derive from democratic governance.

5.3 Conclusion

Citizens' participation in the democratic process involves engaging in various political activities such as voting in elections, participating in decision-making, attending public hearings, and protesting. These activities are fundamental to the democratic process, as they contribute to collective responsibility (Botwinick 1992).

The outcome of the study revealed that an average of 97.4% of the respondents believed that Good Governance, Openness, Active Participation, Accountability and Effective Policy are strong mechanisms that would enhance citizens' participation in the democratic processes. However, an average of 2.6% had a contrary opinion.

The outcome of the study also revealed that the effects of citizens' participation in the democratic process on the legislative outcome cannot be overemphasized, having considered an average of 96.8%. The effectiveness and quality of laws churned out from the parliament as the custodian of democracy largely depends on the effect of citizens' participation in the democratic process, which in turn breeds Timely, Efficient and Effective legislative outcome that meets the needs and aspirations of the people.

The outcome of the study revealed that Town Hall Meeting with 65.6% for (SA), Constituency Office with 68.1% for the (SA), Keeping In Touch with 65.3% for (SA), and Constituency Casework with 64.1% for (SA) were the most effective mechanisms that would bring the citizens' closer to Parliament and its process more than the Website with respondents of 57.2% for (SA). This is because most of the electorate in Ogbaru Federal Constituency do not have access to effective internet due to poor telecommunication infrastructure. Also, most of the constituents are traders and farmers, and because of that, they lack interest in some internet-related democratic activities.

It was concluded that an average of 65.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that Outreach Approach, Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements, Special

Events and Holiday Activities, Conducting Opinion Polling and Surveying Constituent Needs and Social Media are mechanisms that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public. Also, an average of 33% agreed with the items. However, an average of 0.9% had a contrary opinion and also disagreed that Outreach Approach, Local Radio or TV Shows and Public Service Announcements, Special Events and Holiday Activities, Conducting Opinion Polling and Surveying Constituent Needs and Social Media are mechanisms that would enhance communication between the legislators and the public, and an average of 0.9% also strongly disagreed with the assertion of item 17-21.

Overall, the outcome revealed that consensus among the majority of respondents on the critical challenges affecting democratic engagement in Ogbaru Federal Constituency. With an average of 98.6% of participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the identified factors, it is evident that these issues require urgent attention. The data affirms that any barrier to citizen participation must be systematically addressed, as democracy is rooted in the sovereignty and active involvement of the people. Meanwhile, only a marginal average of 1.5% of respondents opposed these assertions, indicating widespread recognition of the existing obstacles.

Despite challenges such as poor leadership, corruption, lack of electoral reforms, inefficient judicial systems, a faulty constitution, and electoral violence, citizens continue to demand good governance. This includes meeting their needs and aspirations without corruption, impunity, or disregard for the rule of law. A proper evaluation of good governance should focus on how well it ensures human rights, provides infrastructure, social amenities, healthcare, education, affordable housing, and works towards lifting citizens out of poverty, ultimately improving their quality of life.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study is useful to Legislators/Policy Makers, Civil Society Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, the General Public and Students of National Institutes for Legislative and Democratic Studies to understand the importance of citizens' participation in the democratic process, to foster good governance and hold the government accountable and the effects it has on Legislative Outcomes.

Also, it will provide a practical source of ideas that the Parliaments can adopt to measure the effects of the laws they make on the lives of the citizens.

It is further a useful tool for institutions that are involved in programmes intended to strengthen citizens' participation in the democratic process.

In addition, the study will expose and stimulate the citizens' need for active participation in the democratic process, most especially in electing Members of the Parliament, both at the National Assembly and at the State Assembly, because laws made by the Parliament are for the peace and good governance of the state, which have effects on their (citizens') lives.

This research work will also spur the General Public to further study, which will encourage active citizens' participation in the democratic process.

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