

Nigerian Electorate's Perception of Their Representatives: The Case of Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State

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Abstract

Democracy, as a concept, is based, fundamentally, on the need for the people to have a voice in governance. Its philosophy is basically that of electing persons in various capacities that would represent and protect the interests of the constituencies that elected them. Thus, the extent to which this can be achieved has been and still is a subject of great intellectual discourse in countries of the world, Nigeria being no exception. The paper examines the relationship between the electorate and their representatives in Nigeria, using Ovia South West Local Government as a case study. The study adopts the survey research design and utilized a structured questionnaire for data collection. Description statistics, such as frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize the data, while chi-square inferential statistics were used to test the relationship between variables. The study found that a non-cordial relationship exists between the electorate and their representatives and this has dire consequences for human and infrastructural development in the local government. Also, the majority of the sampled respondents opined that their elected representatives have failed to attract developmental projects to Ovia South West. Policy recommendations were made that elected representatives should hold regular town hall meetings with the electorate to update them on their

activities and the feedback received should be integrated into policies. Moreover, there should be constant civic education of the electorate to enable them participate and demand effective representation from their elected representatives.

Keywords: Elected representatives, Politics, Governance, Development

Introduction

Long before legislators began to assert their functions as policy makers, they served as representative institutions, providing a link between the citizens and the government. In more recent times, in some parts of the world, under highly centralized democracies, virtually the only role that elected representatives play is to articulate the views of their constituents and serve as a liaison between government and the citizens (Oyewale, 2010). This linkage between citizens and elected representatives helps to legitimize government actions, even under parliamentary systems that may serve only as rubber stamps for executive decisions (Norton and Wood, 2006).

According to Olson (2004), building stronger links between elected representatives and citizens may be particularly important in democracies in which civil society is not well-established. Effective communication between elected representatives and their constituents and between institutions and the general public can help to build and strengthen democratic traditions. In these societies, elected representatives may not yet play a significant role in policy-making due to traditions of strong executive authority or tight party control, but they can still contribute to democracy by voicing the concerns of constituents and assisting them in dealing with government bureaucracy. Over time, placing emphasis on this linkage will serve to educate both the citizens and the elected representatives about their roles in a representative democracy. It also contributes to the legitimacy of democratic government and, eventually, leads to a more significant policy role for elected representatives.

Elected representatives take in information which keeps them informed about the constituency and can be taken back to the legislature to educate other elected representatives about the province, resulting in more informed policy decision-making. They facilitate the flow of information and services back to the constituency, making government more real and accessible, and improving service delivery and empowering constituents to

participate in developing their communities (NDI, 2009). Serving communities of constituents as well as attending to their personal requests in matters within the competence of government are among the major expectations of the average electorate regarding the job of a representative (Turan, 2004).

According to Adesina (2009) and Cain et al. (2007), the relationship between elected representatives and the electorate is that the electoral system makes it more likely that elected representatives will act as citizen intermediaries. Thus, elected representatives have a duty to develop a reputation as effective local advocates by taking up the problems of individual citizens, or indeed of the local community as a whole and bringing them to the attention of government officials. To fulfill this role, they make themselves available to be contacted and may hold local meetings or other events that enable citizens to inform them of their problems. They then write letters to civil servants, federal ministers or even private organizations on behalf of those who come to them. If the matter appears important enough they may even seize the opportunity to raise it at some forum within the legislature.

This paper therefore seeks to examine the actual relationship between elected representatives and the electorate, and proffer suggestions that will help bridge the gap between the elected representatives and electorate.

Statement of the Problem

It is the right of all citizens to be represented in the political decision-making process. In fact, political representation is one of the core principles of contemporary democracies. An elected assembly should reflect the political composition of the electorate as well as other important aspects like geography, gender, ethnicity or other group identities, including age or specific vulnerability. The legitimacy of a democratic system depends largely upon the conviction of all sections of society that they have adequate access to the decision-making institutions through their representatives.

Free and fair elections constitute a necessary precondition for representative democracy, and are decisive for ensuring that the will of the people is respected in the shaping of the legislature and government at all levels. The constituency or electorate's access to the federal, state and local

government is often through the representative. Certainly, being a public policy maker is a big part of a system that brings the constituency or electorate to feel they are part of the democratic process (NDI, 2009). The linkage function of the interaction between representatives and the electorate is obvious. The attention and concerns of the constituency are bases for citizens to participate in the legislative process which legitimizes government action and enhances public support for representative democracy. The very notion of representative democracy assumes that public participation in the decision-making process improves the quality of decision-making (Fearon, 2004).

In Nigeria, the relationship between representatives and the electorate remains to be seen as effective as it should be (Asuquo, 2011). This has led to much intellectual argument and discourse on the realistic relationship between the two parties. Scholars have argued that some of the problems that exist between elected representatives and the electorate are: lack of resources for parliamentarians to communicate with constituents, inadequate media reporting that impedes communication with the public about the legislature, high rate of illiteracy that inhibits written communication between the elected representatives and the electorate, and poor educational systems that do not adequately ground citizens in the ways in which they can affect the decisions of their government. These and other factors have created a gap and vacuum between the representatives and the electorate.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study include to:

1. Determine if a cordial relationship exists between elected representatives and the electorate in the study area.
2. Determine if frequent meetings between elected representatives and the electorate influence the development of the constituency.
3. Determine how satisfied the electorate is with their elected representatives' performance.
4. Identify solutions to the problems between elected representatives and the electorate in the study area.

Conceptual Exposition

Elected Representatives

Representatives are members of a community elected by the community members in a prescribed election to represent their interests in the National Assembly, State Houses of Assembly or as councillors in the local government legislative arm.

The Electorate

The electorate refers to people who are of voting age and who can vote for candidates in an election to represent them in the National Assembly, State Houses of Assembly or as councillors in the local government legislative arm. The constitutional right to vote and be voted for, are contained in sections and sub-sections 77(2); 117 (2); 132(5) and 178 (5) of the 1999 Nigerian constitution, as amended (Asuquo, 2011).

Democracy

The word, democracy is a term that comes from Greek and is made up of two words: *demo*, which means people and *kratein* meaning to govern or to rule. Becker and Raveloson (2008) aligned with Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy, 'government of the people, by the people and for the people'. They went further to say that democracy is government that comes from the people, it is exercised by the people and for the purpose of the people's own interest. It is a government of representation and majority.

Election

Election is a formal decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office. According to Oyewale (2010), election is the legitimate mechanism for the peaceful arbitration of political rivalry and management of power. Also, Olson (2004) defines election as providing a peaceful democratic means for societies to channel competition for political power and make collective decisions. By casting votes to select who will represent them in public offices, citizens express preferences about the policies those representatives will pursue. Citizens may also make decisions on issues through special elections called referenda. Besides the element of choice in an election, it must be seen to be free, fair, acceptable and credible.

Development

Todaro (1981) describes development as both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combination of social, economic and institutional processes, secured the means of obtaining a better life. Ogbeide (2011) opined that, development can be seen as the process through which a society's economic, political and socio-cultural institutions and values are transformed in order to improve the standard of living and life chances of people within that society. According to Dudley (1972: 129), the questions to ask about a country's development are: What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? What has been happening to poverty? If all these are at their lowest levels, then no doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development; even if per-capita income doubled.

Local Government

Local government is mostly seen as that tier of government closest to the people, and vested with certain powers to exercise control over the affairs of the people in its domain (Lawal, 2000). It is also an administrative body for a small geographical area, such as a city, town or state. A local government will typically have control over only a specific geographical area or region and cannot enforce or pass laws that will affect a wider area.

Theoretical Perspective

The system theory has a theoretical explanation that is significant to this research work. Ludwig Von Bertalanffy and Ross Ashby were biologists who proposed the system theory in the 1940s. Von Bertalanffy (1968) wrote that a system is a complex of interaction elements and that they are open to, and interact with their environments. The system theory was later adopted in the social sciences and popularized by Easton (1965) when he utilized it in his, *System Analysis of Political Life*. So, the main tenets of the system theory can be summarised as follows:

1. A system can be perceived as a whole with its parts and their interdependent relationships.

2. A system has its boundaries and can be viewed in terms of its relationships with other systems.
3. A system has sub systems and is also part of a supra system.
4. A system interacts with its environment in terms of the process that involves input, conversation and output of energy, and introduction and materials.
5. A system tends to re-energize or modify itself through the process of information feedback from the environment.

From the above analysis, Omotola (2007) pertinently notes that, the Nigerian democratic system lacks that flow of inter-relationship between the elected representatives and the electorate, and as such development and dividends of democracy become alien in the local government, state and country at large. Just like David Easton (1965) rightly pointed out, the system is kept alive by a continuous interaction between inter-dependent parts. According to Omotola (2007), the questions to ask therefore are: Are the promises during campaigns and elections fulfilled? Have they transformed to improvement in the standard of living of the electorate and development of the economy? Ideally, the relationship should birth the rising legitimacy of the state, an improved standard of living amongst the populace, and improved climate of human rights in all its ramification; all culminating in popular empowerment and participation and an enhanced atmosphere of peace and stability as a prerequisite for development. But in Nigeria there have been more cases of unemployment, corruption, epileptic power supply, infrastructural decay and low standard of living amongst the populace due to the disconnection (Omotola, 2007).

Okeshola and Igba (2013) opined that the much expected dividends of democracy are not enjoyed by the electorate after campaign and elections but by those in the corridors of power and their allies (the elite or elected representatives). They further posit that the education, roads and infrastructure promised by the politicians during campaigns were often tagged 'political statements'. Even when the promises are fulfilled after many pleas from the electorate, the projects are either substandard or few. Most times, the electorate is denied access to submit its demands to the representatives and people at the grassroots are often neglected.

Literature Review

According to Banks and Sundaram (2008), the relationship between an electorate and its elected representative is, at least in part, a principal-agent relationship. This means that the electorate in a representative government delegates the decision-making responsibility to its agent, the representative. Since the electorate cannot observe all the beliefs and dispositions of every candidate for office, and cannot observe every decision (or its context or alternatives) made by every elected official, it must elect an agent who has ideological beliefs it embraces and induce its agent to make decisions it likes.

Fearon (2004) posits that the chief formal lever the electorate has, to influence its agent's preferences and behaviour, is, of course, an election. Elections are useful, both for selecting agents whose preferences are compatible with the electorate's and for inducing an agent with any given preferences to act in accordance with the preferences of the electorate. Barro (1973) and Ferejohn (1986) opined that elections are also blunt instruments of accountability.

Adesina (2009) argues that modern general elections and re-elections changed the relationship between an electorate and its elected representatives. Prior to general elections, under indirect election, the relationship was one of indirect or hierarchical agency – the leaders select the representatives. By so doing, the representatives were only loyal to the leaders to the detriment of the citizens. It must be noted that nineteenth-century legislatures were not always thriving and active bodies, and turnover was often quite high. Nevertheless, many of them were better than the present crop of representatives. The reason being that the first generation of elected representatives were generally more politically sophisticated and connected than the present ones. This relative sophistication arose in part because they had the interest of the electorate; it is conceivably part of the reason they entered into politics in the first place. Campbell (2007) notes that ethnic networks commonly played a role in election to the assemblies and that elected representatives tended to live in common quarters, while the assembly was in session. Each of these factors facilitated the rapid transfer of relevant information and would help elected representatives assimilate the modest information needed to make informed judgments about the electorate.

Bartels (1991) opined that the cornerstone of the justifications for representative government is that representatives faithfully translate popular will into policy decisions, and constituents are able to hold them accountable through elections if they do not. Even if voters are fully informed and rational, the blunt instrument of elections may be up to this task, and if they are not, then any decoupling of citizens from policy decisions is inherently problematic (although perhaps necessary in a large democracy). Besley and Case (2003) stated that placing extra intermediaries between citizens and ultimate policy choices linked by a chain of electoral connections would seem to make matters better for citizens because every link in the chain is another possibility for electorates and policy choice linkages. Donald (2000), however, remarked that this logic is complicated if electoral intermediaries hold better information than electorates about selecting or monitoring elected officials. The intermediaries' information is useful for voters, although they may not leverage it exactly as voters would if they themselves had it.

Arnold (2003) explains that a crucial plank in the normative defense of representative democracy is that elections help to translate popular preferences into public policy decisions. Given such factors as "rational ignorance" and information asymmetries faced by the electorate, the potential incoherence of the electorate and the development of their constituency and whether and how institutions cause this translation is a matter of adequate representation.

Olson (2004) is of the view that building stronger links between legislatures and citizens may be particularly important to democracies in which civil society is not well-established, and that effective communication between elected representatives and the constituency, and between the institution and the general public can help to build a strong democratic tradition. He opined that in these societies, elected representatives may not yet play a significant role in policy-making due to traditions of strong executive authority or tight party control, but they can still contribute to democracy by voicing the concerns of the electorate and assisting them in dealing with the government bureaucracy. Kernell (2005) also believed that educating both the electorate and elected representatives about their roles in a representative democracy may contribute to the legitimacy of democratic government and, eventually, lead to a more significant policy role for elected representatives.

Methodology

The survey research method was adopted for this study. The population of the study included all registered voters in the area of study which was pegged at 79,963 (INEC, 2015). The Yamane 95% confidence level formula (Yamane, 1967) was applied to get the sample size from the 9 wards in the local government. In all, a total sample size of 382 was obtained and used.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where:

n = Sample size required

N = Number of people in the population

e = Allowable error 0.05

1 = Given or constant

Table 1: INEC number of registered voters in 2015

Ward	Nos of Polling Units	Registered Voters per Ward	Percentage per Ward	Sample Selected
Iguobazuwa West	91	9021	11.28	43
Iguobazuwa East	8	6425	8.16	31
Umaza	11	9064	11.34	43
Siluko	12	8244	10.31	39
Udo	15	15701	19.64	77
Ora	6	4579	5.73	21
Usen	11	9800	12.26	47
Ugbogui	13	10609	13.27	51
Nikorogha	8	6421	8.03	30
TOTAL	82	79964	100.00	382

Source: INEC (2015).

The sampling technique is multi-stage sampling because it is a further development of the principle of cluster sampling. In this study, the first stage involved the selection of a large primary sampling unit from the local government. At the second stage, certain polling units within each ward were selected and finally, households from the polling units were selected as the third stage.

A well-structured questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection to elicit information from the electorate in the study area. Section 'A' elicited information on background variables, while Section 'B' contained questions to discover the perception of the electorate about their elected representatives. Copies of the questionnaire were administered directly by the researchers and the simple percentage method was used to analyse the data collected.

Results and Discussion

Background characteristics of the respondents

A total of three hundred and eighty-two (382) copies of the questionnaire were administered, out of which three hundred and fifty-two were completed and returned by the respondents. Out of the 352 respondents, the majority were male, representing 57.1%, while the female represented 42.9% of the sample. The age distribution shows that 27.3% of the respondents were below 18-25 years; 30.7% were 26-35 years; and 24.7% were 36-45 years, while the remaining 17.3% were above 45. This shows that the majority of the respondents who took part in the study were experienced and within the age bracket which enabled them to give informed opinions. Furthermore, 61.9% of the respondents were Christians; 26.1% were Muslims; 26.1% belonged to African Traditional Religion (ATR), while 6.8% were from "other" religions. Therefore, the analyses indicate that the respondents cut across religious divides. In addition, 17.3% of the respondents were primary school certificate holders; 25% were post- primary certificate holders; 27.3% were OND/NCE certificate holders; 21.9% were degree/HND certificate holders; 5.4% were master degree holders, while the remaining 3.1% were PhD holders. This shows that all the respondents had basic education and thus were equipped to make informed responses that are useful to the study. Finally, 40.3% of the respondents were civil/public servants; 27.3% respondents were business men and women; 19.3% were farmers, while 13.1% belonged to the "others" category. This distribution implies that the majority of the respondents were enlightened and therefore in a position to make informed decisions.

Table 2: Characteristics of the respondents

Gender Distribution	Respondents	Frequency	%
	Male	201	57.1
	Female	151	42.9
Age Distribution	18 - 25	96	27.3
	26 - 35	108	30.7
	36 - 45	87	24.7
	≥45	61	17.3
Marital Status	Married	211	59.9
	Single	119	33.8
	Others	22	6.25
Religion Distribution	Christian	218	61.9
	Islam	92	26.1
	ATR	24	6.8
	Others	38	10.8
Educational Qualification	Primary	61	17.3
	Post Primary	88	25.0
	OND/NCE	96	27.3
	Degree/HND	77	21.9
	Master	19	5.4
	PhD	11	3.1
Occupational Status	Civil / Public Servant	142	40.3
	Business	96	27.3
	Farmers	68	19.3
	Others	46	13.1

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Perception of Representatives by the Electorate

Table 3: Perception of representatives by the electorate (N = 352)

Questions	Responses	Frequency	%
1) How long have you been in this constituency?	≤10 years	26	7.4
	10 - 20 years	47	13.4
	20 - 25 years	82	23.3
	≥ 26 years	197	56.0
2) You often communicate with your elected representative.	Strongly Agree	48	13.6
	Agree	131	37.2

Questions	Responses	Frequency	%
3) What medium do you and your elected representative use in communicating?	Undecided	92	26.1
	Strongly Disagree	24	6.8
	Disagree	57	16.2
	One on One Contact	32	9.1
	Letters	49	13.9
	Media Release	184	52.3
	Public Meetings	87	24.7
4) When last did you meet with your elected representative?	Less than a month - 3 month	98	27.8
	4 - 6 month	173	49.1
	7 month and above	81	23.1
5) How would you rate the relationship between your elected representative and the electorate?	Cordial	74	21.0
	Not Cordial	199	56.5
	Don't Know	79	22.4
6) Would you say the kind of relationship that exists between the elected representative and the electorate affects their dividends of democracy?	Strongly Agree	61	17.3
	Agree	122	34.7
	Undecided	84	23.9
	Strongly Disagree	36	10.2
	Disagree	49	13.9
7) Has your elected representative helped to site any development project in your area?	Yes	94	26.7
	No	258	73.3
8) Are you satisfied with the way you are being represented by your elected representative?	Yes	125	35.5
	No	227	64.5

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Analysis from Table 3

Question 1 shows that 7.4% of the respondents have lived in Ovia South West for less than 10 years; 13.4% respondents for 10 - 20 years; 23.3% for 20 - 25 years, while 56.0% respondents have resided in Ovia South West for 26 years and above. Therefore, the above analysis indicates that the majority of the respondents have lived in Ovia South West for 26 years and above.

From Question 2, it was discovered that, 13.6% of the sampled respondents strongly agreed that they often communicate with their elected representative; 37.2% agreed; 26.1% were indecisive of the aforementioned

assertion; 6.8% strongly disagreed, while the remaining 16.2% respondents disagreed as regards the aforementioned assertion.

The answers to Question 3 showed that 9.1% of the respondents indicated that one-on-one contact was the medium they and their elected representative use in communicating; 13.9% of the respondents cited letters; 52.3% of the respondents indicated media release, while the remaining 24.7% of the respondents stated that public meeting was the medium they and their elected representative use in communicating.

The responses to Question 4 indicated that 27.8% of the respondents had met with their elected representative within a period of less than 1 – 3 months; 49.1% had met with their representative within a period of 4 – 6 months, while 23.1% of the respondents had met with their elected representative between 7 months and above.

In responding to Question 5, 21.0% of the respondents were of the opinion that the relationship between the elected representative and the electorate is cordial; 56.5% were of the view that the relationship between the elected representative and the electorate is not cordial, while the remaining 22.4% of the respondents were undecided.

From question 6, it was observed that, 17.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that the relationship that exists between the elected representative and the electorate affects their dividends of democracy; 34.7% agreed; 23.9% were undecided; 10.2% strongly disagreed, while the remaining 13.9% respondents disagreed.

The answers to Question 7 showed that, 26.7% of the respondents agreed that their elected representative has helped to site some developmental projects in their area, while 73.3% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion.

Finally, question 8 showed that, 35.5% of the respondents agreed that they are satisfied with the way they are being represented by their elected representatives, while 64.5% of the sampled respondents indicated that they are not satisfied with the way they are being represented by their elected representatives.

Linking Findings With Objectives

Effective communication between elected representatives and constituents, and between institutions and the general public can help to build and strengthen democratic traditions. In these societies, elected representatives may not yet play a significant role in policy-making due to traditions of strong executive authority or tight party control, but they can still contribute to democracy by voicing the concerns of constituents and assisting them in dealing with government bureaucracy. Over time, placing emphasis on this linkage function educates both citizens and elected representatives about their roles in a representative democracy. It may contribute to the legitimacy of democratic government and, eventually, lead to a more significant policy role for elected representatives.

Thus, in analysing our findings in relation to our research objective, which was to find out if frequent meetings between elected representatives and the electorate promote better constituency representation, results showed that few of the respondents have contact with their elected representative. According to the research findings, most of the time, the elected representative visits his/her constituency, not for developmental purposes but for campaign reasons. And this assertion was largely supported by the majority of the respondents (see Table 3, questions 2 & 3).

Furthermore, it was discovered that the elected representative in Ovia South West LGA, hardly visit their constituency. This was the case in the study where the researcher discovered that, majority of the respondents only get to meet with their elected representatives within a period of 4 - 6 months or more. Thus, it was noticed that there is a need for elected political representatives to be more available in their constituencies and more development oriented (see Table 3, question 4).

Also, in relation to the objective of finding out whether a cordial relationship exists between elected representatives and the electorate in Ovia South LGA, the study revealed that there is no cordial relationship between elected representatives and the electorate. This was affirmed by a 56.5% majority of the respondents, as against the 21.0% of the respondents who do not agree with the aforementioned proposition, while 22.4% of the respondents were undecided on the issue (see Table 3, question 5). The above statistics clearly show that the elected representatives in Ovia South West LGA are failing in their responsibilities.

Moreover, the issue of the non-cordial relationship that exists between the elected representatives and the electorate has been observed by the researcher as having grave effects on the people getting dividends of democracy, as it affects the people of Ovia South West LGA of Edo State. The above assertion was rightly posited and given full back-up by a large majority of the respondents. In buttressing the point, it was noticed that, due to the absence and “corrupt practices” of elected representatives in their constituencies, especially in Ovia South West, the evidence and dividends of democracy have not been felt. And this has led to serious neglect and decay in infrastructural and socio-economic development in the constituencies of the elected representatives.

In addition, the majority of the respondents were of the view that, their elected representatives have not attracted any developmental projects in Ovia South West which has led to lack of development in the area. This is mainly due to the lack of communication between the electorate in the local government area and the elected representatives. The majority of the respondents are not satisfied with the way they are being represented by their elected representatives, and this fact was strongly indicated by 64.5% of the total population of respondents, as against an opposition of 35.5% (see Table 3, question 7).

Finally, in line with our objective (to find out how satisfied the electorate is with the developmental strides and effective representation by the elected representatives), it was largely agreed by the majority of the respondents that effective representation brings about satisfaction and development, thus promoting the dividends of democracy, such as construction of roads and rehabilitation of schools and health centres, amongst others.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the communication gap adversely affects the representation of the electorate by the elected representatives, especially in Ovia South West Local Government Area. Also, the elected representatives have not helped to site meaningful developmental projects in Ovia South West. The study further indicated that the majority of the respondents in Ovia South West LGA were not satisfied with the activities and performance of their elected representatives. The elected representatives hardly visit their constituencies to assess the impact of governance on the people and care for

their demands by influencing and attracting development and/or people empowerment projects to the local government area. Finally, the non-cordial relationship that exists between the elected representatives and the electorate has grave effects on the people enjoying the dividends of democracy, as it negatively affects proper consultation and deliberation, and the formulation of people-oriented policies that can translate to the infrastructural development and socioeconomic empowerment of the people of Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State.

Policy Recommendations

In view of the findings, the study recommends that there is a need to plan and institute a strategic administrative and effective governance drive in running the affairs of the country, to ensure good governance for the electorate. This is important in order to guard against occurrences and factors that tend to undermine the existence and growth of the Nigerian democratic system. Thus, this research work recommends the following:

1. Elected representatives should work hard to bridge the gap between them and the electorate. This can help to strengthen democracy through improved communication and services to constituents. The representatives should also endeavour to always put their constituencies first before their own personal desires. This is because the primary objective of any representative in a democratic government is to serve the people.
2. Elected representatives should work to attract and promote development and empowerment programmes and projects in their constituencies. This will not only bring civilization and development to the people, it will also bring them (elected representatives) closer to the electorate.
3. Elected representatives should create an office in their respective constituencies where they can be reached whenever the need arises. Also, people from the constituency that are versed in community relations should be employed to manage minor affairs of the constituency, while they concentrate on policy matters.
4. The government should also help by setting up a monitoring taskforce that will be in charge of evaluating elected representatives' actions as it pertains to the development of their constituencies.

5. Elected representatives should constantly hold Town Hall meetings with the electorate to update them on their activities and the feedback or outcome from such meetings should be integrated into government policies for the general interest of all.
6. Civic education of the electorate plays an important role in promoting informed and responsible citizenship, making them aware of their democratic rights and interested in how their affairs are being run and managed by their elected representatives.
7. Lastly, the training and education of the elected representatives through workshops, symposia and visits to other consolidated democratic states can help to sensitize them to the benefits of improved communication with the electorate.
8. The role of the electorate in terms of participating in and contributing to policies should be encouraged through such processes as referenda, opinion polls, workshops and constituency meetings with elected representatives.

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