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ASSIGNMENT: DO A TWO PAGE REVIEW ON CHAPTER 8 “CITIZEN ROLES IN DEMOCRACY”

INTRODUCTION

Sovereignty resides in and flows from the people in a democracy. The authority of government likewise derives from the will of the people in their choice of these systems. These precepts are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in modern constitutions all over the world. They capture the foundation for the famous formulation that democratic government is “of the people, by the people and for the people”. There is no democracy without the involvement of citizens. Citizen engagement pursues economic, social, cultural and political development, including the provision of opportunity, resources, services, and security. Transparency is necessity for democracy. For citizenship to be achieved, barriers must be removed.

CITIZEN/CITIZENSHIP: a certain type of relationship between the people and government. Citizens have a set of rights and responsibilities, including the rights to participate in decisions that affect public welfare which is a way to empower citizens. Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth, or by naturalization. A man becomes a citizen of a particular state if his parents are citizens of that state or if born within the territory of that state. On the other hand, the process by which an individual may voluntarily change his/her citizenship of a state to another is known as natuaralisation. The conditions under which naturalization are conferred vary from country to country. Citizenship is perceived to be made up of: civil citizenship; rights to protect individual liberty, political citizenship; participation in exercise of political power, and social citizenship; right to access resources. Brannan et. al. argue that citizenship is not solely comprised of passive membership of political entity but active is an of essential being a citizen. Glover argues that there are three dimensions of citizenship: Ethical Citizenship; active participation in a collective strive towards the public good, Integrative Citizenship; participation that goes beyond formal political practices and institutions, and Educative Citizenship; process that develops a moral, practical and intellectual sense of self in individuals. CITIZENS’ RIGHTS: Individuals rights and liberties are the groundwork the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully. A right is defined as privilege conferred by law upon a person or group. When it is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state it becomes civil right e.g. Right to life, right to work, right to freedom of speech, right to freedom of religion etc.

DEMOCRACY

Etymologically derived from the Greek word “demos” meaning people and “kratos” meaning rule, that is ‘rule by the people’. The concept first originated from Ancient Greece where every citizens was expected to participate in the running of government. The Greece democracy was a limited institution in that it excluded laborers, slaves and aliens from exercising political rights. This idea was first advocated in England after the great civil war in the 17th century. The American colonies, have revolted against England successfully, developed democratic ideas and institutions as way of life. Today democracy or representative government is also known as indirect government. Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as a system of the people, by the people and for the people. Democracy is also defined based on the following features: fundamental rights of the citizen is guaranteed, independent of impartial judiciary, existence of rule of law, freedom of press and periodic free and fair election. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY A citizen in a democracy has a duty to vote, A citizen should be willing to pay taxes, A citizen must have a duty to obey the law, a citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies, A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community etc.

CONCLUSION: Democracy is a system of government where citizens directly the government by voting. It is considered the best form of government in the modern era because citizens play an important role. A positive attitude should be maintained with the development of the state being the priority.