

Name: Umoren Queen Fredrick

Matric number:19/MHS01/422

Department: MBBS

Course: Government

Assignment : Review of Chapter 8(Citizens Role in a Democracy)

The people in a democracy have a collective right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems. The authority of government is derived from the will of the people in their choice of these systems. There is no democracy without the engagement of the citizens, engaging is both a right and responsibility of citizens in establishing, developing and sustaining democracy. For democracy to deliver, citizens need to be informed about issues that can improve their lives and for citizens to be informed, they need accurate information, particularly government-held information. Access to information is essential to an informed citizenry, transparency is a necessity for democracy. Citizens must understand ideas about citizenship, politics and government. Active participation of the people in governance is what brings about development.

To be a citizen means to enjoy certain liberties and rights, citizenship of a state may either be acquired by birth or naturalisation. Citizenship can be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Civil citizenship includes freedom of speech, justice and so on. Political citizenship is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power. Social citizenship consists of the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance with society standards.

Citizenship does not have one definition, it means different things to different people. To Brannan et. al., Citizenship is about being willing to contribute and get involved in issues affecting the society, being active is an essential part of being a citizen. To Glover, there are three dimensions of active citizenship; ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship and educative citizenship. To Kenny, full citizenship is ensured by empowering people to participate in the continual process of shaping their society, their communities and their identities.

In order to let the citizen have a share in the running of his/her government, a group of rights is very essential. Rights entail some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizen, a right is a privilege conferred by law on a person or a group of people. A civil right is a privilege expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, important civil rights accorded to Nigerian citizens in the constitution include: the right to life, the right to work, the right to freedom of religion, right to education and so on. The concept of democracy first originated from Ancient Greece, the word democracy is derived from the Greek word demos meaning people and kratos meaning rule, that is, rule by the people. Today, democracy is associated with the free discussion of political views, the right to differ concerning them and the settlement of differences by counting of votes, it is also a way of determining who shall govern and to what ends they shall rule.

According to Abraham Lincoln, democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. From the various definitions of democracy, the following features of democracy can be deduced; (1) the fundamental human rights of the citizens is guaranteed (2) Independent and Impartial Judiciary (3) existence of the rule of law (4) freedom of press (5) periodic election that is free and fair. While the state provides rights and liberties, all citizens have duties to the state. A citizen has the duty of voting, active participation in democracy is an important duty of citizens to the state. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes. A good citizen must obey the law, democracy cannot exist in a lawless society. A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but instead offer constructive alternatives to government policies. A good citizen must not interfere with the rights or properties of other members of the community, he or she should be honest, hard working and make contributions to the advancement of the nation. A good citizen must support public education in any way possible, education is power in a democracy because it strengthens citizens to be better informed to interrogate government policies.

Democracy is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting, it is considered as the best form of government in modern era. It allows citizens to enjoy many rights and it gives them responsibilities at the same time. There would be no democracy without the cooperation of citizens, citizens should participate in democratic events with full enthusiasm to ensure the survival of democracy. A positive attitude should be maintained with development of the state being the priority.