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REVIEW ON CHAPTER 8: CITIZENS ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY

In a democracy, the people have collective authority and collective right to choose their government, political and electoral systems as part of self-determination. There is no democracy without the engagements of citizens in establishing, developing, and sustaining democracy. Citizen engagements pursue economic, social, cultural, and political development.

For democracy to deliver, citizens must become informed about issues that can improve their lives. They must be free to come together to express their views and preferences and work to see that government responds to citizen's views, thus holding those in government accountable. Citizens, including political competitors, must also be free to impart their views about governmental processes and public affairs; otherwise, citizens cannot be truly informed, nor can they freely make choices.

There are many barriers to citizen participation in every country, for full citizenship to be achieved these barriers must be removed, whether based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, or another status. Citizens must therefore understand the ideas about citizenship, politics, and government. They need the knowledge to make decisions about policy choices and the proper use of authority, along with the skills to voice their concerns, act collectively and hold public officials accountable.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

citizen/citizenship

The term citizen has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government. Citizens have a set of rights and responsibilities, including the right to participate in decisions that affect the public welfare.

Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. Citizenship determined by the place of birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries.

Citizenship can be perceived to be divided into civil, political, and social citizenship.

Civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty e.g, freedom of speech

Political citizenship is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power.

Social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence by the standard prevailing in the society.

CITIZENS RIGHT

Individual rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully. To let the citizen have a share in the running of his/her government, a group of rights is very essential. Important civil rights accorded Nigerian citizens in its constitution include the right to life, the right to work, the right to freedom, etc.

DEMOCRACY

The word democracy is derived from the Greek word 'demos' meaning people and Kratos meaning rule, that is 'rule by the people'.

Abraham Lincoln perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Features of democracy

1. The fundamental rights of the citizens are guaranteed.
2. Freedom of press.
3. A periodic election that is free and fair.
4. Existence of the rule of law.
5. Independent and impartial judiciary.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY

Democratic citizens recognize that they not only have rights but also have responsibilities. Citizens are therefore expected to perform the following responsibilities in a democracy:

1. A citizen should have the duty to vote.
2. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes.
3. A citizen must obey the law.
4. A citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community.

CONCLUSION

Democracy is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting. It is the system of government by the people, of the people, and for the people. Citizens play a vital role in democracy. Citizens should be aware of their rights and responsibilities. A positive attitude should be maintained with development of the state being the priority.

