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Do a two page review of chapter 8, Citizens Role in a Democracy, in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics.

CITIZEN’S ROLE IN DEMOCRACY

There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Engagement is a right and also a responsibility of citizens in establishing, developing and sustaining democracy. Citizen’s engagement pursues economic, social, cultural and political development, including the provision of opportunity, resources, services and security. For democracy to work, citizens must become informed about issues that can improve their lives. To be informed, citizens need accurate and timely information,, particularly government held information. Citizens 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 exists several barriers to citizen participation in every country and they’re based on multiple factors like gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion and so much more. If these barriers aren’t removed then full citizenship might not be achieved. Citizens must have 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.

Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. A man becomes a citizen of a particular if his parents are citizens of that state or if he is born within the territory of that state. Citizenship determined by place of birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries. On the other hand the process by which a citizen may voluntarily change his or her citizenship of a state to another state is known as naturalization. Citizenship is divided into civil, political and social citizenship. Political citizenship is that which is associated with the participation in the democratic exercise of political power either as a voter or as a politician. Social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance to standards prevailing in the society. Civil citizenship refers to those rights necessary to protect individual liberty. According to Brannan he says that being active is an essential part of citizenship.it is about willing to get involved.

According to glover there are three dimensions of active citizenship: ethical citizenship which understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship, integrative citizenship belief that every individual plays an assortment of roles and that it enables the individual to integrate their various roles and to immerse themselves in the community, while educative citizenship is the process that develops a moral, practical and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship. Rights are essential in other to let a citizen have a share in the running of his or her government. Rights are privileges conferred by law upon a person or a group. Civil right refers to a privilege expressed within the framework of the constitution or state.

In a democratic system the state exists to serve the individual and provide the conditions which make a full and happy life possible. According to Abraham Lincoln democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. In a democratic society there exists the rule of law, freedom of press, independent elections, independent and impartial judiciary, fundamental human rights is guaranteed and there exists a periodic free and fair election. While the state provides rights and liberties, citizens have duties to the state as democracy requires an investment of time and hard work. Citizens are therefore expected to perform duties such as voting for new leaders or voting to remove old leaders out of office in other to get the change they desire. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes since taxes are essential in funding a democratic government. A good citizen should also have a duty to obey the law a democracy cannot exist in a lawless society and they must be ready to assist the law enforcement officers by reporting breaches of the law. Citizens should participate in every event of democracy with full enthusiasm to ensure the survival of democracy. Citizens should also ensure they don’t lose sight of the pursuit of public interest.