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ASSIGNMENT

Summarize a two-page review on chapter eight on salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics.

**CITIZENS** **ROLES** **IN** **A** **DEMOCRACY**

Citizens have a collective right to choose their governmental, political and electoral system as part of self-determination. The percepts are embodied in the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Right) 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.” This statement means government belongs to the people, governmental process belongs to the people and elections belongs to the people. There is no democracy without the engagements, ‘engagement that is rights and a responsibility of citizens in establishing, sustaining and developing democracy’ of the citizens. Citizens engagement pursues economic, social, cultural and political development including the provision of opportunity, resources, services and security. 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 citizens views. They are barriers to citizens participation are multiple in every country. These barriers have to be removed for full citizenship to be achieved.

CITIZEN/CITIZENSHIP

Citizens have a set of rights and responsibilities, including the right to participate in decisions that affects public welfare. In addition to the intrinsic democratic value, participation is an instrumental driver of democratic and socio-economic change and a fundamental way to empower citizens. Citizens implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government.

Citizenship has no specific definitions but has been defined by many people because it has different meaning to them. According to Brannan he argues that the concepts of citizenship holds that citizenship is not comprised of passive membership of apolitical entity but that being active is an essential of being a citizen.

Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. Citizenship determined in the place of birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries. According to Turner 1997 citizenship is a formal legal identity that the individual person inherits through a collection of legal rights and obligations, controlling access to the scarce political, economic and cultural resources of society. The process by which an individual may voluntarily change her citizenship of a state to another state is known as naturalization. Citizenship can be divided into:

1. Civil Citizenship: Refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty e.g. freedom of speech, justice, freedom to conclude valid contracts.
2. Political Citizenship: This is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power, either as a member of political community or as an individual elected by the members of such a community.
3. Social Citizenship: Embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allows them to live a civilized existence.

Citizens right: For citizens to have a share in the running of the government a group of rights is essential. Those rights are not absolute since they are limited by the rights of other citizens in the state. A right may be defined as a privilege conferred by law upon a person or group. Rights entails some duties and responsibility on the part of every citizen.

Democracy: The term was gotten from a Greek work ‘demos’ meaning people and ‘kratos’ meaning rule that is rule by the people. According to Abraham Lincoln, the former president of America, defined democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. To him democracy is the government of the people when it is designed to represent the common will of the citizenry within a state and that is a government by the people when its ideological undercurrent is grounded in the people’s culture. Since there is specific definition of democracy, what could be deduced from the various definitions are: 1, Fundamental rights of citizens. 2, Independent judiciary. 3, Existence of rule of law. 4, Freedom of press. 5. Periodic election that is free and fair.

Duties and Responsibilities of Citizens in a Democracy: Citizens have duties to the state. Democratic citizens recognize that they not only have rights, they have responsibilities. They recognize that democracy requires an investment in time and hard work. Citizens are expected to perform certain responsibilities in a democracy:

1. A citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote.

2. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes.

3. A good citizen should refrain from uttering destructive criticism but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies.

4. A good citizen must obey the law.

5. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community.

In conclusion,

Democracy is a system of government where citizens elect the government by voting. Citizens play a very important role in democracy. Democracy assures basic fundamental rights for citizens like right to vote, right to liberty and right to practice any religion. Citizens also have right in challenging the government when it errs.