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ASSIGNMENT: Do a two-page review of chapter 8, “Citizens Role in a Democracy”, in salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics.

ANSWER:

The authority of government is derived from the will of the people in their choice of these systems and the people have a right to take part in their government, including through genuine elections to determine who will legitimately occupy governmental offices. Through democracy is when we get sovereignty.

There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Engagement is both a right and a responsibility of citizens in establishing, developing and sustaining democracy. Citizen engagement pursues economic, social, cultural and political development, including the provision of opportunity, resources, services and security. In order to achieve democracy, citizens must be well informed about issues that can improve their lives. Citizens must be free to come together to express their views and preferences and work to see that government responds to citizens views, thus holding those in government accountable. 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. They are multiple barriers to citizen participation. For full citizenship to be achieved, we must remove these barriers, whether they are based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age nor another status. Citizens must understand ideas about citizenship, politics and government. they need 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.

There is a symbolic relationship between democracy, the citizens and state’s development to the effect that citizens government, made by the citizens for the citizenry is called democracy and it is the involvement or active participation of the people in governance that brings about development.

The term citizen has a 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 public welfare. Participation is an instrumental driver of democratic and socio-economic change, and a fundamental way to empower citizens. In ancient Rome, it was considered a privileged status to be called a citizen, to be a citizen means to enjoy certain liberties and rights as opposed to the slaves who could not enjoy them. Citizenship provides rights and liberties to enable them to develop their potentialities.

Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. The one by birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries. Naturalization is the process by which an individual may voluntarily change his/her citizenship of a state to another state. (section 26(1) to section 32 of the constitution). Citizenship can be divided into civil, political and social citizenship. Citizenship is about willing to contribute to social action as well as to political debate, to be willing to get involved. There are different definitions for citizenship by different scholars.

Individual’s rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it eists to enable men to live and develop fully. These rights are not absolute since they are limited by the rights of other citizens in the state. It has been etymology established that the word democracy is derived from the Greek word ‘*demos* meaning people and *kratos* meaning rule, that is rule by the people’. Democracy is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting. It is also a system of government by the people and for the people. Citizens play an important role in democracy.

Today, democracy or representative government which is also known as indirect government is associated with the free discussion of political views, the right to differ concerning them and the settlement of differences by counting of votes. Features of democracy:

* The fundamental rights of the citizens are guaranteed.
* Independent and impartial judiciary.
* Existence of rule of law.
* Freedom of press.
* Periodic election that is free and fair.

Democratic citizens recognize that they not only have rights, but they also have responsibilities. Citizens perform different responsibilities in a democracy such as the duty to vote, wiliness to pay taxes, duty to obey the law and so on.