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Review of chapter 8: citizens roles in a democracy

What citizenship means

Citizenship means the state of having the rights, privileges and duties of a citizen. It emphasizes the link between a person and a state or an association of states. Citizenship gives the right to work and live in a country. A person with the right to live in a state is called a citizen.

Conceptual clarification

A citizen is a member of the city, which is a large body of people who live in a territory. The Greeks, were the first people to live within developed cities. The members had and still have rights(to claim) in the city and duties(to perform) within the city. Greek cities became known as “city states” because they were organized to make and enforce laws. Officers were elected, foreigners and slaves were not accepted as members of the cities because they had no rights.

Processes of becoming a Nigerian citizen

These are:

- **Citizen by birth**: every person born in Nigeria before or after independence (1st October 1960) whose parents (or one of them) or grandparents (or either of them) are members of a community within Nigerian territory is a citizen. But if you were born in Nigeria but neither your father nor mother is from somewhere Nigeria, you’re not a Nigeria citizen. Every person born outside Nigeria whose parents (or one of them) or grandparents (or one of them) are members of a community within Nigeria is a citizen. If you were born outside Nigeria and either or both of your parents or grandparents are from somewhere in Nigeria, then you are a Nigerian citizen. These are clearly stated in the constitution (chapter 111, section 25.)
- **Citizen by naturalization**: A person who is not a Nigerian citizen by birth cannot register, so he or she may naturalize. This implies that if you’re 21 years of age and above, you can become a Nigerian citizen.

Dimensions of citizenship

Citizenship is broadly classified into three: these are; civil citizenship {includes right needed to protect citizens’ liberty e.g. freedom of speech}, political citizenship {includes active or passive participation in democratic exercise e.g. right to franchise}, social citizenship {includes the claim that citizens ought to own resources in order to be particular e.g. right to own a private legal property}.

Brannan however, argues that active participation in a political entity must be emphasized. Glover on his part classifies active citizenship into: ethical, integrative and educative.

Citizens rights

Human beings are social by nature i.e we interact with others for our various needs. As human beings who live in the same area, we have a right to live together. As individuals or as groups people have more power or influence than others. If some people are therefore not checked they can pursue their own separate interests so much that they can prevent others from doing the same but no society can achieve peace and prosperity if it does not protect the people and encourage them to pursue their interest without hindrance. The UDHR declared some fundamental human rights that include; the right to life, the right to personal property, etcetera. The rights which we are granted in order to pursue our interests freely are known as civil rights.

Democracy

Democracy as defined by Abraham Lincoln is the government of the people (designed to represent the common will of the citizenry within the State), for the people (when the power employed by the custodians of the state business emanates from the collective mandate of the people) and by the people (when the ideological undercurrents is grounded in the peoples culture).

Democracy serves to put the interest of the citizens first before any other thing. It was for this reason, it is tightly guided. Democracy is characterized by: fundamental rights, independent judiciary, press, etc.

Duties and responsibilities of citizens in democracy

- A citizen in a democracy, should have the duty to vote
- A citizen must be willing to pay taxes in order to fund the government
- A citizen must obey the law. He must also report breaches.
- A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms rather they should suggest constructive alternatives when need be.
- A good citizen must refrain from interference with other people's rights.