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ASSIGNMENT: Review of chapter Eight (8)

Review:

Sovereignty is the supreme power given to a person or state; it resides in and flows from the people in a democracy which have a collective right to choose their government, political and electoral systems as part of self-determination. The definition of democratic government by Abraham Lincoln which is used as the foundation of Universal Declaration of Human Right is “of the people, by the people, and for the people” which simply means that government belongs to the people, governmental processes belongs to the people, and elections belong to the people. There’s no government without the engagement of citizens. For democracy to deliver, citizens must become informed about issues that can improve their lives, understand ideas about citizenship, politics and government. Review of citizens’ roles in a democracy basically talks about the things or roles citizens play in a democratic state, their rights, duties and obligations and so on, which will be expatiated on below.

CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP

A citizen is someone who is recognized as an individual of a particular state. It has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and the government. In ancient Rome, it was considered a privileged status to be called citizen because the status was not accorded to all inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Slaves, serfs and some alien residents were deprived of citizenship for racial, political, and religious reasons. Citizens enjoy liberties and freedom as opposed to the slaves who could not enjoy them. In reality, the essence of a state is to provide opportunities to enable citizens to lead a good life. Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. To be a recognized citizen of Nigeria, one must have exhibited one of the conditions one must have to be recognized as a citizen, according to chapter 111 section 25 to section 32 of the 1999 constitution as amended.

There are different ways citizenship is seen and by different scholars. Brannan (2006) argue that the concept of citizenship holds that citizenship is not solely comprised of passive membership of a political entity, but that being active is an essential of being a human being. Kenny a community development practitioner, argues that contemporary constructions of citizenship can be understood by differentiating passive from active citizenship.

Glover (2008) who argues that 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. Integrated citizenship needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions. Educative citizenship on its part according to Dagger (1997) refers to the process that develops a moral, practical, and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship. But whichever ways one looks at the concept, citizenship is a privilege status conferred by status on its people either by birth or by naturalization.

However, citizens need rights to enable themselves to live and develop fully. Rights entail some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizen. A right may therefore be defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by the law upon a person or a group. Therefore, when a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, it becomes a civil right. Rights like; right to life, education, work, religion, as long as it is not going against the 1999 constitution, if so, it will lead to some limitations to human right.

CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

Etymologically, democracy is derived from the Greek word “*demos*” meaning people and “*kratos*” meaning rule by the people. Democracy is originated from the ancient Greece in the city states, where citizens were free to make decisions and exercise their political rights, and every citizen was expected to participate in the running of the government. Since there is no single definition of democracy however, what can be deduced to form the various definitions of democracy are the following features:

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

While the state provides rights and liberties, all citizens have duties to the state because for democracy to succeed, citizens must be active, not passive, because they know that the success of the government is their responsibility, and no one else’s.

* A citizen in a country should have the duty to vote.
* A citizen should be willing to pay taxes.
* A good citizen must have to obey the law.
* A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies.
* A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other member of the community.
* A good citizen must support public education in every way possible.

In conclusion, **a positive attitude should be maintained with development of the state being the priority.**