GST 203

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Assignment

Do a page review of Chapter 8 “Citizen’s role in a democracy” in salient issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics.

Answer

Sovereignty resides in and flows from the people in a democracy. The authority of the government likewise derives 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. Citizens must become informed about issues that can improve their lives. They must be free to come together to express their views and work to see that government responds to citizens’ view holding those in government accountable.

Barriers to citizen participation are multiple in every country. They are both subtle and obvious, small and formidable based on numerous factors. For full citizenship to be achieved, we must to remove barriers like race, status, gender etc.

**Conceptual Clarifications**

* Citizen/Citizenship: It is 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. To be a citizens means to enjoy certain liberties and rights as opposed to the slaves who could not enjoy them. They provide rights and liberties to enable them develop their potentials. The essence of the state is to provide opportunities to enable citizens to lead the good life. Citizenship can either be by birth or by naturalisation. According to chapter 111, section 25 of the Constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria define citizenship as a person born in Nigeria after the date of independence either of whose parents or any of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria or every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria. Citizenship can be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Civil Citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty. Political citizenship is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power as a member of a political community. Social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance with the standards prevailing the society. Brannan et. Al. (2006:65) 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 citizen. However there are broader definitions and perceptions of citizenship as well as shown by Glover, who argues that there are three dimensions of the active citizenship: ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship and educative citizenship. Ethical citizenship understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship. The integrative citizenship needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions. The educative citizenship refers to the process that develops a moral, practical and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship.
* Citizens’ Right

Individual’s rights and liberties are groundwork of the state since it exist to enable men to live and develop fully. Right entails some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizens. A right may therefore be defined as a privilege conferred by law upon a person or a group. The privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, it become a civil right. Important rights accorded Nigerian citizens in its constitution include: right to life, right to work, right to freedom, right to freedom of speech etc.

* Democracy

It is derived from a Greek word “demos meaning people and Kratos meaning rule, that is ‘rule by the people. According to Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a 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 undercurrents is grounded in the people’s culture. Since there is no single definition of democracy however, what can be deduce form the various definitions of democracy are the followings feature:

1. The fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed.
2. Independent and impartial judiciary
3. Existence of rule of law
4. Freedom of press
5. Periodic election that is free and fair

* Duties and Responsibilities of Citizen in a Democracy

Democratic citizens recognise that they not only have rights, they have responsibilities. For democracy to succeed, citizens must be active because they know that the success or failure of the government is their responsibility and no one else’s. The citizens are therefore expected to perform the following responsibilities in a democracy are:

1. A citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote.
2. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes, since without taxes to fund a democratic government, there would be no democracy.
3. A good citizen must have a duty to obey the law.
4. He/she must support public education in every possible way.
5. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the right of another members of the communities.