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19/MHS01/128

GST 203 : REVIEW OF CHAPTER 8 OF SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND IGERIAN POLITICS

TOPIC : ROLES OF CITIZENS IN DEMOCRACY

The authority of government is derived from the will of the people in their choice, systems, and the people have a right to take part in their government. The Universal Declaration Of Human Right capture the foundation of the famous formulation that democratic government is ‘’of the people, by the people and for the people. There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Engagement is thus both a right and responsibility of citizens in establishing, developing, and sustaining democracy. Citizens engagement is not an abstraction; it takes tangible forms and serves particular purpose to improve peoples’ lives. Citizens engagement pursue 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 thus holding those in government accountable .

Conceptual Clarifications

* Citizen/citizenship : citizen implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government. The citizens have a set of rights and responsibilities, including the right to participate in decisions that affect public welfare .
* Citizenship: it may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. It could be perceived to be made up of, or be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the right necessary to protect the individual liberty. Political citizenship is associated with the participation in the democratic exercise of political power, either as a member of a political community or as a individual elected by the individuals of that 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 in the society .

Dimensions of active citizenships

* Ethical citizenship: understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship.
* Integrative citizenship : needs an engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions .
* Educative citizenship : is a process that develops a moral, practical, and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship.

**Citizens Right :** this are privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group . when a privilege is expressed within the frame work of the constitution of the state it becomes a civil right.

**Democracy:** which is derived from a Greek word, *demos* meaning people and *kratos* meaning rule that is rule by the people. Democracy or representative government which is also known as indirect government is associated with free discussion of political views, the right to differ concerning them and settlement of differences concerning vote.

**Features of democracy**

* the fundamental right of the citizens is guaranteed
* independent judiciary
* existence of rule of law
* freedom of press
* periodic elections that is free and fair

**Duties and responsibilities of citizens in ademocracy**

* A citizen in democracy should have the duty to vote
* A citizen should be willing to pay taxes
* A good citizen must have a duty to obey law
* A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticism but offer constructive alternation to government policies
* A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the society
* He /she must support the public education in every way possible through the payment of taxes.