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*A REVIEW OF CHAPTER 8 OF “SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS”*

Sovereignty resides in and flows from the people in a democracy as the have the collective right to choose their governmental, political electoral system. There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Engagement is both a right and a responsibility of citizens in establishing, developing and sustaining a democracy. Citizen engagement pursues the economic, social, cultural and political development. Citizens should be educated about issues that can improve their lives so that democracy can be provided. In a democracy, it is important that the citizens are free to express their opinions/views and preferences. To be informed, transparency is required from the government.

Barriers to citizen participation exists in every country in different ways. They could be subtle or obvious and are usually based on numerous factors. And when these barriers are not removed, the credibility of the government is undermined. To combat this, citizens must understand concepts like; citizenship, government, and politics. They must also have adequate knowledge to make decisions about policies, as well as the skill to voice their concern and hold public officials accountable. It is the active participation of the people in governance that brings about development.

Citizenship refers to the relationship between the people and the government. Citizens, universally, have a set of rights and responsibility. Their participation is the instrumental driver of socio-economic and democratic change. In ancient Rome, it was considered a privilege to be called a citizen as “*to be a citizen means to enjoy certain liberties and rights as opposed to the slaves who could not enjoy them*”. Modern states bestows citizenship onto practically all its citizens. There are a number of way citizenship can be acquired such as; birth, naturalization, marriage, to name a few. Citizenship can be perceived to be made up of or divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship, and social citizenship. Glover argued that there are three dimensions of active citizenship: ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship, and educative citizenship. Ethical citizenship understands the duties and responsibilities of a citizen, accepts it and act accordingly. Integrative citizenship believes that each individual plays an assortment of roles and this form of citizenship to integrate their various roles and immerse themselves into the community. Educative citizenship according to Dagger, refers to the development of a moral, practical and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice citizenship.

Individual rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully. However, they are not absolute since there are limited by the other citizens in the state.

Etymologically, democracy is gotten from the Greek words “*demos*” meaning “*people*”and “*kratos*” meaning “*rule*”. The Greek democracy was limited institution that excluded laborers, slaves, and aliens from exercising political rights. Today, democracy is practiced indirectly through elected officials and is associated with the free discussion of political views. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States of America, defined democracy as the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. In his opinion, democracy is the government of the people designed to represent the common will of the citizen within a state. According to him, the rights, freedoms, and values of individuals count more those of the state in a democracy.

Since the state provides rights and liberties, all citizens have duties to the state. A democracy requires an investment of time and hard work and the government demands constant vigilance and support from the people. In order for a democracy to succeed, it is a must for citizens to be actively involved in the political affairs of the state. They are required to vote and pay taxes. Obey the laws and offer constructive criticisms to government policies.

In conclusion, without the co-operation and commitment of the citizens there will be no democracy. Therefore, citizens must be aware of their rights and duties and should participate in every event in the democracy in order to prevent the government from turning into a tyranny.