

## GST 203 Assignment

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### Chapter 8

#### Citizens Roles in Democracy

In the government democracy, the people have a right to choose their preferred political or electoral system. The people are the main body in a democratic system. Due to this fact, the authority of the government is also determined by the people in terms of the system they have chosen. The people are also responsible for the government officials to be put in power through participating in elections.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights embodies all citizen-democratic actions which also states that democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. This basically emphasizes that there is no democracy without the engagement of the people. The government, its processes and elections all belong to the people. In democracy the citizens are given a briefing of the issues in the country or state. These issues may improve their lives and they come together to express preferences with each other so the government responds to the citizens.

#### Who is a Citizen?

A citizen is an inhabitant of a city or country. A citizen is a participatory member of a political community. As a citizen, there is a relationship between citizen and the government. To be a citizen of a particular state or country, some legal requirements must be made. A citizen enjoys certain liberties and rights. A citizen has a set of rights and responsibilities including participating in public welfare.

#### Citizenship

This is the status of being a citizen of a particular country. This person is recognized under the customs and laws of a state or local jurisdiction. Citizenship is acquired by birth or naturalization. Naturalization, in the sense that a person changes his/her citizenship to another state or country.

Naturalization varies from country to country. The steps to fulfil naturalization in Nigeria is embedded in the Nigerian constitution Chapter 111, section 26(1) to section 32.

Citizenship can either be civil, political or social citizenship. Civil citizenship are those rights that protect individual liberty like freedom of speech, justice, etc. political citizenship deals with participation in democratic exercises either as a member of the community or as an individual elected. Social citizenship are the claims that citizens ought to have access to.

Citizenship has different definitions based on different concepts. Brannan *et. al.* believes that citizenship is the willingness to contribute to social actions and political debate. Glover says there are three dimensions to active citizenship; ethical, integrative and educative citizenship. Whichever way one

looks at the concept of citizenship, it is a privilege status conferred by states on its people either by birth or naturalization.

### **Citizen's Rights**

These are the rights belonging to an individual by virtue of citizenship. It entails some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizen. Invaded civil rights can be taken into the court of law for a redress. Nigerian citizen civil rights include; right to life, right to work, right to freedom of religion, right to education, right to association, freedom of speech, writing and publication amongst others.

### **Democracy**

Derived from the Greek word "demos" meaning people and "kratos" meaning rule i.e. rule by the people. Democracy originated from ancient Greece. Every citizen was expected to participate in the running of government. Here, the citizens exercise authority themselves. This is called direct democracy. Indirect democracy or representative government, is the free discussion of political views and differences by counting votes. It is a way of determining who governs and what ends they shall rule. The definition "of the people, by the people and for the people" was perceived by Abraham Lincoln. Democracies are the states and countries where arrangements and workings of the government like the individual and his/her rights, freedoms and worth are ensured and guaranteed.

### **Features of Democracy**

- Fundamental rights of the citizen are guaranteed
- Independent and impartial industry
- Freedom of press
- Free and fair elections
- Existence of rule of law

### **Duties and Responsibilities of Citizens in a Democracy**

A democratic government needs constant vigilance and support from the citizens. Democratic citizens bear a burden of responsibilities. Citizens must be active for democracy to succeed. Responsibilities of democratic citizens include:

- Duty to vote
- Payment of taxes
- Obey the law
- Assist law enforcement officers
- Refrain from uttering destructive criticism and offer constructive alternatives
- Refrain from interference with rights of other members of the community or property of other persons
- Support public education through voluntary efforts