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QUESTION.

Do a two page review of chapter 8, Citizens roles in a democracy in salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER EIGHT

Sovereignty resides in and flow from the people in a democracy. They have a collective right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems as part of self- determination. These precepts are embodied in the universal declaration of human rights and in modern constitutions the world over. They capture the foundation of democratic government is of the people, by the people, and for the people. In essence government belongs to the people. There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Citizen engagement is not an abstraction, it takes tangible forms and serves particular purposes to improve people’s lives. Citizens engagement pursues 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 respond s to citizens view, thus holding those in government accountable. Barrier to citizen participation are multiple in every country. They are both subtle and obvious, small and formidable ,and based on numerous factors. For full citizenship to be achieved, we must remove these barriers, whether they are based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age or another status . They need knowledge to make decisions about policy choices and the proper use of authority, along with the skills to voice their concerns, act collectively and hold public officials accountable. Thus a symbiotic relationship exists between democracy, the citizens and the state’s development to the effect that citizen’s government made by the citizens for the citizenry is called democracy and it is the involvement or active participations of the people in governance that brings about development.

In order to enhance their meaning as used within the context of this paper, it is important to clarify a few concepts.

Citizen: the term citizen has an inherently political meaning that implies 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. Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalisation. The conditions under which naturalisation are conferred vary from country to country. Chapter 111, section 25 1(a).section 26(1) to section 32 also stipulates the condition which any person that is trying to naturalise must fufil before he or she can be registered as a citizen of Nigeria. Citizenship can be perceived to be made up of , or be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship, and social citizenship. Citizenship is about being willing to contribute to social action as well as to political debate, to be willing to get involved. While involvement in local clubs and societies is seen as valuable, they argue that the involvement must speak of public- mindedness and have a purpose beyond that of a small group of people.

Citizens Rights: Individuals rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully. In order to let the citizen have a share in the running of his/her government, a group of rights is very essential. Rights entails some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizens. A right may therefore be defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group. If the civil rights of a citizen are invaded by another citizen or the government he is entitled to seek redress in the court of law. Some of the civil rights includes: right to freedom, right to religion, right to education, right to work , right to freedom of speech, right to life etc.

Democracy: democracy is derived from the Greek word demos meaning people and kratos meaning rule that is rule by the people. The concept of democracy like many other political concepts first originated from ancient greece where in the city states, citizens were free to meet frequently in assemblies which had the power to make laws.

Abraham Lincoln, former American president perceived democracy as the government of the people by the people and for the people. According to him democracy is a government of the people when it is designed to represent the common will of the citizenry within a state and that it is government by the people when its ideological undercurrents is grounded in the people’s culture also it is a government which is for the people when the power employed by the custodians of state business emanates from and resides in the collective mandate of the people.

Since there is no single definition of democracy however what can be deduce form the various definitions of democracy are the followings features: periodic election that is free and fair, freedom of press, existence of rule of law, independence and impartial judiciary and the fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed.

Duties and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy.

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. A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies .
5. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community.

In conclusion citizens play an important role in democracy. Citizens should participate in every event in democracy with full enthusiasm to ensure the survival of democracy