NAME: AKPOSIVWODOR OGHENEDORO COURSE: GST 203 (Government and Political Institutions) MATRIC. NO: 19/MHS01/078 **ASSIGNMENT:** 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 8**

The people in a democratic system of government have a collective right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems as part of self- determination. These rights are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in modern constitutions all over the world. There is no democratic governance without the participation of the people. Participation is however, both a right and a responsibility of citizens in establishing, developing and sustaining democracy. Barriers to citizens participation are multiple in every country being subtle and obvious, small and formidable, and based on numerous factors. These barriers must however be removed for full participation of citizens in government activities whether they are based on ethnicity, gender, race, religion, age, etc. In order to achieve this, citizens need to understand ideas about citizenship, politics and government.

The term, citizen has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government. Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or naturalization. Citizenship is perceived to be made up of civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty. Political citizenship refers to participation in the democratic process of political power either as a member of a political community or as an individual elected by such community. Social citizenship refers to claims 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.

Citizenship however, does not have just one definition. It is about willingness to contribute to social action as well as to political debate, to be willing to get involved. There are three dimensions of active citizenship: ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship and educative citizenship. Individual’s rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully. Rights entail some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizen. Rights are therefore, privileges or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group. If the rights of a citizen are trampled upon by another citizen or the government, he is entitled to seek redress in the court of law. Civil rights accorded Nigerian citizens in its constitution include: right to life, right to work, right freedom of religion, amongst many others.

‘Democracy’ is derived from the Greek word ‘demos’ meaning people and ‘kratos’ meaning rule i.e., rule by the people. Abraham Lincoln perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting. It is considered as the best form of government.

Citizens in democracy have roles and responsibilities to perform. They include; voting during elections, paying taxes and other legitimate fees, obeying the law, support public education in every possible way, refrain from interfering with the rights of other members of the society, refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but offer constructive alternatives to government policies.