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ASSIGNMENT 1: Do a two-page review of chapter8” citizens roles in a democracy” in salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics.

Power resides in and flows from the people in democracy, they have a right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems as part of self-determination. These rules are embodied in the universal declaration of human rights and in modern constitutions the world over. Democracy is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting.

For democracy to deliver, citizens must become enlightened about issues that can improve their lives. There would probably be no democracy without the co-operation and commitment of citizens, they must be able to come together to express their views and also work to see that the government responds to the citizen’s views therefore holding those in government accountable.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

* CITIZEN/CITIZENSHIP

The term citizen has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and their government. Citizens have a set of rights and responsibilities, including the right to participate in decision making in regards to public welfare. Participation is an instrumental driver of democratic and socio-economic change and a fundamental way to empower citizens.

Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. A person becomes a citizen of a particular state if his/her parents are citizens of that state or if he/ she is born within the territory of that state. Citizenship determined by the place of birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries. On the other hand, the process by which an individual may voluntarily change his/her citizenship of a state to another state is known as naturalization. There are conditions under which naturalization are conferred and they vary from country to country.

Chapter 111, section 25: 1(a) of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria define citizenship as;

1. Every person born in Nigeria before the date of independence either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents belongs or belonged to a community indigenous to Nigeria: provided that a person shall not become a citizen of Nigeria by virtue of this section if neither of his parents nor any of his grandparents was born in Nigeria;
2. Every person born in Nigeria after the date of independence either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria; and
3. Every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria.

Section 26(1) to section 32 also stipulates the conditions which any person that is trying to naturalize must fulfil 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.

However as with so many other concepts, citizenship does not just have one definition, it means different things to different people. Citizenship is about being willing to contribute to social action as well as to political debate, to be willing to get involved.

However, there ae broader definitions and perceptions of citizenship as well as shown by glover who argues that there are three dimensions of active citizenship: ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship and educative citizenship.

CITIZENS RIGHTS

A right may be defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group, when a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, it becomes a civil right.

Individual’s rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully. These rights are not absolute since they are limited by the rights of other citizens in the state. Rights entails some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizen.

DEMOCRACY

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. It has been established that the word democracy is derived from the Greek word “demos meaning people and “kratos meaning rule that is ‘rule by the people’. The citizens of Greece practiced direct democracy, a system that enables people exercise authority themselves.

Abraham Lincoln, former American president perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZEN IN A DEMOCRACY

Democratic citizens recognize that they not only have rights, they have responsibilities. They recognize that democracy requires an investment of time and hard work. For democracy to succeed, citizens must be active not passive, because they know that the success or failure of the government is their responsibility and no one else’s.

Citizens are therefore expected to perform the following responsibilities 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.
6. good citizen must support public education in every way possible, through the payment of taxes, through local volunteer efforts