**GST 203 ASSIGNMENT**

**BY**

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**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY**

**TASK: Do a two page review of Chapter 8, "*Political Parties in Nigeria*" In Salient issues in Government and Nigeria's Politics**

As is embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in modern constitutions the world over, sovereignty resides in and flows from the people in a democracy. The government’s authority is gotten from the will of the people who are permitted legally to partake in their government, and this is why democracy is commonly referred to as government of, for and by the people. This engagement of citizens in democratic activities, both a right and responsibility, is very essential in establishing and sustaining democracy, which means citizens must be properly educated on the ongoing occurrences to ensure they make wise and informed political choices and that government credibility is upheld.

In ancient Rome, the status of citizen was bestowed only on privileged members of society who then acquired the privilege to enjoy certain rights that those who were not citizens could not take advantage of. In modern states, citizenship is much more accessible, as it is either acquired at birth (could be via descent) or via naturalization (conditions necessary for this process in Nigeria are contained in the 1999 constitution from Section 26 (1) to Section 32. These modern states provide the citizens with liberties which enable them to live the good life, dispensing one of the functions of state.

It is posited that there are types of citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberties such as freedom of speech and justice. Political citizenship has to do with citizens’ participation in the democratic exercise of political power either as a voter or as a political/government official. Social citizenship, according to Marshall (1992), entails that citizens must be able to access resources that will allow them to live a civilized existence.

It is argued by Branan et al (2006:55) that being active in the affairs of one’s nation through social action with public interest is an essential part of being a citizen. In furtherance, Glover (2004:18) posits that there are three dimensions of active citizenship. In the ethical dimension, it is understood that all must actively partake in the struggle for the common goal. In the integrative, it is believed that every individual plays a special role, not necessarily formal, which are then combined to achieve positive collective goals. Finally, the educative dimension, according to Dagger (1997) highlights a process that fosters a moral, practical and intellectual sense of self in those who actively practice their citizenship, as well as get rid of individualism and self-interest.

A right is a privilege or prerogative conferred by law on a person or a group. If a right is expressed in a state’s constitution, it becomes a civil right, for example the right to life, the right to work, and so on. Rights, though not absolute, are important because they enable citizens to live fully and participate actively in their government.

The concept of democracy first originated in Ancient Greece, where citizens in the city states met in assemblies to discuss state affairs and had the power to make laws, though it was limited, as labourers, slaves and aliens could not participate. The idea of political participation regardless of social class came up in England after the great Civil War of the 17th century and this served to expand the concept of democracy to truly become a government, according to Abraham Lincoln, “of the people, by the people and for the people”.

In a democracy, the fundamental human rights are guaranteed, the judiciary is independent, the rule of law is upheld, there is free press and the elections are free and fair. This is why it is considered to be the best form of government in the modern era. It is important for citizens of democratic nations to know that democracy requires an investment of time and hard work. Therefore, to ensure the continued strength of that democracy, citizens must carry out their responsibilities as best as possible. To this end, they should vote in elections, pay taxes, obey the law and respect the rights of other individuals in the society.