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COURSE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

COURSE CODE: GST 203

COLLEGE: LAW

ASSIGNMENT

Do a two-page review of Chapter 8 in the government textbook.

ANSWER

**Chapter 8: Citizens’ Role in a Democracy**

A citizen is defined as a person owing loyalty to and entitled by birth or naturalization to the protection of a state or nation. It is a legally recognized subject or national of a state or commonwealth, either native or naturalized.

Citizenship is the status of a person recognized under the custom or law of a sovereign state or local jurisdiction. In many sovereign states citizenship is equal to nationality (not ethnicity), which is in international law the membership to a sovereign state (a nation). Each state is free to determine the conditions under which it will recognize persons as its citizens, and the conditions under which that status will be withdrawn. Recognition by a state as a citizen generally carries with it recognition of civil, political, and social rights which are not afforded to non-citizens. Citizenship is acquired either by birth or naturalisation. One becomes a citizen of a particular state if his parents are citizens of that state or if he is born within the territory of the state. Naturalization is the legal act or process by which a non-citizen of a country may acquire citizenship or nationality of that country. It may be done automatically by a statute, i.e., without any effort on the part of the individual, or it may involve an application or a motion and approval by legal authorities. Chapter 111, section 25:1(a) (b) and (c) of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defined citizenship. Section 26(1) to section 32 stipulates the conditions which any person that is trying to naturalise must fulfil before he or she can be registered as a citizen of Nigeria.

Citizenship is divided into civil, political and social citizenship. With civil citizenship, law and equality were guaranteed to protect the liberty of the people, whether it was right to work, right to move freely etc. Civil citizenship paved the way to move towards political citizenship; Political citizenship highlights the importance of political participation and citizenship, and how participation extends beyond parties andcitizens’ involvement in certain aspects of the electoral process through independent action; and social citizenship according to Marshall, includes “the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society”. This is to say it basically talks about the environmental wellbeing and securities of the state and its inhabitants.

However, citizenship has so many definitions by various thinkers. Citizenship is about being willing to contribute to social action as well as to political debates, to be willing to get involved (Brannan et. al). According to Glover, he believes that there are three dimensions of active citizenship namely; Ethical citizenship, Integrated citizenship and Educative citizenship. Ethical citizenship understands active participation in a collective strike towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship. Integrated citizenship needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions. Educative citizenship, according to Dagger (1997), refers to the process that develops a moral, practical and intellectual sense of self in individual when they practice their citizenship.

Every citizen living in Nigeria has rights which are entrenched in the constitution and protected by the government. These rights as stated above imposes certain duties and responsibilities on all citizens. The performance of these duties and responsibilities depicts the level of obedience and loyalty of all citizens to the country and ensure the realization of common good for all.

A chapter of this book talks about Democracy. Democracy, literally, rule by the people. The term is derived from the Greek word dēmokratiā, which was coined from dēmos (“people”) and kratos (“rule”) in the middle of the 5th century bce to denote the political systems that existed then in some Greek city-states, notably Athens.There are countless ways of defining democracy and what can be brought out from these definitions are that the fundamental rights of citizens, the independent and impartial judiciary, the presence of rule of law, freedom of press and the periodic elections that is free and fair.

There are rights, duties and responsibilities in which a citizen has to have and partake in and they are as follows: right to life, right to fair hearing, right to personal liberty, right to freedom of thought, right to vote and be voted for, right to freedom of expression, payment of taxes, obedience of laws of the state, participating in the political process, defense of the state and crime prevention, respect for national symbols, reporting crimes and criminals, and so on.