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ASSIGNMENT: DO A 2 PAGE REVIEW OF CHAPTER 7 & 8 IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS

CHAPTER 8: CITIZENS ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY

 Sovereignty resides in and flows from the people in a democracy. They have a collective right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems as part of self-determination. The authority of government likewise derives from the will of the people in their choice of these systems, and the people have a right to take part in their government, including through genuine elections to determine who will legitimely occupy governmental offices.

 These precepts are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in modern constitutions the world over. They capture the foundation for the famous formulation that democratic government is ‘’of the people, by the people and for the people’’

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 responds tocitizens’ views, thus holding those in government accountable. To be informed, citizens need accurate and timely information, particularly government-held information. They need to learn from those who compete in politics how politicians intend to employ that information for the good of the population. Access to information is essential to an informed citizenry. That is why transparency is a necessity for democracy.

Conceptual Clarifications; Citizen/Citizenship, the term 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. In addition to the intrinsic democratic value, participation is an instrumental driver of democratic and socio-economic change and a fundamental way to empower citizens.

In ancient Rome, it was considered a privileged status to be called citizen because the status was not accorded to all inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Slaves, serfs, and some alien residents were deprived of citizenship for racial, political and religious reasons.

Citizenship of a state can be either acquired by birth or by naturalization. Chapter 111, section 25: the constitution defines citizenship as, Every person born in Nigeria before independence, either of whose Parents or any of whose grandparents belongs or belonged to a community indigenous to Nigeria; Provided that they person shall not become a citizen, also 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 lastly every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a Nigerian.

Citizenship is divided into 3 categories; the civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to right necessary to protect individual liberty; Political citizenship refers to the participation in the democratic exercise of political community and Social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance with the standards prevailing in society.

However. Citizenship has series of definitions, it means different things to different people. Citizenship is about being willing to contribute to social actions as well as political debate, to be willing to get involved.

 Citizens’ right, individual right 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 rights of other citizens in the state. Right entails some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizen.

Democracy, it has been etymology 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 Greek democracy was a limited institution in that it excluded laborers, slaves and aliens from exercising political rights. Since democracy fails to have a single definition we can deduce the following; fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed, independent and impartial judiciary, existence of rule of law, freedom of the press and periodic elections that is free and fair.

 Duties and responsibility of a citizen; while the state provides rights and liberties, all citizens have duties to the state. Democratic citizens recognize that they are not only having rights they have responsibilities also. A saying in free societies states that you get the government you deserve. Citizens are expected to perform some of the following duties; duty to vote, duty of paying taxes, duty to obey the law, retainment from uttering destructive criticisms but most be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to governmental policies, most not interfere with rights of other citizens, defend its territory, most support public education in every way possible and not stir up racial or class division.