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**ASSIGNMENT: 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.

These precepts are embodied in the universal declaration of human rights and in modern constitutions the word over. They capture the foundation for the famous formulation that democratic government is "of the people, by the people and for the people". There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Citizen engagement is not an abstraction; it takes tangible forms and serves particular purpose to improve peoples' lives.

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 vie9anf preferences. Barriers to citizen participation are multiple in every country. They are both subtle and obvious, small and formidable, and based on numerous factors.

Conceptual clarifications; in order to enhance their meanings as used within the context of this paper, it is important to clarify a few concepts.

>citizens or citizenship: citizens have a set of rights and responsibilities, including the right to participate in decisions that affect public welfare. 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. To be a citizen means to enjoy certain liberties and rights as opposed to the salves who could not enjoy them.

Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. A man becomes a citizen of a particular state if his parents are citizens of that state or if he is born within the territory of that state. Citizenship determined by the place of birth is fundamental in Laws of most countries. 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 have just one definition, it means different things to different people. For instance, Brannan et. al. (2006:55) argue that the concept of citizenship holds that citizenship is not solely comprised of passive membership of a political entity, but that being active is an essential of being a citizen. However, there are broader definitions and perceptions of citizenship as well as shown by glover (2004:18),who argues that there are three dimensions of active citizenship: ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship, and educative citizenship. Ethical citizenship understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship. Integrative citizenship needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions. The Greek democracy was a limited institution in that it excluded labourers, slaves and aliens from exercising political rights.

Abraham Lincoln, former American president, perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. According to him, democray is a government of the people when it is designed to represent the common will of the citizenry within a state and that it is a government by the people when its ideological undercurrents is grounded in the people's culture, also, it is a government which is for the people when the power employed by the custodians of state business emnates from, and resides in the collective mandate of the people.

Since there is no single definition of democracy however, what can be deduce form the various definitions of democracy are the following features:

>the fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed

>independent and impartial judiciary

>existence of rule ofblaw

>freedom of press

>periodic election that is free and fair.

Citizens are therefore expected to perform the following responsibilities in a democracy:

>a citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote.

>a citizen should be willing to pay taxes, since without taxes to fund a democratic government, there would be no democray.

>a good citizen must have a duty to obey the law.

>a good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies.

>a good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community.