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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 system as part of self-determination. The authority of government likewise derived from the will of the people in their choice of these systems, and the people have a right to take a part in their government, including through genuine elections to determine who will legitimate occupy governmental offices.

For democracy to deliver, citizens must become informed about issues that can improve their lives.

The term citizen 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.

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 the laws of most countries.

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

(a) 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 of neither of his parents nor any of his grandparents was born in Nigeria;

(b) 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

(c) Every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria.

Citizens’ Rights:

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 sunscreen they are limited by the rights of others citizens in the state. A right may therefore be defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group.

Democracy is a word derived from a Greek word “demos meaning people and kratos meaning rule, that is ‘rule by the people” . The concept of democracy, like many other political concepts first originated from an Ancient Greece where in the city states, citizens were free to meet frequently in assemblies which had the powers make laws.

Abraham Lincoln, former American president, perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. Since there is no single definition of democracy however, what can be deduce form the various definitions of democracy are the followings features:

a. The fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed

b. Independent and impartial judiciary

c. Existence of rule of law

d. Freedom of press

e. Periodic election that is free and fair

Duties and Responsibilities of Citizens in a Democracy are as follows:

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

b. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes to find the government

c. A good citizen must have a duty to obey the law.

d. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community.