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CITIZEN\CITIZENSHIP

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. 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 slaves who could not enjoy them.

Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by BIRTH, BY MARRIAGE\REGISTRATION AND BY NATURALISATION.

Chapter iii, section 25; 1(a) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defined 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 if neither of his parents nor any of his grandparents were 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 citizens of Nigeria

Section 26(1) to section 32 also stipulates the conditions which any person that is trying to naturalize must fulfill before he or she can be registered as a citizen of Nigeria.

Citizen rights: individual's rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop

fully. In order to let the citizen have a share in the running of his/her government, a group of right is very essential.

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’”. Since there is no single definition of democracy however, what can be deduced from the various definition of democracy are the following features:

- i. The fundamental rights of the citizen is guaranteed
- ii. Independent and impartial judiciary
- iii. Existence of rule of law
- iv. Freedom of press
- v. Periodic election is free and fair

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS IN DEMOCRACY

1. A citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote.
2. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes, since without taxes to fund a democratic government, there will be no democracy
3. A good citizen must have a duty to obey the law. A democracy cannot exist in a lawless society, and without the willingness of citizens to obey the law, which is really a social contract no government has the wherewithal to police a nation of law breakers and anarchy results.
4. A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies
5. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community.
6. (s) He must support public education in every way possible, through the payment of taxes, through local volunteer efforts, through according this system the respect to which it should be entitled.

Democracy is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting. It is also defined as the systems of government by the people, of the people and for the people. It is considered the best form of government in the modern era as it allows citizens to exercise and enjoy much right and it gives them responsibilities at the same time. It is a plus for citizens who acquired citizenship by birth. There will be no democracy without the cooperation and commitment of citizens. Citizens must be aware of their rights and responsibilities as without the awareness among citizens, a government may turn into a tyranny. Democracy assures basic fundamental rights of citizens like the right to life, right to vote, right to information. Citizens should participate in every event in democracy with full enthusiasm to ensure the survival of democracy. One way of doing this is through citizens ensuring that rulers are accountable. Citizens also have the duty in a democracy of ensuring that their rights are preserved by challenging government when it errs. Apart from the rights, citizens must be critical of what the government does. Citizens should also check how institutions like investigating agencies, law making agencies and even civil servants that are put in place for the wellbeing of the democracy are working. At the same time, while being critical, citizens must also not lose sight of the pursuit of public interest. A positive attitude should be maintained with development of the state being the priority.

These precepts are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in modern constitution all over the world.

A symbiotic relationship exists between democracies, the citizens and state's development to the effect that citizen's government, made by the citizens for the citizenry is called democracy and it is the involvement or active participations of the people in governance that brings about development.