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Assignment

Chapter 8

Roles of citizens in Democracy.

The term citizen has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government. Citizenship is about being willing to contribute to social action as well as to political debate. 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 or by naturalisation. Citizenship determined by the place of birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries. The process by which an individual may voluntarily change his or her citizenship of a state to another state is known as Naturalisation.

Citizenship is divided into civil, political and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty. Political citizenship is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power, either as a member of a political community or as an individual elected by the members of such a community. Lastly, Social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilised existence in accordance with the standards prevailing in society.

Individual's right and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully. Rights entails some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizen. Right may be defined as a privilege conferred by law upon a person or a group. When a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, it becomes a civil right. These rights include: right to life, right to work, right to education and so on.

Etymologically, democracy is derived from the Greek word "demos Kratos" meaning "people and rule" respectively, which means "rule by the people". Abraham Lincoln perceived democracy as "the government 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. There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. The state exists to serve the individual and provide the conditions which makes a full and happy life possible (Maxey, 2010:53).

The definition of democracy can be deduced from the following features; which are the fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed, independent and impartial judiciary, existence of rule of law, freedom of press and periodic election that is free and fair.

Democratic citizens recognize that they not only have rights, they have responsibilities. A government of the people demands constant vigilance and support by the people. Citizens are expected to perform the following responsibilities in democracy which are; A democratic citizen must vote, A democratic citizen must be willing to pay taxes a good citizen must obey the law and order of the society, to mention a few.

Democracy is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting. Without the cooperation and commitment of citizens there would be no democracy. Citizens must be aware of their rights and responsibilities as without the awareness among the citizens, a government may turn into a tyranny.

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.