**UZO-NWOSU MMACHUKWU**

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**MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

**SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**

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**CHAPTER 8**

**CITIZENS ROLES IN DEMOCRACY**

Citizens’ engagement in democracy is not an abstraction as there is no democracy without the engagement of citizens; thus, their engagement is both a right and a responsibility. The people have a right to take part in their government, including through genuine elections to determine who will occupy governmental positions. For democracy to flourish and full citizenry to be achieved, citizens must be fully aware on issues in government and they should be able to express their views by having access to accurate and timely government information in order to work together with government to improve their lives as well as keep good government that allows them to be accountable. Thus, a symbiotic relationship exists between democracy, 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 and active participations of the people in governance that brings about development.

**DIFFERENT CONCEPTS IN DEMOCRACY**

**CITIZENS/CITIZENSHIP**

The term citizen has a political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government who have a certain amount of responsibilities. Modern states confer citizenship on practically their whole residents or populations to enable them to develop their potentialities- the essence of a state is to provide opportunities to enable citizens to live a good life. Citizenship can also be acquired through registration and naturalization. Citizenship, according to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, can be every person born in Nigeria, before and after the date of independence whose, either their parents or grandparents are citizens of Nigeria

Citizenship can be divided into three: civil citizenship; the rights necessary to protect individual liberty. For example, freedom of speech, political citizenship; associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power either as voters or those who will place themselves to be voted for, and social citizenship; which embodies the claim that citizens ought to live a civilised life in accordance with the standards prevailing in the society. However, there are broader definitions of citizenship that have added three other active aspects of citizenship: ethical citizenship; understands active participation in a collective strive towards public good, integrative citizenship; believes that every individual plays a list of roles and citizenship allows the individual to integrate their various roles and immerse themselves into their community, and educative citizenship; the process that develops a moral, political, and intellectual sense of self in individuals as they practice their citizenship.

**CITIZEN’S RIGHTS**

To let citizens, have a fair share in running the government, citizens are given a group of essential rights which are limited by other people’s rights. Rights are defined as privileges conferred by the law upon a group of people which are expressed within the framework of the constitution-Rights also entail some duties and responsibilities that should be done by every citizen. Important civil rights include right to work, right to freedom of religion, right to education, etc

**DEMOCRACY**

Democracy, etymologically, is derived from the Greek word “demos” meaning people and “kratos” meaning rule, that is “rule by the people”. The concept of democracy first started in Ancient Greece where citizens were free to meet in assemblies and discuss state affairs, make decisions and laws, and exercise their political rights. The Greek democracy, however, was limited and it excluded labourers, slaves, and foreigners from exercising their political rights. Abraham Lincoln perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. To him, democracy is a government of the people that is designed to represent the common will of the people in which the power represents the collective mandate of the people. There are two types of democracy: the direct democracy; seen as a system that enables people to exercise authority themselves. Greek democracy is an example of direct democracy, and indirect democracy; a way of determining who shall govern and to what end they shall rule. It is a form of representative democracy. Features of democracy include: Existence of rule of law, Freedom of press, Independent judiciary, Periodic free and fair elections, and the fundamental rights of the citizens are guaranteed

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS

* Citizens should have the right to vote
* Citizens must have a duty to obey the law
* Citizens should be willing to pay taxes
* Good citizens must refrain from interfering with the rights of other members of the community
* Good citizens must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to governmental policies