**NAME: IWUEGBU CHISOM REJOICE**

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**CHAPTER 8**

**CITIZENS ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY**

Citizens right in a democracy to participate in important functions or precepts that have been embodied in the UDHR (universal declaration of human right). Note that there is no government without the engagement of the citizens and that include both rights and responsibilities embedded in the constitution in establishing, sustaining and developing democracy.

Although barriers towards citizens in participating in political activities are very multiple in every country and are based on numerous factors. For full citizenship to be achieved we must have to remove the barriers whether it be based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion and so on.

**WHO IS A CITIZEN?**

The term citizen can be looked at from a political aspect as the binding relationship between the people and government. Citizens have included rights and responsibility and most includes having a say in the public welfare.

Citizenship of a state can be inquired by birth or by naturalisation. A man becomes citizen of that state if his/her parents are citizens of that state or are born within the territory of that state.

CHAPTER 111 SECTION 25; 1 (a) of the Federal republic of Nigeria define citizenship as;

1. Every person born in Nigeria after the date of independence, either whose parent 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 the virtue of this section if neither of his parents or grandparents were born in Nigeria.
2. Every person born in Nigeria after independence, either by whose parents or grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria; and
3. Every person born outside Nigeria of whose parent is a citizen of Nigeria

**CITIZEN’S RIGHT**

Every individual’s right and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to develop fully. Now in order to ensure the citizens of this, a group of rights are very essential. These rights contain rights and responsibilities that must be carried out by the citizen of the country. Important civil rights include; right to life, the right to work, right to freedom of religion, right to education, right to association and right to freedom of speech, writing and publications among others.

**DEMOCRACY**

The word democracy is derived from a Greek word ‘demos’ which means people and ‘kratos’ which means rule, that is rule by the people.

Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. He further said that it is a government which is for the people when the power employed by the custodians of state business emanates from, and resides in the collective mandate of the people and lastly, he stated that the rights, freedoms and values of the citizen count more than the state.

Since there is no single definition of democracy, what can be seen as the deduce from the various definition of democracy are the following features;

1. The fundamental rights of the citizen is guaranteed
2. Independent and impartial judiciary
3. Existence of the Rule of Law
4. Freedom from press
5. Free and fair periodic election

**DUTIES AND RIGHT OF A CITIZEN IN DEMOCRACY**

Citizens are therefore expected the following responsibilities in democracy as citizens of the state;

1. A citizen in democracy should have the right to vote
2. A citizen should be willing to pay all his taxes, since without taxes to fund a democratic government, there would be np democracy
3. A good citizen must obey the law at all times
4. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the right of other members of the community
5. She must support the public education in every way possible, either by payments of taxes or local volunteer efforts. Public education is the foundation of democracy.

In conclusion, democracy has been seen to be the best form of government in the modern era as it allows citizens to exercise and enjoy many rights.