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 **CITIZEN ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY**

For democracy to deliver, citizens must become informed about issues that can improve their lives. Citizens must need accurate and timely information for the good of the population, transparency is a necessity for democracy.

Barriers to citizen participation are multiple in every country, the barriers must be removed for full citizenship to be achieved.

Citizen/Citizenship: This is the 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 neutralization, a man has become a citizen of a particular state if his parents are citizens of that state or if he is born within the territory of the state. Citizenship determined by the place of birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries, on the other hand, the process by which an individual may voluntarily change his/her citizenship of a state to another state is known as naturalization.

Citizenship can be perceived to be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship.

Civil citizenship: It refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty e.g. freedom of speech and justice

Political citizenship: Is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political community or as an individual elected by the members of such a community.

Social citizenship: It claims that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance with the standards prevailing in society.

There are broader definition and perception of citizenship, there are three dimensions of active citizenship, ethnical citizenship and integrative citizenship. Ethical citizenship understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship, integrative citizenship needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions, educative citizenship refers to the process that develop a moral, practical, and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship.

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 since they are limited by the rights of other citizens in the state, right is very essential in order for a citizen to have a share in the running of his/her government. Important right accorded Nigerian citizens in the constitution include: the right to life, the right to work, right to freedom of religion, right to education, right to association and freedom of speech

 Democracy: Democracy is from the Greek word “demos” meaning people and “kratos” meaning rule. The concept of democracy originated from ancient Greece, according to Abraham Lincoln democracy is the government of the people, by the people and of the female. Since there is no single definition of democracy the following definition has this following features:

(i). The fundamental rights of the citizens are guaranteed

(ii). Independent and impartial judiciary

(iii). Existence of rule of law

 (iv) Freedom of press

(v). Periodic election that is free and fair.

 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS IN DEMOCRACY

Democratic citizens recognize that democracy requires an investment of time and hard work, they have both rights and responsibilities. For democracy to succeed, citizens must be active, not passive, because they know that the success or failure of the government is their responsibility and no one else’s.

(a). A citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote: there is no point in democracy in which we do not participate

(b). A citizen should be willing to pay taxes, since without taxes to fund a democratic government

(c). 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.

(d). A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies.

(e). A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community, he must not interfere with the properties of other persons

(f). He/she 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.