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ASSIGNMENT: REVIEW OF CHAPTER 8, CITIZENS ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY

There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Engagement is thus both a right and a responsibility of citizens in establishing, developing and sustaining democracy.

Definition of citizenship

Chapter 111, section 25:1(a) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defines citizenship as:

1. 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 was born in Nigeria;
2. 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
3. Every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria.

Citizenship can be divided into civil citizenship, social citizenship and political 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 (e.g. a voter) or as an individual elected by the members of such community (e.g. a politician). Social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance with standards prevailing in society.

Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as government of the people, by the people and for the people. These are the following features of democracy:

1. The fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed
2. Independent and impartial judiciary
3. Existence of rule of law
4. Freedom of press
5. Periodic election that is free and fair

Duties and responsibilities citizens are expected to perform in a 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 would be no democracy.
3. A good citizen must have a duty to obey the law.
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. He/she 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.