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**CITIZENS ROLE IN DEMOCRACY**

The authority of the government derives from the will of the people in their choice of systems and the people have a right to take part in their government including through elections to determine who will legitimately occupy government offices. According to the precept embodied by the universal declaration of human rights and modern constitutions capture democracy as government for the people, by the people and of the people which means that the government belongs to the people, government processes belongs to the people and the government election belongs to the people.

The citizens are expected to be truly informed so that they can impact their views on governmental processes and public affairs and freely make choices. To be a citizen one must have a certain type of relationship between the people and the government, it is determined by the place of birth, naturalization or marriage. According to the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria citizenship can be defined as every person born in Nigeria before the date of independence whose parents or grandparents belongs or belonged to a community indigenous in Nigeria, every person born in Nigeria after the date of independence whose parents or grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria and every person born outside Nigeria whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria.

Citizenship is divided into to civil, political and social citizenship, civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty like freedom of speech, political citizenship is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power either as a member of the political community and social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allows them to live a civilized existence in accordance with the standards prevailing in the society. However, the dimensions of active citizenship are ethical, integrative and educational citizenship, ethical citizenship understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public good, integrative citizenship involves the belief that every individual plays an assortment of roles and that this form of citizenship enables the individual to integrate their various roles and to immerse themselves in the community, hence causing them to have a greater appreciation of the collective while educative citizenship refers to the process that develops a moral, practical and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship. Citizens basic rights include the right to life, right to work, right to freedom of religion, right to education, right to association, right to freedom of speech, right to writing and publication among others.

Democracy is the rule by the people, it originated in the ancient Greece where citizens meet themselves in assemblies which had the power to make the law, citizens were allowed to discuss state affairs, take decisions and exercise their political rights. They practiced direct democracy, during that period the levelers advocated that it is unnatural, unethical and tyrannical for any man to rule or govern people without their consent and successfully democratic institution was adopted as a way of life, this idea spread in the western world from country to country during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

However, democracy also known as indirect government is associated with the free discussion of political views, the right to differ concerning them and the settlement of the differences by counting votes, it is a way to determine who shall govern and to what ends they shall rule. The basic features of democracy are the fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed, independent and impartial judiciary, existence of the rule of law, freedom of the press and periodic elections that is free and fair. citizens in a democracy not only have rights but obligations which include voting during elections, payment of taxes, obedience to the law, refrain from interference with the rights of members of the society.