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**MATRIC NO.: 19/MHS11/050**

**DATE: 18-01-2021.**

**REVIEW ON CHAPTER 8**

**CITIZENS ROLES IN DEMOCRACY**

Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. This exclusively means that governments belong to the people, likewise governmental processes and elections. There is no democracy without the involvement of the citizens. One key feature of democracy is sovereignty as the people have a collective right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems as part of self-determination. However, for democracy to function, citizens must be abreast with issues that can improve their lives and also having active participation in government by tackling issues that might be a barrier to their participation.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS IN DEMOCRACY CONTEXT

Citizen/Citizenship– the term ‘citizen’ has a political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government. They have a set of rights and responsibilities including the right to participate in decisions that affect public welfare. To be a citizen means to enjoy certain liberties and right as opposed to being slaves who can’t enjoy such liberties. Citizenship of a state can be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. Turner suggests that citizenship is a formal legal identity that the individual person inherits through a collection of legal rights and obligations, controlling access to the scarce political, economic and cultural resources of society. Citizenship can be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Brannan et. Al. argue that the concept of citizenship holds that citizenship is not solely comprised of passive membership of a political entity, but that being active is an essential of being a citizen. With this, Glover proposed that there are three dimensions of active citizenship; ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship and educative citizenship.

Citizens’ Rights– a right can be defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or group. Therefore, in order for a citizen to have a share in the running of his/her government, a group of rights is very essential. When a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, it becomes a civil right. Some of these civil rights include; the right to life, right to work, right to education, right to freedom of association, etc. if the civil rights of a citizen are trampled upon by another citizen or the government, he is entitled to seek redress in the court of law.

Democracy– etymologically, democracy is from the Greek word “demos” meaning people and “kratos” meaning rule. This is to say that democracy is the rule by the people. Johnston suggests that a system that enables people exercise authority themselves is known as direct democracy. This concept is traced back to the Ancient Greece where every citizen is expected to participate in the running of the government. However, the Greek democracy excluded the laborers, slaves and aliens from exercising political rights. At around after the great civil war of the seventeenth century, England advocated the idea that all citizens, high or low, within the state are entitled to take part in the running of the affairs of their state. There are many concepts as to what democracy is. The popular one is by Abraham Lincoln, the former president of America. He is of the view that, democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. This in a nutshell means that without the people, there is no democracy. Other scholars also proposed their definitions. Since there are numerous definitions of democracy, **the features of democracy** are deduced as follows; the fundamental rights of the citizens are guaranteed, independent and impartial judiciary, existence of the rule of law, freedom of press, periodic election that is free and fair.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY.

The following are some of the duties and responsibilities a good citizen must perform to his/her state.

* A citizen must vote in periodic elections that takes place in the state or country.
* A citizen must pay taxes in order to fund a democratic government
* A good citizen must obey the law as without the law, there will be anarchy (a state of lawlessness)
* A good citizen must not stir up racial or class division within the state that may lead to bloodshed or chaos.
* A good citizen must not interfere with the rights of other members of the community or state.
* A good citizen must support public education as it is the foundation of democracy, through which children are being educated to be responsible and knowledgeable.

Citizens play an important role in democracy. There would be no democracy without the full commitment and co-operation of the citizens. They should also be awareness of the rights and responsibilities of the citizens amongst themselves, this is because without awareness, the government may create absolute power in itself. Also, citizens should participate in every event concerning democracy, driving away the spirit of political apathy.

In doing all this, citizens shouldn’t forget that the development of the state is their top priority. A positive attitude should therefore be maintained.