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CITIZENS ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY

Sovereignty resides in and flows from the people in a democracy. The precepts are embodied in the universal declaration of human rights, capture the foundation for famous formulation that democratic government is “of the people, by the people and for the people”. To be informed, citizens need accurate and timely information. Transparency is a necessity for democracy. Barriers to citizen participation are both subtle and obvious, small and formidable and based on numerous factors. Universal and equal suffrage is easily denied and governmental credibility is undermined. Thus, a symbiotic relationship exists between democracies.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

- **CITIZENS/CITIZENSHIP**

Citizens has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and the government. They have a set of rights and responsibilities, including the rights to participate in decisions that affect public welfare. To be a citizen means to enjoy certain liberties and rights as opposed to the slaves who couldn't enjoy them.

Citizenship of a state could be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. Citizenship by birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries. The process by which an individual may voluntarily change his/her citizenship of a state to another state is naturalization.

Citizenship can be perceived to be made up of, or to be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights to protect 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 or as an individual elected by the member of the community and social citizenship embodies the claim the citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance with the standards prevailing in society.

Brannan *et al* argue that the concept of citizenship is not solely comprised of passive membership of a political entity, but that being active is an essential of being a citizen. For them, it is active citizenship if someone volunteers in public service provision. However as shown as Glover who argues that there are three dimensions of active citizenship: ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship and educative citizenship. Ethical citizenship understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public. The personal sacrifices that are made aid some public benefit and are hence ultimately also enjoyed by the same person who sacrifices. Integrative citizenship needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institution. This 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 their self to the community. Educative citizenship on its part refers to the process that develops a moral, practical, and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship.