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**MATRIC NO.: 19/LAW01/058**

**COURSE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (GST203)**

**LEVEL: 200**

**QUESTION: DO A TWO PAGE REVIEW OF CHAPTER 8, “ CITIZENS ROLE IN A DEMOCRACY”**

**CHAPTER 8**

**CITIZENS ROLE IN A DEMOCRACY**

**Introduction**

Sovereignty resides in the people in a democracy. The people have a collective right to choose their governmental systems. the government derives its authority from the will of the people, and the people also have a right to take part in their government through genuine elections.

These precepts are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in modern constitutions. They capture the famous formulation that government is “of the people, by the people and for the people.” This essentially means that there is no democracy without the engagement of the citizens.

For a democracy to deliver, citizens must be informed about the issues, free to express their issues and work to see that the government is accountable. Citizens need accurate information. They need to learn from those who compete in politics how politicians intend to employ that information for the good of the population. That is why transparency is necessary for a democracy.

Barriers to citizen participation are multiple in every country. For full citizenship to be achieved, we must remove this barriers. If not, universal and equal suffrage is denied and government credibility is undermined. Thus a symbiotic relationship exists between democracy, the citizens and state development to the effect that the citizens government includes active participations that brings about development.

**Citizens’ Rights**

Individuals rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state and it exists to enable men develop fully. A right may therefore be defined as a priviledge or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group.when a priviledge is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, it becomes a civil right. If the civil rights of a citizen are invaded by another citizen or the government, he is entitled to seek redress in court.

**Democracy**

The word democracy is derived from the Greek word ‘demos’ meaning people and ‘kratos’ meaning rule that is ‘rule by the people.’ The concept of democracy originated from ancient Greece. The greek democracy was a limited institution in that it excluded labourers, slaves and aliens from exercising political rights. The idea that all citizens within the state are entitiled to take part in the running affairs of their state was first advocated in England.

Abraham Lincoln, a former American president, perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. He stated further that in a democracy, the rights, freedoms and the value o f individuals count more than those of the state.

**Duties and Responsibilities of Citizens in a Democracy**

1. A citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote.
2. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes.
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. A good citizen must support public education in every way possible, through payment of taxes, local volunteer efforts etc.

**Conclusion**

Democracy is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting. It is considered as the best form of government in the modern era as it allows citizens to enjoy many rights and gives them responsibilities at the same time.

Citizens play an important role in democracy, there would probably be no democracy without the co-operation and commitment of citizens. Therefore a positive attitude should be developed and maintained with the development of the state being the priority.