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**Chapter Eight**

**Citizens Role in a democracy**

Sovereignty resides in the flows from the people in a democracy. They have collective rights to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems as part of self determination. These precepts are embodied in the universal Declaration of Human Rights and in modern constitutions the world over . The famous formulation that democratic government is “ of the people, by the people and for the people.” Which means the governments belong to the people; governmental processes belong to the people; and elections belong to the people.

For democracy to deliver, citizens must become informed about issues that can improve their lives. Barriers to citizenship participation are multiple in every country. They are both subtle and obvious, small and formidable, and based on numerous factors.

**Conceptual clarification**

In order to improve their meaning as used within the context of this paper , it is important to clarify a few concepts.

**Citizen/Citizenship**

The word citizen has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government.

In ancient Rome, it was considered as a privilege status to be called citizen because the status was not according to all inhabitants of the Roman empire. Modern states confer citizens on practically their whole residents or population. Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalisation. Citizenship determined by the place of birth of fundamental in the laws of most countries. Every one 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.

Citizenship can be perceived to be made up of , or be divided in to civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights to protect individual liberty. freedom of speech e.t.c. political citizenship is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power either as a member of a political community. ( e.g. a politician) and social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilised existence in accordance with the standards prevailing in society. However as with so many other concepts, citizenship does not have just one definition, it means different things to different people

**Citizen’s rights:** Individual’s rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully .when a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state , it becomes a civil right and if the civil rights of a citizen are broken by another citizen or the government, he is entitled to seek redress in the court of law .

**Democracy:** It has been etymologyestablished that the word democracy is derived from the Greek word **“DEMOS** meaning **PEOPLE** and **KRATOS** meaning **RULE** that is **‘RULE BY THE PEOPLE’”.**

The Greek democracy was a limited institution in that it excluded labourers, slaves and aliens from exercising political rights. **ABRAHAM LINCOLN** former American president, perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. According to him , democracy is a government of the people when it is designed to represent the common will of the citizenry within a state and that state and that it is a government by the people when its ideological undercurrents is grounded in the people’s culture, also its is a government which is for the people when the power employed by the custodians of state business emanates from and resides in the collective mandate of the people.

**Features of democracy**

**1** freedom of press , existence of rule of law , the fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed , free and fair elections and independent and imperial judiciary

**Duties of a citizen**

**1** duty to vote

2 willing to pay taxes

3 obey the law

4 stay away from uttering destructive criticism

5 citizens must stay away from interfering with other people’s rights

Citizens play an important role in democracy. A positive attitude should be maintained with development of the state being the priority.