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CHAPTER 8: CITIZENS ROLES IN DEMOCRACY.

The authority of the government derives from the will of the people in their choice of these systems. These prospects are embodied in the universal declaration of human rights and in modern constitutions the world over. They capture the foundation for the famous formulation that democratic government is “of the people, by the people and for the people.” That means government belongs to the people, and elections belongs to the people. Access to information is essential to an informed citizenry. That is why transparency is a necessity for democracy.

Barriers to citizen participation are multiple in every country. They are both subtle and obvious, small and formidable, and are based on numerous factors. A symbolic relationship between democracy, the citizens and state’s development to the effect that citizen’s government, made by the citizens for the citizenry is called democracy and it is the involvement or active participations of the people in governance that brings about development.

CITIZEN/CITIZENSHIP.

The term citizen has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and the government. Citizens have a set of rights and responsibilities, including the right to participate in decisions that affects public welfare. In addition to the intrinsic democratic value, participation is an instrumental driver of democratic and socio-economic change, and a fundamental way to empower citizens.

Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. A man becomes a citizen of a particular place if his parents are citizens of that state or if he was born within the territory of that state. However, there are broader definitions and perceptions of citizenship as well, as shown by Glover (2004:18), who argues that there are three dimensions of active citizenship: ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship and education citizenship. Ethical citizenship understands active participation in collective strive towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship. Integrated citizenships needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions. Educative citizenship on its part, refers to the process that develops a moral, practical, and intellectual sense in individuals when they practice their citizenship.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITES OF A CITIZEN IN DEMOCRACY.

All citizens have duties to the state. Democratic citizens recognize that they not only have rights, they have responsibilities.

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 criticizes.
5. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the right of other members of the community.
6. (S)he must support public education in every way possible.