**LEBILE CELINE MOTUNROLA**

**19/MHS01/235**

**MBBS 200L**

**GST 203 ASSIGNMENT; CHAPTER 8; CITIZENS ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY**

In the universal declaration of human rights and modern constitution all over the world, a democratic government is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. This means that the government and its processes, belongs to the people. Power resides in and flows from the people in a democracy, and the government’s authority is derived from the will of the people. The engagement of citizens in governmental activities, strengthens democracy, therefore it should be taken as a responsibility, so as to establish, develop and sustain democracy.

The term citizen has a political meaning which denotes a certain type of relationship between the people and the government. Citizens have sets of rights and responsibilities towards their community, state, or country. In ancient Rome, not all inhabitants of the community were called citizens, the people who were not considered as citizens were slaves, serfs and travelers. In modern times, states refer to their whole residents or population as citizens, and they provide opportunities to enable citizens to lead a good life.

Human beings become citizens of a country or state by birth, marriage or registration. This can be conceptualized as citizenship. Citizenship can be defined as the position or status of being a citizen of a particular country. It is said to be divided into civil citizenship; which refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty, like freedom of speech, justice. Political citizenship is related with partaking in the democratic exercise of political power, either as a member of a political community (voter) or as an individual elected by the members of a community (politician), social citizenship states that citizens should have access to those resources that allow them to live a refined life.

Rights are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; that is, rights are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory. Right may be defined as the privilege conferred by law upon a person or group of people. When a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of a state, it becomes a civil right. If the civil rights of a citizen are being invaded by another citizen, he or she is entitled to seek redress in the court of law. Every citizen of a state or country has rights, like right to life, right to work, right to vote, right of association, freedom of speech, freedom from discrimination.

The word democracy comes from the Greek words "demos", meaning people, and "kratos" meaning power; so democracy can be thought of as "power of the people". It is a way of governing which depends on the will of the people. Democracy is not autocracy or dictatorship, where one person rules; and it is not oligarchy, where a small segment of society rules. When properly understood, democracy should not even be "rule of the majority", if that means that minorities' interests are ignored completely. A democracy, at least in theory, is government on behalf of all the people, according to their "will”. According to Abraham Lincoln, a former president of the United States of America, democracy is of the people, by the people and for the people. To him, democracy is a government of the people when its designed to represent the common will of citizenry within a state and that it is a government by the people when its principles is rooted in the people’s culture. It is a government for the people when the power used by the custodians of state business comes from and resides with the people.

The idea of democracy derives its moral strength and popular appeal from two key principles; **Individual autonomy**: The idea that no-one should be subject to rules which have been imposed by others. People should be able to control their own lives (within reason), and **equality**: The idea that everyone should have the same opportunity to influence the decisions that affect people in society. The features of democracy are that the fundamental rights of citizens are guaranteed, existence of rule of law, freedom from press, independent impartial judiciary and free and fair elections.

Citizens of a state also have duties to perform, other than exercise power. Some of these duties are; voting during elections, because there is no point of democracy if the citizens do not willingly engage in state related affairs. Citizens should pay taxes, in order to fund a democratic government. Citizens should obey the law, because democracy cannot thrive in lawlessness. Citizens should not interfere with the rights of other citizens, citizens should also educate the public on democracy, its processes, and our rights. Citizens play an important role in democracy.