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**CITIZEN ROLES IN DEMOCRACY**

Governments belong to the people, governmental processes belong to the people and elections belong to the people. There is no democracy without the engagements of the people. Thus, engagement is both a right and responsibility of citizens. It is essential that citizens remain informed about the happenings of the government so they will be able to hold the government accountable for short comings. Transparency and an access to information are necessary for democracy, however, there are both subtle and glaringly obvious barriers such as gender, ethnicity, status and so on, such barriers need to be removed.

A citizen is a legally recognized inhabitant of a particular town or city who has a set of rights and responsibilities. Being a citizen wasn’t always such an easy title to enquire seeing as how in ancient Rome, some slaves and alien residents were denied citizenships on the bases of religion and other reasons. Citizenship of a state can be acquired by birth or by naturalization. Citizenship by birth is acquired if one is born in the territory of the state or if the parents are citizens of the state. Citizenship by naturalization is when one opts to voluntarily change his/her citizenship to that of another state. The conditions for citizenship vary from country to country. For example, in the Nigerian constitution, if one is born in Nigeria before the date of independence and neither his/her parents or grandparents were born in Nigerian, then that person is not a citizen if Nigeria. However, if one is born in Nigeria after the date of independence, either of whose parents or grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria, Likewise, anyone whose parents are Nigerian but was not born in Nigeria, is a citizen of Nigeria.

Citizenship can be divided into; Civil citizenship, Political citizenship and Social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty. Political citizenship is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power, either as a member if a political community or as an individual elected by the members of such a community. Social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized life in accordance with the standard prevailing in the society. Although citizenship in its wide nature has different meanings to different people. To Brannan, citizenship is about being willing to contribute to social action as well as political debate, to be willing to get involved. Glover argues that there are three dimensions of active citizenship namely, Ethical citizenship, Integrative citizenship and Educative citizenship.

Ethical citizenship understands active participation in a collective strive towards public good as essential feature of citizenship. Integrative citizenship requires engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions. Educative citizenship, according to Dagger, refers to the process that develops a moral, practical and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice citizenship. While Kenny argues that it is necessary to differentiate active from passive citizenship, whereas passive citizenship refers to the rights and duties given to citizens from the state and while this is an integral part of citizenship, it is not enough by itself. On that note, a right can be defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group. When a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, it becomes a civil right. Civil rights include; right to life, right to work and so on.

Democracy is derived from the Greek word *demos* which means people and *kratos* which means rule, which equates to ‘rule by the people’. The Greek democracy was a limited institution that excluded laborers, slaves and aliens from exercising political rights. The idea that all citizens should be included in the affairs of the country was first advocated in England after the great Civil War. John Locke in his Treaties on Civil Government advocated for government based on consent. Abraham Lincoln perceived democracy as government of the people, by the people and for the people. Since there are various definitions of the definition of democracy, the following features have been deduced from the various definitions; The fundamental rights is the citizen is guaranteed, Independent and impartial law, Existence of rule of law, Freedom of press and Periodic election that is free and fair.

As citizens of a democratic nation, responsibilities and duties are put in place such as; A citizen in democracy has the duty to vote, A citizen should be willing to pay taxes, A good citizen must obey the law, A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticism, A good citizen must refrain from interference with rights if other members of the community and a good citizen must support public education in every way possible. Citizens should participate in every event in democracy with full enthusiasm to ensure the survival of democracy. A positive attitude should be maintained with development of the state being a priority.