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SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 8: CITIZENS ROLE IN DEMOCRACY.

Citizens have a set of rights and responsibilities including the right to participate in decisions that affect public welfare. In addition to the intrinsic democratic value, participation is an instrumental driver of democratic and socioeconomic change, and a fundamental way to empower citizens.in ancient Rome, it was considered a privileged status to be called citizens because the status was not accorded to all inhabitants of the roman empire. Slaves, serfs and some alien residents were deprived of citizenship for racial, political and religious reasons. To be a citizen means to enjoy certain liberties and rights as opposed to the slaves who could not enjoy them. Modern states confer citizens on practically their whole residents or populations. They provide the rights and liberties to enable them develop their potentialities. In reality, the essence of a state is to provide opportunities to enable citizens to lead the good life. Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization.

Chapter111, section 25:1(a) of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria define citizenship as: as every person 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, every person born in Nigeria after the date of independence either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria and, every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria.

This is what the constitution states for someone or an individual to be recognize as a citizen of the federal republic of Nigeria. However with so many other concept, citizenship does not have just one definition, it means different things to different people.

Individuals’ right and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully. In order to let the citizens have a share in the running of his/her government, a group of rights is very essential. These rights are not absolute since they are limited by the rights of other citizens in the state. Right entails some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizen.

Democracy has been etymologically established that the word democracy is derived from the Greek word demos which mean people and kratos which means rule that is rule by the people. The concept of democracy like many other political concept first originated from ancient Greece where in the city states, citizens were free to meet frequently in assemblies which had the power to make laws. In these assemblies, citizens were free to discuss states affairs, take decisions and exercise their political rights. Every citizen was expected to participate in the running of government. This is what Johnston classified as a direct democracy, a system that enables people exercise authority themselves. Since there is no single definition of democracy however, what can be deduce from the various definition of democracy are the following features: the fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed, freedom of press, existence of rule of law, independent and impartial judiciary, periodic election that is free and fair.

Duties and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy

A citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote. There is no point in democracy in which we do not participate .a citizen should be willing to pay taxes, since without taxes to fund a democratic government, there would be no democracy. A good citizen must obey the law. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community. He/she must support public education in every way possible, through payment of taxes, through local volunteer efforts, through according this system the respect to which it should be entitled.