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**CHAPTER 8**

Roles of Citizens in a Democracy.

Democracy, as defined by Abraham Lincoln is" Government of the people, by the people and for the people" For democracy to function fully in any government setting, citizens have roles to play to see to the full impact of it. Citizens here, members of any nation either by birth or naturalization are equally as important as public office holders in making democracy work. Sovereignty resides in the citizens of the country and so, there is no democracy without the engagement of the people. For democracy to fully thrive, citizens must be informed and take part in decisions to better their lives in terms of good governance. For full participation, barriers such as age,tribe, religion must be fully removed for full actualization of democracy. Citizenship on the other hand, describe the concept of the rights set aside for the citizens to complement democracy. These include political citizenship which entails participation in political settings such as voting, Civil citizenship that include rights such as right to freedom of speech, right to freedom of justice, and social citizenship which connotes the resources available for the citizens to live a civilized existence in accordance with the standards prevailing in society. The features that make up the democracy include fundamental rights of citizens, independent and impartial judiciary, existence of rule of law, freedom of speech and regular and periodic election. In as much ad these features are available and provided by the states, the citizens on the other hand, have responsibilities and duties to the state. For democracy to succeed, citizens must be active in the affairs of the state. These responsibilities include duty to vote; for which a democracy will not thrive without voting. In addition, citizens are required to serve as checks and balances to the government in terms of constructive criticism and not uttering ugly words aimed at public office holders which may incite violence in the run. Citizens are also required to pay taxes, which without them, basic amenities cannot be provided for the citizens. Furthermore, citizens are also charged with the responsibility of obeying the rule of law for democracy cannot survive in a lawless society. Democracy and citizenship are mutually exclusive and are dependent on each other to function efficiently. Democracy, which is practiced in almost all the countries of the west has proven to be best course of government where individuals can choose freely who will govern them and also remove at will. Any government which infringes on the fundamental human suffrage rights of its citizens in a democratically elected government has in turn, pave way for unrest and chaos to be the order of the day. Citizens, on the other hand must play their own role completely with open mind and hold their government accountable for any misdeeds through the proper channels to avoid putting democracy in danger.