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CHAPTER EIGHT (8) - CITIZENS ROLES IN DEMOCRACY.

Democracy is type of government practiced by most people because according to Abraham Lincoln, it is government for the people, by the people and of the people which means that a government cannot exist without the people because power resides in the hands of the people. In other for democracy to be able to function properly there must be an active citizen who is well informed so as to stop the barriers affecting citizen’s participation.

The concept citizen can be defined as an individual who has a set of rights and responsibilities or a type of relationship between the people and the government. In ancient Rome it was considered a privileged status to be called a citizen because the status was not accorded to all inhabitants of the Roman Empire. An individual can become a citizen through the following ways; by birth, by naturalization. For an individual to be a citizen by birth him or he’s grandparent or parent must be born within the territory of that state. An individual who which to be citizen of another country must be born before independence or have parents or grandparents who are born in the country.

Citizenship has different meanings which is been defined by different scholars. According to Brannan, he argues that the concept of citizenship holds that citizenship is not solely comprised of passive membership of a political entity, but being active is an essential of being a citizen. The different types of citizenship we have are as follows: civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty, political citizenship refers to participation in the democratic exercise of political power and social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have aces to those resources that allow them to live a civilized live in accordance with the standards prevailing in society. According to Glover, there are three dimensions of active citizenship which are; ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship and educative citizenship. A citizen has rights in a state because rights are privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group.

Democracy established from the Greek word “demos meaning people and kratos meaning “rule by the people”. Democracy originated from ancient Greece were citizens were free to discuss state affairs, take decisions and exercise political patties but it was a limited institution because it excluded laborers, slaves and aliens from political rights. However, in England, laborers, slaves and aliens were allowed to participate in political rights after the great Civil War of the seventeen century. The Levelers, a radical party, advocated that it is unnatural, irrational and tyrannical for any man to rule or govern any sort of men without their free consent.

The features of democracy are as follows; the fundamental rights of the citizens is guaranteed, independent and impartial judiciary, existence of rule of law, freedom of the press and periodic election that is free and fair. The duties and responsibilities of a citizen re as follows; a citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote so as to enhance the development of the country, a citizen should be willing to pay taxes so that the government will be able to provide for the people, a good citizen must be able to obey the law and not ring problems, a good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms, a good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community and lastly, he or she must support public education.

In conclusion, democracy is a type of government for the people because the government cannot operate without the people’s acceptance to control them. Although, the citizens are the ones who elect the government, the citizens have different rights, duties and obligations which helps to enhance the state for the citizens. Active participation in democracy promoted the concept of democracy.