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**Government Assignment**

**Chapter 8**.

Who is a citizen ? What role do they play in a democracy? They have rights and responsibilities including the right to participate in decisions that affect public welfare. To be informed of how to make adequate responses and to hold government accountable, citizens need to be accurately and timely informed. Thus the need for transparency in democracy. Citizens must be free to impart their views. For full citizenship to be achieved, barriers hindering citizen participation such as age, gender, race and ethnicity should completely be removed. Democracy then becomes a symbiotic relationship existing where citizens and state development is made by the Citizens for the Citizens.

In ancient Rome they were allowed to enjoy their rights and liberties unlike the slaves who worked for them. Citizenship could be acquired by birth or naturalisation. Citizenship determined by birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries. On the other hand the process by which an individual changes their citizenship is known as naturalization. Conditions for naturalization vary from country to country.

Citizenship is seen to be divided into civil, political and social. Civil refers to the right to protect individual freedom. Political citizenship gives us rights to exercise political power. Social gives access to resources enabling civilized existence. However according to **Glover**, there are 3 dimensions of active citizenship which are: **ethical, integrative** and **educative citizenship.** . Ethical citizenship is about active participation in order to benefit the public as a whole. The citizen is expected to make personal sacrifices if the result is more beneficial to the public and the citizen. Integrative citizenship is about engaging oneself in the sphere that is much wider than the formal political institutions and practices. This concept stems from the idea that everyone plays a variety of roles and this form of citizenship enables the citizens to integrate their various roles and immerse themselves into the community so as to help them appreciate the collective more. The third, the educative citizenship, according to ***Dagger 1997***, refers to a process that develops a*moral, practical*and *intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship.* Active participation exposes individuals to an array of belief and value systems thus forming a sense of oneness among people in the community. Glover states that this also works to form a connection between personal and public interest.

As the citizen of a state, individuals have some rights, their citizenship rights, which enable them to live and develop fully both as individuals and as a member of the state. These rights are not absolute, as they limited by the rights of other members of the state. They are also accompanied by duties and responsibilities. When these rights are expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, they are called **civil rights** e.g. the right to life, the right to association, the right to education etc. When these rights are encroached upon by other members of the state or the state itself, the citizen can seek redress in court.

Democracy is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting. It is derived from the greek word *demos* meaning **people** and *kratos* meaning **rule.** Together it can be seen to mean **rule by the people**. **Johnston** classifies a direct democracy as one which enables people exercise their authority themselves. It is considered the best form of government in the modern era as it allows citizens to exercise and enjoy many rights.

People in a democracy have sovereign power. They have the choice to elect leaders. Likewise the ability of leaders is derived from the will of the people. In other words the people have the sovereign power in a democracy. This powers are embodied in the Universal Declaration of human rights which constitutes the world over. It captures the foundation of the famous formulation which says, “of the people, by the people and for the people.” There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Thus for sustainable democracy, the citizens have the utmost rights and responsibility in the day-to-day running and affairs of the government. Citizen engagement accounts for the overall development in the different spheres of the political realm as well as other realms affecting the spheres of human life.

Democracy assures basic fundamental rights for citizens as well as responsibilities such as :

* Citizens have the right to vote. People are free to vote into power as well as peacefully make case for the removal of a person who they feel is not in their favour.
* A citizen should be willing to pay taxes. Democracy is run with the money gotten from royalties, trade with other countries as well as money from the people which is called taxes. Hence citizens should be willing to pay to ensure the smooth and effective daily running of the government.
* Must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but rather constructive criticisms or alternatives to policies and rules made by the government. He or She should be careful not to incite feelings of negativity among the populace to avoid scenes of destruction and chaos leading to loss of lives and properties.
* A citizen has the duty to obey the law at all costs. Democracy exists or can only exist in a lawful environment as lawlessness and unwillingness to obey those in power as well as the law promotes discord and chaos. Therefore, citizens should be ready to cooperate in whatever way possible.