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**REVIEW OF CHAPTER 8 – CITIZENS ROLE IN A DEMOCRACY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Democracy is derived from the Greek word “*demos”* meaning people and is a system of government whereby citizens directly elect the government by voting. Citizens play an important role in democracy. There would be no democracy without the citizens. They should be aware of their rights and responsibilities. They should also partake in every events of democracy.

***WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?***

According to Abraham Lincoln, American former president, Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. In essence the people have a collective right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems. For democracy to deliver, citizens must be free to come together to express their views and preferences and those in government should be held accountable. For democracy to succeed, citizens must be active, not passive. Because they know that the failures or success of the government is their responsibility and not anyone else’s .

***CHARACTERISTICS OF DEMOCRACY***

1. The fundamental rights of citizens is guaranteed
2. Independent and impartial judiciary
3. Existence of rule of law
4. Freedom of press
5. Periodic election is free and fair

***CITIZENSHIP AND RIGHTS OF A CITIZEN***

A citizen is a member of a state, a native or a naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government, is entitled to rights and privileges and is entitled to protection from it. Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization, civil citizenship, political citizen ship, educative citizenship etc. Citizenship is about being willing to contribute to social actions.

Rights and liberties of a person in a state enable the person to live person to live and develop fully. A right is defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group. It is also called the civil rights of an individual. Important civil rights according to Nigeria’s constitution includes : the right to freedom of religion, the right to work, the right to life, the right to education, the right to freedom of speech, etc

Democratic citizens know that they don’t only have rights they also have responsibilities and that democracy requires an investment in time and hard work.

***RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY***

1. A citizen should have a duty to vote their leaders peacefully at established times of elections.
2. Citizens in democracy must reframe from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to governmental policies. They should not stir up racial o any form of division that can lead to bloodshed or chaos in the state
3. They should be willing to pay taxes to assist the government in providing all the needs of their citizens.
4. A good citizen must be law abiding and obedient to instructions from the government because democracy cannot exist in a lawless society, and without willingness of citizens to obey the law, which is really a social contract.
5. Citizens should also assist law enforcing agencies by r5eporting breeches of the laid down laws and regulations.
6. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community. He must not interfere with properties of other members or citizen of the state
7. Citizens must make their contributions to the advancement of the nation
8. A citizen must appear before the court as a witness when called upon respond when called upon so as to serve the army when military service is compulsory and defend the country when it’s at war.
9. A citizen must support public education in every way possible, through local volunteer efforts, payment of taxes, making donations, ensuring public awareness, educate children to be responsible and knowledgeable participants in the democratic process etc. *Education is power in a democracy because it strengthens citizens to be better, informed and situated to interrogate government policies.* Public education is the foundation of democracy.

***CONCLUSION***

Democracy is considered as the best form of government in the modern era as it allows citizens to enjoy and exercise many rights and gives them many responsibilities at the same time. There would be no democracy without the citizens. Citizens play a very important role in democracy. It is therefore, necessary for citizens to recognize their roles and responsibilities in democracy.