**NAME: NNEBE CHINEMEREM.**

**MATRIC NUMBER: 19/LAW01/151.**

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**CHAPTER EIGHT**

**CITIZENS ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY**.

The authority of government likewise derives from the will of the people in their choice of these systems and the people have a right to take part in their government, including through genuine elections to determine who will legitimately occupy governmental offices. There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens.

**Citizenship.**

Citizen has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government. Citizenship maybe acquired either by birth or by naturalization. A man becomes a citizen of a particular state if his parents are citizens of the state or if is born within the territory of that state .citizen by naturalization is the process by which an individual may voluntarily change his/her citizenship of a state to another state.

Citizenship can be perceived to be made up of or be divided civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty (examples are: freedom of speech, justice, the freedom to conclude valid contracts).political citizenship is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political power, either as a member of a political community or as individual elected by the members of such a community and social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance with the standards prevailing in society. Citizenship is about being willing to contribute to social action as to political debate, to be willing to get involved.

Thus In order to let the citizen 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. A right may therefore be defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group. When a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, it becomes a civil right examples of civil rights are: right to education, right to freedom of religion, right of association and right to freedom of speech.

**Democracy**

Democracy etymologically is derived from the Greek word **demos** meaning people and **kratos** meaning rule that is rule by the people. The concept of democracy like many other political concepts 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. The American colonies having revolted against England successfully, developed democratic ideas and institution as a way life. These ideas and institutions spread from country in the western world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Abraham Lincoln perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people.

However, there is no single definition of democracy, the features of democracy are:

* + Freedom of press.
	+ Existence of rule of law.
	+ Free and fair periodic election.
	+ Independent and impartial judiciary.
	+ The fundamental right of the citizen is guaranteed.

**Responsibilities of a good citizen in a democracy are:**

* A good citizen should not interfere in the rights of other members in the society
* A good citizen should refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies.
* A good citizen must have a duty to obey the law, he/she must be ready to assist the law enforcement officers by reporting breaches of the law and by giving them any useful information they may have.
* A good Citizen should have the duty to vote in a democracy.
* A good citizen should be willingly to pay taxes because it is needed to fund the democratic government.
* Lastly a good citizen must support public education in every way possible through the payment of taxes etc.

In conclusion, democracy is considered as the best form of government in the modern era as it allows citizens to exercise and enjoy many rights and it gives them responsibilities at the same time. There would probably be no democracy without the cooperation and commitment of citizens. Citizen must be aware of their rights and responsibilities as without the awareness among the citizens, a government may turn into a tyranny.