**ID-VICTOR YVONNE UYAIABASI**

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**CHAPTER 8**

**A REVIEW ON THE CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY**

Sovereignty lives and flows from the people in a democracy which thus gives them the right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems as part of self-determination. These precepts are inside the Universal Declaration of Human Right and in modern constitutions the world over. They capture the foundation for the famous formulation that democratic government ‘of the people, by the people, and for the people’. For democracy to be effective, the citizens must be informed about issues that can improve their lives. They must also be free to come together to express their views and preferences and then work to see that the government responds to citizens’ views. Barriers to citizen participation are multiple in every country. In order to achieve a full citizenship, these barriers must be removed.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

* CITIZENS/CITIZENSHIP: Citizens have a set right and responsibilities including right to participate in decisions affecting the public welfare. Citizenship on the other hand is a state which may be acquired either by birth or by naturalization. A man may become a citizen of a particular state if his parents are citizens of that state or if he was born within the territory of that state. Citizenship can be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship, and social citizenship. Citizenship has various definitions an cannot be grouped under one definition.
* Citizens rights: In order to let the citizen have a share in the running of his or her government, a group of rights is essential which is absolute since they are limited by rights to other citizens in the state. A right may be defined as a privilege or prerogative confined by law upon a person or a group. Important civil rights accorder Nigerian citizens are; the right to life, the right to work, the right to freedom of speech, the right to freedom of religion and so on.
* DEMOCRACY: the concept of the democracy first originated from Ancient Greece where the citizens were free to meet frequently in assemblies and had the right to and power to make laws. Abraham Lincoln, the former American president, saw democracy as the government of the people, for the people and by the people. He saw democracy as the government of the people when it is designed to represent the common will of citizenry within a state. Some features of democracy include the; fundamental human right, existence of the rule of law, independent and impartial judiciary, freedom of press and periodic election that is free and fair.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CITIZEN IN A DEMOCRACY.

All citizens have duties to a state. Democratic citizens realise that they also have responsibilities asides from their rights to the state. For a democracy to succeed, citizens must be active and not passive. Citizens are expected to perform these certain responsibilities in a democracy;

* Citizens should have the duty to vote.
* Citizens should be willing to pay taxes, in order for the democracy to succeed.
* Good citizens should have a duty to obey the law.
* Good citizens should refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but rather offer constructive criticisms to government policies.
* Good citizens should refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community.
* Citizens should be able to support public education in every way.