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**CHAPTER 8: CITIZEN ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY(GST 203)**

Government belong to the people, governmental processes belong to the people and elections belong to the people. There is no democracy without the engagement of the people. Thus, engagement is both a right and responsibility of citizens. It is essential that citizens remain informed about the happenings of the government so they will be able to hold the government accountable for short comings. Transparency and an access to information are necessary for democracy, however, there are both subtle and glaringly obvious barriers such as gender, ethnicity, status and so on, such barriers need to be removed.

Citizens have a set of rights and duties that relate to their public welfare and participation in the governmental process of their state unlike in ancient Rome, modern states confer citizenship on practically their whole residents or population. Their provide rights and duties to enable them develop their potentials. In reality, the essence of a state is to provide opportunities to enable citizens lead a good life. Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or naturalisation. A man becomes a citizen of a state if his parents are citizens of that particular state or if he is been within the territory of that state. Chapter 3, Section 25 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defines citizenship. A conditions under which citizenship by naturalisation is conferred varies from state to state, section 26(1) to section 32 stipulates the conditions which any person that is trying to naturalize must fulfil before he or she can be registered as a citizen of Nigeria, citizenship may either be civil, political or social. Citizenship is seen differently by different individuals and therefore has many definitions. It may be seen as a privilege status conferred by states on its people either by birth or by naturalisation i.e. voluntary change of citizenship from a state to another. Citizen's rights are very essential in a state as they enable men to grow fully. Rights are privileges or prerogatives conferred by law upon a person or a group, privileges expressed within the framework of the constitution are civil rights e.g. right to life, right to education etc.

Democracy is gotten from two Greek words, "Demos" meaning people and "kratos" meaning rule by the people. The concept originated from Ancient Greece where in the city states, citizens were free to meet frequently in assemblies which had the power to make laws.], this was described as a direct democracy, a system which enables citizens to express authority by themselves. The system was however limited because some classes of people were excluded from exercising their political rights. England was the first state to advocate that all citizens regardless of class should be allowed to participate in the governmental process and exercise their political rights, this happened after the Great Civil War in the Seventeenth Century Other people and groups however did not fully agree with the concept of allowing certain men take decisions or rule over other men without their consent. After the American colonies revolted against England successfully, they developed democratic ideas and institutions as a way of life, these ideas spread from country to country in the western world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, democracy or representative government which is also known as indirect government is associated with the free discussion of political views, the right to differ concerning them and the settlement of differences by counting votes. Moreover, it is a way of determining who shall govern and to what ends they shall rule. Democracy was perceived by former American president, Abraham Lincoln as government of the people, by the people and for the people. There is no single definition for democracy, but it is important to note a few thing that make up democracy, these are; democracy guarantees the fundamental right of citizens, in a democracy, an independent and impartial judiciary exists as well as the rule of rule exist, there is freedom of the press and there are periodic free and fair elections.

Democratic citizens recognise that though they have rights, they also have responsibilities to the state; the citizens know that they must bear the burden of responsibility for their society if they are to benefit from its protection of their rights. Citizens must be active and not passive for democracy to succeed because they know that the success or failure of the government is their responsibility, and no one else's. In turn, government officials understand irrespective of class, all citizens should be treated equally.