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Chapter8

*Citizens roles in a democracy*.

*Citizen/citizenship.*

The term citizen has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government. Citizens have a set of rights and responsibilities, including the right to participate in decisions that affect public welfare. To be a citizen means to enjoy certain liberties and rights as opposed to the slaves who could not enjoy them.

Citizenship of a state may be acquired either by birth or by naturalisation. A man becomes a citizen of a particular state. if his parents are citizens of that state or if he is born within the territory of that state. Citizenship determined by the place of birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries. The process by which an individual may voluntarily change his/her citizenship of a state to another state is known as naturalisation.

Citizenship can be perceived to be made up of, or be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship, and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty (e.g, 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 an 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.

*Citizen’s rights.*

Individual’s rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully. 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. Right entails some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizens. When a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state, it become a civil right. Important civil rights accorded Nigerian citizens in its constitution include: the right to life, the right to work, right to freedom of religion, right to education, right of association and right to freedom of speech, writing and publication among others.

*Duties and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.*

1. A citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote. There is no point in democracy in which we do not participate. People who are not happy with their leaders are free to organize and peacefully make the case for change or try to vote those leaders out of office at established times for elections.
2. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes, since without taxes to fund a democratic government, there would be no democracy.
3. A good citizen must have a duty to obey the law, a democracy cannot exist in a lawless society
4. A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies. He should not stir up racial or class division within the state which may lead to bloodshed or chaos.
5. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community, he must not interfere with the properties of other persons.
6. He must support public education in every way possible, through the payment of taxes, through local volunteer efforts, through according this system the respect to which it should be entitled.

Citizens also have the duty in a democracy of ensuring that their rights are preserved by challenging government when it errs. Citizens should also check how institutions like investigating agencies, law making agencies, and even civil servants, that are put in place for the well-being of the democracy, are working.