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ASSIGNMENT.
CITIZENS ROLE IN DEMOCRACY.

Sovereignty resides and flows from the people in a democracy. They have a collective right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems as part of self determination. These perception are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in modern constitutions the world over. There is no democracy without the engagement of the citizens as it is a right and responsibility of citizens in establishing and sustaining democracy.

The word 'citizen' has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the government and the people. Being a citizen may be acquired by birth or naturalization. Chapter 111, section 25: 1(a) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defined citizenship as:

- Every person born in Nigeria before the date of independence, either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents belongs or belonged to a community indigenous to Nigeria provided that a person shall not become a citizen of Nigeria by virtue of this section if neither of his parents nor any of his grandparents was born in Nigeria;
- Every person born in Nigeria after the date of the independence either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria; and
- Every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria.

Section 26(1) to Section 32 also stipulates the conditions which any person that is trying to naturalise must fulfil before he or she can be registered as a citizen of Nigeria.

Individual's right and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exists to enable men to live and develop fully in order to let them have a share in the running of his/her government. A right can therefore be defined as a privilege 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. Some of the civil rights as citizens of Nigeria include: Right to life, right to work, right to education, right to freedom of speech, right to freedom of education, e.t.c.

Abraham Lincoln perceived democracy as the government of the people for the people and by the people. In his words, democracy is a government of the people when it is designed to represent the common will of the citizens within a state and that it is a government by the people when its ideological undercurrents is grounded in the people's culture, also, it is a government which is for the people when the power employed by the custodians of the state business emanates from and resides in the collective mandate of the people.

Since there's no single definition of democracy, the following features have been deduced from the various definitions:

- Existence of rule of law.
- Freedom of press.
- Periodic election which is free and fair.
- Guaranteed fundamental rights of the citizens.
- Independent and impartial judiciary.

While the state provides rights and liberties, all citizens have their duties to perform to the state because, for democracy to succeed, citizens must be active, not passive as the success or failure of the government is their sole responsibility. The following are responsibilities citizens are expected to perform in a democracy:

- A citizen in democracy should have the duty to vote as there is no point in democracy in which we do not participate.
- A good citizen should be law abiding. Democracy cannot exist in a lawless society and without the willingness of the citizens to obey the rule.
- A citizen should be willing to pay taxes, because without taxes to fund a democratic government, there would be no democracy.
- A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community.
- A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies.
- A good citizen 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.

In conclusion, democracy 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 co-operation and commitment of citizens. They must be aware of theirs rights and responsibilities as without the awareness among the citizens, a government may turn into a tyranny.

Citizens must not lose sight of the pursuit of public interest. A positive attitude should be maintained with development of the state being the priority.