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A REVIEW ON CITIZENS ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY (CHAPTER 8)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights capture the foundation for the famous formulation that democratic government is "of the people, by the people, and for the people". What this means is that governments belong to the people; governmental processes belong to the people; and elections belong to the people. Engagements of citizens brings about democracy. Citizens must be free to come together to express their views and preferences and work to see that government responds to citizens' views, thus holding those in government accountable.

Definition of Citizen/Citizenship

The term 'citizen' has an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and the government.

Chapter 111, section 25: 1(a) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria define citizenship as:

- (a) 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;
- (b) Every person born in Nigeria after the date of independence either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria; and
- (c) Every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria.

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 the state. Citizenship determined by the place of birth is fundamental in the laws of most countries. Naturalisation on the other hand 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 divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty; 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.

Citizenship means different things to different people hence it has several definitions. However, there are broader definitions and perceptions of citizenship as shown by Glover, who argues that there are three dimensions of active citizenship: ethical citizenship, integrative citizenship and educative citizenship. Ethical citizenship understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship. Integrative citizenship needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions. According to Dagger, Educative citizenship refers to the process that develops a moral, practical and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship.

CITIZENS' RIGHTS: A right can be defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group. Civil rights can be seen as when a privilege is expressed within the framework of the constitution of the state. 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 e.t.c.

DEMOCRACY

Etymologically, democracy is derived from the Greek word "*demos* meaning people and *kratos* meaning rule that is 'rule by the people'". Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. 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 settlements of differences by counting of votes. There is no single definition of democracy but some features can be deduced from the various definitions of democracy.

These features includes:

1. The fundamental right of the citizen is guaranteed.
2. Independent and impartial judiciary
3. Existence of rule of law
4. Freedom of press
5. Periodic election that is free and fair.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS IN DEMOCRACY

1. A citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote.
2. A citizen should be willing to pay taxes, since without taxes to fund a democratic government , there would be no government.
3. A good citizen must have a duty to obey the law.
4. A good citizen must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies.
5. A good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community.
6. A good citizen must support public education in every way possible, through payment of taxes, through local volunteer efforts, through according this system the respect to which it is entitled.

