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A Review of Chapter 8

The citizens of a country have the right to choose their governmental, political and electoral system. The authority of the government is derived from the will of the people in their choice of these systems. The citizens have a right to partake in the government through elections to determine who will legitimately occupy governmental offices. These precepts are contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In order for democracy to deliver the citizens have to be engaged. The citizens must be informed about issues that can improve their lives. They must be free to Express their views and preferences.

A citizen is a legal member of a sovereign nation. In ancient Rome, it was considered a privilege to be called a citizen, because the status was not accorded to all the inhabitants. Slaves and serfs were not called citizens due to political, racial and religious reasons. Citizenship is the status of being a legal member of a particular country. This can be acquired either by birth or naturalization. Citizenship by birth occurs when the parents of a person are both citizens of that state or if the individual is born within that territory. Citizenship by naturalization is gotten when an individual voluntarily changes his or her citizenship to that of another state. In the Nigerian constitution it is stated that: 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 of neither of his parents nor any of his grandparents was born in Nigeria, Every person born in Nigeria after the date of independence either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria, Every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria.

Citizenship can 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 . 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.

The word Democracy has its etymological meaning from the Greek word “demos" meaning people and “kratos" meaning rule. There are many definitions of democracy. Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as government of the people, by the people and for the people. Some of the features of democracy are fundamental human rights, independent and impartial judiciary, existence of rule of law, freedom of the press, periodic free and fair elections.

The duties of citizens is as follows: Citizens have the duty to vote; Citizens should be willing to pay taxes, since without taxes to form a democratic government there would be no democracy; citizens have the duty to obey the law; Citizens must refrain from uttering destructive criticism but must be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies; Citizens must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community, etc.