OLATUNJI DEBORAH OLAMIDE

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NURSING

CHAPTER EIGHT

CITIZEN ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Citizens engagement pursues economic, social, cultural and political development. Barriers to citizen participation are multiple in every country. For full citizenship to be achieved, we must eradicate those barriers, be it gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, or another status.

CITIZEN/CITIZENSHIP

Citizen can be defined as an inherently political meaning that implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government. They 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 naturalization. It can be perceived to be made up of, or be divided into civil, political 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 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.

CITIZENS’ RIGHTS

These rights are not absolute since they are limited by the rights of other citizens in the state. Rights entails some duties and responsibilities on the part of every citizens. A right may therefore be defined as a privilege or prerogative conferred by law upon a person or a group. Important civil rights accorded to Nigerian citizen in its constitution include: right to education, right to life, right to work, right to freedom of religion, right to freedom of speech, writing and publication among others.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy can be simply defined as the rule by the people. Every citizens was expected to participate in the running of government. Abraham Lincoln, former American president, perceived democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Features that can be deduced from various definitions of Democracy

1. The Fundamental rights of the citizens 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 A 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 democracy.
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.

In conclusion, Democracy is a system of government where the citizens directly elect the government by voting. It is considered the best form of government in the modern era as it allows citizens to exercise and enjoy many rights and it gives them responsibilities at the same time. Citizens play an important role in democracy. A positive attitude should be maintained with development of the state being the priority.