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**CITIZENS ROLES IN A DEMOCRACY (CHAPTER 8)**

In this chapter, the roles of citizens in a democratic system of government is explained and emphasized as this helps to improve transparency, achieve full citizenship in a country or state, active participation in governance and bring about symbiotic relationship between democracy, citizens and state’s development. The citizens require the knowledge to make decisions about policy choices and the proper use of authority, along with the skills to voice their concerns, act collectively and hold public officials accountable.

The term citizen, has a political meaning which implies a certain type of relationship between the people and government. The citizens of a state or country have a set of rights and responsibilities. In ancient times in Rome, being a citizen was considered a privilege as slaves, serfs, some alien residents were deprived of citizenship for racial, political and religious reasons although in modern times it is not like that anymore as citizens are considered as whole residents or populations. Citizenship can be acquired by either birth or naturalization and the laws concerning citizenship in every country varies.

Citizenship has different divisions. It can 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, 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 an individual elected by the members of such a community. Social community embodies claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance with the standards prevailing the society.

Glover argues that there are three dimensions of active citizenship. These dimensions are; ethical citizenship which understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship, integrative citizenship which needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions and educative citizenship which refers to the process that develops a moral, practical, and intellectual sense of self in individuals when they practice their citizenship. Citizens equally have their fundamental rights such as the right to freedom of speech, right to education, right to freedom of religion and so many more which should be protected in a democratic system.

However the meaning of democracy is important to take note of. Democracy is derived from the Greek word “demos” meaning people and “kratos” meaning rule which is rule by the people. According to Abraham Lincoln, former American president, democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Democracy in general has important features which are; the fundamental rights of citizens is guaranteed, existence of independent and impartial judiciary, existence of rule of law, freedom of press and periodic election that is free and fair.

The Citizens of a democratic country also have duties and responsibilities which they are expected to perform. A citizen in a democracy should have the duty to vote, they should be willing to pay taxes, a good citizen must have the duty to obey the law as democracy cannot exist in a lawless society, they must refrain from uttering destructive criticisms and be prepared to offer constructive alternatives to government policies, a good citizen must refrain from interference with the rights of other members of the community, these citizens must also support public education in every way possible by payment of taxes, local volunteer efforts as public education is the foundation of democracy meant to educate children to be responsible and knowledgeable participants in the democratic process.