

CHAPTER THREE

CITIZENSHIP

2.1 CITIZEN AND CITIZENSHIP

Who is a Citizen?

A citizen is a person who is a legal member of a country and owes allegiance to a particular country in which he resides and he enjoys full civil and political rights and will be ready to put his life at stake in the defence of its territory when occasion calls for it.

Types of Citizenship

(i) **Citizenship by Birth:** A person can become a citizen of a country by **Birth**. If a person is born in a country where his parents are citizens, the person will automatically acquire the citizenship of that country by birth. In Nigeria, this means that such a person must be born in Nigeria and one of his or her parents must be a citizen of Nigeria.

On the other hand, if a person is born outside of Nigeria and either of the parents is a citizen of Nigeria, such a person is equally qualified to be a citizen of Nigeria.

(ii) **Citizenship by Marriage or Registration:** Citizenship can also be acquired through marriage or registration. This is a method by which women acquire citizenship through marriage. What this means is that, if a non-Nigerian woman is legally married to a Nigerian man, she can become a citizen of Nigeria by registration, for instance, a Ghanaian woman married to a Nigerian may register as a citizen of Nigeria.

Also, a person who is of adult age (18 years and above) born outside Nigeria, but whose grand-parents are citizens of Nigeria can become a Nigerian citizen by registration.

A foreign child adopted by Nigerian parents can also become a Nigerian citizen by registration.

(iii) **Citizenship by Naturalization:** Another way of becoming a Nigerian citizen is by naturalization. This follows a process by which a non-Nigerian makes an official application to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for certificate of naturalization.

Any person who wishes to become a citizen of Nigeria by naturalization must:

1. be above 18 years and of good character;
2. have spent at least fifteen years in Nigeria before such application is made;
3. show a clear intention to continue to reside in Nigeria till death;
4. renounce his or her former citizenship.

(iv) **Citizenship by Descent:** This is a method by which a person claims citizenship of another country as a result of the fact that his grandparents are citizens of the country.

(v) **Honorary Citizenship:** This is when citizenship of a country is granted to a distinguished or eminent foreigner without the usual requirements as a mark of honour.

2.2 RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF CITIZENS

Every citizen has certain rights which are usually stated in the constitution of the country. These rights are generally known as fundamental human rights.

These rights include

1. right to life or right to live.
2. right to freedom of association.
3. right to dignity of human person.
4. right to personal liberty.
5. right to education.
6. right to vote and be voted for.
7. right to fair and equal hearing.
8. right to private and family life.
9. right to freedom of movement.
10. right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, or tribe, creed or political opinion and association.
11. right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading punishment.

2.3 DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF A CITIZEN

Duties are the obligations and actions which are expected from citizens in return for rights or freedom they enjoy as citizens of a country.

Duties of citizens include:

1. Obeying the law.
2. Paying taxes, rates and dues.
3. Assisting the law enforcement agents.
4. Loyalty to the country.
5. Defence of the country.
6. Respect national symbols, national flag, national anthem etc.
7. Respect for the Head of State.
8. Helping in community development efforts.
9. Non-interference with others rights.
10. Right attitude to work.

2.4 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF CITIZENS

	Rights	Duties
(i)	Rights are attributes of our humanity i.e. the things that a citizen is morally, legally or officially allowed to do or have in a country.	Duties are the obligations and actions expected from individuals. For example, paying taxes, rates etc.
(ii)	Rights are inherent in human nature, essential to human need or fundamental to human purpose. For example, right to life.	Duties are actions expected from us as citizens of a country and clearly stated in the constitution just as rights.
(iii)	Rights protect our basic freedom.	Duties when performed guarantee our social welfare and promote good governance.

Importance of Citizens' Rights and Duties

1. **Social control** – Rights and duties of citizens ensures stability and orderliness in the society.

2. **Peace and Harmony** - Rights and duties promote peace and harmony in the society.
3. **Due Process** - Rights and duties ensure strict compliance to due process in the society. This prevents citizens who know their rights and duties not to engage in fraud, corruption or cut corners.
4. **Discipline** - Citizens' rights and duties promote good values in the society such as honesty, discipline in terms of good behaviour and character.

2.5 OBLIGATIONS OF CITIZENS

Economic/Financial Obligations

1. **Payment of Correct Taxes:** Every citizen is expected to pay tax to the government of the state in which he or she stays. Prompt payment of taxes by citizens helps government to provide social services to the people.
2. **Respect and Protection of Public Property:** Every citizen is expected to respect and protect public property. We must ensure that public properties are properly protected and well maintained. This implies that nobody should destroy anything that belongs to the government or the community. Examples of public properties are oil pipelines, public buildings, power installations etc. If we see a water tap running, it is our duty to turn it off. Doing this will prevent undue waste of water.
3. **Employment:** Individuals in the community should engage in work that give them income. No citizen should be allowed to stay idle and be a social burden to the community.



Picture showing people paying their taxes to the government Civic and Political Obligations

- (i) **Respect for National Symbols:** Every citizen must respect our national symbols such as National Anthem, National Pledge, National Flag, Currency, Passport, Coat of Arms. It is the duty of the citizen to obey the rules and regulations of the country.



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Picture Showing Students Singing National Anthem

(ii) **Voting in Elections:** Citizens of a country are required as part of their civic responsibility to vote for people who will be part of the government during elections. They can also be voted for if they present themselves as candidates for elective positions before elections.



A Picture Showing People Voting During Election Period

(iii) **Respect for Constituted Authority:** Citizens are required to obey and respect constituted authorities such as the President, Vice-President, Governors, Local Government Chairman, etc.

All persons who have been placed in positions of authority must be respected and given all necessary support in order for them to carry out their duties effectively.



A Picture of a Police Officer Saluting the National Flag

Social Obligations

1. **Defence of the Country:** Every citizen of a country is expected to rise and defend his or her country when he or she is called upon to do so.
2. **Citizen should protect and promote the good name of the country:** If he or she is outside the country, he or she must be a good ambassador of the country. Citizens must not engage in act that is capable of tarnishing the image of the country.
3. **Acquisition of basic education:** Citizens are expected to acquire basic education in order to assist in developing the country.
4. **Maintenance of peace and order:** Every citizen must maintain peace and order in the country. He/she must always ensure there is peace, order and harmony in the society.
5. **Assisting the law enforcement authorities:** Citizens should always assist the law enforcement agencies especially the Police in maintaining law and order in the country.
6. **Environmental cleanliness:** Citizens must take part in regular environmental sanitation to keep the environment clean.

2.6 DUTIES OF GOVERNMENT TO THE CITIZENS

It is the duty of government to provide the following to people.

1. **Provision of social amenities:** It is the duty of the government to provide portable and drinkable water for the citizens.



A picture showing a tap water provided by government to the community

1. **Good Road Network:** The government is to provide good road network like what the Lagos State government is doing in the state presently. Good roads are very important for movement of people, goods and services.



A picture showing a good road network constructed by government

1. **Provision of Security:** It is the duty of government to provide adequate internal and external security for the citizens. In the area of external security, the government is to defend the territorial boundaries and prevent external attack or aggression. The Nigerian Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Airforce) are charged with such responsibilities. There are also some other security services set up by government to ensure adequate national security such as the Nigeria Police, the State Security Service (SSS) and Nigeria Civil Defence and Security Corps (NCDSC) for the internal security.
2. **Education:** It is the duty of government to provide education for the citizens. It is important to note that only the educated

citizens can claim their rights and perform their duties to the society. The government should also provide electricity, low cost housing and other social services for the betterment of the citizens.



A picture showing a school community **Non-Performance of Obligations**

Non-performance of our obligations may lead to the following consequences:

1. Civil unrest such as chaos.
2. Confusion, anarchy and disorderliness.
3. Violence.
4. Instability, lawlessness and disharmony.



A Picture Showing a Protest **Qualities of a Good Citizen**

1. A good citizen must be honest and loyal to the nation.
2. A good citizen must be patriotic and ready to serve the country when called upon, especially in the military.

3. A good citizen must perform his civic responsibilities and duties e.g. voting during elections.
4. A good citizen must respect national symbols e.g. National Flag, Coat of Arms.
5. He must obey the laws of the land.

2.7 CATEGORISATION OF CITIZEN

A citizen can be broadly categorised into three:

1. Good citizen, or active citizens.
 2. Passive citizens.
 3. Bad citizens.
1. **Good Citizens or Active Citizens:** A good or active citizen obeys the laws, rules and regulations of the country. He contributes meaningfully to the progress of the country. A civically minded person.
 2. **Passive Citizens:** A passive citizen does not contribute towards the progress of the community. He is not active or attentive to community issues or affairs. He is not a civic minded person.
 3. **A bad citizen** – does not perform his duties or obligations as required by laws. He is not conscious of importance of participation or involvement in community affairs. A bad citizen works against the peace, progress and development of the country.

2.8 THE IMPORTANCE OF PERFORMING OUR DUTIES

In a community, there are rules and regulations governing the conduct of every member of that community. Peace and orderliness in that community depend upon the extent to which members perform their duties. The following are the benefits of performing our duties:

- (i) All the rules and regulations in effect aim at guaranteeing and protecting the rights of the individual.
- (ii) The performance of our duties will promote and ensure the welfare of people in the community.
- (iii) It will bring peace, harmony and understanding among people in the community.
- (iv) It will also create and promote good conditions for social, economic, cultural, and political development from which all people can benefit.
- (v) This will also ensure that there is progress, peace, order and good government in the community.
- (vi) This will also help in maintaining discipline in the society.

Unsolicited Obligations

There are certain obligations that people perform which they are not compelled by law to do. These obligations are performed purely for humanitarian reasons. These include:

1. Keeping the environment clean.
2. Helping and assisting accident victims.
3. Respecting other road users.
4. Stopping a running water tap to avoid wastage.
5. Giving alms to beggars and helping the needy.
6. He must protect and maintain public property.
7. He should give information and report crime to the police and

so on.

Differences Between Citizens and Non-Citizens

1. **Political participation:** A citizen can contest elections for political posts. He can participate in politics and has the right to vote and be voted for. But a non-citizen, who is a citizen of another country, cannot vote or be voted for in the country unless such a person naturalizes.
2. **Allegiance:** A citizen owes total allegiance to the state. He obeys all rules and regulations of the country. He has some duties and obligations to perform. The country is his own and would not do anything that would pull it down. But a non-citizen does not owe any allegiance whatsoever to the country he resides. He is not answerable to any authority and cannot be compelled to carry out some duties.
3. **Defence of the State:** The citizen is duty-bound to enlist in the army, if asked, for the defence of the country but a non-citizen cannot because the country is not his own.
4. **Deportation:** A citizen cannot be deported from his country to another. A non-citizen can be deported from the country of abode if he does not have valid papers or he has acted against the laws of the land. He could be acting as a spy for his country in another country or when he breaches diplomatic immunity.
5. **Holding of Sensitive Post:** As a citizen, he can hold a sensitive post in the country such as being a member of the state security service (SSS) and Armed forces. The non-citizen cannot be recruited into these places. This is due to security reasons as he could disclose some secret documents.
6. **Rights:** A citizen is a bonafide and a full-fledged member of the country. He enjoys all rights, duties and obligations stated in the constitution. He does not need to have visa or travelling documents before he is allowed to stay in the country. But a non-citizen is not a member of the country and so does not enjoy most of these rights and privileges.
7. **Place of Abode:** The citizen has a permanent home. The home of a citizen can be identified. He can be associated with a particular address. The non-citizen on the other hand does not have a permanent home. He has a temporary place of residence. He is just a bird of passage. He stays in the place for a while. He may build or buy houses in a particular place but he is just a temporary resident of the area. He has a limited time to stay in that place unless he naturalizes.

Exercises

1. Describe the term "Citizenship".
2. Mention four types of citizenship.
3. Explain two processes of becoming a Nigerian Citizen.
4. List three each differences between rights and duties of citizens.
5. Mention five obligations of citizen.
6. List five reasons why you think an American citizen is more patriotic to his country than a Nigerian citizen to his country. And what can you learn from it?