

- Citizenship

Citizenship

Citizenship refers to the full and equal membership of a political community. It grants individuals certain rights and responsibilities within a state. No state is willing to grant membership to refugees or illegal migrants, who often live in precarious conditions without guaranteed rights.

The rights granted to citizens include:

- Political rights such as the right to vote.
- Civil rights including freedom of speech and belief.
- Socio-economic rights like the right to a minimum wage and the right to education.

Citizenship also involves citizen-to-citizen relations and obligations towards society. Citizens are inheritors and trustees of the culture and natural resources of their country.

The right to freedom of movement can sometimes cause resistance among local populations when jobs are taken by outsiders. The right to protest is an aspect of freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution, provided protests do not harm others or the state.

Disputes in a democracy should be settled through negotiation and discussion rather than force. Equal rights do not necessarily mean uniform policies, as different groups may

have different needs. The formal laws on citizenship are a starting point, with interpretations evolving over time.

National identity is expressed through symbols such as the flag, national anthem, language, and ceremonial practices. India defines itself as a secular, democratic nation state and attempts to provide full and equal citizenship to diverse groups including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, and remote communities.

Citizenship in India can be acquired by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation, or inclusion of territory. The Constitution lists the rights and obligations of citizens and prohibits discrimination on grounds of race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Rights of religious and linguistic minorities are also protected.

Stateless people or refugees, displaced by war, persecution, or famine, face significant challenges as no state may accept them. Supporters of global citizenship argue for strengthening a sense of global community to address problems that cross national boundaries.

British sociologist T. H. Marshall identified three kinds of citizenship rights:

- Civil rights protecting life, liberty, and property.
- Political rights enabling participation in governance.
- Social rights providing access to education and employment.

The Supreme Court of India, in a landmark 1985 case, recognized the right to livelihood as part of the right to life, ruling that slum dwellers should be provided alternative accommodation before eviction.

Know the Terms

Citizenship: Full and equal membership of a political community.

Equal citizenship: Providing equal rights and protection to all citizens as a guiding principle of government policies.

Equal/Full membership: Guaranteeing all citizens basic rights and a minimum standard of living.

Natural born citizen: A person born in the country or whose parents are citizens of that country.

Exam Questions

Question 1: What are the three kinds of rights involved in citizenship according to T. H. Marshall?

Answer: According to T. H. Marshall, citizenship involves civil rights (protection of life, liberty, and property), political rights (participation in governance), and social rights (access to education and employment).

Question 2: How does the Indian Constitution ensure equal citizenship?

Answer: The Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of race, caste, sex, or place of birth and protects the rights of religious and linguistic minorities, ensuring equal citizenship for all.

Question 3: What was the significance of the Supreme Court's 1985 decision regarding slum dwellers?

Answer: The Supreme Court ruled that the right to livelihood is part of the right to life, and slum dwellers should be provided alternative accommodation before eviction, recognizing their constitutional rights.

Solved Examples

Example 1:

Question: Explain the concept of global citizenship and its importance.

Solution: Global citizenship refers to the idea that individuals belong to a worldwide community beyond national boundaries. It encourages cooperation among people and governments to address global issues such as disasters and human rights, promoting a sense of shared responsibility.

Example 2:

Question: What are the obligations of citizens towards society?

Solution: Citizens have obligations to respect the rights of others, participate in democratic processes, protect cultural and natural resources, and contribute to social harmony and development.

Practice Set

Easy

- Define citizenship.
- List two political rights of citizens.

Moderate

- Explain the difference between national citizenship and global citizenship.
- Describe the significance of the right to protest in a democracy.

Challenging

- Discuss how the Indian Constitution attempts to provide equal citizenship to diverse groups.
- Analyze the impact of the Supreme Court's decision on slum dwellers' rights.

Answer Key

- **Easy 1:** Citizenship is full and equal membership of a political community.
- **Easy 2:** Right to vote and freedom of speech.
- **Moderate 1:** National citizenship is membership in a particular state with rights and duties; global citizenship refers to belonging to a worldwide community with shared responsibilities.
- **Moderate 2:** The right to protest allows citizens to express dissent peacefully without harming others or the state.
- **Challenging 1:** The Constitution prohibits discrimination and protects rights of minorities, women, and marginalized groups to ensure equal citizenship.
- **Challenging 2:** The decision recognized the right to livelihood as part of the right to life, ensuring protection for vulnerable populations.

Quick Reference

- **Citizenship:** Full membership with rights and duties.
- **Rights:** Civil, political, social.
- **Acquisition:** Birth, descent, registration, naturalisation.
- **Equal citizenship:** No discrimination based on caste, religion, gender.
- **Global citizenship:** Awareness of global interconnection and cooperation.

Glossary

- **Citizenship:** Legal status of being a member of a state with rights and duties.
- **Naturalisation:** Process by which a non-citizen acquires citizenship.
- **Stateless person:** An individual not recognized as a citizen by any state.
- **Right to livelihood:** The right to earn a living and sustain life.

- **Secular state:** A state that treats all religions equally without favoring any.

Year	Event	Significance
1950s	Segregation Laws in Southern USA	Denied civil and political rights to black people; led to civil rights movements.
1985	Supreme Court ruling on slum dwellers' rights in India	Recognized right to livelihood as part of right to life; mandated alternative accommodation before eviction.

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