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# UNIT 8 CITIZENSHIP

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## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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A distinctive relation that people share in common among relative equals in public life and the rights and privileges it confers and the duties and obligations that arise therefrom, has been noted and given expression to in several societies in the past. Citizenship denotes membership of a political community expressing such a relation. Such a relation often deeply marks other social relations in general and public life in particular. Some societies such as the Greeks, the Romans and the city-states of Medieval Europe gave definitive legal and political expression to this relation. With the rise of modern liberal states citizenship which was confined to a small fraction of the permanent residents of a polity came to be demanded and progressively extended to larger and larger segments of the population within such states. The demand for equality came to be mainly expressed as equal citizenship. Further citizenship became the normative tool for socio-political inclusion of groups struggling against prevalent forms of inequality, discrimination and exclusion.

Today, everyone is the citizen of one or another state and even where citizenship is in dispute, several international and domestic provisions ensure a modicum of basic rights and obligations. While citizenship entitlement has become universal, there are unresolved contestations regarding the criteria that should inform inclusion and exclusion of claimants to citizenship; the rights and resources that should accompany it and duties and obligations expected of the citizen; the relation of the citizen to the state on one hand and to the community on the other; the relationship of citizenship to other cherished values such as freedom and equality and the civic and civilisational values and practices that should inform citizenship. Further, an activated citizenship is seen by many as offering solution to several ailments of the polity in our times. Given these complex

demands, pulls and pressures the understanding of this notion remains deeply contested in the prevailing literature on the subject.

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## 8.2 SIGNIFICANCE

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The growing significance of citizenship has not put to rest the theoretical ambiguity associated with this notion. The importance of the concept of citizenship to engage with a series of political processes and values and therefore, as a major normative and explanatory variable has undergone significant changes over time. T.H. Marshall employed it initially to explain the striving for legal, political and social rights among the excluded social groups with particular reference to the working class. He traced the development of citizen rights and connected this development to the situation of the bourgeois on one hand, and the working classes on the other. Citizenship concerns, however, are much larger and ethnic groups and minorities of all sorts have resorted to it as a sheet-anchor. Bryan Turner explores the link between social movements and conflicts and citizenship identity. There are some writers who argue that citizenship rights in their origin are closely linked to elite structures. Antony Giddens and Ramesh Misra draw our attention to the deep ambiguity surrounding citizenship rights. Janoski regrets the missing link between citizenship rights and obligations and the absence of micro studies relating the two. In recent years, there have been major attempts to link citizenship with group identity and to defend a group differentiated conception of citizenship against a conception of citizenship based on individual rights. Sociologically, there are few studies to demonstrate how marginalised people are brought within the vortex of citizenship rights and how nations integrate strangers from other countries and cultures. Further, we know little about the causes that drive people towards the ideals of citizenship. There are wide differences in this regard from Marshall's attribution of the same to *class* to Maslow's *hierarchy of needs*. Further ideological predilections deeply qualify understanding and significance of citizenship. These are just a few highlights and concerns of the growing literature on citizenship in our times.

There was no significant discussion on citizenship in social science literature in the recent past. However, in the last decade and a half, citizenship has suddenly emerged as a central theme in social science literature, both as a normative consideration and social phenomenon.

Certain recent trends in the world and in India have increasingly suggested citizenship as a nodal concern. Increasing voter apathy and long-term welfare dependency in the Western World; the nationalist and mass movements which brought down bureaucratic socialist regions in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; the backlash against welfare regimes in the West and centralized, often, one-party regimes in the Third World and the demographic shift in the Western World towards multicultural and multiracial social composition have increasingly drawn attention to the significance of citizenship. While the decline of authoritarian regimes which curbed citizenship greatly highlighted the importance of the latter, governmental attack on welfare state brought to the fore threats to social rights so central to the inclusionary practices of citizenship. Critics of the welfare, socialist and authoritarian regimes have brought to the fore the importance of the non-state arena constituted of citizenship-agency. Philosophically the decline of positivism, which provided little scope for the free-play of citizenship-agency, has greatly heightened the significance of the choices that citizens make discretely and collectively. In India, an active citizenship is suggested as the need of the hour for the prevalent authoritarianism, lack of accountability of public offices, widespread corruption, intolerance of dissent, violation of fundamental rights, lack of citizens' grievance ventilation and redressal, lack of public spiritedness and work culture, transparency in administration and intolerance towards other citizens.

Overall, there is greater appreciation today of the qualities and attitudes of citizens for the health and stability of modern democracy. Their sense of identity and their relationship to regional, ethnic, religious and national identities is very important to ensure political stability in complex and plural democracies. Certain qualities like the ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different are important ingredients of successful democracy. Galston suggests that together with these qualities, the desire of the citizens to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold political authorities accountable; their willingness to show self restraint and exercise personal responsibility in their economic demands and in personal choices which affect their health and their environment and their sense of justice and commitment to a fair distribution of resources are called for in any healthy democracy. He says that in their absence “the ability of liberal societies to function successfully progressively diminishes”.

Today, there is a greater consensus than ever before that mere institutional and procedural devices such as separation of powers, a bicameral legislature and federalism will not ensure the health and probity of a polity. Civic virtue and public spiritedness which are integral to citizenship are required for the purpose.

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### **8.3 NATURE OF CITIZENSHIP**

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Definitions of citizenship are galore. It has also been approached from different perspectives. Tentatively, we can consider citizenship as membership of a political community with certain rights and obligations broadly acknowledged and shared in common. The membership that citizens enjoy is both passive and active. Considered passively, citizens are entitled to certain rights and obligations without their conscious involvement in shaping them. But citizenship also involves active engagement in the civic and political life of communities and this is reflected in the rights and obligations related to it.

While increasingly certain rights are conceded to all human beings in normal times by states, citizens have certain specific rights which non-citizens do not possess. Most states do not grant the right to vote and to stand for public office to aliens. The same can be said about obligations too. What we regard as rights of citizens today were initially a preserve of the elite. However, eventually the great democratising processes led the large masses of residents – the marginalised, the ethnic groups, minorities, women and the disabled persons to the benefits and burdens of citizenship.

Just the fact that one is a citizen gives access to many rights which aliens do not enjoy. Aliens become naturalised as citizens with attendant rights and obligations. Passive membership often is associated with limited legal rights and extensive social rights expressing redistributive arrangements. The state plays a major role in devising and sustaining them. Active membership highlights citizen-agency and is closely linked with democracy and citizen participation. Most political communities of which citizens are members today are nation-states. Therefore, when we talk about membership of political communities, we primarily refer to membership of nation states.

Citizenship rights are universal in the sense that they pertain to all citizens and in all relevant respects. They are sought to be implemented accordingly. Universality of rights need not preclude enjoyment of group-related rights and to the extent that citizens belong to relevant groups, they are increasingly conceded such rights. Minorities and disadvantaged groups in many societies do enjoy certain special rights. However, often equal rights of citizens are seen as running into conflict with group-rights and cultural belonging of subgroups.

Citizenship invokes a specific equality. It may admit a wide range of quantitative or economic inequalities and cultural differences, but does not admit qualitative inequality wherein one man or woman is marked off from another with respect to their basic claims and obligations. If they are marked off for special consideration, it is on account of the disadvantages they suffer relative to others or due to their distinct collective identity. Citizenship invites persons to a share in the social heritage, which in turn means a claim to be accepted as full members of the society in which they have a claim. Therefore, it provides for equal access to and participation in the public fora and institutions which arbitrate on social heritage. Citizenship is supposed to be insulated from class and status considerations. However, to the extent that citizens have equal access and participation in public life, they collectively decide to a great extent the framework and criteria that determines public life. Therefore, undoubtedly it has a levelling impact. In this context, one of the most important questions that comes to the fore is whether basic equality can be created and preserved without invading the freedom of the competitive market. However, in spite of the role of the market there has been an undeniable sociological tendency wherein citizenship in recent years has been inevitably striving towards social equality and it has been a significant social tendency for over 300 years now.

There is a profound subjective dimension to citizenship. It involves a conscious agency, reflective and deliberative, qualifying his or her pursuits with public interests. It is a way of life growing within a person and not something given from outside. Legal perspectives on citizenship, therefore, have their necessary limitations.

Citizenship involves duties as well as rights. Over the years, an array of rights have been associated with it. The same cannot be said about the duties associated with citizenship. It has had long term consequences in terms of increasing the role of the state and shrinking citizen-initiative.

Citizenship can be divided into three dimensions:

(i) Civil

(ii) Political and

(iii) Social

- i) The civil dimension is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom such as liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own personal property and to conclude valid contracts and the right to strive for a just order. The last are the rights to defend and assert all one's claims in terms of equality with others under rule of law. Courts of justice are primarily associated with civil rights. In the economic field, the basic civil right is the right to work i.e., the right to follow the occupation of one's choice and in the place of one's choice subject to limits posed by other rights.
- ii) The political dimension consists of the rights to participate in the exercise of political power as a member of the body that embodies political authority; to vote; to seek and support political leadership; to marshal support to political authority upholding justice and equality and to struggle against an unfair political authority.
- iii) The social dimension consists of a whole range of claims involving a degree of economic welfare and security; the right to share in full the social heritage and to live the life due to one as per the standards prevailing in one's society. The social dimension also involves the right to culture which entitles one to pursue a way of life distinctive to oneself.

In feudal society that prevailed in large parts of the world prior to the onset of modernity, status was the mark of class and was embedded in inequality. There were no uniform standards of rights and duties with which men and women were endowed by virtue of their membership of society. Equality of citizens did not qualify inequality of classes. The caste system in India too ranked castes unequally in terms of rights and obligations, although the nature of inequality prevalent here differed in significant respects from that of the feudal society. These inequalitarian orders were progressively displaced by a system based on the civil rights of the individual, not on the basis of local custom, but the common law of the land. The evolution of different institutions representing and embodying different dimensions of rights was uneven. In Europe, the trajectory of the evolution of these rights can be marked as civil rights in the eighteenth century, political rights in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and social rights in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the colonies, particularly in India, we find the national movement and the independent regime that followed it invoked all these threefold dimensions together.

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## **8.4 LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC CULTURE**

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In liberal democracy, public authority is exercised in the name of free and equal citizens. The free and equal citizens who are ruled are ruled in their own name, or in other words, they rule themselves. At the same time, the state is expected to play some role in the making of free and equal citizens in whose name it rules. Public education and other fora of culture supported by the state help form and sustain such an identity.

The mode of education and other cultural institutions of liberal democratic society define its citizens as free and equal individuals who are incidentally members of particular ethnic, class and religious communities. Ethnic class and religious relations often beget hierarchical relations. Liberal democracy suggests that the hierarchies generated by such communities are irrelevant to the state in its treatment of citizens. Marxists and in recent years, the communitarians have found that such an understanding of citizenship is idealistic and narrow and does not take seriously the embedded nature of citizens.

However, public education in a liberal democracy till recently had the effect of relativising the hierarchies and ranking systems generated by particularistic cultural communities. It suggested that the identities of citizens should not be wholly or exclusively governed by the principles and values underlying those hierarchies. Civic education which was integral to the building up of citizenship attempted to inculcate certain normative standards such as the ideal attitudes, dispositions and values proper to citizens. Such a civic culture was seen as supportive of citizenship. However, it has to be noted that public education, in turn, created hierarchies distinctive of its own where institutions and disciplines came to be ranked according to the valorisation they enjoyed in the market. Therefore, the civic culture that liberal democracy threw up was profoundly ambivalent.

Civic culture as a specific form of culture pertaining to public life proposes world-views, ways of life, ideas of nature and standards of excellence that shape human behaviour and self-understanding. It is created, transformed and reproduced by processes of persuasion. The norms proper to civic life are expected to be internalised by citizens in their interface with civic culture. However, while offering a normative order, ranking and directing citizen activity, a civic culture permits significant spaces for contestation and to propose alternative ways of life. It may, therefore, beget a widely plural understanding of citizenship. Therefore, civic culture itself needs to be wetted by the rule of law.

However, civic culture has with it certain resources by which the pluralism that it begets remains, normally, within certain limits. Civic culture lays down a civic moral ideal before its members based on the stand point of free and equal individuality. Further, given the fact that the self-understanding of members of a society are shaped by the moral standards of the particularistic cultural communities to which they belong, civic culture has a strong 'contravailing edge'. The impact of the former begins to tell strongly from birth itself, through the rituals and practices of the community while civic educational processes have their impact relatively late.

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## **8.5 MARXISM AND CITIZENSHIP**

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The Marxist tradition has not engaged with the citizenship issue consistently but to the extent it does there is a deep ambivalence about it. Marxism feels that the ideology of the capitalist state, by and large, recasts social relations as relations between citizens, putting a gloss on them as class relations. At the same time the human agency that citizenship furthers is appreciated as it sharpens the contradictions within capitalism itself. Marxism has not adequately reflected on how an older notion such as citizenship has been deployed under capitalism and made to play a role which is central in capitalist ideology. Such a perspective, therefore, makes certain notions closely bound with citizenship such as rights, justice and freedom ambivalent.

For Marxism the basic social relations in all class divided societies are class relations. It is the relation between the peasantry and landlords under feudalism and between the working class and the bourgeoisie that decisively shape the social relations under feudalism and capitalism respectively. If class relations project themselves as basic, then social relations would be mired in class-struggle endangering social unity that is worth relying on, and bringing to the fore, the coercive character of the state to the full to hold classes and class-struggle at bay.

The ideology of the state plays a major role in containing class-struggle and in reconstituting social relations on a basis other than class relations. Under capitalism, Marxists argue, social relations are formulated by this ideology as relations between citizens. The citizens are declared as free and equal and sometimes, as rooted in a cultural ethos and civilisational bond. The freedom and equality of citizens has its counterpart in the exchange relations of the market where from a one-sided view, equals gets exchanged for equals and the agents of such a system of exchange are free to exchange the products they have. However, such an ideology formulated by the state can be seen as superficial and partial when understanding and analysis is not confined to the surface. In such an exercise, social relations are marked as class-relations that are caught in an irreversible struggle between basic classes.

For Marxists, however, state ideology has a real basis in all societies including capitalism, although that real basis lies in an exclusive and one sided projection of social reality. It is not mere chimera. Social agents irrespective of the classes they belong to come to locate their role and place in society in and through this ideology. In capitalist society, the force of this ideology remains persuasive and pervasive due to the massive institutional and ideological complexes of the state through which it is disseminated such as public education, the media, civic associations, political parties, trade unions, legal and juridical organisations and sometimes, religious organisations as well. The French philosopher, Louis Althusser, called them the ideological apparatuses of the state. The consciousness of social agents, routinely and prominently, under conditions of this ideology remains consciousness of citizens, unless and as long as it is not challenged by the contradictions of capitalism and class struggle to overcome them.

Marxism, therefore, calls for a double critique of the notion of free and equal citizenship avowed

by liberal democracy without denying the worth of the notion itself. First, it expresses only the superficial face of the market related freedoms of the bourgeois society and hides the profound contradictions in which social relations under capitalism are caught. An entire array of public institutions rest on this notion and in their turn reinforce it. Secondly, rights and duties associated with citizenship are important and necessary to lay bare the contradictions of capitalist relations and mount struggles to overcome them. Social classes cannot organise themselves, if the basic freedoms associated with citizenship are denied to social agents.

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## 8.6 PERSONS AND CITIZENS

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Philosophically, human beings are conferred attributes and prerogatives that mark them off from other beings, but communities and states have given them little positive consideration unless they are insiders or they are brought within the larger civilisational matrix of which states and communities are parts. In modern times, however, there have been certain attempts to confer a set of rights on all human beings qua human beings. The universal declaration of rights is an apt example of the same. Citizens, however, have always been endowed with special rights be it with the Greeks, the Romans or members of city-states. In modern times, however, large social movements have striven towards an inclusionary understanding of citizenship. These movements have also striven to bring about a social order where everyone enjoys equal rights. According to Turner, citizenship rights are “the outcome of social movements that either aim to expand or defend the definition of social membership.” These movements, he feels, have been able to expand and universalise citizenship rights for an ever widening number of persons. At the same time, citizenship is an act of closure about a group of people it calls citizens. Consequently, states are very particular about whom they call citizens.

Hoffman and Janoski suggest that (i) there are four categories of citizens who have been either excluded from citizenship or had to put up a relentless struggle to be accepted as citizens:

- i) **Stigmatised Humans:** They are supposed to be those who suffer from a social defilement or infirmity. They include the class based poor, gender disqualified women, racial or ethnic groups who are attributed low status, gender despised homosexual groups etc. They are also the most common category of candidates for citizenship. These groups are seen as unable to perform the duties and accept the rights of citizenship due to their narrow interests which are unlikely to benefit the community. They are often charged by their social superiors as selling their votes, being in the control of their husbands or caretakers and not having enough education or mental capacity to make a decision. Cultural and value dissensions have sometimes brought religious minorities and gay groups too within this category. These groups had to put up relentless struggles for equal citizenship and the battles are still on.
- ii) **Impaired Humans:** They may hail from established citizen groups but their competence to fulfil rights and obligations may be questioned due to physical or mental disabilities that preclude action or good judgement and make them dependent upon others. The inclusion movement in many countries, however, has brought about significant changes in the condition of the mentally and physically challenged.
- iii) **Potential Humans:** They include the foetus in the womb, accident victims in a permanent coma, unconscious patients or aged citizens who have lost all thought and activity processes other than involuntary life sustenance. They, of course, have their rights but we can speak little of their obligations.

- iv) **Human-like Non-Humans or Quasi Humans:** Nations, ethnic and even religious groups could be included in this category. They are endowed with certain group rights which we will discuss shortly. There are a second type of social actors who fall in this category such as corporations and offices whose claim for being treated as corporist units are significantly different from nations, ethnic groups and religious communities. Corporate rights lead to systematic class and size bias and place them in contention with the notion of free and equal citizenship.

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## 8.7 GROUP-DIFFERENTIATED CITIZENSHIP

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Till recently, for many liberals citizenship is by definition a matter of treating people as individuals with equal rights under the law. This they felt distinguished democratic citizenship from feudal and other pre-modern views that determined peoples' political status by their religious, ethnic or class membership. However, it is increasingly admitted today that mere avowal of equal rights may not ensure equal access and opportunities to certain groups who are culturally different. In fact, equal rights without certain safeguards to cultural minorities may tend to reinforce majoritarian domination over minorities. Group differentiated citizenship qualifies citizenship by *cultural belonging*. It sees citizenship as constituted of both equal rights and differences. A society avowing group differentiated citizenship appreciates the cultural differences in which equal and free citizens are anchored.

While understanding of cultures are widely varied, Will Kymlicka has suggested that the pertinent notion of culture in terms of group-differentiated rights is societal culture; that is, "a culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres". It is not merely shared memories or values, but also common institutions and values. Societal culture, according to him, is expressed in everyday vocabulary of social life and embodied in practices covering most areas of human activity such as in schools, media, economy, government etc. He argues that culture has the capacity to survive in modern times only by becoming a societal culture. Citizenship is deeply bound with such societal culture, and citizens through their activity shape and reshape this culture. Societal cultures play a major role in enabling and promoting contexts of freedoms. Kymlicka has suggested that "freedom involves making choices amongst various options and our societal culture not only provides these options, but also makes them meaningful to us". It is with reference to culture that the value of practices comes to be underscored. It is in the background of cultural narratives that certain authoritative lines of appropriate conduct is marked for us, conduct which, of course, can be subsequently revised by the exercise of our freedoms. This requires according to the famous philosopher of law, Ronald Dworkin, protection of our culture from "structural debasement or decay". The availability of meaningful options to people largely depends upon access to societal culture.

Cultures are modes of life which are much more enduring. While there are instances of people making a successful transition from one culture to another, this is not a reasonable option for a vast number of people. Of course, cultures are not sterile waters. They do undergo significant changes over time, but across these changes they remain the self-same cultures. With liberalisation and globalisation, there has been a greater interface between cultures, but it cannot be said that the coming together of cultures have made people less aware of their own. If anything, it has been just the contrary.

Margalit and Raz have advanced two major reasons for the endurance of cultures. The first,

cultural membership provides meaningful options. According to them, familiarity with a culture determines the boundaries of the imaginable and if a culture decays, the options and opportunities open to its members will shrink, become less attractive and their pursuit less likely to be successful. The second reason is that self-identity and recognition by others at a fundamental level depend on “criteria of belonging” and not as much on personal ‘accomplishment’. Social identification and belonging that arises from it is important to people. Dignity and self-respect are deeply bound up with it.

Cultural membership too makes one’s accomplishments not as isolated instances, but bonded with and reproducing an entire tradition. When institutions are leavened by culture, the participation of people in them becomes spontaneous and lively too. It begets relationships of solidarity and trust.

However, people employing their freedoms do revise their attachments and belonging and for a vast majority of people, the matrix of such a zone of belonging and exercise of their freedoms remains the nation-state informed by societal culture.

A societal culture is not uniform. It is constituted of diverse streams and autonomous cultures. Often people access societal cultures through such streams and autonomous cultures. The distinct identities embedded in these streams are shaped by such a culture as they in turn shape it as a whole.

Two types of relationships are suggested between citizenship and its cultural embeddment.

- i) Citizenship as an attribute independent of cultural identity.
- ii) Citizenship as a group-differentiated identity.

### **8.7.1 Citizenship As An Attribute Independent of Cultural Identity**

Cultural identities constituted as communities uphold moral ideals that are supposed to hold good to all its members. Often they propose a comprehensive way of life which is supposed to be the embodiment of what good life should be for one and all. It revolves around certain definitive conceptions of what is important and what is not important in life with regard to such fundamental issues such as sex, friendship, work, suffering, sin, death and salvation. It provides definitive order and meaning to such issues. It ranks human qualities and orders aspirations in terms of a hierarchy of ends.

Communities assign stable and well known duties and responsibilities. There are unambiguous standards to evaluate conduct. Communities orient human desire to definitive channels. Communication in such communities acquires clarity and effectiveness due to sharing in common a range of background assumptions. Communities do not entertain questions on meaning, purpose, value and responsibility on a whole range of activities they are constituted of.

In spite of such community anchoring, this conception of citizenship is defined independent of community. Citizenship is limited to membership and participation in political community and it does not aspire to uphold any comprehensive conception of good life or subscribe to any particular comprehensive conception of the good upheld by any specific community. It may encompass a multiplicity of diverse cultural communities holding ideals of good life distinctive to themselves. In such a situation, citizenship proposes the ideal of working with others to design public life without taking into account the separate ideals and values cherished by the respective

communities, but at the same time acknowledging the need to work with their members. In such a conception, while a citizen is committed to his communitarian identity and moral ideal, she at the same, respects and acts in consent with fellow citizens whose communitarian identities and ideals greatly differ from her.

To move from the stand point of a member of community to a conception of a citizenship of this kind, a person needs to acquire the capacity for freedom, the capacity to define him or her independently of the specific community of anchor. However, citizenship itself may not provide cultural resources rich enough for a comprehensive life ideal. To affirm equality, a citizen is required to employ a double framework, one appropriate to the community and as a citizen extending equal consideration to all citizens. For the later purpose, there need to be a space, independent of social hierarchies, where citizens treat each others as equals. It involves forging civic friendship to ensure reproduction of this space and institutions characteristic of it. It is not enough that citizens merely cultivate an attitude of live and let live, a posture of benign mutual indifference.

Such a double framework can be difficult for many who have strong commitments to their community ideals. Beliefs and practices alien to us can be deeply threatening. Such a threat to deeply held beliefs and hallowed practices in interface with such an understanding of citizenship may give rise to parochial, sectarian, exclusivist, authoritarian and fundamentalist tendencies.

### **8.7.2 Citizenship as a Group-Differentiated Identity**

This perspective on citizenship lays greater stress on group differentiated identities whose internal resources are called upon to constitute an overlapping consensus expressed in a political community. The different cultural communities included within such a political community identify and cultivate within their own traditions resources supportive of citizenship, i.e., civic freedom and equality. Such a normative standpoint is addressed to citizens who have been shaped in their understanding and desires by the standards of the particularistic cultural communities to which they belong. The later process virtually begins at birth. Grooming into citizenship is experienced relatively late. The language associated with civic moral ideals is not designed to replace community moral ideals. Citizenship pursuits do not involve a process of conversion from a comprehensive ideal and way of life to another, but a reordering of community identity itself, given the fact of the existence of plurality of such community identities.

In this conception, citizenship means very different things to different communities. The rights that different communities enjoy and the obligations they are expected to shoulder differ, although the principles on which they are grounded are the same. These principles are the significance of community for the constitution of the self and the need to ensure political stability under conditions of freedom and equality.

Three types of rights are suggested under a differentiated understanding of citizenship, although it is possible to suggest a much more complex typology in this regard, considering the kind of deep diversity that prevails in countries like India, Russia, Indonesia and China.

- i) **Citizenship based on Polyethnic Rights:** A large number of states are polyethnic in their composition today, although non-western societies have a much longer experience of such a composition. Western Societies have experienced major shifts in their ethnic composition following their colonial expansion and in the post-colonial period. Such ethnic groups have challenged the demand that they should abandon significant aspects of their ethnic heritage

and assimilate themselves to the mainstream culture. Initially, they demanded the right to freely express themselves without discrimination in the larger society of which they were a part. It resulted in changes in educational curriculum and opened to them the arena of music and arts distinctive to them. Such a demand however did not make significant difference to such visible ethnic minorities, such as the Blacks in the U.S., except a small stratum within them. In recent years, these ethnic groups have demanded funding of ethnic associations, magazines and festivals as integral part of the funding of arts and museums. They have sought exemption from Sunday closing or animal slaughter legislation, motor-cycle helmet laws and official dress-codes, ban on wearing headscarf (turban) and so on. These are stronger ethnic claims.

- ii) **Special Representation Rights:** Special representation rights are demanded by certain groups because the prevailing political process may subject them to some systematic disadvantage whereby they are not able to effectively represent their views and interests. In India, Dalits have demanded special representation rights on this ground, while the Adivasis have demanded them along with ethnic rights.
- iii) **Self-Government Rights:** Self-Government rights are a case of an extreme demand for the group-differentiated right. They tend to divide people into separate political spaces with their distinct history, territory and powers attributing to themselves the status of a separate political community. They may arrogate to themselves the loyalty of the members and make wider citizenship claims secondary.

Liberals have strongly expressed their apprehension about group-differentiated citizenship. In the American context, Nathan Glazier has argued that if groups are encouraged by taking into account their difference as constitutive of citizenship, then “the hope of a larger fraternity of all Americans will have to be abandoned”. It has been argued that cultural or group rights are dangerous as they violate the primacy of individual rights. Some people have argued that group differentiated citizenship ceases to be “a device to cultivate a sense of community and a common sense of purpose”. Such a notion of citizenship is inherently particularistic and may become discriminatory. It is felt that if citizenship is differentiated, it no longer provides a shared experience or common status. Group differentiated citizenship requires representation of the group and group leaders rather than citizens themselves being invested with such rights. The privileging of ethnic groups under group-differentiated citizenship may lead to seeking self-determination and liberation through secession. Thereby, such a notion of citizenship is a clear threat to the state and the larger society advocating universal citizenship. It may foment civil wars and irreconcilable conflicts. Infact, liberals have argued that participatory structures, allowing for greater democratic control over local and regional resource distribution is a better way of handling empowerment of excluded groups than through differentiated citizenship. Some people fear that group-based claims are likely to erode public spiritedness further. They are likely to impede the integration of minorities and immigrants keeping them in “their different origins rather than their shared symbols, society and future”.

Most of these criticisms apply to extreme cases and on a doctrinaire understanding of citizenship rights and obligations. The primary issue that group-differentiated claims raise is whether a group is included within a political community as an equal or not. If they are excluded or partially excluded, members of such groups cannot lay much claim to equal rights. Often exclusion and discrimination precipitate self-government claims among people inhabiting a common territory and shared culture. Self-government and self-determination demands are largely confined today to cultural groups claiming a distinct nationhood. Sometimes, however, the border line between excluded groups occupying a distinct territory making demands for self-government and national self-determination remains very thin.

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## 8.8 SUMMARY

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Citizenship is a highly valorised theme in recent political writings and concerns. A number of political developments of our times have contributed to this heightened interest in citizenship. While the notion of citizenship may go along with a great deal of economic and social inequalities, the level playing field it suggests on the basis of equal rights may make such inequalities an issue of target of concerned citizens. Many social movements of modern times have striven not merely for the inclusion of excluded social groups into the body of citizens, but also for extending and expanding the zone of equal rights. In spite of such strivings, the notion of citizenship remains deeply ambivalent. Liberals tend to stress on the equality and freedom of citizens. Marxists, however, are not very enthusiastic regarding citizenship as they feel that it is a device employed by the capitalist state to restate social relations of classes as relations of citizens. They, however, feel that citizenship as a political device can be of immense use in activating social agents to subject public institutions to a critique and search for alternatives. In spite of the ambiguities in which this concept is caught, there is a widespread agreement that the zone of citizenship be enlarged. This concern for the expansion of the zone of rights has brought within its fold, cultural communities and political minorities who have sought a range of rights, specific to their predicament. They have argued that along with equal rights, their specific differences be taken into account in ordering political communities and their institutions.

Citizen -concerns are closely related to some of the most important issues under public debate today such as civil society, participatory democracy and civic responsibility. The altered role of the state under conditions of globalisation and liberalisation invokes citizenship for the health of polity. Further, the horizon of citizenship is no longer limited to membership of nation-states any longer. Cultural and doctrinal attachments are increasingly brought in to mark a level playing field to citizens otherwise deeply divided in terms of their cultural attachments.

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## 8.9 EXERCISES

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1. Explain the natural significance of citizenship in democratic societies.
2. Discuss liberal democracy and its relation with citizenship.
3. Discuss the Marxist conception of citizenship.
4. Explain the distinction between persons and citizens.
5. Discuss the relationship between citizenship and cultural identity.
6. Explain the various perspectives of citizenship in contemporary societies.