Certificate Programme

International Perspectives On Citizenship, Democracy And Accountability

Unit 1

Understanding Citizenship

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Units Of Certificate In International Perspectives On Citizenship, Democracy And Accountability

Unit 1:   **Understanding Citizenship**

- Citizenship Discourse: A Historical Overview
- Different Traditions On Citizenship Thought
- Different Dimensions Of Citizenship
- Understanding Citizenship
- Citizenship: Rights And Responsibilities
- Forms Of Citizenship: Active, Participatory, Inclusive

Unit 2:   **Claiming Citizenship: Influences And Practices**

- Practice Of Citizenship: Role Of State, Market And Civil Society
- Factors Influencing The Claiming Of Citizenship
- Case Studies
- Overall Lessons And Conclusions

Unit 3:   **Participatory Democracy And Governance**

- Democracy And Its Forms
- Questioning Democracy
- Approaches To Deepening Democracy

Unit 4:   **Practical Applications Of Participatory Democracy And Governance**

- Case Study From India
- International Case Studies

Unit 5:   **Accountability**

- Diverse Forms And Purposes Of Citizen Action
- Understanding Accountability
- The Accountability Of The State, Market And The Civil Society

- The Accountability Of Civil Society
- Case Studies

Unit 6:   Challenges And Strategies

- Building Inclusive Citizenship
- Counter Attractions Of Identity Politics
- Constructing Relationships Between People And Public Institutions
- Whose Knowledge Counts?
- Contesting Local In Global Context
- Strategies

Table Of Contents

Introduction

The contemporary thinking around citizenship concerns itself with a few primary questions. Which processes and trends have influenced the contemporary discourse on citizenship? What is citizenship? How does the concept relate to issues of actor oriented perspectives on rights and development?

- Unit 1 aims to delve into some of these fundamental questions. It will familiarise you with the variety of understandings that there are of the concept and practice of citizenship.

- Section 1.3 provides a brief overview of the processes and trends that have influenced understanding of the concept in contemporary times.

- Section 1.4 provides an overview of different traditions in citizenship thought.

- Section 1.5 describes four dimensions of citizenship. This Section will deepen your understanding of the notion by looking at and analysing the illustrative cases.

- In Section 1.6, you will understand key features of citizenship.

- In Sections 1.7 and 1.8, you will examine some of the issues related to the concept of citizenship, such as rights and development.

- The Unit then concludes with a discussion (in Section 1.9) about the fact that citizens have responsibilities as well as rights and follows this discussion up (in Section 1.10), with a brief examination of how both rights and responsibilities are involved in what is variously called 'active', 'participatory' or 'inclusive' citizenship.

To help you go through this Unit we have designed a learning exercise called "Think Tank", which will aid application of the learnings to your own context. In addition, we have some illustrative points to think about in the "Note Bank".

Learning Objectives

On the completion of this Unit, you should be able to understand

- The processes and trends that have influenced an understanding of the concept of citizenship in contemporary times;

- Dominant perspectives on citizenship;

- Understanding citizenship;

- Issues of citizenship in the context of human rights and development;

- Emerging notion of citizenship as 'active', 'participatory' or 'inclusive'.

1.1 Citizenship Discourse: Historical Overview

Citizenship is a multidimensional and contextual notion. It has different interpretations and applications. It is a juridical and statutory status, with rights and duties and is also a national identity. The construction of various identities and the factors that influence their access to rights and entitlements emanates from the subjective and contradictory experiences of individuals and groups with a diverse range of needs. These include their position, which is rooted in a given physical or geographical space, within specific community or social arrangements. Citizenship is also a dynamic notion; its meanings and characteristics have been subject to change throughout history.

In this section, we shall review the trends that have influenced the contemporary discourse on citizenship.

The notion of citizenship has its origins in the Greek and Roman political systems. The Greek and Roman ideas on politics and citizenship were highly exclusive. Social membership in the political process was grounded in the slave economy and on the institutions of patriarchy. Only adult men and feudal lords were thought to be capable of rational participation in the political community. There were many factors that laid the foundations of modern political citizenship and some of these included:

- The democratic revolution in France

- Social changes associated with the Industrial Revolution such as urbanisation and secularisation

- The collapse of feudal estates

- The development of money economy

- Emergence of autonomous cities

- Rationalisation of the legal system and

- Emergence of universalistic norms and values.

The notion of citizenship progressed through the establishment of autonomous cities and through the emergence of the nation state in the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the welfare states of the 20th century.

 Since the late 1980s, several parallel shifts have taken place. Participatory development, long rooted in the domain of community projects, began to turn towards political participation, in order to increase the participation and influence of poor and marginalised people, over wider decision making processes affecting their lives. Attention was paid to strengthening the processes of participation, focusing on the ways in which poor people exercise their voice through new forms of deliberations, consultations or mobilisations designed to inform and to influence the institutions and policies affecting them. Attention was also paid to strengthening the accountability and responsiveness of these institutions and policies through changes in the institutional design.

Alongside this shift was the rise of the agenda of good governance, its concerns with decentralised governance and the responsiveness of governments to the needs and priorities of citizens. These parallel shifts opened up spaces for citizen participation. As the participatory approaches scaled up from projects to policies, they inevitably entered the arenas of governance. The concerns about good governance and State responsiveness also brought to the fore questions about how citizens engage and make demands on the State. Of paramount importance were questions surrounding how citizens could express voice with influence, and how institutional responsiveness and accountability could be ensured. The arguments for participation and accountability were ground in a rights-based discourse, which transformed the status of citizens from that of beneficiaries of development, to its rightful and legitimate claimants.

The new models of development within the contemporary process of globalisation minimised the role of the State, particularly in terms of market intervention; however, the notion of governance recognised the plurality of domains and actors viz., the State, Markets (industries and the corporate) and Civil Society. Each influence the participation of citizens in the systems and processes of deliberation and decision making at all levels and also build their capacities to exercise their agency. The new forms of democratic decentralisation opened up new opportunities for democratic

engagement at local levels. Increased decentralisation, by presenting new opportunities for citizen engagement in priority settings and resource allocations, has drawn civil society into an active role towards making public institutions responsive and sensitive. The discourses on development and democracy now appear to be intricately woven around the role of citizens in influencing the factors that govern their lives. Their agency, engagement and participation are important in making development and governance inclusive. The notions of *roles and responsibilities of public institutions* and *rights and entitlements of citizens* are intertwined with the notion of claims for accountability.

The late 1990s saw the unfolding of a new relationship between the domains of human rights and development, which crystallised into a right-based approach to development. The notion of rights opened up further space for debates on the issue of citizenship to take place. Underpinning the approach were three principles of a rights perspective: *inclusive rights* for all people, the right to *participation*, and the 'obligations to protect and promote the realisation' of rights by states and other duty bearers, a concept which links to that of *accountability*.

Concepts of rights, especially, those linked to the responsibilities of States, further raised questions about the meaning and nature of citizenship.

- Who is eligible for rights?

- On what basis are rights obtained?

- Are they linked to the notion of a nation-state, or do they extend beyond it?

The heightened political awareness of ethnic and cultural differences within nation-states and a fragmentation of nation-states on the basis of these politicised differences also influenced the contemporary thinking on citizenship. The questioning of the validity of nation-states has led to the recognition of the multi-layered nature of citizenship (local to global) and the need to address the exclusions created by the linkage of citizenship to the nation state.

1.2   Different Traditions In Citizenship Thought

In this unit you will find brief summaries of dominant perspectives on citizenship viz., **liberal, communitarian and civic-republican**, in order to understand the current discourse on citizenship. However, we must remember that these perspectives are a group of ideas which have influenced the thinking on citizenship. However, these particular ideas on citizenship need not necessarily be neatly slotted into any of the three dominant perspectives.

1.2.1 Citizenship In Liberal Thought

Liberal theories position citizenship as a status, which entitles individuals to specific sets of universal rights granted by the State. Liberal thought propounds the centrality of formal rights accorded to each individual. Granting each individual the same formal rights promotes equality. Citizens act rationally to advance their own interest and the State's role is to protect the citizens in the exercise of their rights. This implies that exercising rights is the choice of citizens; that all have necessary access to resources and opportunities. Rights by and large relate to political participation in the public sphere and from that perspective, citizenship reflects a political identity.

Marshall and Rawl's conceptualisation of citizenship is considered a starting point for contemporary thinking on citizenship. Marshall argued that in addition to the right to political participation, citizens also have a right to minimal social and economic needs and that the State ought to address these needs. Going beyond Marshall's conception of the welfare state, Rawls argued that through state redistribution mechanisms, the share of the better off should increase the share for the worse off. Both did not propose equality *per se,* but through reduction in the risks associated with capitalism for the poorest citizens and through redistribution mechanisms, individual citizens would be able to make rational choices to advance their interests.

1.2.2 Citizenship In Communitarian Thought

Communitarianism as a philosophical stance developed from a critique of liberal individualism. Communitarian thought is centred on the notion of the socially embedded citizen and community belonging. It holds that the community, rather than the individual or State, should be at the centre of our analysis and our value system. Individuals can realise their interests and identities through deliberation over the notion of common good. A person's individual values are formed in the social context of the communities and often pursued through communal attachments. Citizenship is defined through civic virtues such as respect for others and recognition of the importance of public service.

1.2.3 Citizenship In Civic-Republican Thought

This perspective incorporates the liberal notion of self-interested individuals within the communitarian framework of egalitarianism and community belonging. Citizenship is understood as a common civic identity, shaped by common public culture. Despite the diversities of people's interests, civic identity can unite citizens towards the common good. Representatives of people participate politically as advocates of particular interests, with their concern focussed on fairness between different sections of the community and the pursuit of common ends (Jones & Gaventa, 2002). Basic resources are necessary to enable participation in community life. This world view promotes deliberative forms of democracy contrary to the liberal emphasis on representative political systems.

The contemporary thinking on citizenship tends to link the liberal, communitarian and civic-republican thoughts. It merges the liberal notion of individual rights, equality under law with the communitarian notion of belonging and civic-republican notion of participation in deliberative processes, collective action and responsibility. It bridges the gap between the citizen and State by recasting citizenship as practised rather than as given. It suggests an active notion of citizenship, which recognises the agency of citizens as '*makers and shapers'* rather than as '*users and choosers*' of interventions or services designed by others (Gaventa, 2005).

1.3   Different Dimensions Of Citizenship

In this section, we shall look at different dimensions of citizenship. We begin with an examination and discussion of citizenship as status, civic virtue, identity, and agency. The first relates to issues of membership, the second to dispositions, values and behaviours, the third to the issues of feelings of belonging, and the last to issues of engagement and political efficacy.

1.3.1 Status

Commonly, 'citizenship' is seen as a status conferred by the State on individuals. However, when individuals are 'subjects', 'vassals', 'bonded labourers', or even 'slaves', they have few, if any at all rights and freedoms. 'Citizens' on the other hand however have certain rights, freedoms and entitlements, some of which may be contained in a nation's Constitution, or in other acts of legislation, including juridical (judicial) systems to protect them.

The grounds on which the state grants citizenship, along with its rights, freedoms and protections, vary from country to country. Nowadays they usually include place of birth (within the country), and family descent or 'naturalisation' (granted after being a 'permanent resident' or 'resident alien' after a specified number of years). In cultures and times past different approaches were taken. In ancient Greece, for example, groups such as women, slaves and foreigners were and could not be granted citizenship.

Having the status of citizenship brings with it not just benefits such as rights, but requirements too. This view of citizenship makes clear that citizenship is commensurate with nationality. Membership of a nation-state carries with it rights to political participation through having freedoms of speech and association. Citizenship status often implies some responsibilities and duties, the most notable of which is the exercise of franchise, as well as abiding by the law, paying taxes and serving on juries or in the armed forces, in certain countries.

The notion of citizenship as a status has several implications:

- Firstly, that citizenship is something which is conferred, or in other words given, *by* the state *to* those of its people deemed to meet specified pre-determined criteria.

- Secondly, the state then expects something in return, certain responsibilities and the fulfilment of duties from its citizens.

- Thirdly that the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship are held to apply universally and equally to all those having them.

- Fourthly, the 'unit' (denomination) of citizenship is the individual.

1.3.2 Civic Virtues

The responsibilities associated with the status of citizenship are taken further in a view of citizenship that sees it as being attained through displaying socially approved forms of behaviour, and the values and attitudes associated with such behaviour, as in the expression "being a good citizen". However, there is no universal agreement on the traits of the good citizen. Civic virtues are socio-cultural constructs and these connotations of the qualities of a good citizen vary. For some people, the qualities of a good citizen may mean patriotism, obedience, diligence and religiosity; while others may emphasise compassion, respect, tolerance, solidarity, and individual responsibility. Yet others may relate citizenship to political engagement, community participation, knowledge of social reality, and critical interest for the common public good. Often the normative dimension of citizenship (civic virtues) is confused with the legal dimension of citizenship.

> **THINK TANK**
> Make your own notes on the subject "What constitutes being a good citizen, in terms of behaviours, personal values and attributes?"

1.3.3 Identity

Citizenship as a universal legal status does not take into account the particular advantages or disadvantages, which different groups experience. The view that sees citizenship as a status which is conferred upon people is open to criticism. The universality and equality associated with conferred citizenship is often restricted by the setting in which it exists. Deep and persistent inequalities entrenched in the social settings of class, caste, gender, and race; ethnic, linguistic and religious minority positioning and a given physical, geographical space influence people's relationships with the State and with each other.

For example, a slum dweller's idea of citizenship is not the same as of those living in elite colonies. In India, people living in shanty towns and on pavements without any permanent address, have difficulty in accessing municipal and banking services or even a voter identity card. This social exclusion of certain individuals and classes

a)   Limits their access to the resources and opportunities to improve life chances

b)   Denies them the right over their labour and productive resources

c)   Constrains their rights to access basic services for education, healthcare, housing, public amenities, recreation, and not the least, the right to dignity.

The criticism of conferred citizenship argues that when rights and entitlements of citizenship are inhibited, withheld or violated, there is a heightening of marginalisation and pauperisation.

Let us explain and extend this criticism through some personal stories that illustrate people's experiences and the consequent perception of citizenship.

The first story comes from Nigeria, which became independent from colonial rulers (who had defined its boundaries) in 1960. The population is now over 140 million, making it the 8th most populous country in the world. It is also highly heterogeneous, with over 500 languages spoken by some 250 different ethnic groups. Ancestral linkage and therefore ethnic and cultural identity plays a fundamental role in people's perception of what citizenship means in Nigeria, as Illustration 1 shows.

Illustration 1: Sunday's Story

"Sunday Ogbaka was born in Otukpo about 30 years ago. His father was from the Igala ethnic group and his mother from the local Idowa ethnic group. Sunday has lived all his life in Otukpo and married an Idowa woman from the same town. Like Sunday himself, all their children were born in the town. He is an active member of his local community and is in fact an adviser to the chief. Given the length of time he has lived here, his involvement in community activities and the fact that he is married to an Idowa woman from the community in which they lived, one would expect Sunday would be regarded as a truly bona fide member of the community. No, for as he puts it, "I am Igala because my father is from Igala land. That is my real place. Here I cannot be chief but in Igala land I can be chief. Politically I do not have a problem but when it comes to cultural options I am not accepted and cannot take part......All my children are Igalas too, because I am......" (Abah & Okwori, 2005).

Sunday's experience is not by any means unique. The study of people's perceptions of citizenship in Nigeria from which Sunday's story is drawn, observed that people prioritised their ethnic identity over that of their national identity. Two important words are implicit or explicit in Sunday's experience, *identity* and *inclusion*. To him, 'citizenship' is related in part at least to who you feel you are (and are seen by others as) and what group of place you feel (or are treated as) part of. The perceptions and identities are created by and in interaction with dominant structures of power and discourse.

This pluralistic understanding of citizenship has gained new prominence in contemporary literature. That is, citizenship needs to be understood within differing cultural, ethnic, national and gendered contexts. Feminist writers and movements have also been at the forefront of challenging universalistic conceptions of citizenship, from a woman's perspective.

NOTE BANK

Critiques Of Citizenship Through The Gender Lens

- Feminists have pointed out that the notion of universal citizenship and equal rights for all members hides the reality of unequal power on the basis of gender that can render women subject to double discrimination. Gendered inequalities lead in reality to some women being excluded from the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship on the basis of their difference. For example, while men and women have the right to work, women might need more support than men in order to exercise this right. Women workers, for instance, need maternity leave, and extra safety when pregnant.

- Gendered exclusion from citizenship is linked to the public/private divide that identifies a man's role as that of being in the public world of politics and paid employment, and a woman's in caring and child rearing in the home. The lack of understanding of the differences hides and exacerbates inequalities and also serves to make certain activities or traits entrenched for particular groups. In employment, for example, women are often clustered in care work or education and men are over represented in areas like finance or transport work. This division of roles and labour is important for understanding citizenship, which traditionally saw men as the holders of citizenship rights on account of their position in the public arena. Men were seen as political agents and women as being under their protection. Women and their concerns were outside the realms of citizenship and their roles, though contributing to society, were not valued as worthy of membership in terms of decision making and public activity. This understanding of the public/private divide has wide ranging implications.

- Women's concerns may be seen as family matters and not as public or community/national matters. Domestic violence and rape in marriage, for example, are often not considered to be crimes. Worldwide it has taken prolonged struggles to get governments to pass laws to deal with these crimes. Attitudes of officials continue to stand in the way of the implementation of such laws in many countries around the world.

- Both citizen rights and what comprises a community or nation's "common good" (good for the whole community) are framed in the interests of men of the powerful groups in a society. Rights and responsibilities in the domestic arena are de-valued or not seen as contributing to the good of society in the same way.

- Rights determine access to resources and authority, yet in order to claim rights, an individual needs to have access to resources, power and knowledge. Unequal gender relations result in men being more able to claim rights than others. Formal, i.e., legal equality is not sufficient to ensure that women can access rights. Moreover, not only does formal or legal equality not guarantee real equality, it also hides inequalities, because being legally entitled to rights and resources may be seen as having exercised rights or received entitlements in reality (Meer & Sever, 2004).

1.3.4 Agency

'Agency' means taking action or exerting power. We can begin to understand its connection to what citizenship means through looking at a second story, which as well as repeating the points about inclusion and identity, adds further dimensions to them. It comes from the state of Rajasthan in India, where among the population there are some 24 communities of nomadic people, each characterised by their own distinctive livelihood practices and customs, which include pastoralism, foraging, artisanship, and

trading. The communities carry out these activities through periodic, usually seasonal travel, along long established routes.

The practices of these peoples and the views others have of them, have changed a great deal over the centuries. In pre-colonial times, the nomads enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with sedentary society. In return for the food, trade, transport, hunting, entertainment, services and manufactured products that they provided, the nomads were allowed to live on village common land and to use resources such as water and pasture until they moved. The arrangement was mutually beneficial.

In colonial times all this began to change. Forest regulations, for example, prevented nomads from having free access to and thus from foraging for and collecting forest produce. In addition, population pressures on land and the commoditisation of land and forests also affected the lives and lifestyles of the nomads, as did the construction of new roads and railways that disrupted their seasonal migration routes. Overall, the result was that nomadic communities began to turn to casual wage employment and therefore, become more sedentary.

In post-colonial times, the problem has been exacerbated by 'misrecognition' of the nature and identity of the nomadic communities by the State. Diverse groups with distinct and different livelihood practices have been grouped together for administrative purposes such as the enumeration and classification of disadvantaged groups. As a result, the classifications do not properly recognise and deal with the particular needs and nature of each group. Nor do they fully recognise that while many groups have now become sedentary, they cannot access even the most basic rights and opportunities to which other citizens of the State and of India are entitled.

The story of the *Gadiya Lohar,* the blacksmith nomads of Rajasthan, illustrates the problem many of the nomadic groups now face and the actions they have taken.

Illustration 2: The Experience Of Some Gadiya Lohar Nomads

"…..in October 2001 a band of Gadiya Lohar nomads requested that they be allotted a piece of land to settle permanently (in one community area). The sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) asked the Sarpanch (village head) to allocate land to this community. The land allocated was near the cremation ground and the nomads refused. Later, however, some unassessed revenue land (i.e. public land) was found, and the SDM suggested the Gadiya Lohar could settle there, and issued them with ration cards which would entitle them to government-subsidised grain and other essentials. But a group of villagers protested that they would not allow the "nomadic community" to settle in the village, nor allow them the issue of ration cards. They said they were prepared to go to jail rather than let this happen, and made threats against the nomads, the SDM and the Sarpanch. Later it was found that a group of powerful villagers had already encroached on the land and therefore had a vested interest in keeping the nomads out. In the end, they succeeded in evicting the nomads who, disheartened by the experience, shifted to another location. But there too they soon came under pressure to leave…." (Pant, 2005).

Through their actions and attempts to exert their power (albeit highly limited) the nomadic communities were seeking the right to property (and in particular land with title deeds and therefore security of tenure); the right to a settled life; and the right to live with dignity. The study from which Illustration 2 is drawn concluded that new types of rights as demanded by the nomads are not expressly included in the Constitution. The demand for citizenship rights point to the significance of the struggle. Nomads are expressing a demand for inclusion, while simultaneously redefining social inclusion (Pant, 2005).

So what we learn from the story of the nomads is,

- Firstly, that citizenship as seen from the people's perspective is something claimed and achieved. It is not by institutionalised 'conferral' from **above**, but by agency, struggle and demand from **below**.

- Secondly, we also learn that 'rights' that appear to come automatically along with citizenship are not necessarily all 'universal' in their nature and some may be highly particular. What the nomads may consider and demand as a right, is not necessarily a consideration or demand by a person in a long term sedentary community.

- Thirdly, we learn from this story (and indeed from other ones here and in later Units of the course), that the claiming of citizenship and the rights associated with it, especially in highly heterogeneous communities, may create tension and even conflict within those communities.

A third example from Central America illustrates this last point and adds a further dimension to our understanding of citizenship.

In Mexico, indigenous people represent approximately 10 percent of the national population and are the poorest section of society. The state of Chiapas is home to one of the highest proportions of indigenous people. Among them indigenous women are further disadvantaged within their own communities, both by violence within the home, and oppression and exclusion from even basic services such as health and education outside it.

In 1994, the 'Zapatista rebellion' took place, with the Zapatista movement seeking changes for the betterment of the country's indigenous population. After brief talks, the government's initial response, up until 2000, was a military one. Then there was a change of government and the Zapatistas represented their demands for change, including a demand for a 'Revolutionary Law for (Indigenous) Women'. While what emerged was far short of what had been hoped for, there were modest initial advances in the form of greater state awareness on the need to focus on indigenous women's experiences of denial of rights at the individual, local and regional levels. And as time has gone by, the efforts of the Zapatista movement at the state level for constitutional reform to promote the cultural and political rights of indigenous people are slowly providing a framework through which the goal of guaranteeing the rights of indigenous women might eventually be achieved. New spaces through which the inclusion of indigenous women within their own and wider society are therefore opening up in the economic and social environment. These include the establishment of artisan cooperatives and other organisations addressing a wide range of issues and advocating for women's human rights, including their cultural and social rights.

Illustration 3: Indigenous Women's Stories

Eleuteria:

"We joined this organisation (an artisan cooperative) because we wanted to have peace in our lives. When we joined……we found direction. First, we went to the assembly and our forces were growing and growing. Then we began to join with other women partners to inform them about (what we had learned) in the meetings where we participated. That was the way we began to organise other women……(and) to understand the importance of being organised…..Women have organised to claim their rights…….and now that women are organised men accept our right to participate……."

Luvia:

"(Our meetings) are very important because we can express our opinions and come to agreements. We can think and take advantage of all the experiences of different women… from different places and different regions…..we can share experiences and ideas……."

Un-named student:

"All of us have rights; indigenous women have rights. I am a woman and I have the right to speak, to democracy and justice, to participate and work. We don't want governmental impositions; we want to organise ourselves………We want an education truly related to our history; to recover our culture………We have rights. Rights are not just for rich people. Indigenous women and men have rights too: a right to justice and democracy, to participate and to organise ourselves in the way we want" (Cortez Ruiz, 2005).

The debates that have gone on among the indigenous women and more broadly within the Zapatista movement about cultural and social rights have led to a broader one about the very nature of rights. The conventional view is that rights, like citizenship, are an individual matter. Yet, the indigenous women in Chiapas see cultural and social rights as being collective in their nature since they are related to collective needs, including language, land and other resources. Other conclusions drawn from the stories of the indigenous women of Chiapas are the construction of a vision of development based on an understanding of rights. This can be interpreted as a process of citizenship construction. Through their participation, the indigenous women are promoting change and guaranteeing their social, political and cultural rights. Their struggles are grounded in their conviction of their 'right to have rights' (Cortez Ruiz, 2005).

THINK TANK

What are the similarities in the demanding of rights by the nomads of India and the indigenous women of Chiapas?

1.4   Understanding Citizenship

It will be apparent that the 'conferred' and 'claimed' views of citizenship are in many respects quite different. The Note Bank below[1] sets out some of the key differences.

Note Bank
Some Key Differences Between Views Of Citizenship

Conferred	Claimed
All people have rights by virtue of their humanity; rights are therefore universal.	Rights are not all universal; many have particularities associated with cultural and other factors.
The individual predates society and therefore is the ultimate bearer of rights, regardless of status in society.	There are contexts in which the rights of groups should take priority over rights of individuals.
Civil and political rights are the only 'true' rights (as they allow and promote the freedom of individuals). Since social and economic rights entail state intervention and public resources, they infringe upon individual liberty.	Economic, social and cultural rights give substance to civil and political rights for the poor and marginalised. The different categories of rights are therefore interdependent and indivisible.

It is not that the two sets of views are 'either /or', rather:

- Citizenship needs to be seen as in part, what the state gives and confers (or at least enables through its constitution and laws), and in part what the individual claims, seeks or even struggles and mobilises to achieve.

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[1] *Adapted from (Kabeer, 2005)*

- Some aspects of citizenship are (or should be seen as) universal and equal, for example, most obviously in respect of 'one person one vote'. However, others are particular, in reference to **specific people** (as in women's rights, or the rights of the child), or **specific cultures** (as in indigenous peoples rights) or other factors or circumstances that affect identity and inclusion. A key question that arises concerns priority and precedence asking, when there are conflicts, whose rights should prevail?

- Rights may be individual or collective. Here, a key question to resolve, in any particular circumstance, is again that of ascertaining which takes precedence over the other. (The second Think Tank exercise below addresses this issue)

- Claimed citizenship will only become necessary when conferred citizenship does not take into account the inclusion and prioritisation of specific groups and identities.

THINK TANK

Read Illustration 2, the story of the nomads in Rajasthan, again.

Should the needs and rights of a minority group, however greatly disadvantaged, have been given precedence, by the magistrate and the village head, over the needs and rights of the sedentary villagers?

The stories we set out earlier, and many others like them that have been gathered and analysed by the Citizenship Development Research Centre[2] and its partner organisations. It is possible to discern a number of features that people see as being integral to citizenship. These are:

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[2] *The Citizenship Development Research Centre (DRC) is an international research partnership based at the Institute of Development Studies in the University of Sussex in the UK. It was founded in 2000, funded by the UK Department for International Development, with additional funding from the Rockefeller Foundation.*

Particular And Universal Rights – People see the need for both and for a balance between these two rights. For example while Naripokkho, a feminist non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Bangladesh wants equality before the laws for women, as a uniform civil right for men and women; it also wants the state to recognise what is 'different' about women (Huq, 2005)

Identity And Inclusion – Respect for the intrinsic worth of all human beings *and* for differences of identity. Questions of power and access to resources are linked very closely to the issues of identity and difference and to the issues of recognition and respect. Citizens' voices derived from identities, which are neither recognised, nor respected, are unlikely to be heard. How people perceive themselves as citizens, and how (or indeed, whether) they are recognised by others, is likely to have a significant impact on how they act to claim their citizenship rights.

Self-Determination And Empowerment – People desire to have the opportunity and ability to exercise some degree of control over their lives.

Collective Solidarity **And** *Individual Action* – Identifying with others and acting in unity with them, as well as taking individual action.

1.5   Citizenship: Rights & Responsibilities

1.5.1 Citizenship And Rights

It will be evident that a great deal of current thinking about citizenship that has just been explored, status, identity/inclusion and agency, relates to rights. Citizenship as a formal status entitles all individuals to specific universalised socio-political and civic rights as enshrined in law. Unfolding of other dimensions of citizenship as identity/inclusion and agency has revealed that universal rights hide the realities of power and difference. The fact is that some citizens have more rights than others and therefore universalism tends to exacerbate social exclusion. In practice, rights are interpreted and mediated through struggles and claim making processes.

The original source document on rights is the UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948. It has been extended and clarified by many subsequent covenants and conventions including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Declaration on the Right to Development. Economic and social rights are also included and elaborated upon in numerous other human rights legal instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Rights are commonly divided into two broad categories: '**civil and political rights'** and '**economic, social and cultural rights'**. It has come to be commonly accepted that the different types of rights are deeply intertwined. For example, the right to speak freely cannot be realised without the benefit of a right to basic education.

Various compilations and 'lists' of the totality of all these rights exist and are captured in the Note bank below.

NOTE BANK

A Summary Of Rights

Civil and political rights

- Protection of the individual's physical integrity (against acts such as execution, torture, or arbitrary arrest)

- Procedural fairness in law (including existence of the rule of law, rights upon arrest, trial, basic conditions met when imprisoned, rights to a lawyer, impartial process in trial)

- Protection against discrimination based on gender, religious, or racial grounds

- Individual freedom of belief, speech, association, including freedom of the press and the right to hold assembly

- The right to political participation (including the right to organise a political party, vote, or to voice criticism of current political authority).

Economic, social, and cultural rights

These include:

- The right to work

- The right to an adequate standard of living, including water, food, shelter, clothing, and housing

- The right to physical and mental health

- The right to social security

- The right to a healthy environment

- The right to education.

1.5.2 Citizenship And Development

In what is commonly called 'participatory development', the poor and marginalised involved in development programmes are themselves 'empowered' in and by the programmes. The programmes thus do not 'confer' the benefits of development upon them, but treat them as actors in the development process.

Participatory development is about participatory forms of citizenship. Participation is seen as the right of citizens to participate in the development process. DFID's (Department for International Development) document on *Realising Human Rights for Poor People* recognised the people's right to participate in the decision making processes which affect their lives.

When that happens, participation gets transcended from being a feature of development project implementation to a broader canvas of influencing (the) established policies, practices and institutions of governance. (Mohanty R. , 2006).

1.5.3 Rights And Responsibilities

We noted earlier that along with having implications about rights, whether conferred or claimed, citizenship often implies some responsibilities and duties. Different views exist about the relationship between such rights and responsibilities.

One view holds that while rights and duties are linked, rights are unconditional and are thus prior to duties. Individuals have rights by virtue of citizenship regardless of whether they own property, participate in public life, pay taxes or fulfil other responsibilities.

Another view, which has been stressed in recent times, holds that citizens must not only 'earn' rights through the fulfilment of duties and responsibilities, but that the carrying out of such duties should *precede* the giving or gaining of particular rights.

Between these two extremes of viewpoint lie others. One is that the *more* the state unconditionally 'gives' rights, freedoms and benefits to people, the more likely it is that they will adopt the passive status of 'beneficiary' and lack the will and ability to make a contribution to the social and economic health of society.

The counter argument is that the *less* the state does or gives, the more people will realise that it is their responsibility and duty to mobilise and act, not just for their own wellbeing, but for the good of society as a whole. As with other aspects of citizenship, it is a question of striking the right balance. Phrases such as 'mutual obligation' and 'reciprocal responsibility' have come to be used to describe the state-citizen relationship implied by such a balance. The Think Tank exercise below encourages you to tease out this issue.

THINK TANK

Appalled by mounting evidence of child abuse and alcohol misuse in remote communities of indigenous people, deemed to be caused by lack of employment and unconditionally given welfare benefits, the government of a country sends in armed forces to protect the children and alters the conditionality of the welfare payments, so that they cannot be spent on the purchase of alcohol.

What do you think about the appropriateness of such action?

What could have been the alternatives?

In such an action, has the State fulfilled its rights when citizens have abandoned their duties?

In the context of the above example, what do you think would have been the consequences of the action taken by the State?

Can you think of a similar instance where the State has taken such action and the consequences of the same?

1.6   Forms Of Citizenship: Active, Participatory, Inclusive

We started with the question, *what is citizenship?* We examined it in the context of something **conferred** and then while looking at some experiences of people; we also see it as something that is **claimed** through their own actions.

In this latter conception, when rights are brought into actuality (rather than existing in the mere rhetoric of declarations, covenants, conventions and even Constitutions and laws) by the actions of people and maintained by them, then it can be said that such people are acting as citizens.

We have also seen how rights and responsibilities have come to be seen as hand-in-glove. Rights give, *inter alia*, the freedom to act and such action in its turn brings about renewed, expanded or strengthened rights.

Such an understanding and practice of citizenship does not define it solely or even principally in terms of a legal *status*, characterised by a (vertical) relationship between individuals and the State, and by individuals getting (or not) the benefits conferred and determined by the State. Instead, citizenship is an *activity* rather than a status - an activity that is focused as much on building and maintaining (horizontal) relationships between people, as on the vertical ones with the State. It is an activity that is "shaped through actual struggles informed by people's own understanding of what they are justly entitled to…." (Gaventa, 2005). Furthermore, the purposes of such activity are not simply individual gain, but the advancement of the broader public common good.

This needs to be seen in the context of the changes of power between the three societal actors that we will discuss in Unit 2. For most of the second half of the 20th century, until the 1980s, it was the state that largely determined what was and was not for the public good. Since then, however, its power to do so has declined. In its place, the power of the market has grown, and with it, the danger of private self-interest becoming dominant over the public good. It was not until the so called global financial 'crisis' of 2008 occurred that the danger was recognised. Yet, the rise of market power still makes it all the more important for people, as individual citizens and through their civil society organisations, to take on responsibility for nurturing and maintaining the public good.

And that is what they are doing through this growing new conception of citizenship-as-action.

Various terms are used to describe this conception. Twenty years ago or more, the term 'active citizenship' was used, but it was more to define what was required for the 'mutual obligation' balance to be struck between the rights and responsibilities of the State and citizen. Now, the terms 'participatory citizenship' and 'inclusive citizenship' are more commonly used. Participatory/ inclusive citizenship is both a discourse and a set of practices.

The essential features include:

- Differential positioning of powerless groups;

- Inclusion of excluded groups in the decision making processes, thereby altering the existing relationship between the state and vulnerable citizenry; and

- Articulation and mobilisation of people to change from an overwhelmingly exclusionary citizenship experience to an inclusive one (Mohanty & Tandon, 2006)

Summary

This unit has highlighted and analysed some of the fundamental questions surrounding the concept of citizenship. It began with a historical overview of the development of the concept of citizenship, and of the different philosophical traditions in citizenship thought. It compared the classical-liberal 'top down' approach to the meaning of citizenship and the alternative 'people-centric' 'bottom-up' approach, which is to be a central feature of this course. The concept of 'participatory citizenship' was introduced, alongside the notion of citizenship as a status invoking both rights and responsibilities. The unit has aimed to embed the concept within a wider understanding of rights and development in order to stimulate a meaningful discussion on citizenship as an active and participatory process.

Recommended Readings

- Mohanty Ranjita and Tandon Rajesh (2006): "Identity, Exclusion, Inclusion: Issues in Participatory Citizenship", in Mohanty, R and Tandon, R (Eds) *Participatory Citizenship: Identity, Exclusion, Inclusion*, New Delhi, Sage Publications (Pp 9-22)

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