

CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship means the status of an individual as a full and responsible member of a political community. It is the status of a person recognized under the custom or law as being a legal member of a sovereign state or a nation.

Citizenship is the relationship between an individual and the state. Hence, citizens must fulfill their duties and obligations toward the state as the state grants them civil, political and social rights. Hence, citizenship means a two way relationship between an individual and the state.

Important Definitions

Aristotle – “Who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state is said by us to be a citizen of that state.

Gettel – “Citizenship is the status of an individual due to which he enjoys civil and political rights in the state and is ready to fulfill his obligations.

Harold J Laski – “Citizenship is the contribution of one’s instructed judgement to the public good”.

William Boyd said that “citizenship consists in the right ordering of loyalties”.

TH Marshall defines Citizenship as “full and equal membership in a political community”.

Who is a Citizen?

There are two types of Citizenship –

- (a) Citizenship by birth (Jus Sanguinis) - if one or both of a person’s parents are citizens of a given state, then the person may have the right to be a citizen of a state.
- (b) Born within a country (Jus Soli) – Those people which are born in the given state will automatically become citizens of that state. This form originated in England.

Theories of Citizenship

Liberal Theory of Citizenship

TH Marshall is the chief exponent of this theory

In his *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950), TH Marshall observed that citizenship gives equal rights and duties, liberties and constraints, and power and responsibilities for different individuals.

As per this theory, Civil rights comprise the foundation of citizenship.

TH Marshall includes 3 components in the structure of citizenship such as – Civic Citizenship, Political Citizenship and Social Citizenship.

John Rawls also contributed to this theory by saying that for the redistribution of goods and services to benefit the least advantaged sections of society.

Libertarian Theory of Citizenship

Robert Nozick is the chief exponent of this theory.

Libertarians say that citizenship is the product of free choice and contract among individuals.

It comprises of market society as its basis and a suitable model of civil life.

Libertarian Citizenship can trace its origin to the government of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 Britain, who gave more importance to market rights than social rights.

In his book *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974) Robert Nozick observed that individuals resort to private activity, market exchange and voluntary association to realize their values, beliefs and preferences.

In a libertarian sense, citizen means a rational consumer of public goods.

Marxist Theory of Citizenship

Anthony Giddens is the chief exponent of this theory.

In his two important works: *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (1981) and *Profiles and Critiques of Social Theory* (1982) Anthony Giddens contradicted TH Marshall's view to bring forth his viewpoint.

As per to this theory, those rights which are connected to citizenship are the by product of the class conflict.

In *The Nation State and Violence* (1985) Anthony Giddens argues that contemporary capitalism is different from 19th century capitalism because it has been shaped by labour movements.

So Anthony Giddens has brought welfare capitalism into focus which takes care of the civil rights of the workers.

Anthony Giddens revised the Marxist perspective and concluded that citizenship rights can be maintained in a liberal framework.

Communitarian View of Citizenship

The exponents of this theory include:

- Hannah Arendt (*The Human Condition*, 1958)
- Michael Walzer (*Spheres of Justice*, 1983)
- Benjamin Barber (*Strong Democracy*, 1984)

The central theme of this theory is that a citizen should identify himself with the community of which he is a member and take an active part in his political life. Then only he can contribute substantially to the realization of the common interest.

The most important feature of communitarian citizenship is “citizen participation” in the welfare of society. The individual doesn’t exist prior to the society.

Hence unlike the liberals, who focus on the individual, communitarian citizenship focuses on group rights.

Feminist View of Citizenship

Feminist critics of citizenship argue that even after getting full citizenship in law, women continue to suffer from subjection in their social life.

Feminist argue that women are second class citizens the world over due to the dominance of men in civil, political, cultural and social spheres of life.

JS Mill said that “an egalitarian family is a much more fertile ground for equal citizens than one organized like a school for despotism”.

Feminist scholars like Iris Marion Young say that the state should go for differentiation between men and women to understand the disadvantages that women face and should try to compensate for disadvantages.

Feminists, therefore, argue that unless the conditions of equal participation of women in public life are not fulfilled, the concept of citizenship cannot be brought to its logical conclusion.

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