

Chapter 6 - Citizenship

Question 1:

Citizenship as full and equal membership of a political community involves both rights and obligations. Which rights could citizens expect to enjoy in most democratic state today? What kind of obligation will they have to their state and fellow citizens?

Answer:

The rights that citizens are expected to enjoy most in democratic state are right to equality, right to vote in political elections, freedom of expression, right to have basic facilities, right to security and equal treatment by laws.

There are legal and moral obligations on citizens to participate in and contribute to the shared life of the community as well as the state. Citizens are also expected to preserve the culture and natural resources of their country.

Question 2:

All citizens may be granted equal rights but all may not be able to equally exercise them. Explain.

Answer:

All citizens may be granted equal rights but all may not be able to equally exercise them due to following factors:

- Socio-economic inequality that prevents equality of opportunity
- Lack of accessibility to legal remedies
- Lack of awareness of rights
- Corruption in the government apparatus that prevents the delivery of services covered under these rights.

The consequences of these factors can be seen in the following examples:

- Every child has right to education but some children are not sent to school due to gender bias and poverty and therefore are engaged in child labour.
- Many women are not aware that physical and mental torture by their husband comes under domestic violence. Therefore, they are not able to seek legal remedies.

Question 3:

Write a short note on any two struggles for full enjoyment of citizen rights which have taken place in India in recent years. Which rights were being claimed in each case?

Answer:

The movement in India regarding the rights of lesbians and gays to express and lead a normal life demanded the decriminalisation of homosexuality by the state that was considered to be a crime. Delhi high court has decriminalised homosexuality but still the movement is on as it has not yet gained the legal approval.

Narmada Bachao Andolan is an environmental as well as human rights movement. The movement is against increasing the height of the dam. The increase in the height of the dam will flood the area and residents will get displaced. The movement is to force the government to decrease the height of the dam and pay proper compensation to the people and assure rehabilitation for them.

Both the above mentioned movements are still going on for the human rights of people. The first movement was for freedom of expression, right to security and normal life as Indian citizens. The second movement focused on the right to shelter, food, employment and security of the people as citizens of India.

Question 4:

What are some of the problems faced by refugees? In what ways could the concept of global citizenship benefit them?

Answer:

Any answer supported with argument or explanation would solve the purpose. It is strongly recommended that you prepare the solution on your own. However, some sample pointers have been provided for your reference:

The following are some of the problems faced by refugees:

- Refugees are not treated well by the local residents of the place.
- They are considered as a burden on the local economy.
- The local residents feel that refugees are snatching their job opportunities in that area.
- The refugees are held responsible for spreading diseases, crime and polluting the area as they mostly live in slums and tents.
- They are constrained to do useful and necessary work but at low wages.
- Refugees face the problem of shelter, food and lack of employment.
- Refugees are exempted from the rights that are given by the state to its people like enjoying the right of minimum standard of living and security.
- Thus, they are often exploited by the police and other local residents on grounds of the rights that they lack as a member of that state.

Global citizenship would be beneficial to refugees as it will be easier to deal with problems that extend across national boundaries and require cooperation of other states.

It would also help refugees and stateless people by providing them basic rights and solutions to their problems so that they can lead a normal life.

Question 5:

Migration of people to different regions within the country is often resisted by the local inhabitants. What are some of the contributions that the migrants could make to the local economy?

Answer:

- Migrants contribute greatly towards the economy of the state where they are working.
- They perform useful work at lower wages and make up a large proportion of the service sector.
- The goods and services provided by them are counted in the GDP.
- Migrants bring new skills and techniques that can be adapted to suit local conditions.
- Migrant workers also pay taxes and thus contribute to economic growth of their host region.

Question 6:

“Democratic citizenship is a project rather than an accomplished fact even in countries like India which grant equal citizenship”. Discuss some of the issues regarding citizenship being raised in India today.

Answer:

“Democratic citizenship is a project rather than an accomplished fact even in countries like India” as in democratic countries people are still far behind in fully enjoying the rights associated with democratic citizenship.

- In the context of India, equality of rights is ensured for all citizens by the Constitution, but does not always translate on the ground.
- Socio-economic inequality is a major factor preventing the access of all citizens to basic rights.
- Citizens have the right to move and work freely anywhere within the territory, they have the right to enjoy basic facilities that are needed to survive and lead a healthy life but migrants are exempted from these rights as Indian citizens at some places.
- Besides migrants other citizens are not able to enjoy the rights fully. Girl children are not able to enjoy the basic right of education. Many poor children are forcefully engaged in child labour though these children have got certain fundamental rights in democratic India but they are not able to enjoy it.
- The issue of dual citizenship for people who reside outside the country is also a matter of debate and shows the dynamic nature of the concept of citizenship.

Therefore, it can be said that democratic citizenship is a project that has still to meet its goal rather than having accomplished it.