

## Chapter 1 : What does it mean to be a citizen of my country?

### 1) Legal Status

One can become a citizen of a country by...

- Descent ( a child becomes a citizen if at least one of his **parents** is a citizen of the country )
- Country of birth ( a child becomes a citizen as long as he's **born in that country** )
- Marriage ( a person becomes a citizen by **marrying** a citizen of that country )
- Naturalisation ( a person becomes a citizen by **imigrating** to that country, **residing** there for a number of years then **registering as** citizens )

A legal citizen of a democratic country has...

#### i. Rights

The Singapore **constitution** ( supreme law ) specifies and protects the rights of Singapore citizens, e.g

- **Slavery** is prohibited
- Equal **opportunity** for all
- **Freedom of movement**
- Freedom of **speech** ( subject to restrictions )
- Freedom of **religion**
- **Education** rights ( no discrimination on grounds of race, religion, etc. )

#### i. Responsibilities

- In USA, all citizens have a responsibility to perform **jury** duty
- In Canada, citizens have a responsibility to protect the **environment** by reducing waste and pollution
- In Singapore and South Korea, all male citizens have a responsibility to serve **National Service**

### 2) Identity and Participation

- Sense of national identity comes from a shared belief that we belong to the same country
- **Common practise** such as pledge-taking ( participation )
- **Common interest** such as food ( identity )
- **Participation** in public affairs ( issues of general interest or concern to most people in society )

## Chapter 2: How do we decide what is good for society?

### Part 1 – Challenges of deciding what's good for society

#### **I. Different needs and interests**

A society can agree that certain basic needs are important, but they may disagree on common interests and what's most important for oneself. As society has limited resources, it'd be impossible to satisfy everyone's needs and interests so decisions on how the resources should be used, have to be made.

*e.g Some who don't have their own mode of transport may see an efficient public transportation system to be more of a priority than efficient road network*

#### **II. Different Priorities**

Different citizens have different priorities, depending on the stage of life they're in. Therefore, it can be hard to decide on what constitutes a need or want, and how much resources should be devoted to those different needs that society has.

*e.g citizens may agree of the importance of a country to provide affordable healthcare, good education, and a clean environment. However, citizens may disagree on which area the government should prioritize*

#### **III. Unequal sharing of costs**

Whenever a decision is made, some individuals or groups may have to bear a higher cost than others.

*e.g For the building of an efficient transportation system, it's important to build expressways for smooth traffic flow. While society will benefit, residents living near those expressways may be affected by the noise generated from the traffic*

#### **IV. Limited Resources**

Smaller countries = Limited resources compared to larger countries. Larger countries also have limitations in terms of how fast or impactful changes can be made.

*e.g Easier and quicker to implement changes in smaller countries than larger ones. But smaller countries also have fewer resources.*

## Part 2 – How the government manages conflicting demands

### **Understanding Trade-Offs**

- Important part of democracy
- Involves an exchange in which an individual has to decide between two or more things of more or less equal value, that cannot be obtained at the same time.
- Also known as opportunity cost.
- This is needed to satisfy the different parties involved in order not to become fixated upon a single issue.

*e.g Singapore Government's urban plans to develop Bukit Brown cemetery into an eight-lane expressway to ease traffic congestion in the area.*

### **Decision-making in a Representative Democracy**

In representative democracies, representatives in governments are elected by citizens and have the **political legitimacy** to make decisions on behalf of citizens when there's conflicting interests and demands.

They do this by

- ✓ Making laws (Rule-making) – By Legislature
- ✓ Implementing laws (Rule Execution) – By Executive
- ✓ Interpreting and applying laws (Rule adjudication) – Judiciary

### **Ideas shaping Governance**

#### **I. Having good leadership**

A leader should be honest, capable, and also have the moral courage, and integrity to do what's right.

#### **II. Anticipating Change and Staying Relevant**

Implies an ability to plan ahead to meet the future needs of those whom leaders serve.

*e.g Building of Integrated Resorts in April 2005*

#### **III. Providing a stake for everyone**

Defined as promoting a collective sense of responsibility and love for the country, not just individual rights and responsibility. Important as it involves nation-building and giving everyone a sense of ownership and belonging in Singapore.

*e.g Our Singapore Conversation, in 2012*

#### **IV. Practising Meritocracy**

System that rewards people based on their efforts and ability. Opportunities for future success are determined by a person's ability, hardwork and effort. Idea is to provide equal opportunities for all regardless of race, religion or social positions.

*e.g Scholarship and Bursaries*

