Chapter One

THE QUEST FOR CITIZENSHIP IN INDIA

The question of socio-political development is paramount in India, leading to the quest for citizenship as a social capital for democracy. The point becomes clear as we gradually proceed to discuss the problem in detail. In this endeavour, our primary imperative shall be to understand the nature of citizenship and its relevance in India, followed by the revision of some aspects of the quest.

The Concept

The terms 'citizen' or 'citizenship' start from the legal premise: earlier it had a legal meaning only. Initially, as Nisbet suggests, the term 'citizen' in the West were strictly referred to the inhabitants of the town; then it came to replace the word 'subject'. With a number of historical changes in the West, two traditions enriched the development of the modern meaning of citizenship. First, Rousseau advocated for a unitary democratic state -- the highest political community, legitimised by the rule of General Will, characterised by the moral superiority of 'public' to the 'private' ones, and equality, homogeneity and motivation among the citizens. The second tradition, heralded by Burke is characterised by decentralization, devolution, localism, regionalism, individual and group rights against political
Accordingly, today there are two concepts of citizenship: in state citizenship, formal legal status is elaborated to operationalize social rights, which "requires a prior institutionalization of democratic political status to enable the effective maintenance of citizenship." Democratic citizenship, on the other hand, refers to equal and shared membership of a political community, necessitating an "absolute primacy of politics" as it is "necessarily implicated with the political, public sphere." The evolution to the modern meaning of citizenship from the initial one is recorded by Bryan Turner: The development in the legal system and natural law, the growth of modern economic and financial systems, with violence as a critical factor incarnating in class-struggle, warfare, migration etc. started the process. The traditional sacred hierarchy is now delegitimised and such life-styles became anachronistic, with the emergence of modern industrial societies, leading to urbanization, secularization, social and geographical mobility, mass consumerism etc. In this emerging egalitarian order, citizenship developed as its central feature. Thus, "conditions for the growth of modern societies were also the conditions for the growth of citizenship." 

The development continues. Today, non-citizens increasingly receive rights hitherto restricted to citizens only, whereas political citizenship is complimented by economic, industrial
and social citizenship. Thus, citizenship today develops into a multiple and multi-layered concept. This concept now needs to be defined with the term 'citizen', as done by King and Waldron: "...a person who can hold her or his head high and participate fully and with dignity in the life of his or her society." Citizenship, Turner defines as the "distribution of legal rights" and a "set of practices (juridical, political, economic, and cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society, and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups." The focus of a general theory of citizenship should address: the content and form (active/passive) of social rights and obligations; the social forces producing such practices; and various social arrangements responsible to distribute such benefits among different sectors of a society. Citizenship also holds out a great promise. Bart van Steenbergen finds it as a framework to fruitfully analyse a multitude of social problems: poverty, gender issues, women's rights, authoritarianism, environment etc. Accordingly, certain new types of citizenship are being unfolded with new developments and new problems afflicting us: cultural, global, ecological etc. "Citizenship appears as a prism through which a happier order can be imagined", in face of genuine decay of civic values and social solidarity.

Citizenship is thus essentially about membership of a person in the social and political process. Membership leads to participation. Participation conceives about a system of
rights to enjoy and responsibilities to discharge. For instance, in a soccer team, the goalkeeper, unlike others, has the special right to touch the ball with hands within a specified area in the playground, but also the prime responsibility to protect the team from defeat. Similarly, in the broader socio-political system, the participant is a citizen, provided with rights and entrusted with duties, to play appropriate roles, i.e., to meet the demands of the society aiming to realise its goals. The goal of the society in general is to enrich the human life. Various social theories, with all their limitations, emerge from time to time claiming to achieve this end.

Citizenship therefore is an interwoven system of rights and duties. Approaching the concept from rights' point of view, J. M. Barbalet finds them important since it provides citizens with minimum opportunities and therefore conditions of social existence, and are associated with several institutions at the core of social structure. Again, being integral to the social fabric, they tend to facilitate social actions in various ways. Rights are the domain in which citizens seek to pursue their own activities within the constraints of community. Thus, as 'free and equal' members of society, citizens enjoy autonomy through rights.

Rights might become contradictory, Turner implies, in the sense that a social group might gain rights at the expense of others. This is one of the premise from where duty-based thinkers defend their position. Assertion of particular
rights, says Richard Bellamy, can only be successful if rival assertions are quashed. In a plural society, this way the struggle for rights "degenerates into a war between polarised camps." The "universalising and homogenising character of rights" help power to get shifted from democratic bodies (e.g. legislature) to judiciary and bureaucracy. Thus rights based theory is basically passive and anti-political. The remedy is duty-based politics, where one exercises meaningfully the right to participate, and takes the view of fellow citizens seriously. This way citizens strive to determine the character of their society, where rights emerge from the political deliberations that take place. Duties are identified successfully by rejecting the principles incompatible with a heterogenous public sphere where all participate on roughly equal terms. The decision-making power will be spread throughout the society with designation of distinct areas of competence, respecting autonomy of different levels of social life. This way it will pre-empt the possibility of majority rule dominating the minority views and also delimit the scope of central authority. Any consent must be open to refusal or renegotiation, as dissent provide the only adequate basis for constructing the norms regulating social life in a plural society. This way duty-based politics encourage the creation of political mechanisms: "what really defines a right is the complex of obligations within which it is situated." Thus, Bellamy defends the republican tradition, which "conceives the citizen as someone who plays an active role in shaping the
future direction of his or her society through political debate and decision-making.¹⁷ Defending the Civic-Republican tradition, Oldfield argues that citizenship is not solely concerned with status and rights, it is also concerned with duties. By engaging into practice, "citizens govern themselves... to reach a degree of moral and political autonomy which a rights-based theory cannot vouchsafe."¹⁸ To this purpose, citizens must be provided with resources to lead a decent life, opportunities to do something and motivation to perform their duties well.¹⁹ (italics mine) By taking their civic duties seriously, individuals become citizens, otherwise they remain 'free-riders'. This process of participation-breeding-participation is educative in itself, and it requires appropriate moral training.²⁰ Citizenship, for Hannah Arendt, is the means to reactivate the public sphere for taking responsible and impartial decision as well as to forge a collective identity, in order to overcome world alienation (loss of the world).²¹ Geoff Mulgan urges the society to take responsibility as seriously as freedom and equality. Responsibility is a moral concept, refers to duty, obligation, accountability and autonomy. "In the absence of a strong sense of right conduct, freedom has become synonymous with license." The challenge is to foster higher standards of behaviour within diversity, so that "those at the receiving end of power would have a chance to know what was done in their name."²²
We have discussed the definition, nature and scope of citizenship. To complete the discussion, we need to take cognizance of some of the values that have now become associated with citizenship:

(i) Autonomy refers to the framework of rights which citizens enjoy to pursue their own activities. According to neo-Republican concept, the Republic shall ensure autonomy to shape the actual power relations. The will of the autonomous citizens are not subject to that of others, and their senses are rationalised. They are purpose-oriented and their will is blended with reason.

(ii) Responsibility, a crucial factor in duty-based approach, considers citizenship as an office, assumed proudly. This requires special competence, and under certain circumstances, modify the fulfilment of other offices in the republic. As an officeholder, the citizen is a person who both governs and is governed, for which qualifications like autonomy, judgement, loyalty etc. are expected.

(iii) Equality, which Turner found as the central feature of the emerging egalitarianism of modern societies, in context of growth of citizenship. Citizenship is based on equality and freedom, where patterns of inequality may be modified by various developments in citizenship rights. The Republican view of citizenship recognizes the participants in citizenship on roughly equal terms. The nature of this equality is clarified by Gunsteren as political equality, not necessarily
The opposite of citizenship is not inequality, but slavery: breeding a sense of powerlessness, humiliation etc.\textsuperscript{32}

(iv) Pluralism: "The true test of the strength of citizenship rights is heterogeniety. Common respect for basic entitlements among people who are different in origin, culture and creed proves that combination of identity and variety which lies at the heart of civil and civilized societies.\textsuperscript{33}" The government in the Republic must take initiative to combine elements in plural society in such a way that their mutual interaction in public domain results in citizenship.\textsuperscript{34} The Republican view is resourceful enough to deal with the question of pluralism. In a plural society, a liberal constitution and broadly liberal policies on the specific concepts of goodwill emerge. It also places formal limits on what decision-making majorities can do, and protects minority rights this way. Liberalism regards these rights as having a pre-political justification, whereas republicanism grounds them into public discourse. The liberals believe the judiciary as the supreme arbiter, whereas the republican finds the whole of citizen body to play this role, searching for a higher degree of agreement between individuals and social groups, through "give and take politics."\textsuperscript{35}

(v) Cultural Foundations: The constituent components of modern citizenship are not always causally related to the public sphere of industrial societies. The origins of modern citizenship can be understood fully if its underlying cultural
dimensions and constellation of values are referred to. Some of the cultural values are social trust, egalitarianism, civic activism etc.  

(vi) Virtue: In Machiavelli's times, citizens were expected to emulate the example of men of virtue. The republican view of virtue concerns reasonability, democracy, plurality, decent manners, and carefully limited use of violence. It requires sensible, competent and responsible treatment of authority, situations and positions of power, which are necessary to make citizenship successful, but cannot be codified exhaustively.

These are the few values upheld by the institution of citizenship, which are obviously interrelated and have a broad meaning, capable to accommodate many specific variables. In context of this work, we may understand citizenship as an ever-broadening concept, and a three-way relationship between the state, society and the citizen, in terms of participation. Participation connotes a system of rights and duties--the two main pillars on which the institution of citizenship stands. The rights of one group or individual impose a twofold sense of duty: one upon the others involved to respect those right; and the another upon the rightholder not to misuse own rights.

The Quest

Democracy never claims to have perfected socio-political development in a given country. It rather makes a constant
search for this end, leading to the quest for citizenship. Some elements of the socio-political development having relevance in India may be discussed below:

(i) One such element is rule of law. Ideally, law is an agreement in the society among its members, defining their rights and duties. In this way rule of law becomes a means to achieve citizenship.

(ii) Another important means to achieve citizenship is through democracy in broader social life. This is a very broad and interdependent continuum, obviously unlike the other specific elements like rule of law, and involves various roles and situations under different circumstances. Some of the areas are secularism (i.e., toleration and respect for people with different primordial identities: religion, caste and language), gender justice and democracy at family level, a balanced sense of rights and duties, environmental protection (since it is a struggle for a better standard of life, and also enjoins upon citizens the duty to protect environment, it is relevant to the discourses in citizenship), development (because India is a developing country, both in economic as well as socio-political terms), human rights and many other moral values that have ramification to the cause of citizenship. The catalogue gets vastly expanded in the subsequent chapters.

(iii) Another means to achieve citizenship in India is through the exercise of professional ethics. Society expects that the incumbent in every job it creates, shall discharge
the responsibility honestly and sincerely. A job ensures both economic security and social identity for the incumbent, even if in relative sense. Sometimes, it also becomes a source of political identity for the incumbent, e.g., various occupation-based pressure groups. On the other hand, the clients to every office society creates are fully entitled to receive the appropriate goods and services in most dignified, decent and friendly manner. To avoid coercion, incumbents assume the office knowing their rights and duties, and clients also take responsibility in being decent and to fulfil other requirements of the office.

(iv) For survival, every office must accommodate itself to the changing times to meet new challenges and requirements. Many of them might be unique, where no aid from previous experience would be possible. Under this circumstances, creativity becomes a tool to solve problems, which may be defined as an impulse to make a unique contribution on something relevant on any section or sector of the society. Since citizenship is also considered as an office, creativity can be considered as a useful requirement. Again, creative impulse can be found, in some way or another in most of the people. In order to harness it towards the need of the society, a backup from the cultural system is necessary.

Anybody fairly well acquainted with Indian society would agree that there is still a long way to go to realise those elements for citizenship. The causes are many, but we shall rather focus on the means to achieve them. I propose to focus
on the role of secondary education, which, with all its limitations, provide the basic education to the citizens of India.

Education plays a vital role in building citizens. Byron Massialas identified four ways through which education performs the task of political socialization: socialization of the youth into political culture; selection, recruitment and training of political leaders; political integration of a community or society; and political input roles, by creating interest groups from teachers and students. Education is a means to produce an enlightened democracy, leading to better social conditions. Dewey found education as highly important for the development of democracy, which repudiates the principle of external authority for voluntary disposition and interest -- could be created only by education. Moreover, on cultural front, democracy is a way of life -- a mode of associated living, of 'conjoint' communicated experience which widens the area of shared concerns and liberates a great diversity of personal capacities. Education is a deliberate process to sustain this momentum. In democracy, education must enable citizens to live and function, and understand about their society. Through various mechanisms like voting, citizens make a choice which again requires some information, and some means to test their validity and relevance to arrive at a decision. "Citizens are learners all their lives, and education in the sense of building of the appropriate character for willing engagement in the practice
never ceases." Mind therefore needs to be manipulated to forge a moral character for civic-republican citizenship, where they are taught to perceive the interest of the community as also their own. Under neo-Republican concept, since citizenship means organization of plurality, education for citizenship is essentially political. It offers young people a protected area to learn, experiment, try and fail in a 'half-free' environment -- neither completely autonomous nor fully slave. They must be trained "to acquire competence in dealing with differences in such a way that consensus is an outcome." Civic education must teach us to participate in the political process to solve various social problems, remembering that problems never end and democracy is always imperfect.

Thinkers in India also have envisaged a special role of education to prepare citizens for independent India, in order to meet India's problems, challenges and future. Tagore advocated for application of knowledge with good sense, otherwise education would be suicidal. Education must be available to everybody, and that is the sure way to achieve unity in a civilised society. Therefore women should be liberated for their liberation. Knowledge has both theoretical side as well as practical applicability. In theoretical education, there should be no male-female difference, but in case of practical training, women should be taught what is natural to them. Tagore did highly emphasise on moral training, not in a mechanised but in a lively manner, treating
the educand with respect. This will be complemented by religious education, not in a formal ritualistic manner, but by providing the individual with a supportive environment, as religion provides health to the entire human existence, by developing the inner self. The necessity is not an institutional, ritual religion, but to instil spirituality on one hand, and teach morality to do the right thing and not to commit wrong on the other. As every human has the impulse and yearning to do and create something, our educational system must encourage originality and creativity of the human being. As 'necessity is the mother of invention', means should be limited.

Moreover, the educational system should facilitate the physical and mental growth of the individual. From childhood, one must practice thinking and imagination. "The mark of good education is that it liberates man, not overwhelm him." (translation mine) It is the external observation and internal realisation of truth that liberates. In order to overcome nature and make use of it, we must learn its rules. Imposition of overdiscipline disrupts the growth of the educand's personality and create cowardice. Our education must aim for the right to humanity.

Vivekananda believes as we are the makers of our destiny, we must be educated to form character and increase the strength to become self-reliant. The aim of the education is man-making: to self-control, strength and courage. The character of one is the "aggregate of his tendencies, the sum
total of his bent of mind." Religion, as the "innermost core of education", lies not in scriptures, but in realising the truth within ourselves.

Education for women is absolutely necessary, as it will make them self-dependent enough to solve their problems. They should be trained in self-defence and acquire the spirit of valour. Finally, if education is not spread among the masses, no amount of politics would be of any avail. In a democratic society, Gandhi held, training for citizenship is essential. The necessary civic virtues are sense of social responsibility, art of discipline, a breadth of vision, toleration and good neighbourliness etc. These should be instilled by education related to life-situations aiming to bring about a new social order. As a preparation for life, education is nothing without character, and character is nothing without personal purity. Both politics and education must aim for freedom -- both political and spiritual (=self-realisation). While making a strong plea for religious education, Gandhi opted for a fundamental universal ethics. He also held that women should come forward to serve the society, be educated and learn the ordinary art of self-defence to protect themselves from the indecent behaviour of unchivalrous young men.

Nehru found education as a means to build individual -- the basis of social progress. Science is always in search of truth in society, and scientific approach must be made to all aspects of life to fight communalism, separatism,
untouchability, exploitation etc. These are the objectives of a strong, free and democratic India, where practice of religion will be free, but limited to its own place. 69

Politics and Economics prepare one for life and its problems, the essence of education. "To vote is to take part in politics; to vote intelligently requires the understanding of political issues; understanding of political issues results usually in accepting a certain political policy; and if one accepts that policy, it is the duty of the citizen to push through that policy, to try to convert others to it. 70

Nehru welcomed creativity, the dearth of which will make the nation weak in every aspect. 71 He criticized the contemporary authoritarian surroundings which prevented the growth of mind and spread of ideas. 72 Education is necessary for one to enjoy freedom. An individual having tolerance arouses dignity for the group. 73 Political freedom cannot be attained without discipline and co-operative spirit. 74 Nehru also supported women's education for its intrinsic desirability and self-defence. 75

Radhakrishnan expected education to be both liberating and life-oriented to meet the moral challenges of the age. 76 Freedom to think new ideas for trial and error depends on the freedom of intellect, thought, expression and assertion. Freedom rests upon the dignity of human personality. "Democracy is rule by moral standards", and a democratic way of life includes faith, tolerance, respect for different opinions, equal justice for all etc. All of these must
be fostered by education, otherwise democracy will fail. The desirable world order must protect diversity. Radhakrishnan also supported education for women, as men are prone to resist social changes. Women's education will help literacy passing from generation to generation. "Character is destiny.... we cannot build rightly with wrong materials." Alongside, the freedom to think, adore and meditate is the aim of the education. "To serve and protect human creative-ness is the end of all education." 79

Azad also believes that education mould citizens who shape the nation. He also supports religious education, as Indian parents want it. If state takes responsibility, then it will have a broad and liberal outlook instead of a parochial one, in accordance with the ethos of secular democracy Azad gave high premium on education to build citizenship: every citizen must understand the meaning of citizenship, prevailing socio-political conditions, history and geography. They should know and observe the rules of public and personal health; try to raise their economic status; strive to attain physical and mental health and train emotions through art, music, literature etc; and learn the "necessity of toleration of one another's differences in a democracy." Alongside, women's education is important, as it will solve half of our problems and teach children in literacy.

Krishnamurti thought that ideology generates "moral and value prescriptions." Disavowing any sort of external authority in learning, he supports the individual's autonomy in
taking the steps towards transforming the society through 'inward revolution'. Otherwise, the individual will only perpetuate disorder in society. This requires morality and virtue, consisting of the "spontaneous functioning of intelligence", which arises out of complete harmony between body, heart and mind. Human transformation will take place through the process of education. Finally, he identified freedom with intelligence, which comes from the understanding of the whole environment and the social, religious, parental and traditional influences.\(^8\)

In the discussion of the ideas on education for citizenship by some Indian thinkers in modern times, I did not attempt a critical assessment. My plan was simply to find how their thoughts are relevant to values associated with and elements of citizenship: religion, character, morality, autonomy, freedom, tolerance, equality, proper application of knowledge, woman's education etc.

Ideals are high; things are not perfect. Means to achieve those ideals are painfully slow. Education is one of the means: the thinkers put the aim of education in such perspective. Education is practised in schools, which, if imagined as a community, can help us analyse an aspect of the quest for citizenship in India.
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