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Responsible Citizenship and Bharat of The Future

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Abstract

India, as the world's largest democracy, depends not only on laws and institutions but also on the behaviour and participation of its citizens. This paper examines the concept of responsible citizenship and its role in strengthening democracy and nation building in India. It discusses civic duties, responsible citizenship, and their constitutional basis, with reference to Fundamental Duties under Article 51A. The study highlights the role of citizens in democracy, social harmony, governance, sustainable development, and Panch Parivartan. It also critically examines major challenges such as civic apathy, lack of civic awareness, misuse of digital platforms, and social divisions. The paper concludes that responsible citizenship is essential for achieving democratic values and shaping the vision of Bharat of the future.

Key Words: Responsible Citizen, Civic duties, Future Bharat, Democratic values, Digital literacy, Social norms.

Introduction:

India, being socially structured with diversity in many areas, shaped within constitutional values and democratic traditions, is world's largest democracy. The strength of democracy of any nation does not depend merely on laws and institutions, but also on the social and community behaviour of its humans. The progress of any society happens when the citizens of society actively support democracy and its values like justice, equality, and other. Therefore, political thinkers, aroused in the Third World, Lucian Pye and Almond emphasized on role and responsibilities of citizens and their active participation for the healthy functioning of nation and democracy.

India, now days experience rapid economic growth, civilization, urbanization, and technology-based development in all spheres of life and these changes have offered new opportunities to its human resources. Simultaneously, they also have brought challenges like social inequality, discrimination on various grounds, sustainable development issues, environment concerns, and declined civic responsibilities and discipline. Therefore, development without public support and responsibility often leads misuse of resources and weakening of social trust. That is why scholars argue that sustainable national development requires not only the policies drawn by the nations, but also conscious public support.

The term Responsible citizenship in general refers to the conscious performance of civic duties by individuals of a nation for the welfare of society, community and the nation as whole. Fazel Freeks (2022) having reference to the definition of Schoeman, mentions that 'Responsible citizenship is a term that denotes people who obey the laws of the country and contribute in every possible way to making a country where people can live together in peace and harmony.' As Schoeman has conducted his study in South Africa, he has referred his nation's name in the definition. Freeks, earlier (2008) mentions that Responsible citizenship is a concern regarding the welfare of country and its people and therefore is more than a label. Therefore Koopman (2015), mentions that Responsible citizens are not only responsible for laws and regulations drawn by the nation, but also participate actively in political life.

In India, citizenship is not limited to concern about the fundamental rights drawn for them, rather includes fulfillment of responsibilities towards the Constitution, public institutions, and following norms of responsible citizenship. Listing Fundamental Duties in the Constitution of India draws lines of act of individuals with respect to unity, and discipline. These duties help to strengthen the foundation for responsible behaviour in a democratic society.

In present time, rapid social, economic, and technological changes have increased in India thinks about the importance of responsible citizenship. There are number issues including misuse of public resources, declining civic discipline, and lack of social sensitivity suggests the necessity of without responsible public conduct for the development and sustainable nation. Active, skilled and socially bound citizens help in strengthening constitutional institutions and appeal that government and its governance appeals transparent and accountable activities. Therefore, scholars from this point of view agree that democratic success largely depends on the quality of citizen participation. Therefore, the aim this study is to examine the role of responsible citizenship towards the democratic values of India and their contribution to the vision of Bharat in future.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To understand the concept of responsible citizenship in Indian context.
2. To examine the role of responsible citizenship and civic duties in shaping future of Bharat.
3. To identify challenges and issues faced by responsible citizens in contemporary Indian society.
4. To suggest strategies for strengthening civic duties and responsibilities among citizens.

Conceptual Framework:

To have an overview on the conceptual ideas regarding civic duties or civic responsibilities, different scholars have implemented their ideas regarding. For majority of scholars, civic responsibilities are beyond following legal obligation by individuals and nurtures moral and ethical consideration among them. On the other hand civic duties are duties and obligations that enable individuals being member of a community or society and offer duties engaged by them. Therefore, civic duties are nothing but the responsibilities that each individual has to

follow towards society and nation. This idea of belonging helps maintain social order, inculcate favour ground for social justice, and strengthen democracy. Duties entitled for responsible citizen are actively participating in political activities to develop nation through political development. Volunteering one's time and skills for the betterment of the community is a significant aspect of civic responsibility, paying taxes, respecting public property and institutional facilities, engaging in social welfare activities for community development, respecting and adhering laws and regulations drawn for better society, serving individually during the jury or emergency and many more. From this point of view, scholars, especially political scholar state that civic duties are not associated to legal obligations that individual follow but also direct him to follow moral responsibilities that ensure the development of democracy as whole.

The concept of responsible citizenship emphasizes awareness, ethical behavior, and active engagement in public life, going beyond basic civic responsibilities. Public accountability, environmental preservation, and social peace are all practices of a responsible citizen. It also entails being knowledgeable, casting responsible ballots, and advancing the common good. Academics contend that national transformation and sustainable development depend heavily on responsible citizenship.

The concept of civic duties and responsible citizenship is unquestionably upheld by the Indian Constitution. Article 51A outlines the Fundamental Duties of every citizen, with an emphasis on preserving the Constitution, promoting unity, and safeguarding the environment. These obligations provide a moral and legal framework that guides citizens to act morally and further the nation. Constitutional experts claim that these provisions establish the foundation for responsible citizenship in a heterogeneous democracy such as India.

Responsible Citizenship and Nation Building:

Role of responsible citizenship is important to maintain healthy democracy and democracy is strengthened not merely by following laws structured by it or institutions constituted by it, but by the active participation of individuals residing within it. When responsible citizens of nations responsibly participate in electoral activities, cast their votes, follow law, engage in community services and acts, debate on public and social issues, and responsibly handle public properties; strengthen governance. To set example for this, India successfully conduct general election, assembly election, local governance election, which are supposed to be the largest democratic event on the globe, is possible due to the active participation of millions of its citizens. People not only performed their right to vote but also engaged in political discussion, monitoring the political campaign; share their views even before the electronic media and social media. Therefore, on this active ground, political theories emphasized that democracy thrives when citizens are aware about their responsibilities; they are informed and possess accountability of their belongings.

A crucial role of responsible citizenship can also be understood by means of social harmony they possess. In a diverse country like India, with multiple cultural and social groups, religious backgrounds, multiple languages, caste and creed, and other social elements, social conflicts arouse easily with no means many a time. Therefore, citizens who respect culture of other social groups, respect linguistic diversity, and promote equality and diversity to nurture

social inclusion play crucial role in maintaining peace within the country. To set practical example for this, people actively participated in Swaccha Bharat Mission on the appeal of Hon. Prime Minister of India. This campaign found opportunity in understanding the collaboration of people to work for a common goal, improved both civic responsibilities and social cohesion.

Responsible citizenship further bears self-disciplines and ethical behaviour, especially in daily routine life. World has proven that nation building is not part or is affected by the large movement carried out within it only, but also by a small actions like obeying traffic rules, ignoring fake content on social media, avoiding false and miss-information, respecting public properties, helping social needs. Nations have been witnessing that how misinformation spread through social media consequent the social and national stability and social trust. Therefore, critical thinking, digital literacy, and social responsibility while handling digital devices have become essential parts of modern citizenship. Studies have proven that informed, responsible, and ethical citizen behaviour inculcates favour ground for peace and stable governance and social development.

Responsible citizens also contribute to better governance by holding leaders accountable and following ethical practices in public life. Public vigilance against corruption, participation in local governance through Gram Sabhas, and reporting social issues are examples of how citizens can influence governance positively. For instance, the Right to Information Act (RTI) has empowered ordinary citizens to demand transparency from government officials, reflecting the impact of responsible citizenship on effective governance.

Responsible citizenship supports sustainable development and nation-building. Citizens who conserve resources, protect the environment, and participate in social welfare programs contribute directly to national growth. A concrete example is the participatory tree plantation campaigns in various Indian states, where citizens, schools, and local NGOs collaborate to improve environmental sustainability. Experts note that long-term development is not possible without ethical, aware, and active citizen engagement (United Nations Development Programme).

Responsible citizenship supports Panch Parivartan by encouraging people to act ethically, respect social harmony, protect the environment, value collective well-being, and contribute to national self-reliance. When citizens follow civic duties, participate peacefully in democracy, and respect constitutional values, they help create the social foundation needed for long-term national transformation.

Challenges to Responsible Citizenship:

Civic apathy is one of challenges that harms to understand responsible citizenship, where people show little concern in public life. In India this challenge is observed when people ignore or move away from public activity participation, even in election. Though Election Commission of India is bound to employ election on fair and democratic ground, 100% voting remains a dream before the institution. Voters also vary across regions, particularly in rural India where people even feel disconnected from local governance. People event found in minor number attendance in Gram Sabha, Ward Meeting, and other community forums;

affects decision-making for the concern authority or governance. This causes to weaken the democratic execution of policies and democratic engagement at the ground level.

Another challenge is the lack of civic awareness, particularly regarding constitutional duties and public responsibilities. Many citizens are aware of their rights but are less informed about duties such as protecting public property, promoting harmony, or following civic rules. This gap is often seen in issues like damage to public infrastructure during protests or neglect of civic cleanliness. Scholars highlight that civic education is essential for developing responsible behavior among citizens

The misuse of digital platforms has emerged as a serious concern in India. Social media is sometimes used to spread unverified information, leading to confusion and public unrest. Government agencies and courts have repeatedly emphasized the need for responsible online behavior and fact-based communication. This shows that digital responsibility is now an important part of modern citizenship in India.

India also faces challenges related to social divisions, such as caste, religion, language, and regional identity. These divisions sometimes create mistrust and reduce cooperation among communities. However, the Constitution promotes unity and fraternity as core values. When citizens place social harmony above narrow interests, nation building becomes stronger. Thinkers argue that tolerance and mutual respect are essential for democratic stability in diverse societies like India.

In order to overcome challenges in bridging the gap between the responsible citizens their duties towards nation, self-consciousness and self-awareness is essential from this point of view. People of India should overthink ethically as they participate in any religious activity, should participate in nation related activity. Local governance need to foster rural minds towards their responsibilities in all sphere of life; let it start from public property. Digital literacy and responsible citizen is a need of time. Public programmes are essential to moderate their mind while using digital devices, especially, social media.

Conclusion

The discussion clearly shows that responsible citizenship is essential for the healthy functioning of democracy and nation building in India. Democracy becomes strong not only through laws and institutions but through the active participation, ethical behavior, and social responsibility of citizens. Civic duties, awareness, respect for diversity, and participation in democratic and community activities help promote social harmony, good governance, and sustainable development. The Indian Constitution, through Fundamental Duties, provides a strong moral and legal base for responsible citizenship.

At the same time, challenges such as civic apathy, lack of awareness, misuse of digital platforms, and social divisions weaken responsible citizenship. These challenges affect democratic participation, social trust, and national unity. Therefore, strengthening civic awareness, ethical conduct, and citizen participation is necessary for achieving the vision of Panch Parivartan and the future of Bharat. The progress of the nation largely depends on citizens who act responsibly, respect constitutional values, and contribute positively to society.

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