

Gender and citizenship assignment

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The term citizenship denotes a sense of belonging and involvement in a community, society or country. For instance, citizenship denotes oneness with the country one is born in or lives in, irrespective of the caste, creed, sex or gender of an individual. However, the notion that citizenship is highly gendered, surfaced from the evaluation that most crucial theories of criticism fail to accept citizenship as a gendered approach which has been sexualized (Robson and Kessler, 2008). The three important constituents of citizenship include the civil, political and social citizenship, however, recent scholars and researchers assert that citizenship is gendered and sexualized in such a way that citizenship is heterosexually based and suits male members of society, privileging and pampering them (Robson and Kessler, 2008). Men have been at the forefront of all political and social milieus while the women were sheltered and had to stay within the confines of their homes, away from any rights and duties in the outside world. T. H. Marshall (1950) splits citizenship into three crucial components of civil, political and social citizenship. Robson and Kessler (2008) explain these essential three components and state that civil citizenship grants individuals the crucial rights to individual freedom and liberty, for instance the right to freedom of speech or right to own personal property or the right to justice. They describe political citizenship as the participatory right which grants citizens the privilege to participate in political affairs which include rules, regulations and laws, concerning the entire society. The third component, social citizenship, grants individuals the right to their personal economic welfare and security in accordance with the prevalent standards of the society within which they survive and function. Obviously, since women had been away from public life and were confined to their domestic duties and

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responsibilities, every aspect of citizenship gained a gendered approach with little or no regard for the female members of society. According to Marshall (1950), the three aspects of citizenship evolved in different centuries with the civil rights being developed in the eighteenth century, political rights in the proceeding nineteenth century and the development of the social rights occurred in the twentieth century. While the major aspects of Marshall's citizenship theories have taken into account, he has also faced criticism for an absolutely simple and straightforward view of citizenship in which he ignored the cultural and economic factors which play a crucial and deciding role in the concept of citizenship (Turner, 1993). Expanding on the theories of Marshall, scholars have contemplated to fill the void by including cultural citizenship as the potential of citizens to take part in the culture of a country, in creative and effective manners (Robson and Kessler, 2008). Economic citizenship involves the financial aspects which include the relations state and the financial market in which citizens function as consumers (Evans, 1993). Additionally, Marshall, in his theories of citizenship, has failed to identify citizenship as a gendered and sexualized subject for which he has faced tremendous criticism. A gendered approach is evident everywhere in society, especially in the domain of consumerism and advertisement, when the concept of citizenship continues to remain a sexually segregated subject. For instance, an advertisement for a consumer product like a cigarette would have a male model to represent the heterosexual image of a man in society, despite the fact that the western society has numerous women smokers as well. Similarly, products relating to young infants and children will have portrayals of women as mothers and children more commonly than men portraying as fathers. In most aspects of familial and domestic life, women

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are believed to be crucial factors of the consumer process and have been reflected in the media as domesticated beings for promoting such products. Thus, there are clear demarcations in life and the domains of males and females have been clearly segregated by the kinds of tasks which they engage in, the women domesticated and homely, while the men taking care of the outside world and the public sector. However, it is through consumer power that women originally began to yield their powers augmenting the gendered approach already prevalent in consumer citizenship. Feminist scholars and researchers like Sylvia Walby assert Marshall's ignorance by stating that the women of the western world, particularly the United States of America and the United Kingdom did not have complete civil and political rights before the 1920s (Robson and Kessler, 2008). Additionally, these women also lacked the essential rights to their bodies and personal decisions which failed to grant them access to abortion and contraception, in addition to other crucial rights like ownership of property after marriage, political rights to vote or even the right to work in the financial markets of the states (Robson and Kessler, 2008). Naturally, these laws were proposed and drafted by the male community with obviously no participation from women, who had no say in political or legal affairs of the states. Researchers assert that this inability to assert political rights is believed to be the very basis of the failure to achieve both, social or civil citizenship, which impedes the transition of the status of women from the home front to the public sphere, due to the private and public patriarchal system prevalent in society (Walby, 1994). It is for this reason that citizenship scholars assert that citizenship is highly based on gender stratification and privileges the heterosexual male

society in which women have been ignored and neglected since ancient times (Walby, 1994).