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Chapter (1) Citizenship Issue





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Introduction:

The issue of citizenship has been of great importance to both the individual and society, and this interest is attributed to many variables, events and developments that the Egyptian society witnessed, such as: political and economic openness policy, and different political orientations, in addition to new constitutional amendments on adding citizenship to the provisions of the constitution and its reflection on society.

The world has also witnessed many events and developments that endanger the value of loyalty, cultural identity and the spirit of volunteering, especially with the emergence of the knowledge and media revolution and its increased effects in recent years. This was manifested in the launch of hundreds of satellites, carrying thousands of satellite channels; which broadcasts its programs from rich countries to poor countries, transferring the traditions and cultures of those countries. In addition to hundreds of information networks that publish millions of messages through the knowledge space to reach everywhere around the world.

The reflection of these problems appeared in Egypt, in the form of violence, extremism, terrorism, lawlessness, and threatening the society's security. Additionally, passivity, intolerance, and lack of political participation became some of the other behavioral characteristics. The indicators of this crisis are reflected in several manifestations, including: prevalence of negativity, indifference, low rate of political participation, the weak sense of belonging, the feeling of alienation, the desire to emigrate, the existence of a political vacuum, and the lack of awareness of political issues.

These changes, developments, and problems have made it clear that the safety and stability of the citizen does not only depend



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on the availability of the values, as the basis of the democratic system's structure, and the achievement of effective citizenship, but also on the quality of citizens, their attitudes, their recognition of identity, their acceptance of the other, and the value harmonious coexistence, along with the desire for political participation. All should aim for achieving public interest on the one hand, and monitoring the political authorities and holding them accountable on the other hand. Finally, the society is lacking the kind of citizens who are able to self-control behaviors and actions that could endanger health and the environment, which makes the achievement of citizenship, becomes elusive, or at least unstable.

However, there are a set of circumstances that have led to the passivity of citizens - in addition to the lack of citizenship values - represented in the preoccupation of millions of the poor in earning their living, the large gap between the rulers and the people, and the citizen's mistrust of the ruling political forces.

The prevalence of these phenomena in society has its impact on the individuals; their lack of knowledge about citizenship and its responsibilities, their alienation from society and its institutions, and lacking the awareness of its roles. Consequently, raising children and educating young people became one of the top priorities, directing more attention to citizenship education through the various institutions of society. Since schools or universities are not the only institutions responsible of raising the values of citizenship, all the other stakeholders, including the various institutions of society are concerned, to one degree or another, with citizenship and are hold accountable for factors and impacts.

These negative phenomena have been the focus of attention of some international entities, such as: the International Commission for Educational Achievement. Some recent research and studies in



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this field indicated that a large number of students lack citizenship obligations, culture and values, and many of them are not inclined to assume those responsibilities. The studies stressed the need to adopt citizenship projects through educational programs that can help students practice positive behaviors, such as democracy, freedom, participation, cooperation, responsibility, etc. The school has to activate its role in developing the values of citizenship, as some intellectuals and educators have set red flags of the danger of lacking citizenship values in our schools.

Concept of Citizenship:

The concept of citizenship dates back, historically, to ancient civilizations such as: the Greek and the ancient Egyptian. The concept of citizenship appears, continues and develops over time, wherever there are organized societies that are socially, politically and economically competent, with well-established distributed roles to institutions and individuals.

The concepts related to citizenship varied according to the different viewpoints. Despite the circulation of the concept of citizenship and its use among all educators in general, and specialists in social studies and political sciences in particular, the concept of citizenship is still vague. This vagueness led to the difficulty of planning appropriate educational programs to develop a sense of citizenship and adherence to its values. Hence, it is important to review the different definitions of citizenship, and the related concepts that overlap with it, such as: citizen - patriotism - human rights – democracy. This analysis leads to a broad understanding of the concept as follows:

1- Some concepts related to the concept of citizenship:

A- The Citizen



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A citizen means that he/she is a member of a country, in which he/she has the rights and privileges of any other person guaranteed by the constitution and the same duties imposed on him/her by that constitution. He/she can participate in political processes, and bear the responsibilities of this participation, and therefore he/she is part of the whole, and not negligible. The citizen is the human being who settles on the land and belongs to it, and is linked to it through a bilateral relationship characterized by continuity, and is based on a set of material and moral interests that arise from interaction with other members of the community for the sake of its advancement.

B- Patriotism:

It is worth noting that the bilateral relationship between the citizen and the homeland with its three components; land, the ruling regime and its institutions, and the masses of citizens; requires a bond of a citizen's sense of belonging and loyalty towards the country and society. This bond of patriotism is manifested in the members of society accepting each other, and their sense of familiarity and satisfaction with their living side by side; taking into account their common interests, feeling that they are part of their homeland, their will to live in it, and sacrifice their lives to defend it.

C- Human rights:

The existence of patriotism and a feeling of loyalty and the sense belonging to a country and the pride of this belonging among



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citizens is mainly flourished through the enjoyment of human rights. Enjoying dignity, equality, justice, and safety helps to develop a sense of citizenship, loyalty to the homeland and patriotism; as it is impossible to find citizens deprived of their rights and freedoms that feel and cherish their national belonging. Thus, citizenship is the culmination of the exercise and enjoyment of rights by citizens, and then the relationship between citizenship and human rights becomes clear. Citizenship is the individual's feeling of loyalty, belonging, and enjoyment of basic rights and political participation; which makes citizenship the legal characteristic by which individuals enjoys their basic rights, whether civil or political, such as: the right to vote, nomination for public office, the right to receive services from the administrative body, etc.

D- Democracy:

It is well known that democracy means: “the rule of the people by the people”; by providing opportunities for all citizens to free expression, dialogue, open discussion, and political and social rights and freedoms. Additionally, giving the individuals the right to participate in the government, so that there is no chance for a class to overrule another class or to be in control of power and government, but the authority is for all members of the people without discrimination. The two words, democracy and citizenship, are often used alternatively, as if they mean the same thing, but in reality they are not. In fact democracy is the basis of citizenship.

2-The linguistic, political and social concept of citizenship

There is a debate among scholars and specialists about the concept of citizenship, as there are still variations in the related definition, revealing the ambiguity inherent in this concept among them.

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Therefore, it is worth referring to its concept from three different angles: the linguistic, the political, and the social, in order to reach a broader meaning of the concept.



a- The linguistic concept of citizenship

The word “citizenship” did not appear in Arabic dictionaries, and it is a modern word derived from a homeland chosen by the Arab linguists to express the English word citizenship. Citizenship and citizen in the linguistic origin of the word is derived from “home”, where the individual resides, and it is “the homeland of man and his place” according to Ibn Manzur in *Lisan Al-Arab*. It can be said that the concept of citizenship is still the absent concept in contemporary thought despite its importance due to its close connection with the homeland and the condition of the citizen within the framework of the national community in terms of: equality, participation, and rights.

b- The political concept of citizenship

Citizenship is no longer confined to clan affiliation, tribal, sectarian, ethnic, or class loyalty. Rather, loyalty goes beyond these narrow frameworks to be linked to the motherland, which embraces all under its ruling constitution and prevailing laws. Citizenship is the source of political and legal relations through the individuals' enjoyment of their rights, their keenness to have a positive role in

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political life, and their freedom of political participation through the right to vote and nominate for electoral bodies. The Encyclopedia Britannica refers to citizenship as the relationship between the individual and the country according to its law, and that relationship includes duties and rights, implying that citizenship has a degree of freedom accompanied by responsibilities and right of voting and holding public office.

Finally, the concept of citizenship is a legal concept in the first place. The citizen is not only the holder of his/her individual rights, but also possesses a part of political sovereignty and freedom. Citizenship is also defined as the strong attachment to the country and its legal and political system with all the obligations and rights it has. Rather, it is a system of rights with a constitutional content for all members of the political community.

c- The social concept of citizenship



Restricting the definition of citizenship to the political framework is a narrow concept for it, as it is only described as an aspect of social life and the concept of citizenship is deeper and more comprehensive than that. Some writers defined it as: “full and equal membership in society with the ensuing rights and duties, which means that all the people who live on the soil of the homeland are equal as the teeth of a comb without the slightest discrimination,



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based on any arbitrary criteria such as religion, gender, color, economic level, political affiliation, or ideological position. Sociologists defined it in various forms, some of them defined it as: the characteristic of a citizen that determines his/her rights and duties; the individual knows his/her rights and performs his/her duties through patriotic education. Citizenship is characterized by a special kind of citizen's loyalty to his/her country and its service, and cooperation with others to achieve national goals. Some others defined it as: a status or a social relationship that exists between a natural person and a political community (the state), and through this relationship the first party provides loyalty, and the second party undertakes the task of protection. This relationship between the person and the state is defined through law and based on equality.

In conclusion, citizenship is an acquired trait of the individual from the society in which he/she grew up, and it is practiced and developed through the process of socialization; whereby the individuals are granted the exercise of their rights guaranteed to them by society, in return for loyalty and belonging to this society in form and content. Thus, citizenship becomes "the individual's relationship with the homeland to which he/she belongs, which imposes constitutional rights and stipulated duties in order to achieve common and reciprocal purposes and to ensure their practice in society".

The importance of citizenship values for the individual and society

Since the beginning of the eighties of the twentieth century, there have been many developments that put the issue of citizenship on the political and educational agenda. Many manifestations have appeared in Egypt that indicate the absence of awareness about the



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development of citizenship values, and that the youth of Egypt are in a turmoil caused by some local factors in addition to other global and regional ones, which intensifies the need to immunize our youth with the concept of citizenship and awareness of its values.

The UNESCO conferences have adopted the call to pay attention to the values of citizenship as a major component in the formation of the personality of the individual. An alert has to take place because of many negative phenomena that have spread among young people in many nations, which have become a threat to the majority of countries in the world.

It is possible to identify some of the values of citizenship and its importance, for both the individual and society, which are represented in:

- Respecting the rights of individuals and groups
- Accepting the opinion of the majority and respecting the rights of the minority
- Encouraging the educated to participate in political processes

In addition to some of the values required by democratic processes such as justice, equality, responsibility, rule of law, respect for human dignity, moderation, integrity, and respect for others.

The values of citizenship in its national dimension include basic values, secondary, accompanying or synonymous values, including:



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Loyalty and what is associated with the values of love of the homeland, cherishing it and pride in belonging to it

Defending the homeland and the accompanying values it requires, such as protecting its sanctities, preserving its wealth, and repulsing any external or internal aggression against it.

Serving the homeland and devotion to work on modernizing and developing it while presenting the higher interests of the homeland

Cooperation and participation in all public matters of interest to all citizens

Commitment to all that is required by laws, morals, and customs, so that justice may prevail

Love and respect for all citizens, regardless of gender, religion and class

The values of citizenship in its global dimension require the following:

- 1- Peace: and its associated values, such as international understanding, human tolerance, respect and appreciation for the cultures of others, and coexistence with all people.
- 2- Cooperation: in various forms and methods and with organizations, systems, groups and individuals in every vital field, such as food, security, education, work, and health.
- 3- Joint defense: to repulse every aggression against countries, minorities and regions, so that people can enjoy a quality life for all.



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Even though all the officials and intellectuals in Egypt recognize the importance of citizenship values and the necessity of their availability in order to develop them for the new generations; there is a still discrepancy in the mechanism that must be formulated and used to implement that goal.

At this point, defining the role of education in developing the values of citizenship and the mechanisms for its implementation can be crucial.

Activating the role of educational institutions in developing the values of citizenship among their students

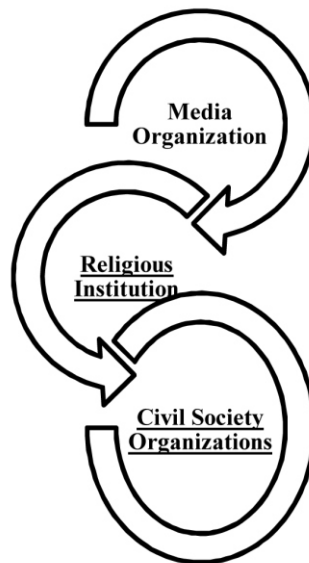
Developed countries are interested in citizenship and consider it a basis for preserving the social fabric and a way to strengthen the national identity and its personality. As a result of what citizenship is based on; including the set of original values of patriotism, loyalty and belonging, freedom, cooperation, tolerance, solidarity, awareness of rights and duties, responsibility, and courage, these values represent the global aspect of citizenship and the greatest common denominator between different societies and most cultures. Activating the concept of citizenship and developing its values is what regulates the relationship between the citizen and the state, and defines for each party their rights and duties. It is the responsibility of all educational institutions in society, as well as media and other entities, to contribute in the development of citizens' values, knowledge, political and civilian skills, and the formation of their personalities, commitments, and responsibilities. Entities including: the family, religious institutions, the media, and civil society organizations, and others, have their recognized roles, but the role of the school stands out among the various institutions of society. The school is the institution that can participate in the development of



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the values of citizenship among individuals, providing programs with specific goals, having intentional and clear educational methods, which are planned to inculcate the target values in millions of the nation's youth.

The roles of these institutions can be allocated as follows:



Media organization:

The Ministry of Information, with its various agencies, television on the top, has proved its leadership in the field of citizenship development in general, and asserted its ability to lead all other educating institutions. Through TV special programs for political and civic education, citizens are acquainted with the constitution, the law, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, legislative and legal institutions, levels of government, and the powers and obligations of all these institutions, and how citizens can influence them. Legislative, judicial, and civil society organizations shed light



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on the contributions of these organizations, as well as conducting media campaigns to urge citizens to participate in political and civilian life, and to exercise their rights and responsibilities of citizenship. They introduce diverse, rich and attractive experiences that affect the world of adults and children alike, providing a channel of communication for other educational institutions. The daily newspapers can play a role in political and civic education, and those in charge of them should not forget that the press has an educational and enlightening role. The American press has set an example for more than two hundred years and provides role models in the dissemination of the ideas and philosophies of thinkers and philosophers of enlightenment across its pages.

Religious institution:

The religious institution represented by: professors, scholars, and preachers of the Ministry of Awqaf and Al-Azhar, along with the Christian clergy, can play a major role in supporting conscious, responsible and effective citizenship, due to its deep influence in the hearts of citizens. Its role can be effective in encouraging political and civilian participation, linking its teachings of religion, through television programs, popular seminars, religious books, and Friday/Sunday sermons.

Civil society organizations:

Civil society organizations, such as political parties, professional unions, human rights organizations, intellectuals associations, and NGOs are the keenest to spread civil and political culture. Therefore these organizations must have opportunities to announce themselves and their practices and inform the public of their contributions and activities, focusing on the importance of understanding citizenship values to the daily life of each citizen, and show ways for citizens to



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participate in these organizations, through media, educational, and religious institutions.

As the development of citizenship values requires the integration of all efforts of educational mediums, then, at the school level, it needs the synergy and integration of all components of the educational situation. For example, field trips, activities of scouts, roving and sports teams can contribute to imparting citizenship values to preparatory education students by setting up school trips to places which witnessed the struggle of Egyptians for Egypt, ancient Egyptian monuments, including Islamic museums, visiting the pyramids, monuments to martyrs, etc. Visiting historical places, museums, as well as exchanging gifts and visits on religious occasions for people of the two religions: Islamic and Christian, can encourage students to earn the desired behaviors. Students will feel reassured and confident in the religious other. Through the school theater, they can present some performances that develop cooperation, solidarity, courage, and other values of citizenship, by forming sports teams and camps, and making summer parties and clubs to develop cooperation, participation and interaction of students with each other.

Thus, education for citizenship must be expressive of the curriculum, based on participation, linked to life skills, conducted in a non-authoritarian environment, conducted in cooperation with parents and the local community. It has to put students in direct contact with the government, popular councils, and all sectors of society, and it should be concerned with basic documents, such as the constitution. It is also necessary to emphasize that education for citizenship is different from political indoctrination, as it basically means: conscious, effective and responsible citizenship and its mission is to develop values and attitudes, support critical thinking

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skills and prepare for a participatory civil society based on positivity and pluralism.

The necessity of activating the role of educational institutions in developing the values of citizenship among their students is very clear, especially at the university level. It is necessary to encourage university students to follow up and pay attention to public issues, internal and external political affairs, by providing them with what can facilitate that matter. For example, through explaining political events and their causes, evaluating public issues and expressing their opinions impartially, without trying to impose particular viewpoint on them, helping them crystallizing an opinion on these issues and events and talking about political alternatives. In order to help students understand different values and beliefs and opposing points of view. Opening windows for discussions can enable them to understand and evaluate public and political issues, and form their own opinion about them.

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