

UNIT 3

Equality

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- distinguish the right for equality and equity of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples.
- explain the right for equality and equity of physically impaired people.
- understand that men and women are equal under all circumstances.

3.1 The Right to Equality and Equity

- What are the advantages for the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and peoples to live together in equality?

The discussion between Furne and Heramo

The constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia declared the equality of all citizens without any discrimination. On the other hand, there are proclamations which state that special support will be given for formerly disadvantaged groups of the society.

Two grade seven students named Furne and Heramo debated this issue as follows:

Heramo: That the constitution recognized the equality of all citizens. Hence, giving special support to some and denying others contradicts to this principle of the constitution.

Furne: Special support does not contradict the constitutional principle of the equality of all citizens. Because, regardless

of our enshrined equality, there is discrimination due to customary practices, gender, history and other causes. Thus, special support does not contradict the constitution. Rather it ensures the right for equality and equity in a practical way.

Activity 1

Answer the following questions based on the above discussion:

1. Do you support the arguments of Heramo or Furne? Explain your choice.
2. In different articles of the constitution it is enshrined that women, less-developed regions and physically impaired persons need special support. How do you see this in comparison with the right for equality?

The right for equality means the exercise of human rights without any pre-conditions. It also involves the respecting of individual and group democratic rights fully as enshrined in the constitution. The Federal constitution clearly states the human and democratic rights that must be respected for every citizen.

The entitlement of every citizen to the same rights, opportunities, privileges and protection is an indicator of the practice of the right for equity. Equal treatment of everyone before the law and equal opportunities to make use of the resources of the country are practical expressions of the right for equity. The FDRE constitution has declared the political, social and cultural rights of individuals and

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groups as well as Nations, Nationalities and peoples in detail. This implies that the right to equity is guaranteed in the country.

Activity 2

Answer the following questions:

1. To what extent is the right to equality being exercised in your locality?
2. Read article 25 of the Ethiopian constitution carefully and explain what is meant by the right for equality?
3. Explain the importance of respecting the right for equity.

3.1.1 Equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, and Manifestations of the Right for Equity



Picture 3.1. Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples

- What do you understand from picture 3.1?
- What is meant by “Ethiopia is a museum of peoples?”

The Hesse people

The *Hesse* people live in a given Zonal administration. They have their own culture, history, language etc. They are widely distributed in three woredas of the zone. The Hesse people requested the right to self-administration. They presented their request to the regional council through their representatives. One of the representatives called W/ro Hawade said “To bring fast development in our locality, we have to

be organized under our own zonal administration”. This is because we are living in federal democratic system. Moreover, we are given the right to self-administration by the constitution. But another member of the council put his opinion forward saying “Would not it be difficult for you to live with others if you established new zone? What if the people in your locality tried to attack you for some reasons?”

The other representative of the *Hesse* in the council, Ato Husen, made a counter argument saying “The right of nations and nationalities for self-administration is the peoples’ right. When this right of peoples at different levels is respected they cannot become enemies rather they prefer to live together in cooperation. Thus, we shall not fear that we may face enemies when we exercise our right for self-administration.”

Another representative of the *Hesse* people, Ato Bushkara, argued saying, “Right now our people are exercising the right to self-determination through their representatives. Our people are also governing themselves through councils at Kebele, Woreda, Zone, and Regional levels. Besides that they are represented in the Federal House of Federation. For example, if you take our Woreda, our own people administer it. There, it is the popularly elected Woreda Council that exercises the highest political power. However, the issue for our people today is just distribution of social services and other physical infrastructures. To bring fast development in our locality we need a just distribution of schools, human and animal health-care centres, telephone service etc. Moreover, we need a road that connects us to market centre’s. For these all to be effected, we need the placement of trained manpower in our locality. Besides, educational and training opportunities have to be opened for our children, who would serve as in our own language.”

After the debate the regional council and delegates of the Federal government, accepted the request of the *Hesse* people for the fair distribution of social services. Moreover, they believed that the peoples’ capacity to exercise self-government more effectively and efficiently should be encouraged.

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Activity 3

Discuss the following questions based on the previous story:

1. What are the advantages of the right for self-administration of nations, nationalities and peoples for the *Hesse* people?
2. How was the request for the self-administration of the *Hesse* people enforced?
3. List the rights that must be respected to enable the *Hesse* people to live together in cooperation with other nations, nationalities and peoples.

The rights of nations, nationalities and peoples are major aspects of in the constitution. Among these rights, the right to self-administration including secession, is one. The nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia established the federal state through their agreement on the importance of equality. To achieve this they have adopted the constitution as a common binding covenant.

In addition to self-administration, nations, nationalities and peoples are proportionally represented in the Federal House of Peoples representatives in the House of Federation. This is another manifestation of the right to self-determination and equality.

Activity 4

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the advantages of self-administration for nations, nationalities and peoples?
2. Explain how the rights of equality and equity of nations, nationalities and peoples are respected?

3.2 The Importance of Respecting the Equality of Language and Other Cultural Aspects of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples

- What do you think are the situations that could lead to chaos and instability in a country?

The languages, history and other cultural aspects of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia were neglected during the previous regions of the country. As a result the development and peace of the country was seriously affected. Moreover, the identities of the peoples were degraded. Many citizens were made victims of violation of rights by the non-democratic regimes. The “Red Terror”— mass killing that took place during the Derg regime is a good example of this.

There are more than 80 nations, nationalities peoples, and languages in Ethiopia. According to the FDRE constitution all of them are equal. Equal respect for the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples and their languages is essential for sustainable peace and fast growth and development in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural society.

Activity 5

Answer the following questions:

1. List the advantages of respecting fully the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples.
2. What are the disadvantages of not respecting these rights?
3. In groups interview your history teacher or refer to books about the horrible mass killing of the Red Terror and explain the results to your classmate.

3.3 Gender Equality

3.3.1 The Women's Right to Equality



Picture 3.2. A man and a woman conducting research

- What do you understand from the above picture?

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Once a panel discussion was conducted under the title “There are great women behind successful works”. The essence of the discussion was published in the newspaper Adis Zemen. The opinions of three speakers are briefly presented as follows:

Speaker 1: Women are causes for skills, talents of the world. Even though we get little publicity we women are behind every success. We have been walking with men. We are walking with them now.

Speaker 2: It is unquestionable that women have the capacity and potential to achieve great things. They have shown their successfulness at national and international levels. Especially nowadays, the ability of women is becoming more and more obvious. Policies and laws that have been enacted are narrowing the gap between men and women. In order to release their own capacity and potential women need to have vision. To develop this and change themselves, they need ways to enhance their skills.

Speaker 3: A great woman is modest and loyal. Who know her mission (vision) and is prepared to make sacrifices to achieve her objectives.

(Source: Adapted from Addis Zemen Megabit 13, 2000 page 13)

Activity 6

Answer the following questions:

1. How do you understand the statement “Women are the cause for skills, talents of this world”? Explain.
2. Do you think that successful development is possible without the equal participation of women? Explain your answer.
3. Can you give example of women who have done great things in your locality? Tell your classmates.

Women are equal with men in every respect. The Ethiopian constitution ensures this in marriage, family life, property utilization, job opportunities and other rights.

Women can work, create and lead just as a man can do.

Activity 7

Discuss the following questions:

1. What is your opinion regarding the statement that says women have equal mental capacity with men?
2. What is expected from every one of you regarding your attitude to women?

3.3.2 Examples of Equal Rights for Women

- Give some examples of equal rights for women.

The Abduction

A young man called Berhanu Gedeno residing in a given Woreda wanted to marry a beautiful girl in his locality. He sent elders to ask for her parents permission. The parents first showed readiness to accept the request, but later, when their daughter persuaded them that she would prefer to continue her education rather than to marry, they changed their minds. They made it clear to the elders that they did not accept the request. However, Berhanu ignored their decision and, with five of his friends, he abducted the girl. The case was followed up by the police and Berhanu and his collaborates were soon arrested. After carrying out their investigation the police transferred the case to the public prosecutor. The prosecutor accused Berhanu of the crime of abduction before the court. Then the court passed a sentence of 15 years imprisonment on Berhanu. It also punished his collaborators for being a part in the crime.

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Activity 8

Discuss the following questions based on the previous case:

1. What do you understand from the case?
2. Is the judgement against Berhanu appropriate? Why?
3. What kinds of advice could a civics and ethical education teacher give to a student who came to talk to her about the danger of abduction which she was facing?
4. What do you think should be done to answer that 'the right of women to education' are not be hindered by harmful customary practices?

In the past, many customary practices undermining the right for equality of women have prevailed in our country. Even though there have been some improvements, it must be understood that more effort is needed to solve the problem. Even today there are customary practices and procedures that undermine women, challenge their right to make their own decisions and leave them under domination. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all citizens to work for equal rights for women by protesting against backward outlooks and practices.

If you educate the women, you educate the whole society.

According to the Ethiopian constitution women have equal rights for marriage, owning property, getting equal payment for work and other rights. Also they have full right to be protected from, harmful customary practices, unfair laws and traditions.

Activity 9

Answer the following questions:

1. Describe the situations in which women are equal with men.
2. Mention harmful practices and proverbs with meanings which undermine women in your locality.
3. Explain what is expected of you to prevent harmful practices against women.

3.4 The Rights of the Disabled People



Picture 3.3. Disabled people engaged in different activities

- What do you understand from the above pictures?

Little Zula

Zula is a 12 years old boy who lives with his mother. He lost his father early in his childhood. His friends prefer to call him by his nick name "little Zula", which was given to him by his mother because of his small size.

When Zula was a grade one student, he was kidnapped by a passer by on his way home. Those who had kidnapped him blinded him and made him a beggar after taking him far away. He had to give the money he collected by begging in villages and at churches to his masters. Life became difficult for him, so, one day, he ran away from his masters and with the help of kind people, he returned to his mother's home. When they met, he found his mother sick with grief and living hand to mouth.

However, without being frustrated by the problems he faced and regardless of the miserable life of his mother, Zula decided to continue his education. However, the nearby school rejected his request for enrollment.

Zula communicated with a local NGO working on the rights of disabled people. The organization

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promised him that it would do its best for him so that he could be enrolled in the school. So, in collaboration with the local education office, the NGO arranged for him to be admitted to school. By facing all these challenges with determination, Zula today is continuing his education.

Activity 10

Answer the following questions based on the above story:

1. Explain the challenges that “little Zula” faced in his life and education.
2. How far do you think that the NGO, which helped Zula to continue his education, fulfilled its role?
3. Why do you think the school changed its decision not to enroll Zula?
4. How should you help disabled people in your locality?

The rights of disabled people must be respected like those of other citizens and they must be given enough special support. The government is expected to take care of disabled people, to rehabilitate and to help them, as much as possible. Disabled people whose rights are respected can then contribute to the development of nations.

3.4.1 The Impacts of not Respecting the Rights of Disabled People

- What are the impacts of not properly respecting the rights of disabled people?

Disabled people, like any other human beings, have full human dignity and can become productive in any aspect of life. Even though some social changes are taking place in our country, prejudice and discrimination against disabled people has not been fully eradicated.

Disabled people with low awareness associate with curses and evil fate. Therefore, disabled people are exposed to economic problems and social discrimination. Some of them are even mistreated

by their own families. For example, their families may deny them access to school and hide them at home.

Discriminating against disabled people and isolating them from social interaction has a negative effect on the family and the nation, because it wastes their potential. This in turn ignores a large productive force, slows national development, and causes poverty.

In general, failing to respect the right to work of disabled people results in complex problems for a country and its people. Thus, the family and society must give appropriate support to disabled people.

Activity 11

Answer the following questions:

1. What problems could result from not respecting the social and economic rights of disabled people?
2. Explain the types of support that should be given to disabled people.
3. What could be your role and responsibility in respecting the rights of disabled people?
4. Explain the advantages of respecting the rights of disabled people.

3.5 The Advantages of Respecting Religious Equality

- What are the advantages of respecting religious equality?

Respecting the right for religious equality in a country strengthens the democratic system, encourages peace and fast growth and development. When their right to follow a religion of their choice is respected, citizens become patriotic—their love and devotion to their country increases. They will make an unreserved effort for the development and well-being of their nation.

According to this right, every person has the right to preach and attract followers of his religion in a peaceful manner. Moreover, forced conversion

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(change of religion) is against the right to freedom of religion and against the constitutional principles of the country. This in turn endangers peaceful co-existence and confidence among the people.

Respecting the right for religious equality is important for the development and prosperity of a country. The equality of all religions before the law means peaceful co-existence, cooperation for common interest, unity on the basis of equality and the development of the common values of the society. The FDRE constitution states that every person can follow a religion of his choice, and it is forbidden to limit a person's religious freedom by force or by any other means. Nonetheless, Art-27(5) and Art-19 (2) state the situations under which freedom of religion can be limited. According to these articles freedom of religion can be limited when a religious practice is against public health or morality and when it is against the rights of other citizens.

Activity 12

Discuss the following questions:

1. What are the advantages of the freedom for everyone to follow a religion of his/her own choice?
2. Explain the situations under which the freedom of religion is limited according to the Ethiopian constitution.
3. What do you think about the statement which says that "Formal educational institutions shall be free from the influence of religious teaching"?
4. Mention the advantages of respecting the right of religious equality.
5. What problems could happen in situations where the right of religious equality is not respected?

Summary

The human and democratic rights of people shall be fully respected. Nations, nationalities and peoples will all have equal rights. When their rights are respected, they will get a fair share of the country's resources. The FDRE constitution establishes the rights for equality of nations, nationalities and peoples. Accordingly their right for self-administration including secession is fully respected. It is apparent that in past political systems some nations, nationalities and peoples were marginalized and undermined. But now, their equality in religion, culture, history and other manifestation is constitutionally recognized. This will have major significance for the development and prosperity of the nation.

Women are equal with men in all aspects of rights. Women are not lesser than men in their mental capacity. They can work, learn, and lead life in the same way as men do. Respecting the rights of women and struggling against backward and wrong attitudes is essential for the country and its generation.

Respecting the rights of disabled people is very advantageous, because, if their rights are respected, they can play as great a role in the development of their nation as any other person can do. Thus, the family, the society and the government should strengthen their care and support for disabled people.

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Key Words

Popular sovereignty:	This is the supremacy of the people in which they become the ultimate source of political power. According to the Ethiopian constitution, the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are invested with popular sovereignty and ultimate political power resides in them
Vision:	Refers to one's life objective which one aims at and will strive to achieve as a goal
Judgment:	Legal or court decision
Master:	One who takes control over somebody in his/her residence and livelihood
Collaborator:	A person or persons who cooperate with someone in committing a crime

Unit Review Exercises

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

I. Write "True" if the statement is correct and write "False" if the statement is incorrect

1. The Ethiopia FDRE constitution is one of the documents in which the right for equality is practically enshrined.
2. Among the rights for equality stated in the Ethiopian constitution, the rights of equality of nations, nationalities and peoples is the basic one.
3. Our country has been prosperous in the past because the cultures and languages of the peoples have been respected in the countries past history.
4. The role of women is less important than that of men in the development efforts of Ethiopia.
5. Mental and physical impairment is caused by evil fate or curse.

II. Match words or phrases under column 'A' with correct items of column 'B'

- | A | B |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The right for self-administration | A. Common responsibility of government and people |
| 2. The Red Terror | B. Harmful and backward practices |
| 3. Abduction and early marriage | C. Popular sovereignty |
| 4. Taking care of disabled people | D. Horrible mass killing of citizens (genocide) |
| | E. Minority rule |

III. Copy the following questions on your exercise book and fill the correct answer on the space provided

1. Ethiopia is said to be _____ peoples.
2. _____ is the document in which the equality of all Ethiopians is recognized.

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IV. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

1. Which one of the following is not the right to equality?
 - (a) Human rights
 - (b) Democratic rights in the constitution
 - (c) Equitable share of the nation's resource
 - (d) Superiority of one over the other.
2. Which one of the following is not included in the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples?
 - (a) Sovereign power of self-administration
 - (b) Fair representation in the House of Peoples Representatives and House of Federation
 - (c) Degrading and undermining other's culture and language
 - (d) Mutual co-existence, tolerance and unity.
3. Which of the following is an aspect of life that shows that women are equal with men?
 - (a) Marriage and family life
 - (b) Labour division and property utilization
 - (c) Transfer and inheritance of ownership
 - (d) All are correct.
4. Identify wrong statements about women's capacity and potential
 - (a) All great works are only done by men
 - (b) Women have equal capacity in decision-making and leadership with men
 - (c) They have the right to get equal payment for equal work
 - (d) Women are not lesser than men in their intellectual capacity.

V. Give short answers for the following questions

1. Explain the importance respecting the right for equality.
2. Explain what is meant by the statement, "There will be no development without the participation of women."
3. Explain how society must protect and care for disabled people.