

# Unit 3

## Equality

### Introduction

You discussed the importance of equality, equality and liberty, gender equality and development, equality of the disabled etc. in Grade 11. You will have further discussion on issues related to equality in this unit. You will discuss the relationship between individual rights and group rights, the necessity of affirmative action to reverse past discrimination and injustice and, the importance of recognizing unity in diversity.

### Lessons

1. The History of the Ethiopian Peoples' Struggle against Oppression
2. Conflict of Interests
3. Equality and the Notion of Affirmative Action
4. Unity in Diversity

### Key words and concepts

- Cultural-relativism
- Ethnocentrism
- Group rights
- Individual rights
- Maladministration
- Petition
- Rebellion
- Self-determination

### What you will learn

#### You will:

- appreciate the struggle of the nation, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.
- understand the notion of conflict of interest.
- recognize the necessity of affirmative action.
- realize the importance of recognizing unity in diversity.

Taking equal responsibility for household chores



## LESSON

## 1

# The History of the Ethiopian Peoples' Struggle against Oppression

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- describe the struggles of the Ethiopian people against autocratic governments.

What are the major features of autocratic governments?

You learnt that inequality and oppression characterized the previous Ethiopian landscape. Though the highest proportion of the Ethiopian population were peasants, they were severely exploited. They were forced to pay heavy taxes and their feudal lords, and other government officials, took most of what they produced. Peasants in Ethiopia suffered from maladministration, corruption and lack of social services. They did not remain indifferent to their hardships, but revolted against the injustice done to them in different ways. The peasants' rebellions in Gojam, Bale and Tigray are very good examples.

## The Gojam Peasant Rebellion (1968)

The peasant rebellion of Gojam was one of the strong resistances against the feudal government. The centres of the rebellion were Mota and Dega Damot provinces. The major causes of the rebellion were the government's attempt to increase the amount of taxes and forced contributions to erect a statue of the emperor. The other cause was maladministration.

The people reflected their opposition by rejecting tax assessors and sending a petition to the emperor. When the government failed to respond, the peasants rebelled. The government sent the army and police force and suppressed the rebellion.

## The First Woyane Movement

The first Woyane movement took place in Tigray immediately after the liberation of Ethiopia from the Italian occupation (1941). The major causes were administrative inefficiency, corruption and greediness of the army stationed in Raya and Azabo, as well as feudalistic conflicts of interest. The rebels achieved some victories at the beginning, such as at Addi Abun in Temben in 1943. Then they controlled towns such as Enda Eyesus, Kwiah and Mekele. But eventually, the government army and the British forces using aircraft crushed the revolt.

There were other peasant rebellions in addition to the Woyane and the Gojam peasant revolts. One of them was the Bale peasant rebellion (1963-1970) caused by misrule reflected in terms of exploitative tax system and suppression of other rights. Because most governors were appointed from the centre, the inhabitants were deprived of their rights

## The History of the Ethiopian Peoples' Struggle against Oppression

to administer themselves, and this had created discontents among the peoples of Oromo and Somale. The resistance was widely spread to areas like Elkere, Wabi and Dollo having broader political aims enjoying the support of the local people. There were also others such as the Yeju peasant uprising (1948 and 1970) and the Gedeo peasant rebellion (1960).

Choose one of them and research it; then produce a report to discuss the causes of the rebellions in the class.



The living condition of Ethiopian peasants in the period of the monarchy

### The outbreak of the Ethiopian Revolution

The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 was a result of the combined effects of the various peasant uprisings and other movements such as the Ethiopian students' movement which strongly challenged the Haile Selassie government in the 1960's and 1970's. They were involved in demonstrations with slogans such as "Land to the Tiller!" The government tried to suppress the students' movement by arresting its leaders and banning demonstrations. However, the students continued their struggle. Their movement eventually was supported by other sectors of the population such as the taxi drivers. This led to the outbreak of the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974.

Though the Ethiopian students played the major role to bring about the end of the regime, it was the committee of military officers called the Derg that controlled political power. The Derg declared, "Land to the Tiller" in 1975, but it did not bring a democratic system to the country. Rather, it controlled and exercised unlimited power, suppressed oppositions and established a single party system. Because of this, the peoples of Ethiopia started fighting against the Derg.

**?** Carry out small group research into the causes of the Ethiopian Revolution. What were the achievements and the failures?



Students' demonstrating in reign of Haile Selassie

### The Struggle to Overthrow the Derg (1975 – 1991)

The struggle to overthrow the Derg started soon after it assumed power. Several political organizations were formed around 1975 among which the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party

## The History of the Ethiopian Peoples' Struggle against Oppression

(EPRP), the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) and the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM) were the prominent ones. However, it was only the TPLF which managed to conduct a truly popular and successful armed struggle. This came to be known as the Second Woyane Movement. Nevertheless, due to their commission of several mistakes, most of the above mentioned parties suffered from internal crisis. Within the EPRP, this led to the rise of a democratic organization called the Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (EPDM). Within a short period of time, the EPDM was able to strengthen its power and translate itself into a truly democratic movement and, in parallel with TPLF, strongly resisted the military forces of the Derg in different places particularly in Wollo/ Amhara region.

In 1988, the TPLF managed to liberate much of Tigray. It was around this time that the TPLF and EPDM agreed to form the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The EPRDF was joined by the newly formed liberation movements, the Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization (OPDO) and the Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement (EDORM).

The EPRDF forces eventually defeated the Derg and removed the military government from power in 1991. This led to the transition to democratic rule in the country.

Discuss the following as a class:



- Which were the major political parties that had seats in the parliament of the transitional government?
- What were the major achievements of the transitional government?



EPRDF fighter

### REMEMBER

- ❑ The history of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia is marked by a struggle against oppression.
- ❑ Good examples are the peasants' rebellions that took place in different parts of Ethiopia.
- ❑ The Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples removed the Derg from power which gave rise to the beginning of the democratic process in the country.

## L E S S O N

## 2

# Conflict of Interests

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- describe the conflicting notion of the individual's rights and group rights.

- What do you know about group rights and individual rights?
- What is the difference between the two?

You discussed many things related to equality in the previous grades. In this lesson you will discuss conflict of interests related to the notion of equality on the one hand and individual and group rights on the other.

Group rights are rights held by individuals who are members of a particular group. It contrasts with rights held by a person as an individual. An example of a commonly asserted group right is the right of a nation or a people to self-determination.

Group rights are also different from human rights because they are not universal to all human beings. Human rights are universal since all human beings are entitled to human rights just by virtue of being human.

Group rights are considered as an instrument to facilitate the realization of equality. Some groups, such as women, the disabled, ethnic minorities and children, need special protective rights if their members are to enjoy human rights on equal terms with other groups of people. Group rights may aim at ensuring freedom from discrimination, or

realizing equal opportunity, or attempting to redress inequality.

Many countries have provided group rights to support or protect disadvantaged groups. After the end of the Apartheid system in South Africa, the South African government sought to redress the inequalities which prevailed during the Apartheid period. It favoured the disadvantaged groups such as blacks, coloured people and Indians by providing economic opportunities which were not previously available to them.

## The Ethiopian context

The FDRE Constitution provides group rights. It provides for every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia the right to self-determination, including the right to secession. One aspect of self-determination is that every Nation, Nationality and People has the right to speak, to write and to develop their language. This is aimed at reversing the linguistic and nationality policy of the previous governments of Ethiopia, which discouraged the use and development of languages other than the official language of the time.

The right to self-determination includes the right of every Nation, Nationality and People:

- to express, develop and promote its culture;
- to preserve its history;
- to the right to self-governance.

## Conflict of Interests

Form groups and discuss the following:

- How are the rights of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia protected by the Constitution?
- Identify examples of individual rights and group rights.



Besides respecting individual and group rights, conflict of interest could be managed through dialogue

### REMEMBER

- ❑ Group rights are rights held by individuals who are the members of a particular group.
- ❑ Individual rights are rights held by a person as an individual.
- ❑ A good example of group rights is the right of a nation or a people to self-determination.
- ❑ The FDRE Constitution provides for every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia the right to self-determination, including the right to secession.

# LESSON 3

## Equality and the Notion of Affirmative Action

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain the role of affirmative action in redressing past discrimination against women.

What is the relationship between affirmative action and women's participation in development?

Affirmative action refers to policies designed to remedy the effects of past discrimination against women, the disabled, racial groups, religious and ethnic minorities, therefore, affirmative action is important to compensate for past injustice and discrimination.

Many countries have practiced affirmative action to redress past discrimination and injustice. Affirmative action has been practiced in the United States where blacks, native Americans, women and other minority groups suffered from discrimination. Affirmative actions in the United States were aimed at:

- increasing employment opportunities for

minorities;

- taking positive steps to insure that employees were not discriminated against because of race, colour, ethnic origin, and creed;
- providing extra advantage and opportunities to enroll blacks, native Americans and women in colleges and universities;
- providing financial assistance to students from minority groups who could not afford to attend colleges.

These kinds of assistance helped members of the disadvantaged groups to achieve more in education and the world of work. Many people agree that affirmative action is important to remedy past discrimination. However, there are people who consider affirmative action unjust. There are people who argue that affirmative actions goes against the principle of equality. Some people consider affirmative action as reverse discrimination and, therefore, unjust.

### CASE STUDY

#### Challenging affirmative action

Allan Bakke was an American white student who was denied admission to a medical school, at the University of California. In 1978, Bakke brought the case to the Supreme Court where he argued that he was subject to reverse discrimination for the reason that black students were admitted with lower

academic credentials. Though the Court upheld that race could be considered in admissions to create a racially diverse student community, it made its decision in favour of Bakke who got admission to the medical school. (Source: Adapted from Encarta 2007)

## Equality and the Notion of Affirmative Action

Form groups and discuss the following questions.



- How do you see the argument of Allan Bakke?
- Would you support the court's decision if it admitted Bakke, who had a good academic results, in place of black student with lower grades? Why?
- How do you see the affirmative action which has been practiced in Ethiopia to provide extra opportunities to university education to female students?
- Do you think that these actions go against the principle of equality between men and women?

Women have historically suffered from discrimination in many parts of the world. This was true, even in the United States where women were not allowed to vote until the 1920 Constitutional Amendment. American women were also victims of discrimination in relation to employment. For instance women in the United States were denied the right to serve as judges.

Women have also suffered from discrimination and injustice in Ethiopia. Though women play a crucial role in the family and at the community level, their contribution was undermined. They did not have the right to own land and other non-movable assets. They did not have the right to inherit family assets such as land.

The subordination of women was not limited to the family level. Women were regarded as second-class citizens at a national level too. Women were denied the right to have equal opportunities in education. As a result, they were underrepresented in the world of work and the politics of the country. We need to recognize the role of women and integrate their experiences and efforts into development schemes.

The FDRE's Constitution gives much attention

to equality between women and men. It also recognizes that women suffered from injustice and discrimination and entitles them to remedial and affirmative actions in order to compensate past mistakes. The purpose of affirmative action is to enable women to have equal participation with men in the economic, social and political life of the country.

### *FDRE's Constitution, Article 35 (3):*

*The historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia taken into account, women, in order to remedy this legacy, are entitled to affirmative measures. The purpose of such measures shall be to provide special attention to women so as to enable them compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions.*

On the basis of the Constitution, the current government of Ethiopia has given much attention to women in many ways. It has expanded the educational opportunities for women at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. The number of female students enrolled at different levels, including at the college level, is continuing to increase.



## Equality and the Notion of Affirmative Action

### CASE STUDY

#### Number of male and female students enrolled in College of Social Sciences, Addis Ababa University from 1995–2000 E. C.

Years	Number of students enrolled			
	ECS	M	F	Total
1995	1007	169	1176	14.4%
1996	916	257	1173	22%
1997	978	329	1307	25.2%
1998	685	233	918	25.4%
1999	681	448	1129	40%
2000	636	395	1031	38.3%

Source: Addis Ababa University, College of Social Sciences, Record Office

Discuss the following questions as a class.

- How do you see the change in the percentage of female and male students enrolled in the College of Social Sciences from 1995 E.C. to 2000 E.C.?
- Do you think that having better opportunities to access university education helps women to participate more in politics?
- Do the following task as an assignment. Collect the number of 12th Grade students in your school over past 5 years and compare the number of male and female students. If you find the number of female students has been increasing/decreasing significantly, discuss why this is so?



Female enrolments in Higher Education have increased over the last ten years

### REMEMBER

- ❑ Affirmative actions are aimed at compensating past injustice and discrimination.
- ❑ Affirmative action is sometimes understood as reverse discrimination.
- ❑ The FDRE Constitution recognizes that women suffered from injustice and discrimination in the past and entitles them to remedial and affirmative actions in order to compensate past mistakes.

## L E S S O N

## 4

# Unity in Diversity

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain how the cultural equality strengthens the unity of the country.

What do you understand from the following quotation?

*"If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity."*  
John F. Kennedy, former president of USA

Countries such as India, China, Nigeria and the United States of America have a wide range of diversities. For instance, there are more than two hundred fifty ethnic groups in Nigeria. About 114 languages and 216 dialects are spoken in India. Diversity does not stop these countries from achieving rapid economic development. For example, India is one of the countries which has achieved rapid economic development despite having so many cultural groups. Likewise, the American population is characterized by racial, ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Different racial groups, such as the white Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and native Americans, live and work together in one political and economic space. Despite their racial, ethnic, cultural and religious differences, the Americans have managed to build their country as the major power in the world.

Ethiopia is also a country of religious, linguistic and other cultural diversities. Though we have

many cultural groups, and despite our diversity, we still need to create a common political and economic space and work together in the fight against poverty and backwardness. Since unity is strength, this will help us promote our common interests in a better way, maintaining equality and recognizing our diversities. We need to recognize the importance of maintaining equality of languages, religions and other cultural traits. That means we have to avoid considering our language, religion or culture superior to that of other people.

People have a tendency to consider their way of life to be good, right and even superior to that of others. This tendency of considering the cultures of other people inferior is called ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the use of one's culture for judging the life styles of other individuals or societies that leads to a negative evaluation of their values, norms and behaviours. As a result of ethnocentrism, many European travellers and writers regarded African societies as ignorant, backward and primitive, though the reality is far from this.

An ethnocentric individual is someone who is unable or unwilling to look at other cultures in their own terms. As a result, he or she fails to understand the true qualities of other cultures. Such a person, taking his religion as a point of reference, may consider the religious practices of others as backward, primitive or even threatening. These kinds of

## Unity in Diversity

### CASE STUDY

#### Tribal knowledge and traditional medicine

Until recently, Western scientists considered the knowledge of African societies to be superstitious. Now, however, they are realizing that these societies are rich in local wisdom and knowledge. The following is a real story that happened in the Central African Republic. A man was dying from an infectious disease that was damaging his chest. Though the patient was treated by European Catholic nuns, he did not show any sign of recovery. Desperately, the Catholic nuns asked the advice of a native doctor. The patient showed a remarkable recovery after a local doctor treated the wound by a traditional drug made from crushed termites.

Source: Henslin, 1995: 627

Form groups and discuss the following questions:

- Catholic nuns did not ask the local doctor for help previously; they asked the advice of the local doctor when their medicine failed to heal the patient. However, it was the local doctor who managed to cure the patient. Why did the nuns not take the patient to this doctor initially?
- Ethiopia has about 80 cultural and linguistic groups. Do you think that we could benefit from the local knowledge of each cultural group? How?

judgements may lead to serious conflicts and bloodshed. You have to avoid ridiculing others because of their language, religion, cultural dances or dress. Rather try to understand the culture of others from their perspective. Anthropologists call this approach of understanding cultures, cultural relativism.

Cultural relativism refers to understanding people's ways of living from the framework of their culture. It is the way of understanding culture in its own terms. Cultural relativism is a belief that any particular set of customs, values and norms are relative to a particular culture and that they can only be understood and evaluated within that particular cultural context. Anthropologists use this technique to compare cultures and understand why people in

different cultures live somewhat differently. Cultural relativism has the following major advantages:

- It helps us to be less arrogant and more open minded in relation to other societies and cultures.
- It helps us to understand and appreciate the culture of other peoples.
- It minimizes misunderstandings and conflicts related to cultural diversity.

Discuss the following question as a class:

- We need to strengthen our unity through recognizing and appreciating our differences. Do you think that cultural relativism helps us to understand cultural diversity and promote unity in diversity?

## Unity in Diversity

Different pictures of women in cultural styles that show “beauty”



Mursi woman



Oromo girl



Harar woman



Tigray woman

### CASE STUDY

#### Cultural diversity: the common heritage of humanity

Culture evolves over time and across distances. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups which make up society. It is a source of innovation and creativity. Cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity

is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefits of present and future generations.

*Source:* Article 1, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

## Unity in Diversity

### CASE STUDY

#### Cultural diversity as a factor in development

Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.

Source: Article 3, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

**?** Discuss the essence of these two articles in groups.  
Do you think that cultural diversity promotes development? Why?



Stone houses in Tigray



Karo huts in SNNPR

### REMEMBER

- Ethiopia is the country of cultural diversity.
- Despite our diversity we need to create a common political and economic space and work together in the fight against poverty and backwardness.
- The tendency to consider one's culture to be good, right and even superior to that of other people is called ethnocentrism.
- Strong ethnocentrism may lead to misunderstanding and conflict.
- Cultural relativism refers to understanding people's culture from their own perspective.
- Cultural relativism helps us to be less arrogant and more open minded in relation to other societies and cultures, and minimizes misunderstandings and conflicts.

## UNIT SUMMARY

The history of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia is marked by the history of their struggle against oppression. Peasant rebellions that took place in different parts of Ethiopia are good examples. The Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia removed the rule of the Derg in 1991.

The FDRE Constitution guarantees both individual and group rights in order to maintain equality. Group rights are those held by individuals as members of a group. Individual rights are rights held by a person as an individual. A good example of group rights is the right of a nation or a people to self-determination. The FDRE Constitution provides for every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia the right to self-determination, including the right to secession.

Affirmative actions are actions aimed at compensating past injustice and discrimination. Although there are people who consider affirmative action as reverse discrimination, it has been practiced in many countries including the USA, South Africa and India. Women were one group which suffered from injustice and discrimination. The FDRE Constitution, recognizing past injustice and discrimination, now entitles women to remedial and affirmative actions.

Ethiopia is the country of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. Despite our diversity, we need to create a common political and economic space and work together in the fight against poverty and backwardness. The tendency of considering one's way of life as good and even superior to that of others is called ethnocentrism. Strong ethnocentrism may lead to misunderstanding and conflict.

Cultural relativism refers to an understanding of people's culture from their (the people's) perspective. Cultural relativism helps us to be less arrogant and more open minded to other societies and cultures, and minimizes misunderstandings and conflicts.

## GLOSSARY

<b><i>Cultural relativism:</i></b>	The principle that people should judge the behaviour of others using the standards of their culture analyzed in its own terms.
<b><i>Ethnocentrism:</i></b>	A belief in, or assumption of, the superiority of the social or cultural group that a person belongs to.
<b><i>Group rights:</i></b>	Rights held by individuals who are the members of a group.
<b><i>Individual rights:</i></b>	Rights held by a person as an individual.
<b><i>Maladministration:</i></b>	Incompetent or dishonest management or administration, especially in public affairs.
<b><i>Petition:</i></b>	An appeal or formal request.
<b><i>Self-determination:</i></b>	The right of people to determine its own form of government without interference from outside.

## UNIT REVIEW EXERCISES

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

### Part I – Multiple choice

- Which of the peasant revolts was destroyed by the joint actions of the Ethiopian government and a British force?
  - the Bale peasant rebellion
  - the Gojam peasant rebellion
  - the first woyane movement
  - the second woyane movement
  - none of the above
- Which of the following statements is true?
  - There are areas of conflict between group rights and individual rights.
  - There is no conflict between affirmative actions and the idea that all human beings have equal rights.
  - Group rights are aimed at facilitating the realization of equality among different groups of people.
  - The current Constitution of Ethiopia gives priority to individual rights.
- Which of the following is true about ethnocentrism?
  - Ethnocentrism is the tendency to evaluate cultures in their own terms.
  - Strong ethnocentrism may lead to conflicts

between different cultural groups.

- Ethnocentrism is a tendency to consider one's culture or religion superior to that of others.
  - Ethnocentrism does not allow us to understand the true qualities of other cultures.
  - all of the above
- Which of the following does not go with group rights?
    - the right to self-determination
    - the right to the child to learn in his/her mother tongue
    - the right to develop one's culture
    - the right to self-governance
    - the right to vote

### Part II – Short answers

- What is the difference between the first and second Woyane Movements?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of affirmative action?
- What are the advantages of cultural relativism to maintain harmonious relationships in a multicultural state like Ethiopia?