

UNIT 10

Active Community Participation

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

- understand the significance of making active participation in community and national issues.
- realize the significance of organizing and strengthening different social bodies.

10.1 The Necessity of Citizens Participation

10.1.1 Active Participation of Citizens for Building Democracy and Good Governance



Picture 10.1. Let us stand to promote our development

- Explain what does the picture show?
- If the idea expressed in the picture is correctly carried out, what should demonstrators have done?



Picture 10.2. Interview with Ato Korocho

Mencher, a village of democracy and good governance

The voice of Mencher—Would you introduce yourself first?

Korocho—My name is Korocho. I have born in Tufat Zuria woreda. It is two years since I came back from 26 years stay out of my country. I employed about 750 individuals by creating job opportunity using the capital I brought from abroad.

Mencher's voice—How do made Mencher your dwelling and working place?

Korocho—As I came back to my country from abroad, I considered to dwell and work in so. But I found it is not suitable and hence I made here in Mencher.

Mencher's Voice—Why are you unable to dwell and work as you planned in Tufat?

Korocho—I failed to invest in Tufat. Because, daily concern of government officials there was running after personal advantages. They have no concern to change the situation of the woreda and the people in it. They have unnecessary relations with one another. They are insulting, quarreling and criticizing one another. They cannot work together for a common goal. Customers are not getting appropriate service even for tax payers of water, light and telephone services. Workers employed to carryout objectives of the institution are expecting certain benefits from customers. While I have the interest to invest in my country to help me and my people, they did not give me appropriate service. I spent lot of time to get place and license of work. Therefore, generally I was not successful. After one

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year of such struggles, without success, I decided to come to Mencher.

Mencher's voice—Have you not faced such problem in Mencher?

Korocho—Though I heard positive things about Mencher, I have not been sure. When I visited them, they were too positive regarding officials, workers and etc. Within 15 days, they gave me the place and license of work with different supports and even made it tax free for certain years. The criticism of these officials is to correct their work, and to give better services in a convenient way for the customers. They request for advices, listen to what we say, ready to learn from others and listen to one another. Oh! How interesting it is to work with these people?

Mencher's voice—I would like to thank for your ideas.

Korocho—So do I.

Activity 1

Answer the following questions on basis of the above interview:

1. Compare Tufat and Mencher woredas in regard to building democracy, good governance and common understanding.
2. What would you do if you were resident of Mencher woreda?
3. What would you do if you were resident of Tufat woreda?

Without democracy, there is no respecting, trusting and listening to one another. Since a few dictators prevail, the majority suffer. The public movement for common development is suppressed. Social development also perishes. On contrary, when building democratic system if it is followed by creating common understanding and good governance, it has significance for social justice and a country's progress. Since the common understanding and good governance in turn strengths democracy, it sustains development.

These are however not achievable by themselves. To attain these things, active participation of a society

has to be attained. Without active participation of citizens, democratic system cannot be strengthened. Good governance cannot prevail sustainable. In the absence of these, development and progress is unattainable.

Activity 2

Answer the following questions:

1. Mention at least two advantages of building a democratic system.
2. What would happen if people cannot participate actively in the democratic system?

10.1.2 Active Community Participation for Poverty Reduction



Picture 10.3. Farming through irrigation

- What do you understand from the picture?

Irrigation—A way for secured agricultural development

Agriculture is the base of our country's economy. It is highly correlated with natural rain. If the amount and distribution of rain is adequate, the economy becomes better. If it is not adequate, the economy suffers. Shall this dependency on rain have to continue? Is it not surprising while our rivers are trans-boundary, but we are dependent on rain?

Recently, I heard the news that Hadiya becomes an example to come out from such problems. By the self-initiation of the farmers of the zone, they diverted the two rivers in the traditional method for development reasons. They got high product from 88 hectare they cultivated in such way. They are improving their life by selling garden vegetables and fruits.

Opting irrigation as the alternative to bring changes in their life shows changes in two basic issues. The first is, waiting for rain and cultivating

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on base of this has no sustenance. Hence they have to depart them from that dependence. The second is replacing the unguaranteed traditional farming by the modern way.

We have to appreciate the self-initiation of such people to use irrigation and to come out of dependency. Such kind of attempts through the support of professionals and government has to be changed to general agriculture or mixed or even to the modern one.

In this way, it is possible to create the way of agriculture in which production is carried out through the year. The production rather than reserving for, family and community consumption, it is important to bring it to market. By succeeding the poverty reduction first then the sustainable development and fast progress is attainable.

[Source: Addis Zemen, Tir 95 E.C. page 3]

Activity 3

Answer the following on basis of the passage:

1. How the Hadiya farmers can play a role in reduction of poverty?
2. How active participation is exhibited by Hadiya farmers?

Ethiopia is one of the poverty stricken countries. In such countries, it is impossible to develop through traditional ways. It is important to score the economic progress with strong poverty reduction strategy and sustaining that economic progress. To achieve this, everyone has to realize to commit his/her energy, finance and knowledge all together. Such kind of fast development is attainable, if all citizens are able to have active participation in their areas of engagement and achieve successes.

Activity 4

Answer the following questions:

1. Why fast development is needed in our country?
2. What is your role to attain fast and sustainable development in Ethiopia?

10.1.3 Citizens Participation to Promote Transparency and Accountability



Picture 10.4. Transparency and accountability in the school

- What do you understand from the picture?

The Report of the Director

Respected teachers, students and workers of our school, last year as you know we have planned and endorsed the plan to promote transparency and accountability in our school. The plan has been implemented this year. In this meeting, I am going to present our achievements in due practice of the plan.

As you know, there are different services in the school. You remember the details of the plan on the type, for whom, in what condition and in what time span the service is to be given. For example, giving practical education for students to make them good citizens and making continuous assessment to ensure their achievement have been part of our plan. Giving consultations for students has been another area. We also agreed to give their certificates on time. We planned also to give supportive education while students are out of school for practical education. It was planned to give prompt and appropriate responses for families or care takers of students who want to know about their child's (children's) performance. Giving information for those who want either for concerned bodies or researchers is part of the plan. We have started to give fast and satisfactory administrative services to teachers and workers of the school. This ensures our agreement we made to promote transparency.

It was also openly introduced for people to fulfill first his/her own obligations when they come to get services duties. We also agreed to be accountable if

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duties are not managed to get fast, appropriate and respected service. On other words, we agreed to be accountable.

In years implementations, we tried to implement such stated plans. Except few problems around teachers and workers, generally, we have achieved good result. For example, one of the teachers due to not giving continuous assessment, poor recording and not letting results for students, has penalized. Also one administrative worker, due to maltreating of the student leaving the school to give his document and due to giving wrong document eventually, has penalized. Except these problems, mainly strong results were achieved. Due to transparency and accountability, our yearly work has evaluated as successful.

Thank you for listening!

Activity 5

Based on the above report, answer the following questions:

1. What do you understand from the report of the director?
2. Does your school have transparent and accountable procedure? Explain with practical examples.
3. Mention two areas in your school where you consider transparency and accountability is important.
4. Be in groups and make a dialogue for and against on “transparency and accountability bring change and do not bring change” in a given social service. Present the result of dialogue to your teacher.

If there is democracy in a society, that society can promote their views freely. Since this enables to listen one another, it creates common understanding. Public officials by considering themselves of being public servants, have to promote good governance. If there is change in the consciousness of people, it is possible to attain fast and sustainable development through active community participation. This enables us to reach the expected level of development.

Among the attributes of building democratic system and good governance, the principle of transparency and accountability of the government is the major procedure. In every society, the service of government bodies to public has to be measured against, the type of service, the end result of service and the strategy designed to achieve it. If it does not work against those procedures and appropriate result is not achieved, there should be the system to be accountable and liable. These all are practical if democracy prevails. Hence, democratic system has to be protected. Without active participation, the democracy and its products such as common understanding, good governance and fast development are unattainable.

Activity 6

Discuss on the following questions:

1. How can we ensure the existence of transparent and accountable administration? When can we say that good governance exists?
2. What does fast economic development mean?
3. Democracy is a precondition of good governance and fast development. Do you agree? Why?
4. What is expected from the people for enhancement of good governance and building democracy system and fast development?

10.2 Civic Organizations

10.2.1 The Significance of Civic Organizations in Country's Development



Picture 10.5. Women in the meeting

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Kimemit and her Colleagues

Kimemit participates in the garment factory female workers association from ordinary membership to leadership actively. Since she argues persuasively and a person of pragmatism and courage among members of the females, they give her the name Kimemit. No one calls her with her original name. Females are 2/3 the factory workers. Formerly, females paid less salary to men while working the same work. They were excluded from workers rights and privileges. A number of females face problem by virtue of their sex. Usually they face sexual harassment also.

Since the factory was edge of the town, females out of the factory had certain problems. Since the factory has no satisfactory transportation service, female workers forced to walk large distance, which was after the heavy work of factory. At days or nights while they walk on roads they face attacks from gangsters, for looting and sexual harassment.

Kimemit, strongly identified these females problems through research. Then she attempted bring solution in workers association movement. However, the association unable to settle their problem unlike she expected. She was not successful. Hence, she recognized the necessity of establishing women workers association. After certain ups and downs, through strong support of large number of female workers, her ambition succeeded. She became the chairperson of the association. Then that organization from that day onwards mobilized whole female workers. By their strong activities, they resolved problems of female workers of the factory. Today, between female and male workers, there is no difference in right and privileges. Even attacks they encounter out of the factory are solved by collaborative efforts of factory administrators, police and other concerned governmental and non-governmental organization and with surrounding communities.

Today, there is absolute peace in the factory. Female workers can move freely within and out the factory and also exit and enter freely. They have good participation in factory administration. They participate in administrative decisions concerning, rights and privileges of workers and the productivity

of the factory. The factory became highly productive and supporting country's economy well. These all results are achieved due to the strong participation of women workers in collaboration with female workers association.

Activity 7

Answer the following questions based on the above passage:

1. Is there any civic organization that played great role in the story? If there is, what role it has played and achieved?
2. On basis of story, enumerate the achievements attained due to factory workers movement in building democracy, peace and development?
3. Was there active participation of females in the changes of factory? Explain the significance and adverse of it.
4. If you were the worker of this factory, what would you do in this struggle? Why?

The base for the subsequent development of a country is, the prevalence of peace and democratic system. It is also practical however, if there is active participation of society. Rather than unilateral involvement of the individuals in peace, democracy and development, being organized has great significance. The role of civic organization is more expressed in such ways. Any social and economic problem can be solved by civic organization if strong administration, committed and active workers and with clear vision. Hence such civic organizations have real power for promotion of democracy and peace and economic progress.

Activity 8

Discuss on the following questions:

1. How should people act in a country to ensure peace, democracy and development?
2. What does the role of civic organizations look like in promoting peace, democracy and development?

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10.2.2 The Role of Civic Organization to Influence on Government Action

- How civic organization influences on government actions?

The forum of Addis Ababa residents



Picture 10.6. General forum of Addis Ababa residents

There is the establishment of kebele residents' forum in Addis Ababa city in 1999 based by different social groups on basis of former structures. The major bases of the forum are youth and females association. Later, it was included to all residence of city into forum.

The forum specially centred the problems of females, youths and lower and middle class of the society. Major issues were unemployment, problems of peace and security, absence of good governance, economic inflation and etc. Generally, the weakening of economic activities in the city was another concern. The forum carried direct discussions and criticisms with the city administrations to awake their performances. It also unclosed corruption and unfair works of the administration and other offices. It also echoed the problem to federal government higher authorities. It tried to show governments weaknesses. Such common discussions played a lot role to give solutions. The forum continues to struggle until all problems are handled. The struggle yet now also played a role in reducing such problems and motivating the people to be involved in city issues.

Activity 9

Answer the following questions on basis of the previous passage:

1. What do you understand from Addis Ababa city residents forum meeting?
2. What is the role of the forum to strengthen peace, development and democracy?
3. What lesson you learn from forum of Addis Ababa city residence?

Civic organizations are out of the influence of government. They are non-profit making. They request the active participation of people for social, political and economic contribution to the society. They have great role in the democracy in solving the social and economic problems. They play great role in building democracy. There are democratic practices such as making free participation, electing members, recall if leader not perform well and the like.

They serve as bridge between people and government. By doing so, they play significant role in making government to discharge its duties and responsibilities. They have great public role to influence, check and control government whether it has done activities properly or not.

Activity 10

Discuss on the following questions:

1. How do civic organizations differ from others?
2. What are significances of civic organizations?
3. Is it important to participate in civic organizations? Why?
4. What kind of civic organizations are there in your schools? What has to be the role of these civic organizations?

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Summary

We saw that, it is important to build democracy to have common understanding, good governance, and transparency and accountability of government bodies. They are preconditions to ensure fast development. To make them real and to sustain them, active community participation is important.

It is obvious that such participations are not by the unilateral involvement of individuals but by being associated in different organizations. Civic

organizations are centres for popular participation for promotion of peace, democracy and ensuring active community participation. They are also centres for people to check and control government on certain current affairs. Hence, every one has to have active participation in civic organization. This is important to ensure our peace, to strengthen democratic system and fast development.

Key Words

Good governance:	Non-partisan, non-corrupted, giving fast and appropriate service
Transparency:	A procedure when government authorities and workers are based on laws and appropriate procedures
Harassment:	Physical and Psychological attack peoples make on other peoples in different ways
Common understanding:	While difference is there, having on certain agreeable issues and working in together to attain them
Forum:	Union established by peoples with common objective to act in together
Accountability:	System on which government authorities are either rewarded or blamed on basis of their performance

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. Among attributes endangering democracy is the dictatorship of individual leaders.
2. Fast development has contribution for reduction of poverty.
3. For fast development, the main issue is the amount of natural resources than active community participation.
4. Ensuring either transparency or accountability is a precondition to promote good governance.
5. Though civic organizations role for democracy and peace is limited, its economic role is significant.

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

- | A | B |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Accountability | A. Governing by elected individuals |
| 2. Civic organizations | B. Being responsible for what you are doing |
| 3. Direct participation | C. Doing openly |
| 4. Indirect participation | D. Influencing and controlling government |
| 5. Activities of civic organization | E. Individual involvements in political issues |
| | F. Being profitable on what we are doing |
| | G. Common public organization |

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

1. There are _____ and _____ participation of society in social, economic and political issue.
2. The development encompassed by active community participation is not only fast but also _____.

IV. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

1. _____ can be among things endangering good governance.
(a) Corruption (b) Partisan practice
(c) Maltreatment of customs (d) All.
2. Among activities of civic organizations
(a) Implementing government policies
(b) Involving the public in development, peace and democratic movements
(c) Instrument of government to control the people (d) All.
3. The role of every society cannot be replaced by another, means
(a) Work division among peoples (b) No interference of one another
(c) Since everybody has its own special character, it cannot be replaced by another
(d) All.
4. One of the following is the challenges of democracy
(a) Civil war and conflict (b) Unaccepting constructive criticism
(c) Intolerance and not listening one another (d) All.
5. In order civic organizations to influence and control government
(a) They have to exist in democratic system (b) Have to accept orders from government
(c) They have to be superior from government in authority and hence free from government control
(d) All.

V. Give short answers for the following questions

1. Mention at least three possible effects in the absence of good governance.
2. Mention two things in which active community participation can play for good governance.