

Unit 3

Equality

Introduction

You learnt the importance of the rule of law in Unit Two. The rule of law means the law should treat all citizens fairly and equally. In this unit, you will learn about equality. The unit deals with equality of nations, nationalities and peoples. It also discusses equality of citizens, gender equality and equality within diversity of cultures. Your understanding on equality will help you to grasp the main points related to justice which is the focus of the next unit.

Lessons

1. Equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia
2. Equality of Citizens in the Ethiopian Constitution
3. Gender Equality
4. Equality within Diversity

Key words and concepts

- Cultural Equality
- Diversity
- Economic Equality
- Equal Opportunities
- Equality
- Gender
- Gender Equality
- Political Equality

What you will learn

You will:

- recognize the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.
- understand the essence of gender equality.

Taking equal responsibility for household chores



1

LESSON

Equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia

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

- define what equality means.
- explain the history of equality in Ethiopia.

What is equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples?

Equality indicates some similarity between individuals and groups of people. It is a state of being equal in having similar rights, benefits, opportunities and burdens. Equality does not show complete similarity. You and your classmates cannot be absolutely similar. You may differ in the language you speak, in your religious and other cultural backgrounds. You may also have different skills, opinions, interests or political views. This shows the prevalence of diversity in different ways.

Ethiopia is a good example of diversity of peoples and cultures. You know that about eighty nations, nationalities and peoples live in our country. These peoples speak different languages and have other various cultural traits. They live in different parts of the country. They are engaged in different economic activities such as farming and livestock herding. Most of the people live in rural areas while many people live in towns and cities.

Equality prevails when all nations, nationalities

and peoples enjoy equal rights and opportunities. The history of Ethiopia is marked by the prevalence of inequality of nations, nationalities and peoples. In the past, people living in different parts of the country did not have equal access to education.

There were many schools in few areas while there were few in some regions. There were very few schools in regions such as Afar where livestock herding people live. Access to education was also very low in regions such as Benishangul Gumuz which are located far from Addis Ababa. This means there were many educated people in some parts of the country while in others there were few.

The people of Ethiopia did not enjoy equal rights to use their languages in schools and courts of law. But now children have the right to use their first language, at least in primary schools.

You are a Grade 9 student. Let us assume that your first language is Gamo and you have sisters at primary school age. Your sisters have the right to learn in Gamo language. This is the right of all children with different ethnic backgrounds. But in the past most children in Ethiopia did not enjoy this right because Amharic was the school language throughout the country.

Most of the people did not have equal opportunities to promote social and cultural development. They were not encouraged to be proud of their languages and religions. For

Equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia

example, most people had no right to use their language in the court of law. People who had court cases did not have the right to use their languages in the court of law because Amharic was a court language in all regions.

There was also inequality in political participation. Nations, nationalities and peoples did not have the right to self-government. They did not have the right to govern their woredas and regions. The people who governed different regions were appointed by the central government. People from very few cultural groups controlled

political power be it at the woreda or national level of government. People from other nations and nationalities did not have an equal share of political power.

? Make groups and discuss the different forms of inequality that existed in Ethiopia in the past and discuss what rights nations, nationalities and peoples are enjoying now. Group leaders can give a summary of the main points to the class.

CASE STUDY

The Sari and Darab are two peoples who live in one of the African countries. The two peoples have their own cultural traits like language. The Sari people live near a big city and along a main highway. Seventy five percent of the Sari children have access to primary education because the government of that country opened many schools in their area. However, only twenty percent of the Darab children go to school because the number of schools in their area is very small.

Make groups and discuss these questions. Let your group leader summarize your points to the class for further discussion.

- ?**
- Do you think that it is fair to open many schools in one area while opening few in another area?
 - What is the effect of this kind of difference? Does it affect the political participation of the people?

REMEMBER

- ❑ Equality does not mean absolute similarity.
- ❑ Equality means being equal in having similar rights, benefits, opportunities and burdens.
- ❑ People enjoy equality where there is no discrimination based on their cultural backgrounds.
- ❑ The peoples of Ethiopia did not enjoy equal rights to use their languages in schools and to develop their other cultural traits in the past.

LESSON 2

Equality of Citizens in the Ethiopian Constitution

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

- explain the different dimensions of equality as stated in the Federal Constitution.

State a few points about equality of citizens? What does the Ethiopian Constitution say about this?

You have learned what equality means in the previous lesson. Equality means that citizens have equal access to resources and opportunities such as education and also share similar burdens. You and other students in your school have equal rights to use the school library and to play on the football field. When you elect a class representative, every student in your class has the right to vote and be elected. Citizens of Ethiopia have equal political and economic opportunities. The Constitution of Ethiopia guarantees equality of citizens in political and economic opportunities without discrimination based on differences in religion, language and other cultural traits and sex.

Political Equality

Article 38, sub-article 1b of the FDRE Constitution states:

Every Ethiopian national ... has the following rights: on the attainment of 18 years of age, to vote in accordance with law; ...

The Constitution states that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to political participation. This is what we call political equality. All adult citizens have equal right to elect their representatives. They have equal rights to be elected and work as administrators at the kebele, woreda, regional or federal levels of government.

You have the right to elect your representatives from the age of 18 and the right to be elected when you attain the age of 21. Citizens also have equal rights to make a political speech and reflect their opinion. They have also the right to form or be members of political parties and other associations.

Economic Equality

Every Ethiopian has the right to choose his or her means of livelihood, occupation and profession.

(Article 41, sub-article 2 of the FDRE Constitution)

Economic equality does not refer to absolute equality in wealth and property. It means equality of opportunities such as job opportunities. The FDRE Constitution guarantees equality of economic opportunities to all citizens. Citizens have equal opportunities to take part in different economic activities. They have equal rights to

Equality of Citizens in the Ethiopian Constitution

choose their job and profession. As a citizen you have the right to choose your job. You have the right to decide to be a teacher, a driver, a farmer or a pilot.

Of course your choice should depend upon your ability and education. For example, if you choose to be a teacher you have to be trained in

teachers’ colleges or institutions. If you want to be a driver you have to get the necessary training.

When you get a job you have the right to get equal pay with other citizens with similar ability, education and work. You, and all other citizens have also the right to own property through legal means.

Make small groups and discuss the following questions:

Read the following articles of the FDRE Constitution. Discuss their meanings and identify whether each article deals with a political or economic right.

Every Ethiopian national has the right: To vote and to be elected at periodic elections to any office at any level of government (Article 38, sub-article 1c)

Women workers have the right to equal pay for equal work (Article 42, sub-article d)



Copy the table below. List on the copy the articles of the FDRE’s Constitution that deal with political equality and economic equality. Examples are provided.

Articles related to economic rights	Articles related to political rights
Article 41 sub-article 2: Every Ethiopian has the right to choose his or her means of livelihood, occupation or profession.	Article 31: Every person has the right to freedom of association for any cause or purpose....

CASE STUDY

The caste system: restriction on the right to choose an occupation

In India people are divided into social groups called castes. The members of each caste have certain occupations. The four main castes are Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Viyashvas, and Shudras. Brahmans is the highest caste. It includes scholars and religious leaders. Kshatriyas is the second caste. It consists of soldiers and rulers. Viyashvas is the third caste that

includes merchants and farmers. Shudras, the fourth caste, includes labourers and craftsmen. Kshatriyas are not allowed to be religious leaders or priests. Viyashvas are not allowed to be soldiers. Shudras are not allowed to be merchants and farmers. In addition to this, the members of each caste group are not allowed to marry a member of another caste.

Equality of Citizens in the Ethiopian Constitution

Discuss these questions as a class.



- Is it fair to restrict the right of people to a certain occupation?
- What is the effect of these kinds of inequalities among citizens?
- Does it go against the principle of equality?

CASE STUDY

Craft workers undermined

Dartse is a potter. Chuba, her husband, is a tanner. Both Dartse and Chuba are Gamo. They live near Chenchä town in the Gamo highlands. Previously, in the Gamo culture, crafts, such as pottery or tannery, were considered inferior to farming. Tanners were not allowed to have farmland or to farm. They were considered inferior to farmers and other people who would not use the same coffee cup as a potter like Dartse because they believed that it would bring them harm. Farmers and weavers did not marry potters or the children of potters or tanners. People like Dartse and Chuba make pots and other things important to the community but, until recently, they were not encouraged in their work. They could not build their house in the village. They lived in isolated areas and kept their distance from the villages inhabited by other people.

Discuss the following questions in groups and present the summaries to the class.



- What is your opinion regarding this case?
- What is the difference between the Indian caste system and the situation mentioned in this case?
- Do you think that undermining craftsmen and craftswomen retards the development of craftworks?



A female potter

Equality of Citizens in the Ethiopian Constitution

REMEMBER

- ❑ Equality of citizens means citizens have equal access to resources and opportunities such as education.
- ❑ Citizens of Ethiopia have equal political and economic opportunities.
- ❑ Economic equality means equality of opportunities such as job opportunities.
- ❑ Political equality means all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to political participation.
- ❑ The Constitution states that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to political participation.
- ❑ The FDRE Constitution also guarantees equality of economic opportunities to all citizens.

LESSON 3

Gender Equality

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

- explain the concept of gender equality and its place in contemporary Ethiopia.

- What is gender?
- What is gender equality?

Sex and Gender

You have to identify the meanings of sex and gender to understand what gender equality means. Sex and gender have different meanings. Sex refers to differences in physical or biological features, such as body, hair and breast development. Differences in reproductive functions of men and women are a good example. For example, it is women who give birth to babies and breastfeed them. Men cannot do this because of biological differences. These kinds of differences are natural. They do not show inequality of men and women.

Gender does not refer to biological differences. It is a social concept. It is closely related to our culture. In some societies only men weave. Women can help men but they do not weave. This does not mean that women have no ability to weave. They do not weave because the culture does not allow them to be weavers. In many areas of Ethiopia men plough the farm using oxen while women perform other farm activities. It does not mean that women are too weak to do this; it is because of cultural beliefs.



Gender equality in education

Gender deals with differences between men and women in social, economic and political participation. Previously men and women did not have equal rights to control resources. They did not have equal rights to political participation. They did not have equal access to education. For example, there are very few female Prime Ministers or Presidents in the world. There are very few female university teachers in Ethiopia. The number of educated women is much lower than that of men in many countries. Gender deals with these kinds of differences between men and women, girls and boys.

Gender Equality

Copy the tables. Fill out the copies based on the examples given:

Sexual differences

Male/men	Female/women
Have strong muscles	Give birth to babies



Gender biases

Male/men	Female/women
Control more political power	Have less access to education

Gender Equality

Gender equality refers to equality of men and women, girls and boys, regarding their rights to enjoy equal opportunities. This means men and women should enjoy equal basic rights such as the right to vote, to be elected and hold public offices. Men and women should have equal access to education and job opportunities. The idea of gender equality is a recent development. Women and men did not have equal rights in the recent past. For example, women did not have the right to vote in the United States until the last century. When we talk about gender equality, we are talking about:

- Reducing the gap between boys’ and girls’ access to education;
- Reducing the gap between men and women in political participation and job opportunities;

- Supporting women and girls to exercise their rights.

Gender Inequality in Ethiopia

Girls and women in Ethiopia were not treated equally with boys and men in the past. The origins of gender inequality are cultural backgrounds and unequal distribution of opportunities such as access to education and job opportunities. In many cultures in Ethiopia the women’s role has been limited to activities such as childcare, cooking and home management. Women had little access to education. They were not encouraged to take part in political activities and decision-making. Their political participation at the local and national level was very weak. They had less income and access to resources such as land. Women and girls also suffer from harmful cultural practices such as female circumcision and early marriage. Although there are changes, these inequalities still exist in our country.

Gender Equality

Copy this table. Discuss the following questions in small groups and present your answers to the class

- Collect data from your teacher on the number of male and female students of Grade 9 over the last two years and complete the table below.
- On the basis of this data how far has gender equality been achieved?

Students in Grade 9	Year 1	Year 2
Females		
Males		

The Importance of Gender Equality

Gender inequality prevailed in Ethiopia. Men and women did not have equal access to land and other resources. They did not have equal opportunities related to education, jobs and political participation. Gender inequalities weaken women's participation in many ways. It limits girls' access to education. It weakens the political participation of women. It also decreases women's contribution in productive activities. The active participation of women is very important to promote the development of the country. It is difficult to reduce poverty without their active participation because women comprise half of the country's population.

REMEMBER

- Sex and gender have different meanings.
- Sex refers to differences in physical or biological features.
- Gender deals with differences between men and women in social, economic and political participation.
- Gender equality refers to equality of men and women, girls and boys, regarding their rights to enjoy equal opportunities.
- Gender inequality prevailed in Ethiopia in the past.
- Gender inequality limited the participation of girls and women in development activities and in poverty reduction.
- We have to fight gender inequality to increase women's contribution in development activities and poverty reduction.

LESSON

4

Equality within Diversity

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

- explain the respect that should be accorded to different cultures in order for equality to prevail.
- respect the culture of your citizens.

What are the benefits of respecting the cultures of others?

You learnt about diversity and tolerance in Unit 1. Ethiopia is a country of different peoples and cultures. Tolerating these and other differences is important to live in peace and cooperation.

Cultures, each having a unique character, contribute something to a diverse society. For example, the Gamo or Dorze weavers produce very beautiful cultural clothes called *tebeb*. People in different parts of Ethiopia use these traditional clothes when they go to church and at times of weddings and holidays. Many merchants make a profit buying and selling *tebeb* and other traditional clothes. Some also export high quality *tebeb* to Europe and America.

Similarly, other peoples contribute to the cultural development of Ethiopia. Having cultural diversity means having different dress styles, traditional foods and cultural dances, all of which makes Ethiopia beautiful and interesting. This attracts many tourists and increases our country's income.

Equality within diversity

We have said that diversity of cultures has benefits. We can benefit from our cultures when we see them equally. You have to respect differences in dress styles, dances, traditional foods etc. You respect these and other cultural differences when you believe in equality of cultures. You have to realize that there is no culture which is superior to other cultures. Similarly, no culture is inferior to any other culture. All cultures should be seen equally.

Some people may consider that their culture is superior to other cultures. They may consider that their cultural foods and dances are better than those of others. They may also think that their dress styles are more beautiful than those of other peoples. Some people may try to undermine the foods, dances or dress styles of others. When you do this you are undermining the cultural identity of others. This means you harm the feelings of other people. This may lead you into conflict with those people. These kinds of conflicts may expand and create serious problem. Conflicts of this type weaken the possibility of living and working together peacefully.

We need to work together to fight poverty which is our common enemy. We have no time to waste. We have to join hands and work hard to fight against poverty. We can do this successfully when we respect our cultural differences and

Equality within Diversity

treat all cultures equally. Mutual respect helps us to fight our common enemies and promote the development of our country.

When we talk of equality as an instrument of development, we also have to take account of people with disabilities. Their contribution to society can be valuable if they are treated equally and given appropriate support in terms of health and education.

Equality of Religion: Religion is a cultural manifestation which we have to respect. In Ethiopia there are different religions like Islam, Christianity, Judaism and indigenous beliefs. The Ethiopian people are followers of these different

religions. When we respect the religion of others it means that we respect their culture. This enables us to live in harmony as citizens of one country.

Discuss the following questions as a class. Ethiopia is a country of diversity. It is the home of many cultures and peoples.

- ?**
- What are the advantages of respecting the equality of peoples from different backgrounds?
 - Can we promote the development of our country if we do not maintain equality among the peoples of Ethiopia who have different cultures?



New mosque in Addis Ababa



Christian Orthodox Church

REMEMBER

- ❑ Diversity of cultures has many benefits because each culture contributes something to the development of our country.
- ❑ We can benefit from our cultures when we respect cultural differences and see our cultures equally.
- ❑ Undermining cultures of others could lead to conflicts between different cultural groups.
- ❑ You need to respect diversity and see cultures equally; this will help us to work together and fight poverty which is our common enemy.

UNIT SUMMARY

You have learnt the meaning and types of equality. Equality does not show complete similarity. Equality means being equal in having similar rights, benefits, and opportunities. Equality of citizens means citizens have equal access to resources and opportunities such as education. You can enjoy equality where there is no discrimination.

Citizens of Ethiopia have equal political and economic opportunities. Economic equality means equality of opportunities such as job opportunities. Political equality means all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to political participation. The FDRE Constitution states that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to political participation. It also guarantees equality of economic opportunities to all citizens.

Gender inequality is one type of inequality. Sex and gender have different meanings. Sex refers to differences in physical or biological features. Gender is related to differences between men and women in social, economic and political participation. Gender equality refers to equality of men and women, girls and boys regarding their rights to enjoy equal opportunities. Gender inequality weakens the participation of women in development activities and poverty reduction. We have to fight gender inequality to increase women's contribution in development activities.

Diversity of cultures has many good points because each culture contributes something to the development of our country. We can benefit from our cultures when we respect cultural differences. Undermining the cultures of others could lead to conflicts. You need to respect diversity and see cultures equally because that will help us to work together and fight poverty, our common enemy.

GLOSSARY

<i>Culture:</i>	The way of life including all customs, beliefs and social organization of a community.
<i>Cultural equality:</i>	The idea that there is no culture which is inferior or superior to other cultures.
<i>Caste:</i>	A division of society based on differences in wealth, social rank or occupation.
<i>Diversity:</i>	Differences among peoples in terms of culture, religion, languages, etc.
<i>Economic equality:</i>	Equality of opportunities such as job opportunities.
<i>Equal opportunities:</i>	Having equal access to education, employment, health, etc.
<i>Equality:</i>	Being equal in having similar rights, benefits, and opportunities.
<i>Gender:</i>	Differences between men and women in social, economic and political participation.

Gender equality:	The equality of men and women, girls and boys regarding their rights to enjoy equal opportunities.
Political equality:	Having equal rights to political participation such as the right to vote or be elected.

UNIT REVIEW EXERCISES

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

Part I – True or false

1. Economic equality means citizens should have equal amounts of wealth and property.
2. At present all children in Ethiopia have equal rights to learn in their own language.

Part II – Multiple choice

1. Which of the following is False in relation to economic equality?
 - (a) equal access to job opportunities
 - (b) the right to choose job and profession
 - (c) having equal amount of wealth
 - (d) equal pay for a similar work
2. “Every Ethiopian national on the attainment of 18 years of age has the right to vote in accordance with law.” This sub-article of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution deals with:
 - (a) economic equality
 - (b) cultural equality
 - (c) political equality
 - (d) gender equality
3. Which of the following statements is true?
 - (a) gender and sex have similar meanings
 - (b) gender is about physical features while sex is about cultural features

- (c) gender inequality has no effect on development activities
 - (d) gender equality means men and women enjoy equal opportunities
4. Which of the following is not an advantage of cultural diversity?
 - (a) each culture contributes some values to society
 - (b) differences lead to conflict and war
 - (c) it is beautiful to have various kinds of dress styles and dances
 - (d) the existence of various cultures attracts the attention of tourists

Part III – Short answers

1. List two points about the benefits of gender equality.
2. What is the major source of gender inequality?
3. “Women workers have the right to equal pay for equal work” (Art. 42/d). This sub-article of the FDRE’s Constitution indicates gender equality as well as economic equality. Is it right? Why?
4. Crafts workers, such as potters and tanners, are considered inferior to other people in many parts of Ethiopia. List two negative effects of these kinds of opinion?