

Unit 3

Equality

Introduction

In Grade 9, you identified what equality means. You discussed equality of citizens, gender equality and equality within diversity. In this unit, you will discuss the importance of equality in promoting peace, stability and development. The unit also focuses on equality of cultures including equality of languages and religions.

Lessons

1. The Concept of Equality
2. The Effects of Equality of Citizens
3. Gender Equality
4. Equality of Cultures

What you will learn

You will:

- recognize how equality was understood in Ethiopia.

- appreciate the importance of equality.
- understand the necessity of gender equality.

Key words and concepts

- Culture
- Equality of cultures
- Equal opportunities
- National consensus
- Stability

Taking equal responsibility for household chores



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LESSON

The Concept of Equality

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

- explain the new dimensions of equality after the transition to democracy in Ethiopia.

Do you have some idea about the history of equality in Ethiopia?

You learnt the meaning of equality in Grade 9. Equality does not mean the provision of identical treatment and benefits. When we say all citizens are equal we are not saying all of them should receive identical treatment and rewards. For example, hundreds of athletes may participate in a marathon competition where the rules and the course are the same for every competitor. But, depending on their ability and performance, they may get different awards. Absolute equality and similarity do not exist between any two people. This is because we differ in physical strength, intellectual capacity, interest and devotion.

Equality means having similar rights, benefits and opportunities. The rights guaranteed to you are guaranteed to other citizens and vice versa. Equality also indicates the absence of discrimination based on race, wealth, sex and culture.

Inequality based on race and gender was common in Ethiopia and other parts of the world. For example, black Americans in the United States of America did not have the right to vote until the constitutional amendment of 1870. Similarly, women did not have the right to elect until the amendment of the constitution in 1920.

Equality is not only about rights and benefits but also burdens that should be distributed equally. For example, as your parents enjoy government services, they have the obligation to pay appropriate amounts of tax, as do other citizens.

Citizens should enjoy benefits and services provided by the government. They should also shoulder responsibilities. Inequality prevailed in Ethiopia in many ways in the past. The relationship between peasants and landlords in the feudal period is a good example of inequality. The peasants at that time were forced to pay different types of taxes in the form of crops, cattle and sheep or labour. Although peasants had all these burdens, they did not get schools, health centres and other social services. They also did not have the right to political participation since the kings and their families, as well as feudal lords, controlled political power.

The Concept of Equality

CASE STUDY

Feudal lords and the gebar in contemporary Ethiopia

In the nineteenth century, the economic basis of political power was tribute (*gibir*) and surplus labour. The feudal lords extracted *gibir* and labour from the peasants. There were different types of tributes. The main tribute was the land tax. The next was tithes or *asrat*, which was about a tenth of the peasants' harvest. In addition to these two tributes, the *gebar* was obliged to supply provisions for officials and visitors passing through his district. He had to provide firewood for his overlord, known as *malkagna*. He did this twice or three times a year. He provided the honey that was so essential to make *tej* for the ruling class. He was also expected to offer 'gifts' when a new governor was appointed, when the governor was promoted or when a son was born to the governor.

The *gebar* was also responsible to pay *gibir* in the form of labour. The *gebar* worked on the governor's land called *hudad*. This took about a third of a *gebar's* labour time. The *gebar* also ground grain for the

malkagna. He was engaged in the construction of granaries and fences for the governor or the *malkagna*. He also provided transport service, carrying personal property of the governor or an official in the times of peace, and provisions of military service in times of war.

Source: Adapted from Bahru Zewde, 2002

Discuss the following questions based on this case study.

- List the kinds of *gibir* the peasant paid to the feudal lords.
- Which group benefited more from this relationship between the *gebar* and the feudal lords?
- Do you think that *gebars*, or peasants of that time, had access to education and health-care services?

You have learnt that inequality prevailed among nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia in the period of previous governments. Peoples' political participation was very limited both in the periods of the monarchy and the military government. Kings and feudal lords controlled political power in the feudal period. Few military leaders controlled political power in the reign of the Derg. The peoples of Ethiopia did not exercise political power, even at the local level, because both governments were unitary and centralized.

This situation changed after the fall of the Derg and the introduction of a democratic system. Now people are represented both through the regional and federal governments. At the federal level,

each nation, nationality and peoples is represented in the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of the Federation. They take part in decision-making in the House of Peoples' Representatives through their representatives. People also participate in government activities in the regional states, at the woreda and kebele levels. Because the Constitution guarantees the rights of the nations, nationalities and peoples, they have started to enjoy their political, economic and social rights as citizens of Ethiopia.

The FDRE Constitution and peoples' representation

The FDRE Constitution guarantees peoples' representation in the House of the Federation

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and House of Peoples' Representatives. The FDRE Constitution in Article 54 (3) and 61 (1 and 2) deals with peoples' representation in HPR and HF.

3. *Members of the House of Peoples' Representatives shall be on the basis of population and special representation of minority Nationalities and Peoples, shall not exceed 550: of these, minority Nationalities and Peoples shall have at least 20 seats.*
1. *Each Nation, Nationality and People shall be represented in the House of the Federation by*

at least one member.

2. *Each Nation or Nationality shall be represented by one additional representative for each one million of its population.*

- How are people represented in the two Houses?
- Which Article gives attention to minority nationalities and peoples?
- In your opinion, what are the benefits of peoples' representation in the two Houses?

REMEMBER

- ❑ Equality means having similar rights, benefits and opportunities. It does not indicate the provision of identical treatment and benefits.
- ❑ Citizens should enjoy the benefits/services and shoulder responsibility.
- ❑ Inequality based on sex, family and cultural background was common in Ethiopia.
- ❑ Now nations, nationalities and peoples are represented in the House of the Federation and House of Peoples' Representatives and take part in government activities.



Joint meeting of the House of Federation and the House of Peoples' Representatives

LESSON 2

The Effects of Equality of Citizens

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

- explain the effects of the existence of equality among the citizens of Ethiopia.

What is the importance of equality of citizens in Ethiopia?

You should have clear knowledge about the past because it helps you to understand the present situation in a better way. When you go back in time, you understand that Ethiopian history is full of stories of wars and conflicts. Ethiopians fought many battles against external enemies in order to defend their country. This is what we have to do today, and in the future when enemies invade our country. This is our obligation as citizens.



Victory Monument in Arat Kilo —
a sign of our ability to defend the motherland

But in Ethiopia there was an internal war as well. One of the main causes of internal wars was the existence of inequalities. You know that war is destructive. The continuous conflicts and wars exhausted the resources of the country and led to lack of peace and **stability**. This in turn retarded the development of our country.

The solution to avoid wars and conflicts is promoting equality of citizens. Citizens should enjoy equality regarding access to social services such as education and job opportunities. They should also have **equal opportunities** in political participation. When equality prevails we enjoy peace and stability. The existence of peace and stability reduces conflict and wars and thus reduces the destruction of human and material resources of the country.

It also helps us to live in peace and work together to promote the development of our country. When peace and stability exist, people invest their money in different sectors. Farmers devote time and labour to tilling the land and cultivating more crops. People move from place to place for business and different purposes. You and your friends attend classes, sit for exams and get promotion. All these are possible when peace and stability prevails.

We have said that the existence of equality leads to peace and accelerates development. It also paves the way for national consensus. National consensus means all members of a group agreeing on and sharing similar opinions about important

The Effects of Equality of Citizens

issues. People can work together and achieve when they have similar opinions about their common goal. For example, students and teachers in your school may have a consensus about the need to keep the school compound clean and beautiful. Based on your agreement, you can work together to make your school tidy and attractive.

It is important to have a general consensus on some issues at a national level. You have learned that Ethiopia is a land of diversity. We Ethiopians speak different languages and generally have different cultures. We live in different parts of the country and are engaged in different economic activities. But we all have similar opinions about some important issues. For example, we have a national consensus on building the unity of Ethiopia based on the will and mutual respect of its peoples. You also know that poverty is our common enemy. We have a national consensus about the need to fight poverty. We need to have peace and stability to work together and achieve this goal. This means we have to join together to maintain peace and stability.

You can say that there is a national consensus when citizens and peoples have similar opinions regarding major national issues. We can achieve

rapid and continuous development when we enjoy equality and have a national consensus.

Make small groups and discuss these questions:

- Describe the negative impacts of lack of equality in the previous governments of Ethiopia.
- Why is the existence of equality of citizens important?
- Do you think that we should have consensus on the following issues?
 - Fighting poverty;
 - Fighting against terrorism;
 - Tolerating cultural diversity;
 - Maintaining peace and stability.

Moreover, the rights of the disabled must be respected. Disability can result from birth, illness, accident or other causes. Whatever the causes, the disabled are citizens of the country and, as such, have constitutional rights that must be respected by all. Provided these rights are respected and appropriate support is given, most people with a disability can be productive members of the country.

REMEMBER

- ❑ Equality of citizens is important to maintain peace and stability.
- ❑ The prevalence of peace and stability is essential to speed up our country's development.
- ❑ The existence of equality paves the way for national consensus.
- ❑ When citizens share similar opinions about national issues, they work together to promote the national interests.
- ❑ We can achieve fast and continuous development when we enjoy equality and have a national consensus.

LESSON 3

Gender Equality

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

- describe the importance of gender equality.
- explain the constitutional response to gender equality in Ethiopia.
- respect gender equality.

Have you ever observed your parents treating you and your brother/sister differently because you are of a different gender?

Discuss this issue in the class.

You have seen in the previous lessons, the importance of equality to promote peace, stability and development. One of the dimensions of equality is gender equality. Gender equality is concerned with the equality of the sexes. It means that men and women are equal.

This has always been a problematic issue in many countries because women are considered inferior to men in many cultures. For example, many mothers order their daughters to do work in the house. They do not expect their boys to do the same. This comes from thinking, wrongly, that girls, and not boys, are supposed to work in the house. This shows that boys and girls are not seen equally.

The same is true with men and women. Some people still believe that women are not capable of doing the jobs that men can do. So they do not see

men and women equally. Some people think that the right place for a woman is at home taking care of the children and performing other household activities such as cooking.

These days we see many changes. There are strong women political leaders in the world. There are famous women in the military. There are women in all types of work. So it is important to understand that men and women are equal.

Changes in terms of gender equality are also growing in Ethiopia. The Federal Constitution has recognised equality of women and put mechanisms in place to promote the enjoyment of their rights. This is clearly stated in Article 35 which states:

1. *Women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections for by this Constitution, have equal rights with men.*
2. *Women have equal rights with men in marriage as prescribed by this Constitution.*
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.*
4. *The State shall enforce the right of women to eliminate the harmful customs. Laws, customs and practices that oppress or cause bodily or mental harm to women are prohibited.*

Gender Equality



Woman preparing dung on the farm

Women's contributions increase when they have equal access to education, job opportunities, and political and economic participation. When women get more education and training they can help their family in many ways. Educated women

feed their children and maintain hygiene in a better way. They help their children to get the right education. When women get training and credit services and are actively engaged in economic activities, they can make a greater contribution to their country and improve their lives and the lives of their families.

All these are important in promoting development and reducing poverty. Thus, we have to fight gender inequality to increase women's contribution in development activities and poverty reduction.

CASE STUDY

Women's role in productive activities

Dorze is a place located in Gamo Gofa Zone in Southern Regional State. Most of the men in Dorze are weavers. Many of them work in towns far away from home. Dorze women engage in different farm activities. They fertilize farm plots with dung, which is important to get a higher yield. They walk for an hour or two to transport the dung to the farm plots. Dorze women do this in groups. Men sow the seed. Weeding and harvesting are the tasks of women. Women transport the crop from the farm to home. Women also take care for the enset plant, which is the main source of food in the Gamo highland.



Dorze woman processing enset

Discuss the following points as a class.

- List the economic activities of Dorze women and discuss the contribution of each activity.
- ? ➤ List economic activities of women in your area and compare them with those of the Dorze women.
- Do you think that we can achieve rapid economic development without the active participation of women?

Gender Equality

In Grade 9, you saw that gender equality is not fully developed in Ethiopia. Women account for half of the Ethiopian population. This means they are very important parts of the workforce. In the past, men were considered as heads of the family and made most of the decisions concerning the family. Women had very little power to participate in decision-making.

But as we have seen, the Ethiopian Constitution recognizes the importance of equality of men and women.

? Split the class into groups, female and male, and discuss among yourselves whether or not you are treated differently from your brothers or sisters at home. Choose a representative of each group and present your points to the class. Finally discuss all the issues in the class considering gender equality and inequality.



Gender and cultural equality are respected under the Constitution

REMEMBER

- ❑ One of the dimensions of equality is gender equality
- ❑ It is important to understand the equality of men and women
- ❑ The Constitution protects the rights of women emphasizing their equality with men.

LESSON 4

Equality of Cultures

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

- explain what is meant by equality of cultures.

Do you think all cultures are equal? Why?
Discuss this issue in the class.

Culture is a broad term which calls for equality of treatment. Culture is the unique way of doing things in a certain society. It can be divided into material and non-material culture. Material culture includes clothes, household utensils, tools, houses and ornaments. Non-material culture includes language, beliefs, values and norms. In Ethiopia there are many societies with their own cultures. There are many types of dressing styles, languages, houses and dances. Despite these differences, it is important to treat all cultures equally.

Equality of Language

Language is an important element of culture. Different societies use various languages as a means of communication. You use language to describe your day-to-day activities and to express your feelings and emotions. Language is important to take part in productive activities and promote social relations. You learnt the language spoken in your family and surroundings beginning from

your birth. You are comfortable talking in your language. Other people from other areas also are comfortable speaking in their own languages. All languages are equal and important. It is important to respect the languages spoken by other people. Respecting the languages of other peoples mean respecting their culture. This helps you to treat peoples with different cultures equally and fairly.

Equality of Religion

Another aspect of culture that should be treated equally is religion. Religion is the spiritual belief of people. Like their language, people cherish and love their own religion.

There are a lot of religions in the world. Although they may be different from your religion, you have to respect other religions. You have to respect and appreciate different religious events and celebrations that you observe. There are some people who desire to force people to change their religion because they believe theirs is better than the religions of others. These kinds of people do not believe in equality of religion. This is not right.

It should be noted that Ethiopia is a land of religious diversity and despising religions, or using bad words, is being unconstitutional. In the

Equality of Cultures

Federal Constitution it is clearly stated in Article 27, sub-article 1:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include the freedom to hold or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and the freedom, either individually or in community with others, and in public or private, to

manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

Therefore, you have to respect the religion of other people even if it is different from your own. Treating people equally means respecting their religions and cultural values, even though they are different from your religion and values.

CASE STUDY

Religious Extremists Trying to Convert Others

In Sri Lanka in 2006, extremist Buddhist people broke into a Dutch Reformed Church children's home and damaged it. They put a Buddhist flag on the roof of the house. The church was in the process of expanding and being repaired as a home for orphaned children. The extremists did not like this. They demanded that the repair and expansion should stop. They were not ready to respect the church.

Source: <http://www.trusrilanka.org>

Another story of religious inequality is the case of India in the 16th century. Around 1500 the Portuguese came to India and demanded that all the Hindu people be converted to Catholic Christianity,

either willingly or forcefully. Because of that, they dispossessed Hindu people who refused to convert to Christianity. The property taken from the Hindus went to the church.

Source: <http://www.hinduunity.org>

Make groups and discuss the following questions based on the above cases.

- Do you think that it is fair to violate the rights of people to choose their religion?
- Do you think religious intolerance is harmful to the common good?
- How can we avoid or minimize conflicts that may arise out of religious controversy?

Other cultural traits

Just like language and religion there are other cultural traits that different people have. These include cultural dresses, cultural dances, cultural foods etc., all of which hold value among the people. This is because it makes them unique from other people. Ethiopia is a land where there

are many different cultural dresses and cultural dances. There are around 80 different cultural groups who have different languages, styles of clothes and dances. All these dresses and dances are very beautiful, especially when they are seen together. The Ethiopian culture is full of diversity. It is also important to understand that all cultures are equal.

Equality of Cultures

REMEMBER

- ❑ Culture is the unique way of doing things in a certain society.
- ❑ Culture includes languages, clothes, dances etc...
- ❑ It is important to treat all languages equally.
- ❑ It is important to respect others' religions and treat them equally.
- ❑ It is important to treat the cultural traits of others equally.

UNIT SUMMARY

Equality does not indicate the provision of identical treatment and benefits. It means having similar rights, benefits and opportunities. Citizens should enjoy the benefits/services provided by the government. They should also shoulder responsibilities. Inequality based on sex, family and cultural background was common in Ethiopia. Nations, nationalities and peoples did not have equal political participation in the period of the previous governments. Now they are represented in the House of the Federation and House of Peoples' Representatives and take part in government decision-making and activities.

Equality of citizens is important in many ways. It maintains peace and stability which is essential to speed up our country's development. The existence of equality paves the way for national consensus. When citizens share similar opinion about national issues, they work together to promote the national interests. As citizens of Ethiopia, we can achieve fast and continuous development when we enjoy equality and have a national consensus.

One of the dimensions of equality is gender equality. It is important to understand the equality of men and women. The FDRE Constitution protects the rights of women, emphasizing their equality with men. These days, people understand that gender equality is essential to fight against poverty and achieve rapid and continuous development.

Promoting equality of cultures is also essential. Culture is the unique way of doing things in a certain society. Culture includes many things such as languages, religion, dressing styles and dances. It is important to respect all languages and religions equally because that helps to avoid conflicts between groups who speak different languages and have different religions.

GLOSSARY

<i>Culture:</i>	The customs and beliefs and way of life of a particular people or society.
<i>Equality of cultures:</i>	Provision of equal respect and fair treatment of languages, religions, customs and way of life of all cultural groups.
<i>Equal opportunities:</i>	Having equal access to job opportunities, education, health and other social services with no discrimination.
<i>National consensus:</i>	Having similar opinions on matters of national interest such as peace, stability, poverty reduction and development.
<i>Stability:</i>	The state of social order and peace.

UNIT REVIEW EXERCISES

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

Part I – True or false

1. In addition to having equal rights, citizens should receive similar rewards and benefits though their abilities and contributions differ.
2. Political equality prevailed in Ethiopia in the period of the monarchy though kings and feudal lords had more political power.
3. Gender equality refers to equality of men and women in terms of rights, access to services and opportunities.

Part II – Multiple choice

1. Which of the following is not the advantage of the prevalence of equality among citizens?
 - (a) it promotes peace and stability
 - (b) it promotes development
 - (c) it reduces conflicts

(d) it makes citizens equally rich

(e) none of the above

2. What is the importance of having national consensus among citizens?

(a) it helps citizens to promote their common interest

(b) it helps them to fight against their common enemies

(c) it helps them to have identical opinions on important issues

(d) it helps them to maintain peace and stability

(e) all

Part III – Short answers

1. What is gender equality and how does it help to promote development?
2. What is national consensus?
3. What is the difference between material and non-material culture?