

Unit 3

Equality

Introduction

In this unit, you will learn why you need to treat the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia equally. You will see that equality is expressed in political, economic, social and cultural ways. You will also learn that equality requires treating females and males as equals. You will realize the necessity of equality for peace and the development of the country.

Lessons

1. The Importance of Equality among the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia
2. The Individual and the Public Interest
3. Gender Issues and Socially Discriminated Groups
4. The Tendency to Negate Unity in Diversity

Key words and concepts

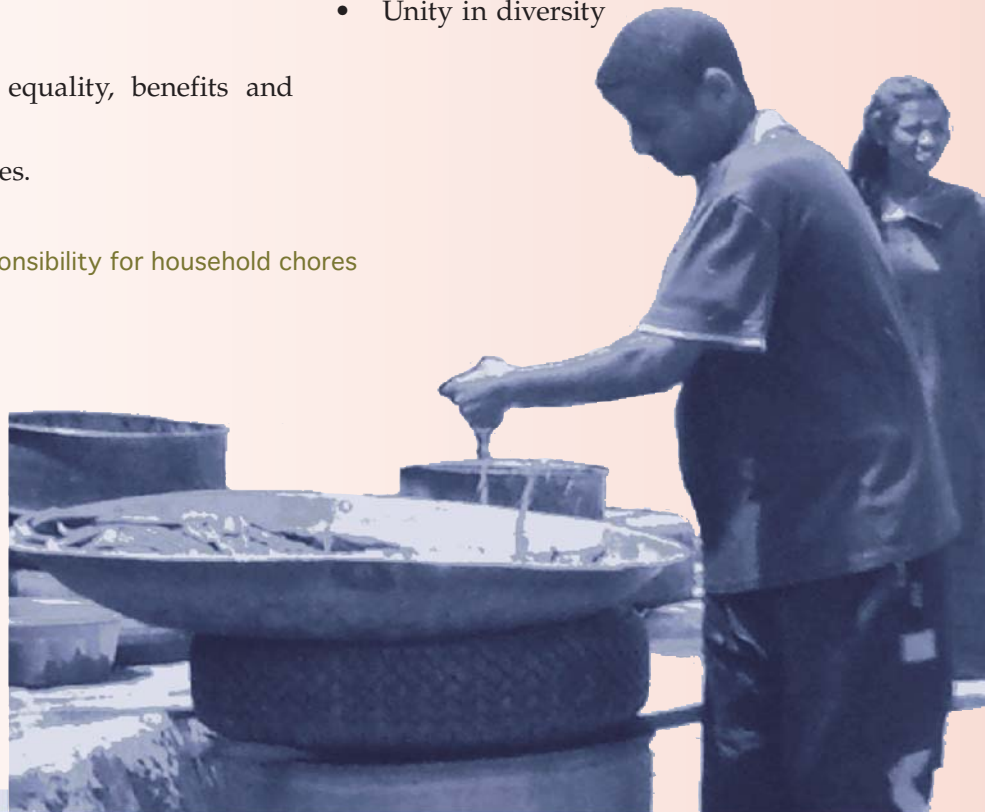
- Affirmative action
- Disabled group
- Equality
- Gender
- Gender issues
- Individual rights
- Socially discriminated groups
- Unity in diversity

What you will learn

You will:

- realize the notions of equality, benefits and burden.
- be aware of gender issues.

Taking equal responsibility for household chores



1

LESSON

The Importance of Equality among the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia

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

- describe what kinds of equality and burdens the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia enjoy.

Give an example of a person who has been treated unequally. Why was the person treated in this way?

Equality is the right not to be treated differently because of age, race, sex, ability, political views or any other status; it means being treated the same as others. It is a broad concept that involves economic, political, social and cultural considerations. Equality can be a form of remedial or restorative justice to repair damages done in the past. Equality can be seen as a process of undoing past inequalities or injustices. This could lead to greater uniformity

among members of society in terms of equality.

In today's world, the issue of equality has gained huge political importance. It has attracted the attention of governments as a key to ensuring internal stability, peace and development. In the broader sense, equality means to extend equal opportunities for members of society. Equality, in the main refers to opportunities that the state extends to its people. It also means equal protection and the rights given to all citizens.

? Form groups to discuss the ways in which the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia can be maintained. In what ways are peace and development related to equality? Group leaders should present their ideas to the class for more discussion.

CASE STUDY

The Bale and Gedeo Peasants uprisings

During the time of Haile Selassie, millions of Ethiopians were landless, while a very few were owners of most of the land. This created economic, social, cultural and political inequality. As a result of this, there were peasant's uprisings in many parts of the country. The Bale and Gedeo peasants' uprisings were among

those revolts against the regime. These uprisings were brutally crushed by the government forces. However, Haile Selassie's government could not continue for long. The resistance of the people against inequality and injustice ended the feudal system. After years of fighting, the peasants got their land.

The Importance of Equality among the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia

? Form groups to discuss how the inequalities in the past, led to the peasants uprisings. Group leaders should present their ideas to the class for more discussion.

REMEMBER

- Equality refers to the state of being treated the same as others.
- In the broader sense, equality means extending equal opportunities for members of society.
- In today's world, the issue of equality has gained huge political importance.
- The federal structure of government helps to address the problem of equality.
- People who are treated equally will be more inspired to do their part for nation building.

LESSON 2

The Individual and the Public Interest

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

- describe the differences between individual and public interests.

Why might you be treated unequally at times?

Equality means treating people as equals regardless of sex, race, religion, culture, nationality or occupation. Equality is related to rights. Your rights entitle you to be treated equally to others. However, exercising your equality has limitations as the use of your rights can be conditioned by your obligations. As expressed in the Constitution, you have freedom of speech, and expressions. But, your freedoms of expression do not include the right to verbally abuse or insult someone you hate. This is a violation of the rights of others. You are not denied any of your rights when you are not allowed to abuse others.

You have equal rights to participate in the



Medical student working in laboratory

extracurricular activities in your school. You might want to join the schools basketball and football teams, but you may have to pass a physical examination first.

Your performance may not be up to the standard to be selected. If you still insist that you have an equal right to be accepted, then your understanding of the essence of equality is wrong. After all, equality must be viewed in terms of extending equal opportunity to compete, but not deserving whatever you wish.

You have equal opportunities with others to become a medical doctor. But, you cannot join the Faculty of Medicine simply because you have the desire. You will be accepted when you have met all the criteria required to join the faculty.

Your family might own a house, however, due to the construction of a road, it could be marked for removal. Certainly, this would be a sad story for the whole family. Still, your parents cannot argue that their right to own property is violated so long as they are compensated for the loss. What justifies the government to take this action is the desire to promote the public interest more than that of the individual.

Your personal interests are protected only to the extent that the interest of the public is not adversely affected. Therefore, you might have to give up some of your individual rights in order to promote what benefits society. Generally speaking, public interests should precede individual rights.

The Individual and the Public Interest

? Form groups to discuss how limiting individual rights is a necessity in order to promote the interests of society. Is it fair to give up some of your rights for the sake of society? Group's leaders should present their ideas to the class for more discussion.

CASE STUDY

The Tekeze Hydroelectric Power Plant

Today Ethiopia has launched the construction of a number of hydroelectric power plants in different parts of the country. The total number of power plants constructed over the last ten years is greater than those constructed previously. The output has more than doubled. The Tekeze Hydroelectric power plant is currently the biggest power plant near completion with the capacity of more than 300 megawatt.

Hydroelectric power plants' construction is necessary for the accelerated development of the country. However, the construction of the power plants was not without problems as it dislodges people living in those areas. People who lived in the area for many years were moved out and resettled elsewhere. It might not be pleasing to them, but it is a necessary action to take for the sake of promoting national development.

? Form groups to produce a justification for resettling people from this area in the interest of national development. Group leaders should present their ideas to the class for discussion and debate.



Building an Ethiopian hydroelectric power plant

REMEMBER

- Equality means treating people as equals regardless of sex, race, religion, culture, nationality, or occupation.
- Exercising your right to equality has limitations, as the use of your rights can be conditioned by your obligation to others.
- As expressed in the Constitution, you have freedom of speech and expressions; but your freedom of expression does not allow you to verbally abuse or insult others.
- Your personal interests are protected only to the extent that the interest of the public is not adversely affected.
- It is right to promote the individual interest so long as the outcome does not affect the common good.
- Public interests should precede individual rights.

LESSON 3

Gender Issues and Socially Discriminated Groups

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

- explain how women and the socially discriminated groups are treated unfairly in society.

Give an example of a group that experiences social discrimination. Why are they sometimes not treated equally?

Gender issues, in the main, refer to determined patterns of behaviour in relation to rights, duties, obligations and responsibilities assigned to females and males in society. The cultural differences in a society shape how gender issues are viewed and handled. The history of human society, for the most part, is marked by unfair treatment for women.

Women in Ethiopia are often denied the same rights that men enjoy. In the past women were denied the right to own and inherit land and other properties. Thus, they were subordinate to men. They had no right to decide who to marry and live with. They were subject to circumcision, early marriage, abduction and domestic violence.

At present, women have the same legal rights as men. They have constitutional protection to enjoy their rights. They have equal access to education, jobs and health care and also have freedom of expression and the right to form an association. More female students are in schools and universities now than in the past. They are assuming ministerial positions; and given the opportunity, they can make higher

decisions, alongside their male counterparts.

Through affirmative action, today women in Ethiopia are enjoying many advantages. This helped women to experience positive discrimination to compensate them for past injustices. In this regard, female and male students can join universities with different cumulative grade point average requirements. Like in education, some jobs, through affirmative action, give priority to females.

A new family law has been issued to protect women's rights in marriage and divorce. These are positive developments that have empowered women. Empowering women means empowering society as a whole. Women are the backbone of society and women's empowerment is one of the cornerstones of social justice. The development of a country is achieved when all women are treated fairly and equally to men.

The development of Ethiopia requires addressing the equality of disabled groups as much as gender issues. These are citizens who are physically and mentally impaired and who need special treatment. Schools, workplaces, shops, hotels, transportation services and even roads need to be constructed to handle them. Communities should give attention to the disabled members to support them. They deserve special attention because they are part of the society to be sympathized and cared for. They have a right to be able to access the same things as those who are able bodied.

Gender Issues and Socially Discriminated Groups

? Create a list of similarities and differences between male and female students. Examine why these exist and consider what effect they may have on society.

CASE STUDY

Women's achievements

In the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Tirunesh Dibaba set a new world record in the 10,000 meters women competition. She performed this great feat in the face of very tough competition. Her achievement is a pride for the Ethiopians. She displayed a great deal of determination to translate what she promised to the Ethiopians into practice. She set a new world record in an environment that was hot and humid. She is one of the icons of Ethiopia and a role model for Ethiopian girls.



Female Ethiopian athlete

? Form groups to discuss whether women can do more if given the opportunity and treated equally. Group leaders should present their ideas to the class for more discussion.



The disabled can be productive

Gender Issues and Socially Discriminated Groups

REMEMBER

- ❑ Gender issues, in the main, refer to determined patterns of behaviour in relation to rights, duties, obligations and responsibilities assigned to females and males in society.
- ❑ The cultural differences in society shape how the different gender issues are viewed and handled.
- ❑ The history of human society, for the most part, is marked by unfair treatment of women.
- ❑ In Ethiopia, most women were denied the same rights that men enjoyed.
- ❑ At present, women have the same legal rights as men.
- ❑ Empowering women means empowering society as a whole.
- ❑ The development of Ethiopia requires addressing the equality of disabled groups as much as gender issues.

LESSON 4

The Tendency to Negate Unity in Diversity

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

- describe the negative impact of failing to acknowledge unity in diversity.

Describe one cultural event or activity you really enjoy to your neighbour.

Unity in diversity is all about the mutual existence of different cultural groups. Societies, having such diversity, are called multicultural societies and countries consisting of such compositions are multicultural nations. The political doctrine that upholds this way of life is termed multiculturalism. It means living together to respect others' languages, religions and ways of life. This is based on the belief that all cultures, religions and languages are equal, thus everyone deserves to be treated equally. A multicultural society exists in peace as long as all its members display mutual respect for one another. Failure to do so can easily jeopardize the social peace and the ability to live as one community.



Ethiopia is a multicultural and multi ethnic country with over seventy ethnic groups inhabiting its territories. Today they are classified as nations, nationalities and peoples. They have constitutionally protected rights of equality. No one group is superior, as no group is inferior. All, big or small, have equal rights to protect, advance and promote the development of their cultural distinctions. Ethiopia is as different as its cultural and ethnic groups are different. Its unity can be expressed through the unity that its ethno-cultural groups forge among themselves with a shared purpose and objectives.

When we are united as a nation, we are strong, but if we lose what unites us, we will be weak. The roles you play should bring the nations, nationalities and peoples of the country together. To do this you have to respect the cultures, languages and religions of others.

? Form groups to discuss the positive and negative activities that can affect the unity of the peoples of Ethiopia and list them.



The Afar people

The Tendency to Negate Unity in Diversity

CASE STUDY

The Hamer of South West Ethiopia

The Hamer lives in the South Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Regional State. They inhabit the area around the town of Jinka. They are herdsmen combining some agriculture for their living. They have their own language, belief system and other cultural traits that they are proud of. They share the same rights as the people of the rest of Ethiopia to develop

and promote themselves. Many anthropologists have studied their way of life for many years. The Hamers live with others with respect, dignity and harmony.

? What enables the Hamer to live in harmony with others? Discuss in groups.

REMEMBER

- ❑ Unity in diversity is all about the mutual existence of different cultural groups.
- ❑ A multicultural society exists in peace as long as all its members show mutual respect for one another.
- ❑ Ethiopia is as different as its cultural and ethnic groups are different.
- ❑ When we are united as a nation, we are strong, but if we lose what unites us, we will be weak.



Hamer family group

UNIT SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the importance of equality manifesting itself in the political, economic, social and cultural aspects. You have seen the need to treat the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia as equals to preserve its unity, and achieve development to live a better life. It is important for you to develop the capacity to treat males and females as equals. The development of Ethiopia can be achieved when you support women's empowerment in the country as a whole. You should help the disabled and treat them as equals because they are citizens.

GLOSSARY

Affirmative action:	Positive actions taken to address socially disfavoured groups in order to compensate past injustices.
Disabled group:	A group which comprises of individuals who are mentally or physical impaired.
Equality:	Is a political doctrine that rests on the belief that citizens of a country should enjoy the same and equal rights in economic, political, social and cultural areas.
Gender:	Is a concept pertaining to the relationship between men and women.
Gender issues:	Issues related to the relationship between men and women.
Individual rights:	Is a political thinking that refers to rights that every individual enjoys in society.
Socially discriminated groups:	Are members of society who are discriminated against due to ethnic, religious, sexual, cultural or physical disability or occupation.
Unity in diversity:	Is the mutual existence of different cultural groups.

UNIT REVIEW EXERCISES

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

Part I – Multiple choice

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which one of the following groups do not demand equal treatment with others? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> nations nationalities people none Affirmative action may not be needed in Ethiopia only for one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> women minority groups groups whose language is on the verge of vanishing none | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Unity in diversity does not mean one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> treating ethnic groups equally treating all regions as equals |
|---|--|

- (c) be willing to work with others having different viewpoints
- (d) to accept that some societies are superior to others

Part II – True or false

1. Disabled groups in society need special attention.
2. Equality means to demand anything and get it.
3. Ethiopia is a country where there are no gender issues.
4. Gender equality means replacing male dominance by female dominance.

5. Socially discriminated groups have the same rights as others.

Part III – Short answers

1. What is equality?
2. What do you understand by affirmative actions? Give examples.
3. What are your individual rights? State some.
4. Describe one gender issue you see in society. How can things be improved?

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