

UNIT 1

Democratic System

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

- identify the concept of democracy and democratic system.
- understand human and democratic rights to be respected in democratic system.
- appreciate the meaning of diversity and how to accommodate differences within diversity.
- explain the meaning of Federal and Regional states.
- understand the meaning of Foreign Relations.

1.1 What is Democracy?



Picture 1.1. Electing class monitor



Picture 1.2. Meeting on school discipline guidelines

Activity 1

1. What do you observe in picture 1.1? Guess, what is happening in that class?
2. What do you observe in picture 1.2? Guess, what is happening in that class?
3. You may have heard the term “democracy”, haven’t you? When you first time come across with the term, what ideas come to your mind?

Electing Monitor

Ato Kolcha is the homeroom teacher of Grade five in Tabor Primary School. It is only a week since the school has been opened after a long summer vacation. Ato Kolcha informed the students that the selection of Dansite as the class monitor was carried out in the last year by the last year’s homeroom teacher. Following this, Kolcha also asked the students whether, Dansite, the last year monitor, has to continue or whether to elect new student for this year. Majority of students showed their interest to elect new, while a few of them requested the continuation of Dansite. At the end, the class reached consensus that Dansite can also be one of the candidates for the competition of the class monitor. Therefore, based on the interest of the majority, three candidates were proposed: Labena, Genet and Dansite. 15 students voted for Dansite, 12 for Labena and 40 students voted for Genet. On basis of cast vote, the winner became Genet. Therefore, Grade five students were very delighted on this event that they elected their monitor and representative of their class democratically expecting her to lead the class with a strong commitment. Genet thanked the class for they elected her democratically and promised to practice good leadership quality. The

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students overjoyed and expressed their feeling that they really practiced their right to elect their leader freely and they also asserted that this is a practice of a real democracy and that it is good to be led by the monitor they elected democratically. The class also reached agreement that if their new monitor does not keep her promise and commitment they can also replace her as they did today. Finally, peaceful transfer of class monitor power and responsibility was accomplished.

Now answer the following questions:

1. On basis of the above passage and pictures, give the definition of “democracy”.
2. You have attempted to discuss the meaning of democracy on page one. How do you relate it to the above question number 1?
3. What would happen if Kolcha, the new homeroom teacher, has made Dansite to continue as class monitor without asking the class? Discuss.

After reading the following definitions of democracy, compare it with your answers you gave in former sections.

What is Democracy?

The word Democracy has originated from two Greek words—“Demo” and “Kratius”. “Demo” is to mean people while “Kratius” is to refer to authority or rule etc. Based on this, democracy is the rule or governance of people or a government by people. Based on picture 1.1, as students practiced their right to elect their monitor, likewise people also have sovereign authority to elect their leaders.

As you have observed in picture 1.2, students were debating on disciplinary regulation of their schools and likewise people can take active participation in the public meetings and decide on issues of their concern. In general, in democratic system, when people elect their leaders, they take part in the election process freely and equally. The one elected by majority becomes a leader. In a democratic system, people take free and active participation in their locality.

Activity 2

1. In your class or school, in addition to the process of electing monitors and debating disciplinary issues, are there other ways that democracy is practiced? If yes, can you give examples? If your answer is no, what issues should be practiced democratically in your class and school as well?
2. Explain the significance of the existence of democratic practices in your school and class.

1.2 The Meaning of Human and Democratic Rights

1.2.1 The Meaning of Human Rights

- Try to write your own understanding of the meaning of human rights on your exercise book.
- Discuss and compare your definition of human rights with your deskmates.

After reading the following definition of human rights, compare it with the definition forwarded by you.

Human right is given for every human being by the virtue of humanity. For example, the right to life and security are human rights given by the virtue of humanity. Except for certain legally stated criminal action, no person has to lose the right to life. The right of security implies that, no one has to face physical damage.

1.2.2 The Meaning of Democratic Rights



Picture 1.3. Establishing school clubs

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- Picture 1.3 shows while students are practicing one of their democratic rights. After looking at the picture, let you mention what kind of democratic right is practiced in it.
- Based on this, define what democratic right is.

From picture 1.3, have you tried to understand the meaning of democracy? To check your level of understanding, read the following note seriously.

Democratic rights are rights given for individuals and peoples who are citizens of a given democratic system. And these rights are written in their constitution. There are enormous democratic rights which should be respected in democratic governments; the right to organize under an association is one example. Any person for whatever objective it may be has the right to organize an association.

In this regard, students can establish extra-curricular unions in their respective schools and can take part in those activities. While students are establishing such unions to practice their rights, they have to obey the school rules and regulation and they also have to respect the dignity of the member of the school community.

Right on other side of its coin has the responsibility. Rights and responsibilities are inseparable. When we mention right, it also encompasses of duties and obligations. Hence, when some one is practicing his/her right, he/she has to be conscious of not violating the other person's right too.

Activity 3

1. Explain the meaning of Human Rights shortly by examples.
2. Explain the meaning of Democratic Rights shortly by examples.

1.3 Diversity

1.3.1 What is Diversity?



Picture 1.4. Diversification of Nation and Nationalities

1. Look at picture 1.4. How many differences can you identify?
2. Based on this, explain what diversity is and what you have understood about it.

1.3.2 Diversity among Students of a School and Classroom



Picture 1.5. Students at break time

- Look at picture 1.5. Be in pair with your classmate and mention observable differences among students in your school compound.
- Identify five areas of similarities and differences among yourselves too.

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- Based on this, explain how you understand the meaning of diversity.

After reading the following explanation of diversity, compare this with your answers for diversity.

Diversity refers to difference in colour of skin, age, sex, height, competence and it generally indicates that no person is totally similar to another. As there are many things that make us similar, there are also lots of things that make us different. But the basic thing to understand is that our similarities are dominant than our differences. The other important point is that diversity is natural and inevitable—we cannot avoid it. And our diversity is our beauty and this makes life interesting.

1.3.3 Unity in Diversity and Tolerance

- Recall the time you have failed to agree and quarrel over an issue with your friends, brothers or sisters.
- Share your experience and tell your deskmate in short the causes of the disagreement and what happened during the quarrel.

Keredin and Nuria

Keredin and Nuria are the two intimate friends. Keredin's family members are farmers while Nuria's are merchants. Keredin and Nuria often discuss on different issues at their break time. At times, they debate hotly. However, they never quarrel because of their different ideas. If possible, they understand and agree each other; and if not both respect their differences and usually end their debate peacefully.

Unusually, one day they faced something different. They raised an issue about the importance of a merchant and a peasant to the country's economy. The debate was very hot. Keredin stressed on the contribution of a peasant while Nuria on a merchant. Their debate was unusually emotional that they started shouting above their head and did not listen to each other.

After the long argument, however, suddenly both of them were surprised by their unusual practice and asked each other, "What has happened to us?"; "What is going on?" Later, both of them

recognized that they were biased because of their family background. They regretted and corrected their mistake for the fact that both peasants and merchants are important for a country's economy; moreover, they understood that a peasant cannot be successful without merchant and vice versa. In the meantime, the bell rang and giving a hug to each other they went to the class happily.

Activity 4

Based on the above passage, answer the following questions:

1. Why do the two intimate friends shout at each other instead of listening to each other during their debate?
2. What is the main purpose of accepting and accommodating differences of others and live in peaceful way?
3. What lessons do you draw from this story?

Tolerance and understanding are two important values to accommodate differences and live peacefully. To appreciate this aspect, read the following passage carefully and finally do the assignment in group.

We have learned that, naturally human beings have a number of differences. Based on those differences, they have their own understanding, opinion and belief, which implies that no one is dare to say his/her is correct and the others is incorrect. If some one rigidly starts to ignore other opinion and consider his/her idea as perfect, it is practically impossible to have a peaceful co-existence. The outcome can be conflict and violence. In this case, conflicts and disputes can become common phenomenon. Therefore, to avoid such conflicts and disputes and to have unity in diversity, tolerance and listening to one another is important. Tolerance is important to admit differences and to live peacefully though there is a difference in skin colour, belief, and competence etc., tolerance is important to appreciate and respect others' interest in order to promote peaceful co-existence.

What do you understand by accepting and accommodating differences for peaceful living? And what are the advantages?

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Though there is a difference in belief, understanding, colour, race among people etc., admitting and appreciating diversity is a matter of respecting one's dignity and securing one's right. Diversity is resource that we should appreciate. By doing so, it is significant to understand diversity of people's culture, race, and religion as it has its own positive contribution. Appreciating this, it is important to promote unity through diversity and live peaceful co-existence.

Activity 5

Answer the following questions:

1. Ask your parents whether they had faced disputes or strong conflict due to lack of understanding of differences, and problem of practicing tolerance, and peaceful co-existence in the family or with their neighbours. Identify the root cause of the dispute or conflict. What solution was given for the conflict? Write in short all the important events in one paragraph.
2. Explain briefly also what lessons you get out of it.

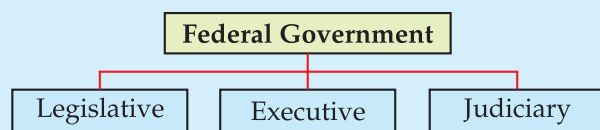
1.4 System of Government in Ethiopia

1.4.1 The Meaning and Necessity of Democratic System



Picture 1.6. People waiting to vote

- What are people doing in picture 1.6?



Picture 1.7. The structure of federal government

- What do you understand from picture 1.7?
- Have you ever heard the term government? Please, explain what ideas come to your mind when you first come across with the word government?

The meaning of democratic government

Democratic government is a type of government where all peoples actively participate in the system. In the democratic leadership, people actively participate in the process of election—they can elect or be elected. Furthermore, the people actively participate in the issues of their concern, for example, in the community development activities. Therefore, democratic government is advantageous for the people.

The necessity of democratic government

Since the whole people participate in the democratic system, it has a number of advantages. Some of these are the followings:

1. Ensures the rights and privileges of peoples.
2. Promotes good governance.
3. Enables for peaceful and stable working environment and ensures the development of the nation.

Activity 6

Discuss on the following issues:

1. What is democratic government?
2. Explain the importance of democratic government.

1.4.2 The Meaning of Federal Government

- You have heard the term 'federal' frequently. Do you know its meaning? Please write on a paper the idea that comes to your mind when you heard the term federal for the first time.
- Discuss the idea you have stated on a paper with a student beside you, and see the extent of similarity and difference in your understanding.

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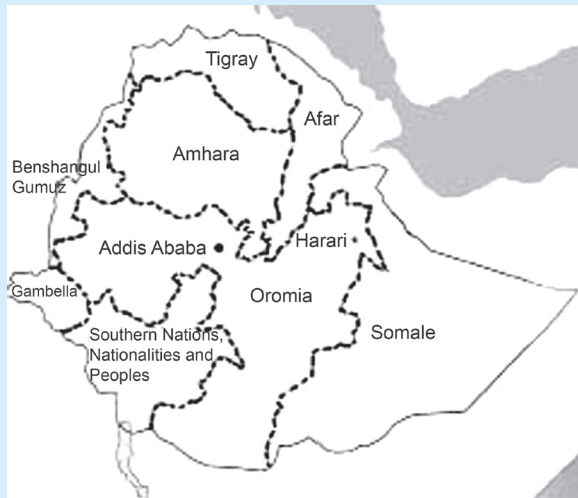
Federalism is about a system of government encompassing a number of self-governing states, but with single central government. In federal system, power is divided into centre and regions on basis of the constitution. For example, the Ethiopian Federal Government has nine regional states. The central government is called federal government and cannot intervene in powers and functions of regional states unless given by a law to do so. And also regional states cannot intervene in the power and functions of federal government unless given by a law.

Activity 7

Answer the following questions:

1. Compare the definition of term federal with the meaning you forwarded already.
2. What do you understand by a federal system of government?

1.4.3 Regional States of Ethiopia



Picture 1.8. Map of Ethiopia

- How many regions are there in Ethiopia? Mention their names.
- What does regional state mean?

Regional states are the second highest structure of the nation next to federal government. Regions are organized on the basis of population settlement, language, identity and the consent of the people.

Accordingly, we have nine regional states. These are:

1. Tigray Regional State
2. Afar Regional State
3. Amhara Regional State
4. Oromia Regional State
5. Somale Regional State
6. Benshangul Gumuz Regional State
7. Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State
8. Gambella Peoples Regional State
9. Harari People Regional State

Activity 8

1. Explain the meaning of regional state.
2. Mention your region and its neighbours.

1.4.4 The Meaning of City Administration



Dire Dawa city administration



Addis Ababa city administration

Picture 1.9. City administration of Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa

- Which cities does picture 1.9 represent?
- What does city administration mean?

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The city administration

Like the regional states, cities of Addis Ababa (A.A.) and Dire Dawa (D.D.) are self-administrating cities and are accountable to the federal government. They are known as city administrations.

Activity 9

1. Mention the two self-governing cities of Ethiopia.

1.5 Foreign Relation

1.5.1 The Meaning of Foreign Relations and its Policies



Picture 1.10. Ethiopia and neighbouring countries

- Look at the map. Which countries are the neighbouring countries of Ethiopia? Mention their names.
- Do you know what kind of relation Ethiopia has with neighbouring countries? Discuss this with a student beside you. Following this, explain what foreign relation means.

Foreign relation is the interaction and interconnection of countries on different issues (Economic, Political, etc.).

Foreign relation policies are the general guiding principles of countries in their relation to another. Based on this, Ethiopian foreign policy is based on the principles of peaceful co-existence with others, respecting one another and healthy neighbourhoodness.

Activity 10

1. What is the meaning of foreign relation?
2. What are the guiding principles of the Ethiopian's foreign relation policy?

Summary

Democracy is about government by people. In democratic government, people actively participate in the area of their own concern freely. Human rights are ensured for all human beings by the virtue of their being human beings. For example, the right to life is one of the human rights. Democratic rights, on the other hand, are given for individuals or groups of people who are citizens of that particular democratic system as endorsed by the constitution of that particular government. For example, the right to be associated is one of the democratic rights. Anyone to enjoy his/her rights has to keep his/her responsibilities too.

Diversity is a difference in skin colour, religion, age, competence and other cases and that is not being

same or similar with others. Diversity is inevitable and necessary. Based on these differences, peoples have their own way of thinking and believing. Therefore, it is important to admit differences among people for peaceful co-existence. Promoting tolerance is important in order to understand and respect each others interest and differences. This is to mean that though religion, colour and race differences are there, we have to appreciate one another.

Democratic government is a form of government in which people are taking active participation in it. It also guarantees rights and privileges of the people, promotes good governance and peace as well as stable working environment.

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Federalism is the system of government which contains the union of a number of self-governing state (regions). Regions are organized on the basis of population settlement, language, identity and the consent of the people. Based on this, currently, Ethiopia has nine regional states. These are Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somale, Benshangul Gumuz, SNNPR, Gambella and Harari peoples regional states. The two self-administrative cities, which are

accountable to the federal government, are Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa.

A foreign relation is the interaction of a given country with other country on different issues. Foreign relation policy is a general guiding principle of a given country of its relation with other countries. The Ethiopian foreign policy is based on the peaceful co-existence, respecting one another and healthy neighbourhood.

Key Words

<i>Democracy:</i>	The rule/authority of people
<i>Authority:</i>	Possessing rights and legitimacy to perform something
<i>Right:</i>	It is a privilege that has to be enjoyed by human beings and which has legal protection
<i>Human right:</i>	Endowed for human beings by virtue of humanity
<i>Democratic rights:</i>	It is a freedom possessed by individuals and groups for their being in a democratic system
<i>Federalism:</i>	The system of government encompassing a number of self-governing states (regions)
<i>Government:</i>	It is an administrative wing of state representing the people
<i>Foreign relation:</i>	It is the close interaction and interconnection of a given country with another country
<i>Foreign relation policy:</i>	It is a general guiding principle of a country's foreign relation

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. Democracy is the government by people.
2. In democratic system, people participate actively when issues are raised in areas of their own concern.
3. Democratic rights are possessed by people by the virtue of their being human beings.
4. Human rights are freedoms given for individuals or groups in the existence of democratic system.
5. Diversity refers to difference in colour of skin, age, sex, height, competence, etc., among human beings.

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

- | A | B |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. In difference, we have to respect others interest | (A) Democracy |
| 2. Governance in which people are taking part | (B) Foreign relation |
| 3. Interaction and connection of a country with another country | (C) Federalism |
| 4. The administrative body getting the representation from people | (D) Tolerance |
| | (E) Government |

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

- _____ is important value for the existence of unity in diversity that helps to have a peaceful co-existence among people.
- A system of government consisting of a number of self-governing states is _____.
- The term that implies demanding of all privileges that has to be enjoyed by people and has to get legal protection is _____.

IV. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

- Which one is a city-administration that is accountable to federal government?
(a) Bahir dar (b) Dire Dawa (c) Mekele (d) Hawassa.
- Which one is the federal capital city, that has self-administration authority?
(a) Addis Ababa (b) Dire Dawa (c) Mekele (d) Bahir dar.
- Which one of the following is the characteristic of democratic system?
(a) Respecting human rights (b) Respecting democratic rights
(c) Tolerance, understanding and respecting one another (d) All.
- Which one of the following is not the characteristic of democratic system?
(a) Leaders are elected by people (b) Leaders come to power by force
(c) People actively participate in the country issues
(d) Leaders are accountable to the people.
- Which one of the following is important for peaceful co-existence among people?
(a) Appreciating diversities as important resource
(b) Admitting that all cultures, religions, races etc., do have their positive contribution
(c) Accepting that some cultures, religions and races are superior to others
(d) (a) and (b).

V. Give short answers for the following questions

- Explain the meaning of democracy.
- Mention democratic rights to be respected in a democratic system.