

Democratic System

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

- identify the meaning of building a democratic system.
- understand human and democratic rights of citizens.
- realize the necessity of democratic institutions.
- recognize the significance of unity in diversity.
- identify the similarity and difference between federal and regional states.

1.1 Building a Democratic System

1.1.1 The Meaning of Building a Democratic System



Picture 1.1. Civics and Ethical Education club members on training

- Based on the picture above, explain what you understand about building a democratic system?

Building a democratic system refers to the existence of conducive practices to promote democracy. It is a process of creating democratic citizens and developing democratic culture.

There are some attributes of democratic citizens in developing democratic cultures. They are:

- Knowing and respecting human and democratic rights of others.
- Accepting differences.
- Realizing the importance of unity in diversity.
- Accepting the rule of law.
- Realizing the importance of civic commitment and patriotic feeling.

The attributes mentioned above should bear in the mind of any citizen to build democratic culture. Besides to those attributes, developing a democratic cultures can be manifested in different ways. The following are the major ones.

1. Understanding the difference in outlook and interest of individuals, respecting the outlook and opinion of others or tolerating others views.
2. Peaceful settlement of differences by discussion.
3. If there are conflicts which cannot be settled by discussion, it is important to forward for judicial settlement.

Activity 1

Answer the following questions:

1. Explain the meaning of building a democratic system.
2. How is it possible to create a democratic citizen? Debate.
3. How is it possible to develop a democratic culture? Debate.

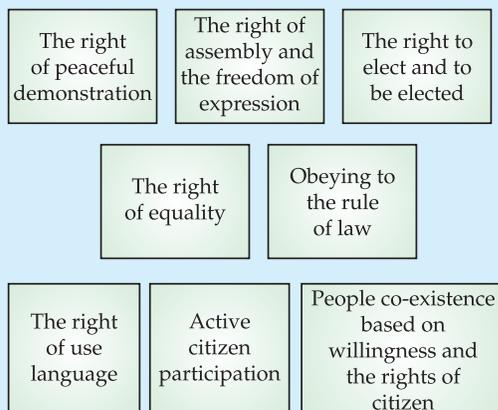
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The democratic system is a system where human and democratic rights of citizens and the equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are respected. It is a way in which people elect their leaders, and avoid those leaders if they are not confident on them. But the avoidance is through peaceful mechanisms and by replacing them by the others. This implies that people are the sovereign possessor of power in a democratic system.

Group Work

Gather information about the practice of building a democratic system from different sources (Concerning Ethiopia) and write report at least two pages.

1.1.2 Bases for Building a Democratic System



Picture 1.2. Bases for building a democratic system

- What do you understand from picture 1.2?

In the process of developing democratic system the above important points are reflected through the following major bases of building a democratic system. They are varied, the following are the major ones.

A. Abiding Rule of Law

Abiding rule of law is one of the most important foundation for building a democratic system.

The principle ensures leaders to come to power only through democratic election. When the rule of

law is practical, it is possible to hold power by free, fair and periodic election without corruption, and intimidation. The other reason is that, this principle ensures guarantee for human and democratic rights of citizens and equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to be respected.

B. Peaceful Co-existence and Rights of Citizens

It is impossible to build a democracy in the absence of co-existence of citizens. This is because; it is only when co-existence is there that peoples can live together regardless of race, religion, language, and outlook and like differences. Either to live with differences or to resolve them, it is important to talk, debate and forward ideas freely. For this, necessarily, human and democratic rights of citizens have to be respected. Respecting such rights is important to settle differences or to develop tolerance among them.

C. Respecting the Right of Equality

It is necessary to respect the rights and equality of people in a country where different nations, nationalities and peoples are living together. This helps them to develop mutual understanding, love, peace and security.

D. Respecting the Right to Elect and to be Elected

Respecting the right to elect and to be elected is important to ensure popular sovereignty. In addition to this, it has the following important practices to build democratic system.

- Ensures the right of all eligible citizens to elect and to be elected regardless of sex, ethnicity, language, religion etc.
- Ensures the right of people to be governed by their representatives.
- Ensures the right to participate in a political system directly or indirectly.

E. The Right to Use His/Her Own Language

The constitution ensures that every nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia to develop their language and preserve their history. Based

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on this constitutional right people can speak their own language. Using their own language help the individual to explain their internal interest without translator. Therefore, people use their own language and promote their own culture and history. This helps them to develop mutual understanding and respecting one another.

F. Active Participation of Citizens

Democratic system cannot be built without active participation of citizens. Thus, every citizen should directly or indirectly participate in the process.

G. The Rights of Speech, Assembly, and Petition

In democracy, citizens enjoy the rights of speech assembly and petition. When these rights are respected it created conducive environment to have a strong political parties. This is because one of the features of democracy is the existence of multiparty

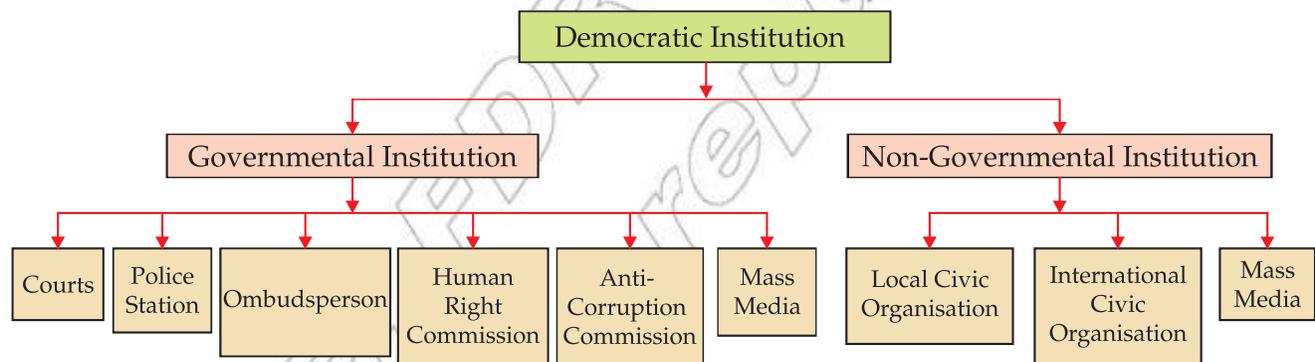
system. If different political parties exist in the country. The people will have get an opportunity to identify better alternative programs.

Activity 2

Answer the following questions:

1. Why respecting rights of citizens and co-existence are the bases for building a democratic system? Forward your own reason.
2. Why the rights to assembly and speech are the bases for building a democratic system? Discuss.

1.2 The Necessity for Building Democratic Institutions to Promote Human and Democratic Rights



Picture 1.3. Democratic institution to promote human and democratic rights

- Based on picture 1.3, explain the importance of democratic institutions to promote human and democratic rights.

There are varied reasons for giving due respect to human and democratic rights. The major ones are:

- To have effective implementation of constitutionally granted rights fully.
- To invalidate all traditional practices in the society if they are anti-constitutional and also violating rights of citizens.

To achieve these goals, it is important to have democratic institutions. They can be divided into

Governmental and Non-governmental Organizations. Courts, police station, ombudsperson, human rights commission, anti-corruption and media under government control are governmental institutions. Non-governmental organizations are organizations working in our country such as international civic organizations, local civic organization and private mass media.

In general, democratic institutions are important since they are creating a conducive environment for the respect of human and democratic rights. Courts are the prime institutions to promote the rule of law in the country. They are established on the basis of

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the constitution to settle disputes impartially on basis of issues forwarded by parties with regard to the law of the country. The principle of justice is based on all individuals are equal before the law. The procedure of courts has to be non-partisan to ethnicity, colour, sex, language, religion, political outlook and so on.

Police forces are also an institution guaranteeing human and democratic rights of individuals as enshrined in a constitution by promoting peace and security of the people. The major objective of police forces is maintaining the constitution and other laws of a country by combating crime with the support of active community participation.

The Human Rights Commission is an institution investigating complaints of the people applying to support the maintenance with due respect of human and democratic rights. It also follows up whether other laws, rules and regulations of a state are against basic human rights of citizens or not. Except issues currently held by courts, the Human Rights Commission can accept and investigate complaints without any reward from complainants.

The Ombudsperson is an institution investigating complaints in the work environment or governmental institution and give due decision on them. It follows up whether authorities and employees are acting in the scope of their authority and whether they are based on law of a country or not. Its major objective is promoting the rule of law. The responsiveness and transparency of the Ombudsperson is to ensure the rights and privileges of citizens without endangering the concerned bodies.

The Federal Ethical and Anti-corruption Commission is an institution aimed to create a society with good ethics which is disgusting and combating corruption. The institution has additional roles on expanding ethical education; combating, exposing corruption and maladministration.

Civic organizations are either locally or internationally established organizations arising

out of government bureaucracy by the self-initiation of certain active and responsible groups. Humanitarian organizations, social, economic, cultural organizations etc., are some of these civic organizations. They are important to enhance accountability, transparency and participation of people to settle their own problem by themselves. They further give power to people to follow up activities of a government.

Mass Media are institutions providing timely and reliable information for the public to become aware and to make appropriate decision on a country's issues. Furthermore, like the Ombudsperson, it follows up the activities and performances of governmental and other organizations in a society. When the radio, television, newspaper and other publications are expanded, their roles would be to have due respect for human and democratic rights.

Generally, the violation of human and democratic rights can be done by different bodies. For instance, government officials by wrongly using their authority may violate rights of others. Individuals can even violate rights of citizens by initiating unnecessary conflicts. Violations can be even done due to harmful traditional practices and civic neglect. If individuals do not have knowledge of their rights, they cannot claim their rights even in violations. Therefore, to resolve these problems and to build a democratic system to enhance human and democratic rights, it is important to establish democratic institutions.

Activity 3

Answer the following questions:

1. Why is it important to safeguard human and democratic rights? Debate.
2. Are there institution working on human and democratic rights in your community? After enumerating them, write the functions of each of them.

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1.3 Peaceful Settlement of Disputes



Picture 1.4. Discussion among friends

- After looking at the picture above, what do you see the students are performing?
- If there are conflicts (disputes) with your friends, how do you settle such differences?

The three friends

Durette, Misho and Shole are the three intimate friends in grade 8B. They are living in the same area. They agreed to set a studying plan for Saturday and Sunday. To do it, they came with pens, pencils and white paper. But all of them came with different interests. So they failed to come to a consensus. On the issue of 'what subject should we study', Durette said Mathematics, while Misho said English and Shole said Science. Based on this, rather than settling the weekend study program, they got into unnecessary disputes.

Activity 4

Answer the following questions based on the passage:

1. If you were in the place of those three friends how would you settle such differences?
2. How would you settle the study plan that can harmonize the interest of the three?

There are certain basic issues to handling differences and disagreements. Some of them are the following.

A. Discussion

On the occasion of disputes, it is important to reach common agreement. Discussion is the way in which disputant parties come around the table and settle differences by searching a common ground for all parties. Since discussions are to settle differences, the discussants in addition to forwarding their ideas, have to closely listen what other parties are saying. To achieve the goal of the discussion, it is important to suggest ideas acceptable by both parties. To this end, tolerance is important.

B. Listening One Another

Listening one another implies giving due attention to others ideas and not intervening while others are forwarding their opinions.

C. Tolerance

This promotes a friendly spirit among disputants through promoting mutual respect and by avoiding intolerance and aggressiveness. This is through giving up some of their stands in order to reach an agreement by understanding others views and interests rather than mere allegations of one another.

Activity 5

Answer the following questions:

1. What has to be done to settle differences created by situations of place and time? Debate it.
2. Explain using examples, roles of discussion, listening one another and tolerance to settle disputes through peaceful ways.

1.4 Federal and Regional States

1.4.1 Similarities and Differences

- Explain issues which are showing the similarities of federal and regional states.

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Similarities

The common structure of Federal and Regional States within FDRE is the unity of federal and regional states. The other similarity is the body of governments. In both federal and regional states, there are law making, enforcing and interpreting organs. Another common thing is that both governments are protecting and ensuring the federal constitution.

Differences

As there are similarities, there are also differences. Among them is that the existence of the House of Federation at Federal level, which is non-existence at regional level and also does not belong to three major organs of government. The House of Federation is the representation of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia.

Another basic difference is that federal government dominates international issues which need some uniform administration (such as currency, national defense etc.) while the regions are endowed with the authority of self-administration.

Activity 6

Answer the following questions:

1. What are similarities between the federal and regional states?
2. What are differences between the federal and regional states?

1.4.2 Concurrent Powers

- What are the concurrent powers of regional and federal states of Ethiopia?

Though regional and federal states do have exclusive powers, they also have concurrent powers. Based on chapter 11 article 98, the following are concurrent powers held by both regional and federal governments.

1. The federal government and the states shall jointly levy and collect profit sales, excise and personal income taxes on enterprises they jointly establish.

2. They shall jointly levy and collect taxes on the profit of companies and dividends due to share holders.
3. They shall jointly levy and collect taxes on income derived from large scale mining and all petroleum and gas operations, and royalties on such operations.

Activity 7

Answer the following questions:

1. Mention concurrent powers of federal and regional states as per 1995 Ethiopian constitution?
2. Why do you think those powers are concurrent power of federal and regional states? Debate.

1.4.3 Major Functions of City Administrations

- What are the two city-administrations in Ethiopia which are answerable to the federal government?

In addition to nine regional states, there are two city-administrations which together establish the federal government of Ethiopia. The two city-administrations are Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. Both of them have certain major functions as per proclamation 87/1999 E.C. of Addis Ababa and 416/1996 E.C. proclamation of Dire Dawa. According to those proclamations, the following are their major functions:

- Imposing tax and duties on profit source allocated for them.
- Planning and implementing economic and social programs.
- Planning and administrating their budget and getting loans from local sources.
- Establishing police force to maintain peace and the security of cities.
- Administer land and natural resource which existing within those city-administrations.

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- Deciding on powers and functions of governmental organizations and development institutions in the city-administration.
- Deciding issues of the civil service and work situations of the city-administration.
- Formulating and executing rules and regulations on issues under the city-administration.
- Making agreements with equivalent cities abroad on technical, economic, cultural and protocol issues.
- Creating and making agreements to have direct contact with federal and regional states in the country.

Activity 8

Answer the following questions:

1. Mention at least five functions of city-administrations.
2. Among the mentioned functions of city-administrations, identify some similarities and differences in regard to functions of them with regional states.

1.5 International Relations of Ethiopia

1.5.1 Ethiopian Relations with Other Countries



Picture 1.5. The relation of Ethiopia with other country

- Based on picture 1.5, on what issues does Ethiopia makes relationships with other countries.

Ethiopia has long history of international relations. Ethiopia is among the founding members of the UN organization which was established in 1945 in the aftermath of the Second World War. Currently, Ethiopia is strengthening such relations. For instance investors from the Middle East, Asia, Europe and America are taking part in investment activities of our country based on conducive situations of our country.

We have encouraging relations with Asian countries particularly with India, China and Japan. Since strengthening relations with South and Eastern Asian countries in trade and investment, it has got due attention of the state. In general, to promote the building of the democratic system and development endeavours, Ethiopia's international relations are based on the principle of cooperation with one another.

Activity 9

Answer the following questions:

1. Which countries have strong relations with Ethiopia? Mention at least three of them.
2. At what level, does that relationship with Ethiopia exist with those foreign countries? Explain by using examples.

1.5.2 Advantages of International Relations to Ethiopia

- What kind of advantages Ethiopia will or do have from making International relations?

The major objective of foreign relations to Ethiopia is creating suitable situation for building the democratic system which ensures fast development. This is because the beginning as well as destination of foreign relation of our country is targeted to promote democracy and development. To attain these targets, it is aimed to create a free market to get investments, loans, grant and technical support from foreign world.

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Activity 10

Discuss the following:

1. Discuss advantages attained through international relations with Ethiopia.
2. By being in different groups and by identifying some foreign countries, present your findings on advantages attained by Ethiopia from such relations.

Summary

The democratic system is one in which human and democratic rights and equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are respected. Building democratic systems refers to the implementation of the democratic system through the creation of democratic citizens and a democratic culture. Building a democratic system in general refers to creation of democratic citizens and culture which are bases to create convenient administration for people and the country in general.

There are major bases for building a democratic system. Among them are promoting the rule of law, co-existence, respecting human and democratic rights of citizens, and freedom of speech. Furthermore, equality, using his/her language and the right to elect and to be elected are major factors of democracy.

The existence of governmental and non-governmental democratic institutions is important to promote human and democratic rights. Courts, police station, Ombudsperson, Human Right Commissions, Anti-corruption and Mass Media under government control are among governmental institutions. However, international and local, civic organizations and privately held Mass Media are under non-governmental democratic institutions established to promote human and democratic rights.

Discussion, listening to one another and tolerance are among peaceful ways of settling disputes. One of the major attributes of the similarities of federal and regional states is having the common structures of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Furthermore, at both levels, there are legislative, executive, and judiciary bodies. Both are also authorized to safeguard the constitution of a country. Their differences mainly are that federal government is handling international issues (such as currency, national defense, and foreign relation); regional states are enhancing self-governance. City-administrations have functions to impose and collect taxes on profits, administer land and natural resource establish police force, and formulate rules and regulations in their own scope and signing agreements with equivalent cities abroad on technical, economic and cultural protocols.

Ethiopia has strong relations with other countries. Such relations are aimed to succeed development endeavours by creating market opportunities supporting development activities, to get loans, grants, technical support to create administrative institutions for the promotion of democratic system. In general, the foreign relations of Ethiopia are furthering the development endeavour of the country.

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Key Words

Protocol agreements:	An agreement among or between countries on education, culture and economy
Political party:	An association of different communities to get power through free election to ensure social and economic rights
Royalty payment:	A sum of money that is paid to somebody who has written a book, a piece of music or arts etc., on each time it has sold or performed

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. Building democratic systems refers to creating and developing democratic citizens and culture.
2. The co-existence of people and respecting human and democratic rights are among the bases of building a democratic system.
3. A Human Rights Commission is the prime institution to safeguard the rule of law in a country.
4. The international relations of Ethiopia is targeted to get support for development endeavour and to promote the respect of human and democratic rights in the country.
5. Imposing and collecting income tax from higher mining works and From, petroleum gases and the Royalty fee is the authority of federal government.

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

- | A | B |
|--|---|
| 1. An institution working for effective implementation of human and democratic rights without reduction. | A. Mass media |
| 2. An institution that ensures whether rules and regulations are contradicting basic human and democratic rights or not. | B. Ombudsperson |
| 3. An institution following up the implementation of laws stated rights and privileges by government officials. | C. Civic organizations |
| 4. An institution working to ensure accountability, transparency and active community participation. | D. Human Rights Commissioner |
| 5. Disseminating timely and reliable information for the public. | E. Police force |
| | F. Federal Ethical and Anti-corruption Commission |

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

1. _____ is an organization established out of government bureaucracy by the self-initiation of active and responsive citizens.
2. An organization accepting, evaluating and deciding issues and complaints in government institutions to promote rights of individuals is _____.
3. The three major ways for the peaceful settlement of disputes are _____, _____ and _____.

IV. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

1. The rule of law is the basic principle of building a democratic system since
 - (a) It ensures the power holding only through democratic ways
 - (b) It ensures the respect of human and democratic rights
 - (c) It ensures the respect of equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples
 - (d) All of the above.
2. Among the characteristics of democratic citizens, which one is not?
 - (a) Knows human and democratic rights of citizens
 - (b) Admits differences as bases of democracy
 - (c) Respects human and democratic rights of citizens
 - (d) Violates the right of others.
3. When can we say that a democratic culture is developed?
 - (a) When there is the acceptance of differences of opinions and tolerating one another
 - (b) When there is peaceful settlement of disputes
 - (c) When there is the using of the judicial settlement and majority decision on issues which cannot be settled through discussion
 - (d) All of the above.

V. Give short answers for the following questions

1. Mention at least three bases for building democratic system and justify each of them.
2. Mention at least two institutions which are working for promotion of human and democratic rights and explain their objectives.
3. Explain the similarities and differences of federal and regional states.