

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO CIVICS AND ETHICS

1.1. Definitions

- the word civics is derived from the Latin word 'civis' which means a citizen.
- Another Latin word 'civitas' means city-state.
- Both these two Latin words gave birth to the social science known as civics
- Civics as an education for the first time delivered in ancient Greek-city-state of Athens with the aim of teaching Athenians about the "good life".
- Thus, civic education is, in short, an education for citizenship in which people get access to different kinds of knowledge
- The main aim of teaching civics and ethics is to create active, disciplined(good citizens) , and responsive citizens

- Civics education is a branch of social science which deals with the rights and responsibilities of citizens(this is the most cited definition)
- It is the intensive study and understanding of political institutions such as legislative, executive and judiciary
- It is the study of the purpose of government, the nature of the law, and the way private behavior affects the public order and the political system;

- It also studies the international socio-economic and political conditions. i.e. civic competence. It is the ability to participate in political, economic and social affairs
- Civic education is an education for the wide spread participation of citizen in the overall affaires of their nation.
- It is also deals with the knowledge and skills that you should acquire in order to be competent and responsible citizen

Origin and Definition of Ethics

- Ethics is a branch of philosophy that study the **rightness** and **wrongness** of human actions and conducts.
- Ethics is a means to decide a course of human action or conduct as right or wrong, or as bad or good based on rational ethical principles and standards.
- In ethics, we are concerned with what we ought to do, what consequences ought to be achieved, and what sort of persons we ought to become.
- It seeks to establish and prescribe norms, standards, or principles for evaluating our actual practices.

What is Morality?

- ❖ morality and ethics are often used interchangeably in everyday speech as referring to justified or proper conduct.
- ❖ But ethics is usually associated with a certain conduct within a profession, for example, the code of ethics for the teaching profession.
- ❖ Morality is a more general term referring to the character of individuals and community.

- ❖ Morality refers to moral conduct while ethics refers to the formal study of moral conduct.
- ❖ It can be claimed that morality is related to the action, but ethics is related to principles on the basis of which we judge our actions
- ❖ If an action conform to the established code(ethical standards), it is called moral ,if not immoral

Ethics and Law

- ❖ As opposed to morals and ethics, laws are norms, formally approved by national governments or international political institutions
- ❖ Many laws are introduced in order to promote well-being, resolve conflicts of interest, and promote social harmony.
- ❖ However, there are several reasons why ethics is not law.
- ❖ **First, some actions that are illegal may not be unethical.**
- ❖ Speeding is illegal, but one might have an ethical obligation to break the speed limit in order to transport someone to a hospital in an emergency.

- ❖ Second, some actions that are unethical may not be illegal.
- ❖ Most people would agree that lying is unethical but lying is only illegal under certain conditions, e.g. lying on an income tax return, lying when giving sworn testimony, etc.
- ❖ Third, laws can be unethical or immoral.
- ❖ The United States had laws permitting slavery in the 1800s but most people today would say that those laws were unethical or immoral.
- ❖ Although we have moral and ethical obligations to obey the law, civil disobedience can be justified when immoral or unethical laws exist.

- ❖ Fourth, we use different kinds of mechanisms to express, teach, inculcate, and enforce laws and ethics.
- ❖ Laws are expressed publicly in statutes, penal codes, court rulings, government regulations, and so forth.
- ❖ Although ethics and morals are sometimes made explicit in religious texts, professional codes of conduct, or philosophical writings, many ethical and moral standards are implicit.

- The method of enforcement also vary.
- we use the coercive power of government to enforce laws.
- People who break certain laws can be fined, imprisoned, or executed.
- People who violate ethical or moral standards do not face these kinds of punishments unless their actions also violate laws.
- society uses persuasion and social exclusion in the case of violation of ethical principles

- ❑ Civic and ethical education is a subject which is interdisciplinary.
- ❑ A subject becomes interdisciplinary when it borrows shares or makes knowledge, theories, principles and explanations from different disciplines.
- ❑ Civic and ethical education has several sources and takes knowledge from different disciplines or subjects.
- ❑ The sources of civic and ethical education can be generally classified in to two.

A. Theoretical sources

- This refers to the various subjects which civic and ethical education borrows theories, principles and explanations.
- These include political science, philosophy, law, economics geography, history, sociology and so on. For example, when you learn about morality or ethics, the source is philosophy. When you deal about democracy, state, government, citizenship, etc, the source is political science. Issues about human rights and constitution are originally taken from law

B. Documentary sources

- Documentary sources include international instruments such as UDHR, which is very important source on the issue of Human Rights, and various kinds of covenants and conventions
- In addition, constitutions both federal and regional as well as legal enactments and decisions made by legal bodies, such as parliaments, state councils and various federal ministries are also sources of civic and ethical education.
- Furthermore, historical sources, films and photographs and so on are some of the documentary sources of the subject matter under discussion.

Goals of Moral and Civic Education

- ❖ In higher educational institutions of Ethiopia, civics and ethics/moral education is given with the aim of educating students about democratic culture, ethical values and principles, supremacy of constitution, the rule of law, rights and duties of citizens.
- ❖ It is also aimed at creating a generation who has the capability to shoulder family and national responsibility
- ❖ Generally, the necessity of delivering the course emanates from:

1. Developing a democratic and participant political culture

- Democratic outlooks should be indoctrinated into the mind of the young generation.
- This can be realized by teaching students democratic values, principles, and cultivate them in such way that they could be able to shoulder the responsibility of their country
- Political tolerance is critical to build up democratic system.
- In order to ensure the freedom of expression, the culture of tolerance is a pillar.
- So, tolerance could mean accommodation of political differences.
- Therefore, civic and ethical education teaches students about political culture, democracy and its values and principles.

❖ political culture defines the roles which an individual may play in the political process.

❖ Almond and Verba (1963) construct three political cultures:

A. parochial cultures,

B. subject cultures, and

C. participant cultures.

A. parochial cultures

- ❖ In such political culture, citizens don't have any tendency to participate in the political sphere of their countries
- ❖ individuals think of their families' or localities' advantage as the only goal to pursue.
- ❖ Citizens focus only on local matters by excluding wider social contexts
- ❖ People have no understanding of the national political system

B. Subject political cultures

- ✓ In subject cultures, there is high cognitive, affective, and evaluative orientation towards the political system and policy outputs, but orientations towards input objects (like political parties) and the self as active participants are minimal.
- ✓ Subject cultures are most compatible with centralized, authoritarian political structures

C. participant political cultures

- ✓ members of society have high cognitive, affective, and evaluative orientation to the political system, the input objects, the policy outputs, and recognize the self as an active participant in the polity.
- ❖ participant cultures are most compatible with democratic political structures
- ❖ Democracy can only flourish when citizens understand and participate actively in civic and political life from the perspective that participation is important, but informed and educated participation is more important.
- ❖ Which political/civic culture best describes the Ethiopian political situations?

2) Building civic competence in citizens

- Civic and ethical education is the overall educational system that helps students to develop civic knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- In other words, it helps citizens to develop their capacity and ability to participate effectively in the political, economy and social system in their country.

3) Promoting diversity and culture of tolerance

- ❖ Differences are natural and part of the lives of human kind.
- ❖ Relationships and interactions between people could only be maintained and kept alive when people develop feeling of tolerance and appreciation for differences.
- ❖ Tolerance enables us to understand that other people have the right to hold opinions, believes, and positions that are different from our own.

▪It helps individuals to give respect and values for traditions, languages, culture and etc of others as well as to listen to the view points of others.

▪ Therefore, civic and ethical education enables students to develop certain positive and relevant attitudes towards important values and virtues like tolerance.

▪It also enables citizens to appreciate the values of dialogue, negotiation, tolerance, compromise diversity and so on.

4. National character and patriotism

- Patriotism refers to one's love, affection and devotion towards his/her country.
- Citizens should always be willing and ready to sacrifice everything for their motherland.
- They should be proud of their country.
- They should also be proud of their identity, cultural heritage and uphold the values of the society.
- For example, a student who has learnt about the glory, fame, and deeds of his/her ancestors as well as the history of his/her country will develop the feeling of patriotism

5) Conflict resolution and peace building

- Civic and ethical education is aimed at creating good citizens who don't participate in corruption, respect the rights and opinions of others,
- It helps student to develop skills such as information inquiry and accurate decision making, conflict resolution, expression of oneself logically and clearly, use of respectful language, scientific reasoning, and so on.
- Moreover, it also widely teaches students about the importance of the right attitudes that needs to ensure harmony and peaceful co-existence among people.

❖ Moral and Civics Education is based on and seeks to promote in students core moral, ethical, democratic, and educational values, such as:

- ✓ Respect for life
- ✓ Respect for reasoning
- ✓ Fairness
- ✓ Concern for the welfare of others
- ✓ Respect for diversity
- ✓ Values democratic principles
- ✓ Peaceful resolution of conflict

■ In general the significance of civic and ethical studies includes:

- to make citizen aware about the fundamental rights freedoms and duties,
- to initiate citizens to participate actively in the political activities of the government, economic and social issues of their country
- to produce competent(knowledgeable, skillful and positive attitudes), high moral standard society and responsible citizens who can ask and use their rights and fulfill their obligations in accordance with the laws of their respective country,
- to develop the culture of democracy and avoid the culture of passivity and apathy,
- to make citizen think rationally and critically