

Alkan Health Business and Technology College



**Social Anthropology Course Lecture note adapted from Ministry of Science
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Chapter One

Anthropology: Definitions, Nature and Scope

1. What is Anthropology?

The term anthropology is a combination of two terms ‘anthropos’ and ‘logus’, the former meaning human and the later meaning discourse or science. Thus anthropology is the science or discourse of man. The following are important and simple definitions of anthropology:

The concise oxford dictionary: anthropology is the study of mankind especially of its societies and customs; study of structure and evolution of man.

Kroeber: “Anthropology is the science of groups of men and their behaviour and production”.

Herskovits: “Anthropology maybe defined as the measurement of human beings.”

Jacobs and Stern: “Anthropology is the scientific study of the physical, social and cultural development and behavior of human beings since their appearance on this earth.

Anthropology is a broad scientific discipline dedicated to the comparative study of humans as a group, from its first appearance on earth to its present stage of development.

In a more specific term, anthropology is a science which:

- Investigates the strategies for living that are learned and shared by people as members of human social groups;
- Examines the characteristics that human beings share as members of one species (*homo sapiens*) and the diverse ways that people live in different environments; and
- Analyzes the products of social groups: material objects (tools, cloths, houses, etc) and non-material creations (beliefs, values, practices, institutions, etc).

Anthropology seeks to explain how and why people are both similar and different through examination of our biological and cultural past and comparative study of contemporary human societies.

Anthropology has a strong affinity with natural sciences as well. In fact, anthropology is well known by that aspect of it which is mainly concerned with the biological/ physical dimensions of mankind as a biological being in group context. Hence, it may be inappropriate to say that anthropology is only a social science. It is also a natural science, not in the sense that it deals with the natural phenomenon or man as an individual entity, but in the sense that one of its main interests is to study man and man's behavior as a product of the natural processes, and in the context of the animal kingdom.

It should further be stressed that anthropology focuses on:

- ✚ The origin of humans,
- ✚ The evolutionary development of humans,
- ✚ Human physical, bio-chemical and Socio-cultural variations, and
- ✚ The material possessions and cultural heritages of humans.

1.1. Origin and Development of Anthropology

The facts of the incredibly diverse and at the same time essentially similar nature of humans over time and space have intrigued curious-minded people over the century. The history of anthropological thought is replete with many and varied ideas, some of which often were wild extremes resulting from ethnocentric attitudes.

Before anthropology attained the status of scientific discipline curious-minded persons from ancient to medieval times have speculated a lot about the issues and problems that concern anthropologists today. That is, the present academic anthropology has its roots in the works and ideas of the great ancient and Medieval Greek, Roman, and Hebrew philosophers and social thinkers. These people were interested in the nature, origin and destiny of man, and the morality and ethics of human relationships. While the roots of (socio-cultural) anthropology can be generally traced through the history of western culture as far back as ancient Greek social philosophical thinking, the discipline did not emerge as distinct field of study until the mid-nineteenth century. Anthropology as an academic discipline was born during the 19th century. Anthropology as academic discipline was born out of the intellectual atmosphere of what is called the **Enlightenment**, which is the eighteenth century social philosophical movement that emphasized human progress and the power of reason, and based on **Darwinian Theory of Evolution**.

By the late 1870s, anthropology was beginning to emerge as a profession. A major impetus for its growth was the expansion of western colonial powers and their consequent desire to better understand the peoples living under colonial domination. In the United States, for example, the government sought information on Native American peoples who were being subdued and placed on reservations. As the tribes were subdued, anthropologists were employed to help devise means to administer these people. ... However, many anthropologists were motivated by the desire to record local customs before they disappeared and were forgotten.... Anthropology became a profession primarily in museums, During the 1870s and 1880s many museums devoted to the study of humankind were founded in Europe, North America and South America.... Anthropology's link with museums influenced its development throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's... Professionalization during the latter part of nineteenth and early twentieth century's made great breakthroughs in the quality and quantity of ethnographic research....

Early anthropologists mainly studied small communities in technologically simple societies. Such societies are often called by various names, such as, *traditional, non-industrialized or simple societies*. Anthropologists of the early 1900s emphasized the study of social and cultural differences among human groups. This time, many of the indigenous peoples of the non-western world and their social and cultural features were studied in detail and documented.

1.2. Subject Matter and Scope of Anthropology

The subject matter of anthropology is very vast. The subject covers all aspects of human ways of life and culture, as humans live in a social group relationship. The main distinguishing characteristic of anthropology, the thing that makes it different from the many other fields that also include people as their subject matter is its broad scope. A good way to emphasize this broad scope is to say that anthropologists are interested in all human beings, whether living or dead, "primitive" or "civilized" and that they are interested in many different aspects of humans, including their skin color, family lives, marriages, political systems, tools, personality types, and languages. No place or time is too remote to escape the anthropologist's notice. No dimension of human kind, from genes to art styles, is outside the anthropologist's attention

Anthropologists seem to be unsure whether humanity is absolutely dichotomous with other lower forms of animals. Some may even tend to regard humanity and non-humanity as something that is best understood in the form of continuum. This sense of continuum may be particularly in terms of time scale. Thus, the farther we go in time backwards, the narrower becomes the difference between humanity and non-humanity.

Anthropologists try to know and explain about the technological, economic, political and intellectual development of humanity. They attempt to discover the extent to which different human populations vary in their biological and social characteristics and to understand why these differences exist.

Anthropology's ultimate goal is to develop an integrated picture of humankind a goal that encompasses an almost infinite number of questions about all aspects of our existence. Anthropology is interested in some of the following questions and issues about humans:

- ✓ Where did human species come from (i.e. what are the origins of mankind)?
- ✓ Were human beings created in the image and likeness of God, or were they just the products of millions of years of the natural, evolutionary process?
- ✓ What makes us human? Why do some groups of people tend to be tall and lanky, while others tend to be short and stocky?
- ✓ Why do some groups of people practice agriculture, while others hunt for a living?
- ✓ In what ways does man differ from other animal species?
- ✓ How did mankind arrive at the present stage of biological, intellectual, and cultural development?
Is there a common human nature?
- ✓ In what ways do humans live in various times and places differ?
- ✓ How can we explain why cultures vary?

1.4.1. Anthropological Imagination

Anthropological Imagination is the ability to understand the social construction of cultural assumptions and the influence of our biological heritage while embracing the overall human experience. It is also to mean the

process of employing anthropological perspectives to view the socio cultural, political and economic issues of the world.

1.3. Sub-Fields of Anthropology: Four Mirrors For Understanding Humanity

As indicated earlier, the interests and subject- matter of anthropology are wide-ranging. This broad discipline is divided into four main sub-fields. These are: physical anthropology, socio-cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology and archaeological anthropology. A brief discussion of the four major sub-fields is as follows.

A. Physical Anthropology

Physical anthropology is the branch of anthropology most closely related to the natural sciences, particularly biology; that is why it is often called biological anthropology. It studies the biological dimensions of human beings, including biological evolution, the physical variations between contemporary populations, and the biology and behavior of non-human **primates**. Physical anthropology itself is further divided into three special fields of study: Paleo-anthropology, primatology and anthropometry.

a). Paleo-anthropology: is a subspecialty in physical anthropology which is interested in the search for **fossil** remains from prehistoric times to trace the development of outstanding human physical, social and cultural characteristics. Paleo-anthropology is the study of human evolution through analysis of fossil remains. Paleoanthropologists use a variety of sophisticated techniques to date, clarify and compare fossil bones to determine the links between modern humans and their biological ancestors. Despite the highly acclaimed Darwinian theory of human origins, that humans are evolved from lower life forms, it may be appropriate to state that many writers in the evolutionary circle argue that there are limits to fossil evidences and Paleo-anthropology has many problems to tackle suggests, the great theory of Darwinian Evolution rests on so little evidence. Paleoanthropologists are aware of this limitation but textbook accounts of origins of human beings tend to neglect them.

b). Primatology: The study of the biology and behavior of **primates**, that is, the animals that most closely resemble human beings in terms of physiological and anatomical structure, is an important field in physical anthropology. Primatologists observe primates such as gorillas, chimpanzees, gibbons, and orangutans in their natural habitats to ascertain the similarities and differences between these other primates and humans. Primatological research helps us understand what human beings share with other animals, what makes them part of the natural world and their unique characteristics.

a) Anthropometry: The study of human variations within and among different populations in time and space, human ecology, population genetics, etc makes the central concerns of this sub-branch of physical anthropology. These physical differences may be in terms of blood types, skin colors, skull

shape, facial shape, hair texture, and the like. Anthropometry shades some light on how differing physical characteristics have helped human groups adapt different geographical environments.

Population genetics, the study of biological inheritance plays an important role in anthropometry, what is sometimes termed as biological anthropology (Scupin and DeCorse, 1995; Howard and Dunaif-Hattis, 1992).

The investigation of human variations among living populations has led to the application of the knowledge in solving practical problems. The development of a specialty known as **forensic anthropology** is one of the results of these attempts. Forensic anthropology is the identification of human skeletal remains for medical and legal purposes. Forensic anthropologists work often with other forensic specialists in aiding criminal investigations. Forensic anthropologists attempt to determine the sex, age at death, ancestral background, and stature of the deceased individual. Using this knowledge, forensic anthropologists identify crash victims, war casualties, homicide victims, and skeletal remains in unmarked graves.

B. Socio-cultural Anthropology

This is also often called social anthropology or cultural anthropology. It is concerned with the social and cultural dimensions of the living people's and with the description and analysis of people's lives and traditions. Socio-cultural anthropology studies the social, symbolic or non-material and material lives of contemporary and historically recent human societies, taking the concept of culture central to its goal.

There are many other specialized fields of study in social or cultural anthropology. Some of these include: Medical Anthropology, Urban Anthropology, Rural Anthropology, Economic Anthropology, Political Anthropology, Development Anthropology, Anthropology of Religion, Legal Anthropology, Demographic Anthropology, Ecological Anthropology, Psychological Anthropology, Anthropology of Art, Ethnomusicology, etc.

C. Archaeological Anthropology

Archaeology studies the ways of lives of past peoples by excavating and analyzing the physical remains they left behind. **Artifacts** are the material remains of human societies (Scupin and DeCorse, 1995). Archeologists also study **ecofacts**, the footprints on the ecology by the past societies. This helps reveal the way human societies interacted with their local ecosystems. Tools, ornaments, pottery, animal bones, human skeletal material, and evidence of how people lived in the distant past are collected, and systematically analyzed.

Some branches of study in Archaeological Anthropology includes:

- 1) **Prehistoric archaeology:** Prehistoric archaeology investigates human prehistory; that is the periods of time in a region before the development of art of writing. Many anthropological archaeologists study societies that did not leave behind any written records. Prehistoric archaeology uses material remains to reconstruct prehistoric life ways; it also studies contemporary peoples whose styles of life are analogous and or comparable to those of ancient peoples. For example, by studying the ways of life of present hunter and gatherer societies, prehistoric archaeologists can gain insights into the ways in which the ancient foraging peoples lived.
- 2) **Ethno archaeology:** This may be regarded as an aspect of prehistoric archaeology. It is an approach to ethnographic analogy in which archeologists make their own observation of the contemporary cultures rather than relying on information provided by cultural anthropologists.
- 3) **Historical archaeology:** uses the evidence provided by excavated remains to enhance our understanding of historic peoples; that is, peoples who had writing and about whom written records are available. Historical archeologists study sites dating from historic times. Much of the work of historical archaeologists has been to help preserve historical sites.
- 4) **Classical archaeology:** Is an aspect of historic archaeology; it deals primarily with the ancient civilizations and empires of Europe and the Middle East, including Egypt, Greece, Roman and Persia, Axum, etc.

There are several other specialized areas of study and research in archaeology such as industrial archeology, marine archaeology, cognitive archeology, experimental archeology, biblical archeology, and so on.

Archeological anthropology has three major goals: 1) classifying and sequencing material culture; 2) reconstructing ancient ways of life; and 3) explaining and defining cultural processes.

D. Linguistic Anthropology

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Linguists describe and analyze the sound patterns, combinations of sounds, meanings, and structure of sentence in human languages. They also attempt to determine how two or more languages are related. Historically, modern linguists are especially interested in whether all human languages share any universal common feature. Some recent work suggests that human infants are born with knowledge of a set of generalized rules that allow them to discover the specific rules of language around them and to formulate new sentences by applying these rules.

The terms linguistic anthropology, anthropological linguistics, and ethno linguistics are often used interchangeably in the linguistic anthropology literature. However, the more preferred term is linguistic anthropology. It is defined as “the study of speech and language within the context of anthropology. It is the study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice”.

Linguistic anthropology usually focuses on *unwritten languages* (i.e., those languages which have no form of writing, languages used by indigenous peoples of the non-western societies). It is especially concerned with relations between language and other aspects of human behavior and thought. Linguistic anthropologists might describe and analyze a language so far unknown to linguistic science. There are three branch of linguistic anthropology those are ; sociolinguistics ,historical linguistics, structural linguistics.

Sociolinguistics is interested in how the language is used in various social contexts. For example, what speech style must one use with people of higher social standing? How does a local political leader use language to earn people's allegiance? What can the naming of various parts of the natural and social environment tell us about people's perception of their environments?

Historical Linguistics focuses on the comparison and classifications of different languages to distinguish the historical links between them. This historical linguistic research is particularly useful in tracing the migration routes of various societies through time

Structural Linguistics which studies the structure of linguistic patterns. Structural linguists compare grammatical patterns and other linguistic elements to find out how contemporary languages are similar to and different from one another.

1.4. The Relationship between Anthropology and Other Disciplines

Anthropology is similar with other social sciences as to its subject of study. All the social sciences such as sociology, psychology, political science, economics, history, etc, study, in one way or another, the human society and its ways of lives. Anthropology greatly overlaps with other disciplines that study human society. For example, anthropological field workers are likely to collect information on a society's agriculture, leadership patterns, and beliefs about the universe (physical world), music and art forms. They might find it useful to be acquainted with the works of economists, geographers, political scientists, philosophers, mythologists, and artists or art historians. They may read the works of historians, sociologists, novelists, economists, psychologists, and political scientists who also write about the region. Anthropology thus cuts across many disciplines, encompassing many of the subjects that other scholars consider their special province: law, religion, politics, literatures, art, and so on.

In the other way, Anthropology differs from other social sciences and the humanities by its broad scope, approach, unit of analysis and methods used. It studies mankind in its entirety. In its approach, anthropology studies and analyzes human ways of life holistically, comparatively and in a relativistic manner. Its unit of analysis is small-scale society. In its method of research, it is unique in that extended fieldwork among the studied community and developing intimate knowledge of the life worlds of the community with participant observation.

1.5. Distinguishing Features of Anthropology

We may identify five distinguishing marks of anthropology:

b) It's Broader Scope: as it is mentioned in the scope of anthropology part, The main distinguishing characteristic of anthropology, the thing that makes it different from the many other fields that also include people as their subject matter is its broad scope. A good way to emphasize this broad scope is to say that anthropologists are interested in all human beings.

c) Its Unique Approaches

- 1) **Anthropology is Holistic:** Studying one aspect of the ways of life of a group of people by relating it to other complex related aspects of life.
- 2) **Anthropology is Relativistic:** Anthropology tries to study and explain a certain belief, practice or institution of a group of people in its own context. It does not make value judgment, i.e., declaring that 'this belief or practice is good' or 'that is bad.'
- 3) **Anthropology is Comparative:** Anthropology studies certain aspects of the culture of a group of people by comparing it across societies and different times; i.e. the present with the past, the modern with the traditional, etc. There are two dimensions of comparison: **Synchronic:** - a systematic comparison of cultures at a point in time. **Diachronic:** - the comparative study of culture and society across time.

C) Emphasis on Insiders' View: Anthropologists focus on how the people themselves understand about their world, how a particular group of people explains about the world, etc. This is what anthropologists call emic perspective.

D). The Micro-focus: This is another distinguishing mark of anthropology. Anthropology focuses on small-scale society or community. The kinds of social groups or communities anthropologists study, whether they are in traditional or modern world, are usually small scaled in their social organization, economic and political structure, and tend to be homogenous in their overall character.

E) Its Method of Research: The hallmarks of anthropology are qualitative research methods such as Ethnographic Method (extended fieldwork), focus- group discussion, participant observation, in-depth and key informant interviews. Although these methods are now practiced in other behavioral sciences as well, no other discipline seems to be so associated with and employs such methods as anthropologists.

1.6. Anthropological Research Method: Ethnography & Ethnographic Methods

The most vital anthropological method of data collection is fieldwork, in which the researchers live among the societies study and observe their way of life intimately. A typical anthropological research method is participant observation, in which the researcher learns about a society living among them and participating in their daily lives. Ethnography is the anthropologists' distinct strategy in data collection. It is the hallmark of anthropology. Ethnography provides a foundation for generalizations about human behavior and social life.

1.6.1. What is Ethnography?

Ethnography, emerging from anthropology, is a qualitative methodology that lends itself to the study of the beliefs, social interactions, and behaviours of small societies, involving participation and observation over a period of time, and the interpretation of the data collected (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011)

The central aim of ethnography is to provide rich, holistic insights in to people's views and actions, as well as the nature (that is, sights, sounds) of the location they inhabit, through the collection of detailed observations and interviews. Besides The task of ethnographer is to document the culture, the perspectives and practices, of the people in these settings.

Ethnographers typically gather participant observations, necessitating direct engagement and involvement with the world they are studying. Owing to the complex nature of social life, ethnographers need to record a variety of elements in their field notes.

Ethnography is a qualitative research method where researchers observe and/or interact with a study's participants in their real-life environment. It was initially popular in the field of anthropology, but is now used across a wide range of social sciences. A good researcher is required when observing and/or interacting with target audiences in their real-life environment.

Key features of ethnographic research

- ✓ A strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon,
- ✓ Investigation of a small number of cases (perhaps even just one case) in detail
- ✓ Emphasize on exploring social phenomena rather than testing of preset hypotheses
- ✓ An open-ended emergent learning process, and is highly flexible and creative process
- ✓ Requires the daily and continuous recording of field notes

1.6.2. Why Choose Ethnography?

Anthropologists employ Ethnographic research because it offers several advantages. For example, the use of participant observation enables ethnographers to “immerse” themselves in a setting, thereby generating a rich understanding of social action and its subtleties in different contexts.

Participant observation also gives ethnographers opportunities to gather empirical insights into social practices that are normally “hidden” from the public gaze. Additionally, since it aims to generate holistic social accounts, ethnographic research can identify, explore, and link social phenomena which, on the surface, have little connection with each other .

1.7. Contributions of Anthropology

The contributions of anthropology may be categorized in to the following.

- Anthropology gives us an insight into different ways and modes of life of a given society, to understand the logic behind and justification for human activities and behavior.
- Anthropology also helps us understand our own ways of lives. Many aspects of our lives seem to us normal, so we don't know the logic behind. Eating *injera*, for example, is assumed to be normal to those whose staple (main) food item is *injera*. By studying anthropology, we look into ourselves through the others' ways of lives.
- Anthropology helps us fight against prejudices and discriminations. It helps us fight against ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism arises from ignorance about other ethnic groups and their ways of lives.
- Anthropology is also used as a tool for development. Applied anthropology, here, is the application of anthropological knowledge in solving social problems.

In addition to the aforementioned points, we may substantiate the contributions of anthropology as follows:

- Because of its broad scope, anthropology allows us to understand the biological, technological and cultural development of humanity over long period of time in human evolution.
- Because of its *comparative approach* to humanity, anthropology allows us to separate what is unique to our way of life from what is general to all people.
- Because of its *relativistic approach*, anthropology helps us to appreciate cultural diversity and variability. It helps us to avoid the misunderstanding that commonly arises when individuals of different cultural traditions come into contact. Anthropology reduces ethnocentrism.
- Anthropology can help us be aware that when we interact with people from other cultural traditions, their actions are not always intended to mean what we take them to mean, and therefore much miscommunication can be avoided. For instance, Health workers involved in health care provision in various cultural settings will find it very helpful if they develop this mentality.
- Anthropologists bring a *holistic approach* to national and international development agencies.
- Anthropologists use their expertise in particular subjects to formulate practical ways of coping with immediate social problems. Medical anthropologists, for example, investigate the interrelationship between human health, nutrition, and cultural beliefs and practices.

1.8. Misconceptions about Anthropology

There are a number of misconceptions associated with anthropology due to lack of appropriate awareness of its nature. The following are some of the misconceptions:

- a) One misconception about anthropology is related to the area of its study. It is said that anthropology is limited to the study of "primitive" societies. Indeed, most of the works done by anthropologists during early periods focused on isolated, "primitive", small-scale societies. However, anthropologists nowadays study the advanced, complex societies as well.
- b) Another misconception is that anthropologists only study the rural people and rural areas. True, most of the works conducted focused on rural areas. But now, anthropologists are also interested in the

study of urban people and urban areas. There is a distinct sub-discipline devoted to the study of urban societies called urban anthropology which focuses on the study of complex societies in urban centers.

- c) It is claimed that anthropologists are only interested in the study of far away, remote exotic communities living isolated from the influences of modernization. True, most anthropologists go to fieldwork to an isolated people in a distant corner. But now anthropologists are interested in home anthropology, studying anthropology at home, i.e., in one's own society.
- d) It is also said that the purpose of anthropology is to study in order to keep and preserve primitive cultural practices in museums and anthropologists are advocates of primitive culture. True, when anthropologists study "primitive" society, they study the culture of the people, to reconstruct it, to give meaning to the peculiar behaviors of people. However, anthropologists do not defend "primitive way of life"; they play a great role in bringing about positive change and development in the lives of people.

Unit Two

Human Culture and Ties that Connect

2. Definition of Culture

Culture is a unique possession of man. It is one of the distinguishing traits of human society. It makes the backbone of sociology and socio-cultural anthropology and other related disciplines such as cultural geography and social psychology. The term culture is not used with consistent meanings. It is used with various meanings in common-sense. Culture is very broad term that includes in itself all our walks of life, our modes of behavior, our philosophies and ethics, our morals and manners, our customs and traditions, our religious, political, economic and other types of activities. Culture includes all that man has acquired in his individual and social life.

Anthropologists and sociologists define culture in different ways. Some of their definition has been quoted below:

-  B. Malinowski has defined culture “as cumulative creation of man”. He regarded culture as the handiwork of man and the medium through which he achieves his ends.
-  Robert Bierstedt says, “Culture is the complex whole that consists of everything we think and do and have as members of society.”

However the most comprehensive definition of culture was provided by the British anthropologist **Edward B. Tylor**. He defined culture as “a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”.

The phrase “acquired by man as a member of society” in his definition is very important. It is not any habit or capability of man as a biological being, but man as a member of a social group. The definition focuses on beliefs and behavior that people acquire not through biological heredity but by growing up in a particular society and social group where they are exposed to a specific cultural tradition. It is through the socialization process that a person acquires a cultural knowledge. In anthropology, this process is called **enculturation**. Enculturation is specifically defined as the process by which an individual learns the rules and values of one’s culture.

Combining several of these definitions, we may define culture as the common way of life shared by a group of people. It includes all things beyond nature and biology. Culture therefore, is moral, intellectual and spiritual discipline for advancement, in accordance with the norms and values based on accumulated heritage. Culture is a system of learned behavior shared by and transmitted among the members of the group.

Culture is a collective heritage learned by individuals and passed from one generation to another. The individual receives culture as part of social heritage and in turn, may reshape the culture and introduce changes which then become part of the heritage of succeeding generations.

2.1. Misconceptions about Culture

Again before going any further, it is also important to note that common people often misuse the concept of culture. Some misconceptions about the term culture include:

- i. Many people in the western world use the term culture in the sense that some people are more "cultured" than others. This basically emanates from the idea associated with the root word of the term culture, "kulture" in German, which refers to "civilization". Thus, when one is said to be "cultured", he or she is said to be civilized. For an anthropologist, culture includes much more than refinement, taste, sophistication, education and appreciation of the fine arts. Not only college graduates but also all people are 'cultured'.
- ii. A second commonly used misconception is that which equates "culture" with things which are colorful, customs, cloths, foods, dancing, music, etc. many people have come to think of culture in terms of colorful customs, music, dancing and adornments clothing, jewelry and hairstyles.... Taken to an extreme, such images portray culture as recreational and ultimately unserious rather than something that ordinary people live everyday of their lives not just when they have festivals.
- iii. A third misconception about what culture is and what it constitutes is that which may be entertained by many common people here in Ethiopia. This misconception is similar to the second one, but it differs from it in that most people here think culture (as conceptualized in its local language for example, *bahil* in Amharic) is that which pertains to unique traditional material objects or non – material things of the past. According to this view, the cultural may not include things (material or non – material) which are modern, more ordinary, day-to – day, life aspects. Here, the simple, ordinary social, economic and other activities, ideas and affairs are regarded as not cultural or somewhat "less cultural" although not clearly stated.

2.2 Characteristics of Culture

For the better understanding the concept of culture, it is necessary for us to know its main features.

1. Culture Is Learned: Culture is not transmitted genetically rather; it is acquired through the process of learning or interacting with one's environment. More than any other species human relies for their survival on behavior patterns that are learned. Human have no instinct, which genetically programmed to direct to behave in a particular way. This process of acquiring culture after we born is called enculturation. Enculturation is specifically defined as the process by which an individual learns the rules and values of one's culture.

2. Culture Is Shared: For a thing, idea, or behavior pattern to qualify as being “cultural” it must have a shared meaning by at least two people within a society. In order for a society to operate effectively, the guidelines must be shared by its members. Without shared culture members of a society would be unable to communicate and cooperates and confusion and disorder world result.

3. Culture Is Symbolic: Symbolic thought is unique and crucial to humans and to cultural learning. A symbol is something verbal or nonverbal, within a particular language or culture that comes to stand for something else. There need be no obvious, natural, or necessary connection between the symbol and what it symbolizes. A symbol’s meaning is not always obvious. However, many symbols are powerful and often trigger behaviors or emotional states. For example, the designs and colors of the flags of different countries represent symbolic associations with abstract ideas and concepts.

4. Culture Is All-Encompassing: Culture encompasses all aspects, which affect people in their everyday lives. Culture comprises countless material and non-material aspects of human lives. Thus, when we talk about a particular people’s culture, we are referring to all of its man- made objects, ideas, activities whether those of traditional, old time things of the past or those created lately. Culture is the sum total of human creation: intellectual, technical, artistic, physical, and moral; it is the complex pattern of living that directs human social life, and which each new generation must learn and to which they eventually add with the dynamics of the social world and the changing environmental conditions.

5. Culture Is Integrated: Cultures are not haphazard collections of customs and beliefs. Instead, culture should be thought as of integrated wholes, the parts of which, to some degree, are interconnected with one another. When we view cultures as integrated systems, we can begin to see how particular culture traits fit into the whole system and, consequently, how they tend to make sense within that context. A culture is a system, change in one aspect will likely generate changes in other aspects. A good way of describing this integrated nature of culture is by using the analogy between a culture and a living organism. The physical human body comprises a number of systems, all functioning to maintain the overall health of the organisms, including among others, such system as the respiratory system, the digestive system, the skeletal system, excretory system, the reproductive system, and lymphatic system.

6. Culture Can Be Adaptive and Maladaptive: Humans have both biological and cultural ways of coping with environmental stresses. Besides our biological means of adaptation, we also use "cultural adaptive kits," which contain customary activities and tools that aid us. People adapt themselves to the environment using culture. The ability to adapt themselves to practically any ecological condition, unlike other animals, makes humans unique. Culture has allowed the global human population to grow from less than 10 million people shortly after the end of the last ice age to more than 7 billion people today, a mere 10,000 years later. This ability is attributed to human’s capacity for creating and using culture. Sometimes, adaptive behaviour that offers short-term benefits to particular subgroups or individuals may harm the environment and threaten the group's long-term survival. Example: Automobiles permit us to make a living by getting us from home to workplace. But the by-products of such "beneficial" technology often create new problems. Chemical

emissions increase air pollution, deplete the ozone layer, and contribute to global warming. Many cultural patterns such as overconsumption and pollution appear to be maladaptive in the long run.

7. Culture Is Dynamic: There are no cultures that remain completely static year after year. Culture is changing constantly as new ideas and new techniques are added as time passes modifying or changing the old ways. This is the characteristics of culture that stems from the culture's cumulative quality.

8. Culture is general and specific: Generally, all human societies of the world have a culture. It distinguishes them from other nonhuman beings. Specifically, there are as specific cultures as there are diverse peoples in the world. Humanity shares a capacity for culture (general), but people live in particular cultures where they are encultured.

9. Culture is stable and yet it changes: Culture is stable and yet changing: Culture is stable when we consider what people hold valuable and are handing over to the next generation in order to maintain their norms and values. However, when culture comes into contact with other cultures, it can change. That is, cultural diffusion, the spread of cultural traits from one area to the other, may cause cultural change. However, culture changes not only because of direct or indirect contact between cultures, but also through innovation and adaptation to new circumstances. That is, the forces of culture change are not only external, but they are also internal.

2.3 Aspects/Elements of Culture

Culture is reflected through the various components that it comprises viz., values, language, myths, customs, rituals and laws. Two of the most basic aspects of culture are material and nonmaterial culture. These are briefly explained as follows:

2.3.1 Material culture

Material culture consist of man-made objects such as tools, implements, furniture, automobiles, buildings, dams, roads, bridges, and in fact, the physical substance which has been changed and used by man. It is concerned with the external, mechanical and utilitarian objects. It includes technical and material equipment. It is referred to as civilization.

2.3.2 Non – Material culture

The term 'culture' when used in the ordinary sense, means 'non-material culture'. It is something internal and intrinsically valuable, reflects the inward nature of man. Non material culture consists of the words the people use or the language they speak, the beliefs they hold, values and virtues they cherish, habits they follow, rituals and practices that they do and the ceremonies they observe. It also includes our customs and tastes, attitudes and outlook, in brief, our ways of acting, feeling and thinking. Some of the aspects of non material culture listed as follows:

Values: Values are the standards by which member of a society define what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly. Every society develops both values and expectations regarding the right way to reflect them. Values are a central aspect of the nonmaterial culture of a society and are important because they influence the behavior of the members of a society.

Beliefs: Beliefs are cultural conventions that concern true or false assumptions, specific descriptions of the nature of the universe and humanity's place in it. Values are generalized notions of what is good and bad; beliefs are more specific and, in form at least, have more content. "Education is good" is a fundamental value in American society, whereas "Grading is the best way to evaluate students" is a belief that reflects assumptions about the most appropriate way to determine educational achievement.

Norms: Norms are another aspect of nonmaterial culture. Norms are shared rules or guidelines that define how people "ought" to behave under certain circumstances. Norms are generally connected to the values, beliefs, and ideologies of a society. Norms vary in terms of their importance to a culture, these are:

a) **Folkway:** Norms guiding ordinary usages and conventions of everyday life are known as folkways. Folkways are norms that are not strictly enforced, such as not leaving your seat for an elderly people inside a bus/taxi. They may result in a person getting a bad look.

b) **Mores:** Mores (pronounced MOR-ays) are much stronger norms than are folkways. Mores are norms that are believed to be essential to core values and we insist on conformity. A person who steals, rapes, and kills has violated some of society's most important mores. People who violate mores are usually severely punished, although punishment for the violation of mores varies from society to society. It may take the form of ostracism, vicious gossip, public ridicule, exile, loss of one's job, physical beating, imprisonment, commitment to a mental asylum, or even execution

2.4 Cultural Unity and Variations: Universality, Generality and Particularity of Culture

In studying human diversity in time and space, anthropologists distinguish among the universal, the generalized, and the particular. Certain biological, psychological, social, and cultural features are universal (found in every culture), others are merely generalities (common to several but not all human groups), other traits are particularities (unique to certain cultural traditions).

1) **Universality:** Universals are cultural traits that span across all cultures. Most are biologically that distinguish us from other species. Eg Long period of infant dependency, Year-round sexuality, Complex brain that enables use of symbols, languages, and tools Social universals, Life in groups, Some kind of family, Culture organizes on social life Depends on social interactions for expression and continuation, Incest taboo, Exogamy (marriage outside one's group). A great example of universality is that whether in Africa or Asia, Australia, or Antarctica, people understand the universal concept of family. Anthropologists would argue that it's just what we as humans do - we organize ourselves into families that are based on biology. No matter where you choose to travel and explore, you'll find a family system.

2) Generality: Generalities are cultural traits that occur in many societies but not all of them. Societies can share same beliefs and customs because of borrowing Domination (colonial rule) when customs and procedures are imposed on one culture can also cause generality Independent innovation of same cultural trait eg. Nuclear family Parents and children.

3) Particularity: Trait of a culture that is not widespread Cultural borrowing – traits once limited are more widespread Useful traits that don't clash with current culture get borrowed Examples: – Food dishes Particularities are becoming rarer in some ways but also becoming more obvious Borrowed cultural traits are modified Marriage, parenthood, death, puberty, birth all celebrated differently.

2.5. Evaluating Cultural Differences: Ethnocentrism, Cultural Relativism and Human Rights

The concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism occupy key position in anthropology.

A. Ethnocentrism: The common response in all societies to other cultures is to judge them in terms of the values and customs of their own familiar culture. Ethnocentrism refers to the tendency to see the behaviors, beliefs, values, and norms of one's own group as the only right way of living and to judge others by those standards.

Being fond of your own way of life and condescending or even hostile toward other cultures is normal for all people. Because of ethnocentrism, we often operate on the premise that our own society's ways are the correct, normal, better ways, for acting, thinking, feeling and behaving. Our own group is the centre or axis of everything, and we scale and rate all others with reference to it. Ethnocentrism is not characteristic only of complex modern societies. People in small, relatively isolated societies are also ethnocentric in their views about outsiders. It is a cultural universal. Alien cultural traits are often viewed as being not just different but inferior, less sensible, and even "unnatural".

Ethnocentrism results in prejudices about people from other cultures and the rejection of their "alien ways." Our ethnocentrism can prevent us from understanding and appreciating another culture. When there is contact with people from other cultures, ethnocentrism can prevent open communication and result in misunderstanding and mistrust.

This would be highly counterproductive for businessmen trying to negotiate a trade deal, professionals who work in areas other than their own or even just neighbors trying to get along with each other. The positive aspect of ethnocentrism has to do with the protection that it can provide for a culture. By causing a rejection of the foods, customs, and perceptions of people in other cultures, it acts as a conservative force in preserving traditions of one's own culture. It can help maintain the separation and uniqueness of cultures.

B. Cultural relativism: We cannot grasp the behavior of other people if we interpret what they say and do in the light of our values, beliefs, and motives. Instead, we need to examine their behavior as insiders, seeing it within the framework of their values, beliefs and motives. The concept of cultural relativism states that

cultures differ, so that a cultural trait, act, or idea has no meaning but its meaning only within its cultural setting.

Cultural relativism suspends judgment and views about the behavior of people from the perspective of their own culture. Every society has its own culture, which is more or less unique. Every culture contains its own unique pattern of behavior which may seem alien to people from other cultural backgrounds. We cannot understand the practices and beliefs separately from the wider culture of which they are part. A culture has to be studied in terms of its own meanings and values. Cultural relativism describes a situation where there is an attitude of respect for cultural differences rather than condemning other people's culture as uncivilized or backward.

Respect for cultural differences involves:

- ✓ Appreciating cultural diversity;
- ✓ Accepting and respecting other cultures;
- ✓ Trying to understand every culture and its elements in terms of its own context and logic;
- ✓ Knowing that a person's own culture is only one among many; and
- ✓ Recognizing that what is immoral, ethical, acceptable, etc, in one culture may not be so in another culture.
- ✓ Accepting that each body of custom has inherent dignity and meaning as the way of life of one group which has worked out to its environment, to the biological needs of its members, and to the group relationships;

C. Human Rights: In today's world, human rights advocates challenge many of the tenets of cultural relativism. Many anthropologists are uncomfortable with the strong form of cultural relativism that suggests that all patterns of culture are equally valid. What if the people practice slavery, violence against women, torture, or genocide? Human rights: rights based on justice and morality beyond and superior to particular countries, cultures, and religions. The idea of human rights challenges cultural relativism by invoking a realm of justice and morality beyond and superior to the laws and customs of particular countries, cultures, and religions.

Human rights include the right to speak freely, to hold religious beliefs without persecution, and to not be murdered, injured, or enslaved or imprisoned without charge. Such rights are seen as inalienable (nations cannot abridge or terminate them) and international (larger than and superior to individual nations and cultures). A doctrine of universal human rights, which emphasizes the rights of the individual over those of the community, would condemn such killings. Anthropologists respect human diversity. Most ethnographers try to be objective, accurate, and sensitive in their accounts of other cultures. However, their objectivity, sensitivity and a cross-cultural perspective got nothing to do with ignoring international standards of justice and morality.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is the psychological and social maladjustment at micro or macro level that is experienced for the first time when people encounter new cultural elements such as new things, new ideas, values, new concepts, seemingly strange beliefs and practices. No person is protected from culture shock. However, individuals vary in their capacity to adapt and overcome the influence of culture shock. For instance, ethnocentric individuals are exposed widely to culture shock. On the other hand, cultural relativists may find it easy to adapt to new situations and overcome culture shock.

When culture shock set in, everything seems to go wrong; we frequently become irritated over minor inconveniences. Even though culture shock manifests itself in a number of ways, it is usually characterized by the following:

- a sense of confusion over how to behave
- a sense of surprise, disgust after realizing some features of the new culture
- the feeling of being rejected(not accepted) by members of the new culture
- a sense of loss of the old familiar surroundings (eg.firends, possessions and ways of doing things)
- the feeling of doubt when one's own cultural values are brought in to question

2.6 Culture Change

Culture changes in several ways; under this section we will discuss how and why cultures change and briefly review some of the widespread changes that have occurred in recent times. Thus, in order to learn more about culture change would you please responding to below question before we go the subsequent texts.

When you examine the history of a society, it is obvious that its culture has changed over time. Some of the shared behaviors and ideas that were common at one time are modified or replaced at another time. That is why, any anthropological account of the culture of any society is a type of snapshot view of one particular time. The anthropologists return several years after completing a cultural study, he or she would not find exactly the same situation, for there are no cultures that remain completely static year after year.

Culture change can occur as a result of the following Mechanisms:

- i. **Diffusion** The source of new cultural elements in a society may also be another society. The process by which cultural elements are borrowed from another society and incorporated into the culture of the recipient group is called diffusion.
 - Diffusion is direct when two cultures trade with, intermarry among, or wage war on one another.
 - Diffusion is forced when one culture subjugates another and imposes its customs on the dominated group.
 - Diffusion is indirect when items or traits move from group A to group C via group B without any firsthand contact between A and C. In this case, group B might consist of traders or merchants who

take products from a variety of places to new markets. Or group B might be geographically situated between A and C, so that what it gets from A eventually winds up in C, and vice versa. In today's world, much international diffusion is indirect-culture spread by the mass media and advanced information technology.

ii. Acculturation: Acculturation is the exchange of cultural features that results when groups have continuous firsthand contact? The cultures of either or both groups may be changed by this contact. This usually happens in situations of trade or colonialism. In situations of continuous contact, cultures have also exchanged and blended foods, recipes, music, dances, clothing, tools, and technologies.

iii. Invention : Invention is the process by which humans innovate, creatively finding solutions to problems is a third mechanism of cultural change. Faced with comparable problems and challenges, people in different societies have innovated and changed in similar ways, which is one reason cultural generalities exist. One example is the independent invention of agriculture in the Middle East and Mexico. Over the course of human history, major innovations have spread at the expense of earlier ones. Often a major invention, such as agriculture, triggers a series of subsequent interrelated changes. Thus in both Mexico and the Middle East, agriculture led to many social, political, and legal changes, including notions of property and distinctions in wealth, class, and power.

iv. Globalization: The term globalization encompasses a series of processes, including diffusion and acculturation, working to promote change in a world in which nations and people are increasingly interlinked and mutually dependent. Promoting such linkages are economic and political forces, as well as modern systems of transportation and communication.

Due to globalization, long-distance communication is easier, faster, and cheaper than ever, and extends to remote areas. The mass media help propel a globally spreading culture of consumption. Within nations and across their borders, the media spread information about products, services, rights, institutions, lifestyles, and the perceived costs and benefits of globalization. Emigrants transmit information and resources transnationally, as they maintain their ties with home (phoning, faxing, e-mailing, making visits, and sending money). In a sense such people live multilocally-in different places and cultures at once. They learn to play various social roles and to change behavior and identity depending on the Situation

2.7 Ties That Connect: Marriage, Family and Kinship

In this section you will be introduced to the idea of how we as social beings organize ourselves and how the cultural rules governing our ties on marriage, family organization, residence patterns after marriage, forms of descent and descent groups, and other aspects of kinship.

2.7.1 Marriage: Almost all known societies recognize marriage. The ritual of marriage marks a change in status for a man and a woman and the acceptance by society of the new family that is formed. The term marriage is not an easy terms to define. For years, anthropologists have attempted to define these terms in

such a way to cover all known societies. Frequently, anthropologists have debated whether or not families and the institutions of marriage are universals. One interesting case is that the Nayar of Southern India, did not have marriage in the conventional sense of the term. Although teenage Nayar girls took a ritual husband in a public ceremony, the husband took no responsibility for the women after the ceremony, and frequently he never saw her again. Thus the Nayar do not have marriage according to our definition in that there is no economic, cooperation, regulation of sexual activity, cohabitation, or expectation of permanency.

2.7.1.1 Rules of Marriage

Societies also have rules that state whom one can and cannot marry. Every society known to anthropology has established for itself some type of rules regulating mating (sexual intercourse). The most common form of prohibition is mating with certain type of kin that are defined by the society as being inappropriate sexual partners. These prohibitions on mating with certain categories of relatives known as incest taboos. The most universal form of incest taboo involves mating between members of the immediate (nuclear) family: mother-sons, father-daughters, and brother-sisters. There are a few striking examples of marriage between members of the immediate family that violate the universality of the incest taboo. For political, religious, or economic reasons, members of the royal families among the ancient Egyptians, Incas and Hawaiians were permitted to mate with and marry their siblings, although this practice did not extend to the ordinary members of those societies. Marriage is, therefore, a permanent legal union between a man and a woman. It is an important institution without which the society could never be sustained.

2.7.1.2 Mate Selection: Whom Should You Marry?

In a society one cannot marry anyone whom he or she likes. There are certain strict rules and regulations.

- a) **Exogamy:** This is the rule by which a man is not allowed to marry someone from his own social group. Such prohibited union is designated as incest. Incest is often considered as sin. Different scholars had tried to find out the explanation behind this prohibition. i.e. how incest taboo came into operation. In fact, there are some definite reasons for which practice of exogamy got approval. They are:

A conception of blood relation prevails among the members of a group. Therefore, marriage within the group-members is considered a marriage between a brother and sister. Attraction between a male and female gets lost due to close relationship in a small group. There is a popular idea that a great increase of energy and vigor is possible in the progeny if marriage binds two extremely distant persons who possess no kin relation among them. Kottak claimed also that exogamy has adaptive value, because it links people into a wider social network that nurtures, helps, and protects them in times of need pushing social organization outward, establishing and preserving alliances among groups.

- b) **Endogamy:** A rule of endogamy requires individuals to marry within their own group and forbids them to marry outside it. Religious groups such as the Amish, Mormons, Catholics, and Jews have rules of endogamy, though these are often violated when marriage takes place outside the group. Castes in India and

Nepal are also endogamous. “Indeed, most cultures are endogamous units, although they usually do not need a formal rule requiring people to marry someone from their own society” (Kottak, 2017: 150).

c) **Preferential Cousin Marriage:** A common form of preferred marriage is called preferential cousin marriage and is practiced in one form or another in most of the major regions of the world. Kinship systems based on lineages distinguish between two different types of first cousins, these are: Cross Cousins: are children of siblings of the opposite sex- that is one’s mother’s brothers’ children and one’s father’s sisters’ children.

The most common form of preferential cousin marriage is between cross cousins because it functions to strengthen and maintain ties between kin groups established by the marriages that took place in the proceeding generation.

Parallel Cousins: When marriage takes place between the children of the siblings of the same sex, it is called parallel cousin marriage. are children of siblings of the same sex, namely the children of one’s mother’s sister and one’s father brother. The mate may come either from one’s father’s brother’s children or mother’s sister’s children. A much less common form of cousin marriage is between parallel cousins, the child of one’s mother’s sister or father’s brother. Found among some Arabic societies in North Africa, it involves the marriage of a man to his father’s brother’s daughter. Since parallel cousins belong to the same family, such a practice can serve to prevent the fragmentation of family property.

d) **The Levirate and Sororate**

Another form of mate selection that tends to limit individual choice are those that require a person to marry the husband or wide of deceased kin. The levirate- is the custom whereby a widow is expected to marry the brother (or some close male relative) of her dead husband. Usually any children fathered by the woman’s new husband are considered to belong legally to the dead brother rather than to the actual genitor. Such a custom both serves as a form of social security for the widow and her children and preserved the rights of her husband’s family to her sexuality and future children.

The sororate, which comes into play when a wife dies, is the practice of a widower’s marrying the sister (or some close female relative) of his deceased wife. In the event that the deceased spouse has no sibling, the family of the deceased is under a general obligation to supply some equivalent relative as a substitute. For example, in a society that practice sororate, a widower may be given as a substitute wife the daughter of his deceased wife’s brother.

2.7.1.3. Number of Spouses

Societies have rules regulating whom one may/may not marry; they have rules specifying how many mates a person may/should have.

- Monogamy: the marriage of one man to one woman at a time.
- Polygamy i.e. marriage of a man or woman with two or more mates. Polygamy can be of two types:
- Polygyny: the marriage of a man to two or more women at a time.
 - Polyandry: the marriage of a woman to two or more men at a time. Marriage of a man with two or more sisters at a time is called sororal polygyny. When the co-wives are not sisters, the marriage is termed as non sororal polygyny.

Advantages & Disadvantages of Polygamy marriage

- ✓ Having two/more wives is often seen as a sign of prestige.
- ✓ Having multiple wives means wealth, power, & status both for the polygynous husband, wives and children.
- ✓ It produces more children, who are considered valuable for future economic and political assets
- ✓ Economic advantage: It encourages to work hard (more cows, goats..) for more wives

The Drawbacks of Polygyny: Jealousy among the co-wives who frequently compete for the husband's attention.

2.7.1.4 Economic Consideration of Marriage

Most societies view as a binding contract between at least the husband and wife and, in many cases, between their respective families as well. Such a contract includes the transfer of certain rights between the parties involved: rights of sexual access, legal rights to children, and rights of the spouses to each other's economic goods and services. Often the transfer of rights is accompanied by the transfer of some type of economic consideration. These transactions, which may take place either before or after the marriage can be divided into three categories:

1. Bride Price: It is also known as bride wealth, is the compensation given upon marriage by the family of the groom to the family of the bride. According to Murdock, in Africa it was estimated that 82% of the societies require the payment of bride price. Anthropologists identified a number of important functions that the institutions of bride price performed for the well-being of the society. For example, bride price has been seen: as security or insurance for the good treatment of the wife: as mechanism to stabilize marriage by reducing the possibility of divorce: as a form of compensation to the bride's lineage for the loss of her economic potential and childbearing capacity: and as a symbol of the union between two large groups of kin.

2. Bride Service: When the groom works for his wife's family, this is known as bride service. It may be recalled that in the Old Testament, Jacob labored for seven years in order to marry Leah, and then another seven years to marry Rachel; Leah's younger sister, thus performed fourteen years of bride service for his father-in-law. Bride service was also practiced by the Yanomamo, a people living in the low-lands of Venezuela. During this time, the groom lives with the bride's parents and hunts for them.

3. Dowry: A dowry involves a transfer of goods or money in the opposite direction, from the bride's family to the groom's family.

2.7.1.5 Post-Marital Residence

Where the newly married couple lives after the marriage ritual is governed by cultural rules, which are referred to as post-marital residence rule.

- **Patrilocal Residence:** the married couple lives with or near the relatives of the husband's father.
- **Matrilocal Residence:** the married couple lives with or near the relatives of the wife.
- **Avunculocal Residence:** The married couple lives with or near the husband's mother's brother.
- **Ambilocal/Bilocal Residence:** The married couple has a choice of living with relatives of the wife or relatives of the husband
- **Neolocal Residence:** The Married couple forms an independent place of residence away from the relatives of either spouse.

2.7.2 Family

Family is the basis of human society. It is the most important primary group in society. The family, as an institution, is universal. It is the most permanent and most pervasive of all social institutions. The interpersonal relationships within the family make the family an endurable social unit. Cultural anthropologists have identified two fundamentally different types of family structure-the nuclear family and the extended family.

1. The Nuclear Family: Consisting of husband and wife and their children, the nuclear family is a two-generation family formed around the conjugal or marital union. Even though the nuclear family to some degree is part of a larger family structure, it remains relatively autonomous and independent unit. That is, the everyday needs of economic support, childcare, and social interaction are met within the nuclear family itself rather than by a wider set of relatives.

In those societies based on the nuclear family, it is customary for married couple to live apart from either set of parents (neolocal residence), nor is there any particular obligation or expectation for the married couple to care for their aging parents in their own homes. Generally, parents are not actively involved in mate selection for their children, in no way legitimize the marriages of their children, in no way legitimize the marriages of their children, and have no control over whether or not their children remain married.

2. The Extended Family

In societies based on extended families, blood ties are more important than ties of marriage. Extended families consist of two or more families that are linked by blood ties. Most commonly, this takes the form of a married couple living with one or more of their married children in a single household or homestead and under the authority of a family head.

In the case of a patrilineal extended family, the young couple takes up residence in the homestead of the husband's father, and the husband continues to work for his father, who also runs the household. Moreover, most of the personal property in the household is not owned by the newlyweds, but is controlled by the husbands' father.

It is important to point out that in extended family systems, marriage is viewed more as bringing a daughter into the family than acquiring a wife. In other words, a man's obligations of obedience to his father and loyalty to his brothers is far more important than his relationship to his wife. When a woman marries into an extended family, she most often comes under the control of her mother-in-law, who allocates chores and supervises her domestic activities. As geographical mobility are more likely associated with nuclear family than with extended family. There is a rough correlation found between extended family system and an agricultural way of life.

2.7.2.1 Functions Marriage and Family

Family performs certain specific functions which can be mentioned as follows:

- 1. Biological Function:** The institution of marriage and family serves biological (sexual and reproductive) function. The institution of marriage regulates and socially validates long term, sexual relations between males and females. Thus, husband wife relationship come into existence and become a socially approved means to control sexual relation and a socially approved basis of the family. Sexual cohabitation between spouses automatically leads to the birth of off-springs. The task of perpetuating the population of a society is an important function of a family. Society reproduces itself through family.
- 2. Economic Function:** Marriage brings economic co-operation between men and women and ensure survival of individuals in a society. With the birth of off-springs the division of labor based on sex and generation come into play. In small scale societies family is a self-contained economic unit of production, consumption and distribution.
- 3. Social Function:** Marriage is based on the desire to perpetuate one's family line. In marriage one adds, not only a spouse but most of the spouse's relatives to one's own group of kin. This means the institution of marriage brings with it the creation and perpetuation of the family, the form of person to person relations and linking once kin group to another kin group.
- 4. Educational and Socialization Function:** The burden of socialization (via processes of enculturation and education) of new born infants fall primarily upon the family. In addition, children learn an immense amount of knowledge, culture, values prescribed by society, before they assume their place as adult members of a society. The task of educating and enculturating children is distributed among parents. Moreover, family behaves as an effective agent in the transmission of social heritage.

2.7.3 Kinship

A significant concept in Anthropology – The concept of kinship is vitally important in Anthropology, because kinship and family constitute the focal points in anthropological studies. Kinship is the method of reckoning relationship. In any society every adult individual belongs to two different nuclear families. The family in which he was born and reared is called ‘family of orientation’. The other family to which he establishes relation through marriage is called ‘family of procreation’. A kinship system is neither a social group nor does it correspond to organized aggregation of individuals. It is a structured system of relationships where individuals are bound together by complex interlocking and ramifying ties.

The relationship based on blood ties is called “consanguineous kinship”, and the relatives of this kind are called ‘consanguineous kin’. The desire for reproduction gives rise to another kind of binding relationship. “This kind of bond, which arises out of a socially or legally defined marital relationship, is called a final relationship”, and the relatives so related are called ‘a final kin’. The final kinds [husband and wife] are not related to one another through blood.

2.7.4 Descent

Descent refers to the social recognition of the biological relationship that exists between the individuals. The rule of descent refers to a set of principles by which an individual traces his descent. In almost all societies kinship connections are very significant. An individual always possesses certain obligations towards his kinsmen and he also expects the same from his kinsmen. Succession and inheritance is related to this rule of descent. There are three important rules of descent as follows;

1. **Patrilineal descent** :When descent is traced solely through the male line, it is called patrilineal descent. A man’s sons and daughters all belong to the same descent group by birth, but it only the sons who continue the affiliation. Succession and inheritance pass through the male line.
2. **Matrilineal descent**: When the descent is traced solely through the female line. It is called matrilineal descent. At birth, children of both sexes belong to mother’s descent group, but later only females acquire the succession and inheritance. Therefore, daughters carry the tradition, generation after generation.
3. **Cognatic Descent** :In some society’s individuals are free to show their genealogical links either through men or women. Some people of such society are therefore connected with the kin-group of father and others with the kin group of mothers. There is no fixed rule to trace the succession and inheritance; any combination of lineal link is possible in such societies.

Unit-Three

3. Human Diversity, Culture Areas and Contact in Ethiopia

3.1. Human Beings & Being Human

Anthropology is a broader discipline covering a vast spatio-temporal dimension in the study of man/humanity. Since anthropology studies humanity in its entirety, it is often called a mirror of humanity. Anthropology helps human beings to look into themselves by searching for answers to questions that challenge us. Anthropologists study human beings as biological and cultural dimensions. To address this issue anthropologists employ comparative approach (cultural relativism) and evolution.

The comparative approach, which is also known as cultural relativism, entails that cultures shouldn't be compared one another for the sake of saying one is better than the other. Instead cultures should be compared in order to understand how and why they differ and share commonalities each other. The comparative approach or cultural relativism encourages us not to make moral judgments about different kinds of humanity, and it examines cultures on their own and from the perspective of their unique history and origin.

Evolution is the change of species through time. It allow us to address the aforementioned fundamental questions regarding our distant origin, current stage of growth, forms of adaptation, and predict future direction of development. By studying evolution anthropologists tend to treat humanity as one of the biological species in the animal kingdom.

3.1.1The Biocultural Animal

Humanity evolves both as a result of biological and cultural factors. Culture dictates how you see and act in the world. Thus cultural behaviors and their possible involvement with biological evolution of our species enable man to survive in various times and spaces. For Example ,The use of clothing allows human bodies to survive in environments they wouldn't normally survive in. that is the invention of heavy coats and other such clothing enables that body to survive Arctic temperatures.

3.2. Humanity from the Anthropological Perspective

Humanity is the most common term we to use refer to human beings. The term humanity applies to modern humans and our most recent ancestors called Homo sapiens. Moreover Humanity stands for a group of life forms with the following characteristics:

- ✓ Bipedalism (walking on two legs)
- ✓ Relatively small teeth for primates of our size
- ✓ Relatively large brains for primates of our size
- ✓ Using modern language to communicate ideas; and
- ✓ Using complex sets of ideas called culture to survive.

3.3. Origin of the Modern Human Species: *Homo sapiens sapiens*

There are two basic explanations about the origin of Modern Human Species. These are Cosmological and Evolutional Explanation.

a. Cosmological Explanation

Cosmologies are conceptual frameworks that present the universe (the cosmos) as an orderly system. They often include answers to these basic questions about human origins and the place of human kind in the universe, usually considered the most sacred of all cosmological conceptions. Cosmological formation raises issues like: Where did we come from? Why are we here? What is our place in the universe?

Cosmologies account for the ways in which supernatural beings or forces formed human beings and the planet we live on. These beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation through ritual, education, laws, art, and language.

For example, the ancient Greeks had various mythological explanations for human origin. The Greek philosopher Thales of Miletus (c.636–546BC) attempted to understand the origin and the existence of the world without reference to mythology. He argued that life originated in the sea and that humans initially were fishlike, eventually moving onto dry land and evolving into mammals.

The most important cosmological tradition affecting Western views of creation is recounted in the biblical Book of Genesis. This Judaic tradition describes how God created the cosmos. It begins with “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” and describes how creation took six days during which light, heaven, Earth, vegetation, Sun, Moon, stars, birds, fish, animals, and humans originated. Yahweh, the Creator, made man, Adam, from “dust” and placed him in the Garden of Eden. Woman, Eve, was created from Adam’s rib. Later, as Christianity spread throughout Europe, this tradition became the dominant cosmological explanation of human origins.

b. Evolutionary Explanation

Evolution refers to a process and gradual change in species over time. As opposed to cosmological explanations, anthropologists rely on scientific views of evolution in order to explain human origins. In fact, evolution is used to describe the cumulative effects of three independent facts. Importantly, these attributes of evolution can be observed in nature every day.

They are:

- **Replication:** The fact that life forms have offspring
- **Variation:** The fact that each offspring is slightly different from its parents, and its siblings;
- **Selection:** The fact that not all offspring survive, and those that do tend to be the ones best suited to their environment.

The scientific explanation of human origin and the concept of evolution are attributed to a series of discoveries of early modern period and the works of handful of scientists in the physical/natural sciences.

One of the prominent persons in relation to this development is Charles Darwin (1809-1882), a British Naturalist of the period. In doing so, anthropologists study humanity as a biological phenomenon by raising questions such as:

- ✓ What species are we most and least like?
- ✓ Where and when did we first appear?
- ✓ What were our ancestors like?
- ✓ Can we learn about human behavior from the behavior of our nearest relatives,
- ✓ Is our species still evolving?

The answers to the above mentioned and many other questions about our species in the study of evolution.

3.4. The Kinds of Humanity: Human Physical Variation

People come in many colors and shapes. Biologically speaking, a **race** is a group of organisms of the same species that share similar physical (genetic) attributes and specific geographic regions. In short, they're subdivisions of a single species- meaning they can mate and have offspring that are healthy enough to have their own offspring-exhibiting some characteristics reflecting their geographical origins.

Human beings adapt to their environments through an evolutionary process. Adaptation is can be understood as a process (behavioural and/or biological) that increases the likelihood of survival for an organism. An adaptation can be a mutation that confers an advantage. In humans, adaptations include complex behavior, such as making tools. These behaviors aren't passed on genetically but rather culturally.

Some of these bodily adaptations are pretty easily visible, and some are only visible when you look very closely at the genes. Skin color one of the most visible human characteristics is a good example of adaptation to a particular environment. The darkest skin appears in populations originating in tropical zones, such as Africa and Asia. The lightest skin is traditionally found in northern Europe because over time, natural selection favored darker skins in areas that received extensive and more intensive sunlight, because individuals with lighter skin in these areas were more prone to skin cancers. Darker skin, then, is an adaptation to the geographical conditions of Africa.

3.5. Human Races: The History of Racial Typing

Some of the first records of humans classifying others as certain "types" come from ancient Egypt, where by 1350 BC you can see records of them classifying humans by skin color: Egyptians were red-skinned, people south of Egypt were black-skinned, those living north of the Mediterranean Sea were white-skinned, and people to the east were yellow-skinned.

By the the16th century, during the Age of Discovery, Europeans voyaging around the world were encountering many previously unknown peoples and developing racial classifications of their own. Because skin color was so noticeable, many racial classifications were based only on that factor. Additionally, these unknown people weren't Christian and didn't share European culture and values, so the Europeans labeled them Savages. In fact, they thought they could use racial type as an indicator of just how Savage a person

was. The less European-looking, of course, the more Savage. Though most have ditched this concept today, many racial supremacists still believe that cultural behavior correlates with skin color, nose shape, hair texture, or what have you.

Some naturalists in the 16th through 19th centuries proposed that savages were even a different species than white Europeans, saying that they shouldn't even be considered human. This classification made persecution and enslavement of different peoples purely because of how they looked much easier. Early attempts by Europeans to categorize people into racial schemes were extremely biased and hierarchical, associating morality and intelligence with skin color and other physical attributes. These schemes always placed Europeans at the top of the scale, and the successively darker-skinned peoples at the bottom.

By the mid-1800s, naturalists began using a method of describing the shape of the head called the cephalic index, a ratio measurement of the length and width of the head. Dolichocephalic peoples had long and narrow heads (like most northern Europeans), and brachycephalic peoples tended to have broad heads like many southern Europeans. Not surprisingly, this classification scheme and others like it led to many arguments about which peoples were superior to the others.

The root problem of all this flailing around at the identification of human types was biological determinism, the idea that physical traits were somehow linked to behavior. Many thought traits like intellect, values, and morals were all products of one's race. Today, most people know better, although some people still wear sheets and call for "racial purity," an impossible and destructive idea

With behavioral characteristics "linked" to genetic characteristics in the minds of many (including scientists), some in the 19th and early 20th centuries even advocated for state regulation of marriages, family size, and whether to allow an individual to reproduce. This practice became known as eugenics, and the Nazis took it to a terrible extreme during World War II. In Germany, the Nazi party began to systematically kill those members of society that it considered inferior to the northern-European Christian ideal they held. Using eugenics as the basis for its acts, the Nazi party killed millions of Jewish people, Gypsies and others it considered inferior in an attempt to create a master race.

3.5 The Grand Illusion: Race, turns out, is arbitrary

Over the years, various anthropologists have attempted to classify the human species into various races, such as Caucasian, Black African, Asian, and so on. The problem is that the physical traits used to identify which group an individual belonged in aren't binary opposites like black or white, period, with no middle ground. They're continuous traits, meaning that a whole spectrum exists between, say, and "black and white" skin designations.

Any attempt to classify human races raises a number of questions. Although Asians look pretty clearly different from Europeans in some respects, what do you do with people who look, well, partly Asian and partly European? And does "European" end in the Middle East, where some African traits are present? Where does Africa even begin, genetically speaking? Who's going to draw up the lines between "black" and "white" (and what qualifies that person for the job, anyway)?

One thorough 1972 study by Harvard anthropologist R.C.Lewontin concluded that “Human racial classification is of no social value and is positively destructive of social and human relations. For most professional anthropologists today, human “race” is an antiquated concept. For biomedical reasons (and sometimes forensic identification of bodies), the reality of genetic ancestry can be important, but color coded races, loaded with behavioral traits, are basically arbitrary.

What Anthropologists can say for sure about Human Races?

So do human races exist? Very strictly speaking, yes. *Homo sapiens sapiens* does feature geographically based differences within the species. However, you must consider two very important points.

First, these genetic differences don’t mean a lot, biologically. Because all healthy humans can mate and have healthy offspring, we’re all in *Homo sapiens sapiens*, biologically speaking. Not only is it inaccurate to say “the female species” when talking about significant sex differences between males and females, but it’s also inaccurate to say “the African race” or the “European race” when speaking of deep differences in these peoples. Biologically speaking, though, these differences aren’t important. For most physical anthropologists, race is nearly meaningless when applied to humanity.

Rather than talk about races, physical anthropologists more commonly talk today of ancestry, a more general term that recognizes the reality of some geographically specific human adaptations but doesn’t turn them into loaded, black-and-white races (pun intended.) Ancestry may be important, for example, when considering someone’s genetic health because different human populations have developed slightly different genetic characteristics over time.

Second most important is that cultural behavior isn’t genetically linked to those geographical differences. Most of human behavior isn’t biologically determined or filtered in through the natural environment most of it is culturally learned. Like any human can acquire any language, any infant can acquire any culture; it’s culture that really drives behavior, not the genes. The ancient belief that human races have innate behavioral traits industrious Asians or hot-blooded Mediterraneans is simply wrong.

Why is everyone Different? Human Cultural Diversity/Variation

Although all humans are of the same species, they don’t all act the same; human behavior varies tremendously worldwide. If race doesn’t control a person’s characteristics, what does account for human behavioral variation? In short, the answer is culture. Cultures differ because people live in different conditions, be they ecological, economic, social, or what have you.

For example, each culture is ultimately a unique adaptation to the social and environmental conditions in which it evolves. The culture of the Amazonian foragers has certain characteristics, and they value certain things and act certain ways, because they have evolved in a particular ecological environment, one different from highland Scots, whose own culture is an adaptation to their unique environment.

Culture area and cultural contact in Ethiopia

Culture areas refer to a cluster of related cultures occupying a certain geographical region. In the context of Ethiopia, we may come up with different culture are in relation to subsistence. These are plough culture, Enset culture area, and pastoral society's culture area.

A. Plough culture area

Plough culture area represents those parts of the country where agriculture is predominantly the means by which subsistence is eked out. Most of highland and central parts of the country serves as the backbone of the economy is considered a plough culture.

B. Enset Culture Area

Enset culture area, on the other hand, covers a vast region in the southern part of country. Enset cultivating regions of the present day SNNPRS such as the Guraghe, Sidama and Gedeo areas constitute enset culture area. In this region, enset serves as a staple diet to the people who make use the plant in a wide variety of forms for a living.

C. Pastoral Culture Area

Pastoral culture area is found in the low land areas covering a large section of the Afar in the northwest, Somali in the southeast and Borena of southern of Ethiopia. As opposed ot the above the cases, inhabitants of the pastoral culture area rely significantly on their herds and cattle for a living. Mobility of people and herds is a major characteristic feature of the people occupying the pastoral culture area.

Unit Four

4. Marginalized, Minorities and Vulnerable Groups

4.1 Definition of Concepts

Marginalization

Marginalization is defined as a treatment of a person or social group as minor, insignificant or peripheral. It involves exclusion of certain groups from social interactions, marriage relations, sharing food, drinks, working and living together.

There are marginalized social groups in every society and culture. Women, children, older people and people with disabilities are among marginalized groups across the world. Religious, ethnic and racial minorities are also among social groups marginalized in different societies and cultures. Crafts workers such as tanners, potters, and ironsmiths are marginalized in many parts of Ethiopia.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability refers to the state of being exposed to physical or emotional injuries. Vulnerable groups are people exposed to possibilities of attack, harms or mistreatment. As a result, vulnerable persons/groups need special attention, protection and support. For example, children and people with disabilities need special support and protection as they are exposed to risks and neglect because of their age and disabilities.

Minority Groups

‘Minority group’ refers to a small group of people within a community, region, or country. In most cases, minority groups are different from the majority population in terms of race, religion, ethnicity and language. Hence, minority groups can be ethnic minorities, religious minorities, or racial minorities in a given community, region of country. For example, black Americans are minorities in the United States of America. Christians could be minorities in a Muslim majority country. Muslims can be minorities in a predominantly Hindu society.

4.2. Forms of Marginalization

There are different forms of marginalization. Let’s see the various forms of marginalization one by one.

4.2.1 Gender-Based Marginalization

Gender inequality involves discrimination on a group of people based on their gender. Gender inequality mainly arises from socio-cultural norms. The manifestations of gender inequality vary from culture to culture. Women are exposed to social and economic inequalities involving unfair distribution of wealth, income and job opportunities across the world.

Gender-based marginalization is a global problem. It involves exclusion of girls and women from a wide range of opportunities and social services. Gender disparities in education are a good example. Girls in developing countries, especially those who live in remote and rural areas, are excluded from formal education. The enrollment of girls in higher education is much lower than that of boys. Women do not enjoy equal employment opportunities. They do not have equal rights in terms of property ownership and inheritance. Women and girls are also vulnerable to gender-based and customary based violence such as rape, early/child marriage, abduction/forced marriage, domestic violence and female genital cutting/mutilation.

Female genital cutting

Female genital cutting (FGC) is practiced in 28 countries in western, northern and eastern Africa. The prevalence of FGC is very high in Somali (98%)¹, Djibouti (93%), Egypt (87%), Sudan (87%), and Eritrea (83%). Ethiopia is one of the high prevalence countries in Africa. The prevalence of FGC in Ethiopia varied from region to region. Somali (99%), Afar (91%), and Harari (84%) are the three regions with very high prevalence of the practice.

There are four major types of FGC. They are Type I cutting without flesh removing (clitoridectomy), Type II cut and flesh removed (excision), Type III sewn closed type (infibulation), and Type IV (all the rest). The first three types of FGC are practiced in Ethiopia. infibulation is the most severe form of FGC. This type of FGC is widely practiced in the Somali, Afar, and Harari regions.

Short term and long term implications for the health of girls and women including severe bleeding, infections, pain during sexual intercourse, delivery complications, and fistula. The impacts also include psychological trauma.

Factors that encourage female genital cutting

The practice of FGC is sustained for some reasons. The following are some of the beliefs related to the practice of FGC:

- ✓ FGC is considered as a process of purifying girls. In some cultures uncircumcised girls/women are considered as impure.
- ✓ Uncircumcised girls would be disobedient, powerful and ill-mannered.
- ✓ There is a widely held belief that uncircumcised girls are promiscuous because they have high sexual drive.
- ✓ FGC is also considered as a means of preserving girls' virginity, which is considered as a precondition for marriage in some cultures.

Female genital cutting is sustained is enforced by social expectations and norms. Girls and parents who decide to abandon the practice would be subject to social sanctions. The following are examples:

- **Social exclusion and marginalization:** Community members would exclude uncut girls and women from a wide range of social relations and interactions.
- **Gossip and insult:** community members, including peer groups, boys, women and men, put pressure on uncircumcised girls and their parents through gossiping and insulting.
- **Labeling uncircumcised girls as impure:** In some parts of the country, people do not eat food cooked by uncircumcised girls. Uncircumcised girls/women are not also allowed to join other people for prayer. This is because uncut girls are labeled as impure.

4.2.2. Marginalized Occupational Groups

According to anthropological findings, there are occupational marginalized groups in many parts of Ethiopia. tanners, potters, weavers and ironsmiths are marginalized occupational groups in our country. These craft-workers have different names in different parts of the country. These occupational marginalized groups are considered as impure and excluded from social interactions, ownership of economic resources and participation in associations and celebrations.

Craft-workers in Ethiopia produce several articles such as traditional hand-woven clothes, household utensils, and farm tools. For examples, weavers produce cultural clothes highly demanded by thousands and millions of people. Many people use cultural clothes during annual celebrations, religious holidays,

weddings, culture days, and mourning. Despite their contributions, weavers are marginalized from the wider society.

Ironsmiths are among occupational groups marginalized in many cultural setting in Ethiopia. Ironsmiths make and repair iron articles without using machines. They contribute a lot especially in rural areas. Ironsmiths serve rural communities by producing farming tools such as plough shares, sickles, and hoes. Ethiopia families widely use household utensils (e.g., knives and axes) made by ironsmiths. Despite their contributions, these craft-workers are considered inferior and marginalized from wide areas of social interactions.

4.2.3. Age-Based Vulnerability

Age-based vulnerability is susceptibility of people, especially children and older people, to different forms of attack, physical injuries and emotional harms. For example, children and older people are exposed to possibilities of attack, harm and mistreatment because of their age. As a result, vulnerable persons/groups need special attention, protection and support.

4.2.3.1. Children: Discrimination/vulnerability

Children are among vulnerable groups exposed to harm because of their age. Both boys and girls are exposed to some harm and abuse in the hands of older people. However, girls are exposed to double marginalization and discrimination because of the gender. Child girls are exposed to various kinds of harm before they reach at the age of maturity. Minor girls are also exposed to early/child marriage in many parts of Ethiopia.

Early/child marriage: Early marriage refers to marriage which involves girls below the age of 18. The prevalence of early marriage is declining in Ethiopia and other African countries. According to international human rights conventions, early marriage is regarded as violation of the rights of the child. Early marriage has the following major harmful consequences:

- ✓ Young girls enter into marital relation when they are too young to give their consent to get married.
- ✓ Early marriage inhibits girls' personal development; it hinders girls' chance to education and future professional development.
- ✓ Early marriage exposes young girls to sexual abuse by their older husbands.

- ✓ Early marriage leads to early pregnancies, which increases risks of diseases and complications during delivery, fistula, and death of the mother or child.

Factors encouraging early marriage

According to study findings, there are various factors that drive early marriage. Social norms and economic factors are the two major drivers of the practice.

Social norms: Chastity of girls is one of the social norms that influence parents and relatives to protecting girls from pre-marital sex. The value attached to virginity is another driver of early marriage.

Economic factors: Economic factors are among the major factors that drive child marriage. In many areas of Ethiopia marriage provides economic security for young girls. Hence, parents, in some cases girls, support early marriage for economic benefits such as access to land and other resources. Parents' desire to get a good husband for their daughter is also another reason.

4.2.4 Marginalization of Older Persons

The phrase 'older people' refers to adults with the age of 60 and above. The number of older people is increasing globally. People's attitude towards older persons is changing over time in Ethiopia and all over the world. Older men and women have been respected across Ethiopian cultures. Older persons have been considered as custodians of tradition, culture, and history. Situations are changing as family structures and living patterns are changing over time.

Rural-urban migration, changes in values and life style, education and new employment opportunities lead to so many changes. Care and support for older people tend to decline as younger people migrate to urban areas and exposed to economic pressure and new life styles.

Ageism is a widely observed social problem in the world. Ageism refer to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people based on their age. Older women and men enjoyed a certain level of support and respected in the past. This was true in many cultures of Ethiopia in the past. Things have been changing in recent times. Older people are facing various problems as a result of modernization, globalization, and urbanization. Older people are exposed to social exclusion because of their lower social and economic status. In most cases, older people are excluded from social, cultural, political and economic interactions in their communities.

4.2.5. Religious and ethnic minorities

Religious and ethnic minorities groups also face different forms of marginalization. There are several examples of marginalization and discrimination targeting religious and ethnic minorities in the world. Let us mention two examples.

The Jewish people suffered from discrimination and persecution in different parts of the world. They were targets of extermination in Germany and other Western European countries because of their identity.

Muslim Rohingyas are among the most marginalized and persecuted people in the world. According to Abdu Hasnat Milton et al (2017), the Rohingya are ‘one of the most ill-treated and persecuted refugee groups in the world’. In recent years, more than half-a-million Rohingyas fled from their homes in Myanmar to neighboring countries such as Bangladesh.

These are among the widely known examples of discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities. The problem is not limited to specific areas, regions or countries. Although the level of the problem varies in different contexts, religious and ethnic minorities face different forms of discrimination in many parts of the world.

Human Right Approaches and Inclusiveness: Anthropological Perspectives

All forms of marginalization and discrimination against vulnerable and minority groups contradict the principles of human rights. The major human rights conventions denounce discrimination against women, children, people with disability, older people and other minority and vulnerable groups. People with disabilities have the right to inclusive services and equal opportunities. The human rights of women and girls include right to be free from harmful traditional practices such as forced marriage, early marriage, and female genital cutting. Any form of discrimination, exclusion and gender-based violence also violate the human rights girls and women.

Unit Five

5. Ethnicity, Identity and Inter-Ethnic Relations

The study of ethnicity and ethnic relations has in recent years come to play a central role in the social sciences, to a large extent replacing class structure and class conflict as a central focus of attention. This has occurred on an interdisciplinary basis involving social anthropology, sociology, political theory, political philosophy and history (Erikson, 2002). In this regard, the academic and popular use of the term 'ethnicity' is fairly, modern.

Conceptualizing Ethnicity

The word 'ethnicity' is derived from the Greek term 'ethnos' which literally means "a group of people bound together by the same manners, customs or other distinctive features". In the context of ancient Greek, the term refers to a collectivity of humans lived and acted together -which is typically translated today as 'people' or 'nation' (not political unit per say, but group of people with shared communality) (Jenkins, 1997).

Contrary to its literal meaning however, ancient Greeks were using the term 'ethnos' in practice to refer to non-Hellenic, people who are non-Greek and considered as second-class peoples. Likewise, in early England, it used to refer to someone who was neither Christian nor Jewish (to refer to heathen or pagan).

In its modern sense, it was only after the end of II World War that the term widely adopted and begins to use. Before World War II, while the term "tribe" was the term of choice for "pre-modern" societies and the term "race" was used to refer modern societies (Jenkins, 2001). Due to the close link between the term "race" and Nazi ideology, after the end of II WW, the term "ethnic" gradually replaced "race" within both the North American tradition and the European tradition. The North American tradition adopted 'ethnic' as a substitute for minority groups within a larger society of the nation-state (referring to the Jews, Italians, Irish and other people considered inferior to the dominant group of largely British descent).

Ethnicity is not a single unified social phenomenon but a congeries, a "family," of related but analytically distinct phenomena. The foundations of ethnicity, the "markers" of ethnicity, the history of ethnicity, the aims and goals of ethnicity these vary from case to case" (Eller, 1999).

Ethnicity itself is an abstract concept, which includes an implicit reference to both collective and individual aspects of the phenomenon. The emphasis on culture as the point of departure for our understanding of the nature of ethnicity is not intended to mean that members of an ethnic group must always share one and the same culture to the exclusion of any other. Rather, it is intended to mean that persons who include themselves in an ethnicity would have a relation to a group who either now or at some point in the past has shared a unique culture.

Clifford Geertz has elegantly defined ethnicity as the 'world of personal identity collectively ratified and publicly expressed' and 'socially ratified personal identity' (1973:268, 309).

In spite of the difference in scholarly views of ethnicity among anthropologists, the 'basic social anthropological model of ethnicity' can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ Ethnicity is a matter of cultural differentiation - although, to reiterate the main theme of social identity (Jenkins 2004), identification always involves a dialectical interplay between similarity and difference.
- ✓ Ethnicity is centrally a matter of shared meanings - what we conventionally call 'culture' - but is also produced and reproduced during interaction.
- ✓ Ethnicity is no more fixed or unchanging than the way of life of which it is an aspect, or the situations in which it is produced and reproduced.
- ✓ Ethnicity, as identification, is collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and the categorization of others, and internalized in personal self identification.

Ethnic Group

Notably, the term 'ethnic group' is also attached with various meanings as ethnicity. Different definitions have been proposed to define 'ethnic group'. According to Weber, an 'ethnic group' is based on the belief in common descent shared by its members, extending beyond kinship, political solidarity vis-a-vis other groups, and common customs, language, religion, values, morality, and etiquette (Weber, 1978).

Anderson (1983), described ethnic groups as “an imagined community” that possesses a “character and quality” (Anderson, 1983).

F. Barth (1969), define ethnic groups as a self-defined group based on subjective factors and/or fundamental cultural values chosen by members from their past history or present existing conditions in which members are aware of-and-in contact with other ethnic groups. This entailed that, ethnic group are defined out of group interaction in which members of a group keep their social solidarity, identified themselves as belonging to specific group based on their subjective communalities (language, myth of origin, and shared cultural entities) that defined in reference with others (Abbink, 2004).

By considering the various definitions provided to define ethnicity, Hutchinson and Smith's (1996) identified six main features that the definition of an ethnic group. This includes;

- ✓ A common proper name, to identify and express the “essence” of the community;
- ✓ A myth of common ancestry that includes the idea of common origin in time and place and that gives an ethnic group a sense of fictive kinship;
- ✓ Shared historical memories, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration;
- ✓ One or more elements of common culture, which need not be specified but normally, include religion, customs, and language;
- ✓ A link with a homeland, not necessarily its physical occupation by the ethnic group, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples; and
- ✓ A sense of solidarity on the part of at least some sections of the ethnic's population (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996:6-7).

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is an affiliative construct, where an individual is viewed by themselves and by others as belonging to a particular ethnic or cultural group. Affiliation can be influenced by racial, natal, symbolic, and cultural factors. Racial factors involve the use of physiognomic and physical characteristics, natal factors refer to "homeland" (ancestral home) or origins of individuals, their parents and kin, and symbolic factors include those factors that typify or exemplify an ethnic group (e.g., holidays, foods, clothing, artifacts, etc.). Symbolic ethnic identity usually implies that individuals choose their identity, however, to some extent the cultural elements of the ethnic or racial group have a modest influence on their behavior (Kivisto & Nefzger, 1993).

On the individual level, ethnicity is a social-psychological process, which gives an individual a sense of belonging and identity. It is, of course, one of a number of social phenomena, which produce a sense of identity. Ethnic identity can be defined as a manner in which persons, on account of their ethnic origin, locate themselves psychologically in relation to one or more social systems, and in which they perceive others as locating them in relation to those systems.

By ethnic origin is meant either that a person has been socialized in an ethnic group or that his or her ancestors, real or symbolic, have been members of the group. The social systems may be one's ethnic community or society at large, or other ethnic communities and other societies or groups, or a combination of all these (Isajiw, 1990).

We can thus distinguish external and internal aspects of ethnic identity. External aspects refer to observable behaviour, both cultural and social, such as (1), speaking an ethnic language, practicing ethnic traditions, (2), participation in ethnic personal networks, such as family and friendships, (3), participation in ethnic institutional organizations, such as churches, schools, enterprises, media (4), participation in ethnic voluntary associations, such as clubs, 'societies,' youth organizations and (5) participation in functions sponsored by ethnic organizations such as picnics, concerts, public lectures, rallies, dances.

The internal aspects of ethnic identity refer to images, ideas, attitudes, and feelings. These, of course, are interconnected with the external behaviour. But, it should not be assumed that, empirically, the two types are always dependent upon each other. Rather, they may vary independently, as for example, a third-generation person may retain a higher degree of internal than of external aspects. We can distinguish at least three types of internal aspects of identity: (1) cognitive, (2) moral, and (3) affective.

Theories of Ethnicity

The Primordialist, Instrumentalist and Constructivist are the dominant theoretical approaches in Anthropology envisaged to understand the nature and characteristics of ethnicity, ethnic identity and ethnic interaction. These theories broadly reflect changes of approach in anthropology over the past 20 years, i.e. the shift from cultural evolution theories, to structural-functionalist theories, to conflict theories,

and finally to postmodern theories. These changes are related to the twin forces of modernity and globalization.

a. The Primordial Model of Ethnicity

The Primordialist approach is the oldest in anthropological literature. It was popular until the mid-1970s. Primordialism is an “objectivist or essentialist theory” which argues, that “ultimately there is some real, tangible, foundation for ethnic identification.” Primordialist theories view human society as a conglomeration of distinct social groups. At birth a person “becomes” a member of a particular group. Ethnic identification is based on deep, ‘primordial’ attachments to that group, established by kinship and descent. One’s ethnicity is thus “fixed” and an unchangeable part of one’s identity.

The anthropologist, Clifford Geertz (1973), articulated ethnicity as a natural phenomenon with its foundations in primordial ties - deriving mainly from kinship, locality and culture. Further, Geertz is perfectly clear that what matters analytically is that ties of blood, language and culture are seen by actors to be ineffable and obligatory; that they are seen as natural. He is also concerned with the terms in which attachments are understood and mobilized locally; with what people believe.

Anthony D. Smith (1986), theorized the defining elements of ethnic identification as psychological and emotional, emerging from a person’s historical and cultural backgrounds. He illustrated that the ‘core’ of ethnicity resides in the myths, memories, values, symbols and the characteristic styles of particular historic configurations, what he calls ‘a myth-symbol complex’.

Smith concluded that, ‘primordialism’ makes two distinct claims. Firstly, ethnicity and ethnic attachment is “natural and innate”, which would never change over time, and secondly, it is “ancient and perennial”. By this, ethnicity is an ascribed status and ethnic membership is fixed, permanent and primarily ascribed through birth. (Smith, 1986).

b). Instrumentalist (Situational) Theory of Ethnicity

The instrumentalist theorists view ethnicity as situationally defined, depending on rational calculations of advantage and stimulated by political mobilization under the leadership of actors whose primary motives are non-ethnic

Banks (1996) explained the instrumentalist understandings of ethnicity as an instrument of group mobilization for political and economic ends. By this, ethnicity is something that can be changed, constructed or even manipulated to gain specific political and/or economic ends (Banks, 1996).

Proponents of this perspective advocate that in the contexts of modern states, leaders (political elites) use and manipulate perceptions of ethnic identity to further their own ends and stay in power. In this regard, ethnicity is created in the dynamics of elite competition within the boundaries determined by political and economic realities” and ethnic groups are to be seen as a product of political myths, created and manipulated by culture elites in their pursuit of advantages and power.

Abner Cohen (1974), one of the leading advocator of this perspective, in contrast to Barth, “placed [a] greater emphasis on the ethnic group as a collectively organized strategy for the protection of economic and political interests” (Jones 1997:74). Ethnic groups share common interests and in pursuit of these interests they develop “basic organizational functions: such as distinctiveness or boundaries (ethnic identity); communication; authority structure; decision making procedure; ideology; and socialization” (Cohen 1974).

Accordingly, Daniel Bell (1975) and Jeffrey Ross (1982) emphasize the political advantage of ethnic membership choice. Hence, ethnicity is "a group option in which resources are mobilized for the purpose of pressuring the political system to allocate public goods for the benefit of the members of a self-differentiating collectivity". In more general terms, it refers to the actor's pliant ascription of ethnic identity to organize the meaning of his social relationships within the requirements of variously structured social situations (Okamura, 1981).

c). Social Constructivist Theory of Ethnicity

The basic notion in this approach is that ethnicity is something that is being negotiated and constructed in everyday living. It regards ethnicity as a process, which continues to unfold. It has much to do with the exigencies of everyday survival (ethnicity is constructed in the process of feeding, clothing, sending to school and conversing with children and others).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this approach is its subjectivist stance, which sees ethnicity as basically a social-psychological reality or a matter of perception of "us" and "them" in contradistinction to looking at it as something given, which exists objectively as it were "out there". By this, ethnicity is more dependent on the socio-psychological experience of individuals, where it focuses on the interpersonal and behavioral aspects of ethnicity. However, this does not mean that all “subjectivists” reject all objective aspects of ethnicity. Some, in fact give them significant attention. But, they all tend to make it dependent on the socio-psychological experience.

In general, constructivists conceive ethnicity as situational, flexible and variable dealing with interpersonal ethnicity without initially reifying a concept of culture. Jenkins (1997) further noted that, as far as the flow of individuals from one ethnic group to another is possible, it is possible to argue that the boundaries of ethnicity are permeable and osmotic (Jenkins, 1997: 53).

Unit Six

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and Practices

6. Definition of concepts

6.1. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Indigenous Knowledge System is defined as technical insight of wisdom gained and developed by people in a particular locality through years of careful observation and experimentation with the phenomena around them. (Mangetane, 2001).

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) refer to a body of empirical knowledge and beliefs handed down through generations of long-time inhabitants of a specific locale, by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings with each other and their environment (Warren 1991).

IKS is embodied in culture and is described as an integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs and behavior. It consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, artifacts, rituals, ceremonies, folklores and gender. This culture is passed down from one generation to the next generation and generally it provides a holistic view of how to use natural resources based on traditional ethical perspectives (Atteh,1991).

Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

According to Warren, indigenous knowledge is the local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. It is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities (Warren, 1991).

The World Bank refers IK as a large body of knowledge and skills which is developed outside the formal system including development planning, environmental assessment, resource management, local conservation of biological resources, and conflict resolution (World Bank, 1998).

Special Features of Indigenous Knowledge

Ellen and Harris (1996) identified the following special features of indigenous knowledge that distinguish it broadly from other knowledge. As to them IK is:

- a. **Local:** IK is rooted in a particular community and situated within broader cultural traditions; it is a set of experiences generated by people living in those communities.
- b. **Tacit knowledge:** IK is not easily codifiable.
- c. **Transmitted orally:** IK Transmitted through imitation and demonstration. Codifying it may lead to the loss of some of its properties.
- d. **Experiential rather than theoretical knowledge:** Experience and trial and error, tested in the rigorous laboratory of survival of local communities constantly reinforce IK.
- e. **Learned through repetition:** which is a defining characteristic of tradition even when new knowledge is added. Repetition aids in the retention and reinforcement of IK.

- f. **Constantly changing:** being produced as well as reproduced, discovered as well as lost; though it is often perceived by external observers as being somewhat static

Significance of indigenous knowledge

Indigenous knowledge is important in that people in a community value whatever resource they get from the environment through sustainable production systems. These communities are conscious of the need to self-reliant in capital stocks and management skills (Mangetane, 2001).

The knowledge of local people is an enabling component of development. In this regard; a large percentage of the earth's genetic diversity has been maintained and managed through farmer's IKS (Dewes,1993).

Indigenous knowledge system enables people to develop strategies for handling household and communal activities .For example in Ethiopia Debo and Jige are an important uniting forces in communal activities. Members of the community unite to provide essential inputs, including direct labor to operations (Mangetane,2001).

In general, indigenous knowledge is an important part of the lives of the poor. IK is a key element of the “social capital” of the poor; their main asset to invest in the struggle for survival, to produce food, to provide for shelter or to achieve control of their own lives.

Furthermore, one cannot overlook indigenous knowledge’s ability to provide effective alternatives to Western know-how. IK offers local people and their development workers further options in designing new projects or addressing specific problems and wider disasters. Instead of relying on imported Western technologies, people in the developing nations can choose from readily available indigenous knowledge or, where appropriate, combine indigenous and Western technology.

However, it is important to note that not all indigenous practices are beneficial to the sustainable development of a local community; and not all IK can a priori provide the right solution for a given problem. Typical examples are slash and burn agriculture and female circumcision. Hence, before adopting IK, integrating it into development programs, or even disseminating it, practices need to be scrutinized for their appropriateness just as any other technology. (A frame work for action, 1998).

According to Paula Puffer Paula (1995), indigenous / local knowledge can help find the best solution to a development challenges. For example, familiarity with local knowledge can help extensionists and researchers understand and communicate better with local people.

Over the years, IKS authorities (elders) make local rules to protect important resources such as useful plants, water bodies, stone terracing, agro-forestry, watersheds and rivers, food preservations, conflict management, calendar, fallowing as a soil regeneration practice, etc.

Needless to mention again, indigenous knowledge refers to what indigenous people know and do, and what they have known and done for generations practices that evolved through trial and error and proved flexible enough to cope with change (Melchias, 2001).

Indigenous knowledge enable indigenous people to survive, manage their natural resources and the ecosystems surrounding them like animals, plants, rivers, seas, natural environment, economic, cultural and political organization. In other words,"IK is relevant to development process such as agriculture, animal husbandry, traditional medicine, saving and credit, community development, poverty alleviation, and peaceful coexistence" (Boven and Morohashi, 2002).

Indigenous knowledge may help identify cost-effective and sustainable mechanisms for poverty alleviation that are locally manageable and meaningful. It increases and enhances livelihood options, revitalize agriculture, increase food security, improve health and promote a sense of cultural pride within the community (Kudzayi, 2013.Indigenous knowledge is used at the local level by communities as the basis for decisions pertaining to food security, human and animal health, education, natural resources management, and other vital activities (Nicolas, 2000).

Challenges, Limitations and Preservation of IK

Indigenous knowledge, which has generally been passed from generation to generation by word of mouth, is in danger of being lost unless it is formally documented and preserved. The future of IK, that reflects many generations of experience and problem solving by thousands of indigenous people across the globe, is uncertain (Warren, 2004).

The loss of IK would impoverish society because, just as the world needs genetic diversity of species, it needs diversity of knowledge systems .The rapid change in the way of life of local communities has largely accounted for the loss of IK. (Labelle, 1997).

IK can also be eroded by wider economic and social forces. Pressure on indigenous peoples to integrate with larger societies is often great and, as they become more integrated, the social structures pressure by multinational agrochemical companies eager to break into new markets (Thrupp, 1989).

Regarding the challenges and limitations of IK, Amare (2009) states the following :

Although the knowledge of indigenous communities has been found to be very useful, the, exploitation of natural resources, and increased competition for employment, has set off a problematic chain of events. This modernization has influenced indigenous traditional spread of industrialization threatens the preservation and continued development of IK systems (Sherpa, 2005). Industrialization, along with its attendant processes of urbanization African which generate IK and practices can break down. Added to this is the commercial society in many ways and Ethiopia is no exception.

The Erosion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems(IKS)

Despite the fact that some IK is lost naturally as techniques and tools are modified or fall out of use, the recent and current rate of loss is accelerating because of rapid population growth, growth of international

markets, educational systems, environmental degradation, and development processes — pressures related to rapid modernization and cultural homogenization (Louise Grenier, 1998). Below, some examples are given by Grenier to illustrate these mechanisms:

- With rapid population growth often due to in-migration or government relocation schemes in the case of large development projects, such as dams standards of living may be compromised. With poverty, opportunities for short-term gain are selected over environmentally sound local practices. With increasing levels of poverty, farmers, for example, may also have less time and fewer resources to sustain the dynamic nature of IK systems through their local experiments and innovations.
- The introduction of market-oriented agricultural and forestry practices focused on monocropping is associated with losses in IK and IK practices, through losses in biodiversity and cultural diversity. For instance, policies promoting generic rice and wheat varieties devalue locally adapted species. With the ready availability of many commercial foods, some biodiversity seems to become less relevant, such as seed and crop varieties selected over the years for their long-term storage attributes.
- In the short term, chemical inputs seem to reduce the need to tailor varieties to difficult growing conditions, contributing to the demise of local varieties.
- With deforestation, certain medicinal plants become more difficult to find (and the knowledge or culture associated with the plants also declines).
- More and more knowledge is being lost as a result of the disruption of traditional channels of oral communication. Neither children nor adults spend as much time in their communities anymore (for example, some people travel to the city on a daily basis to go to school, to look for work, or to sell farm produce; many young people are no longer interested in, or do not have the opportunity for, learning traditional methods). It is harder for the older generation to transmit their knowledge to young people.
- As IK is transmitted orally, it is vulnerable to rapid change especially when people are displaced or when young people acquire values and lifestyles different from those of their ancestors.
- Farmers traditionally maintained their indigenous crop varieties by keeping household seed stocks and by obtaining seed through traditional family and community networks and through exchanges with nearby communities. Some of these traditional networks have been disrupted or no longer exist.
- In the past, outsiders (for example, social, physical, and agricultural scientists, biologists, colonial powers) ignored or maligned IK, depicting it as primitive, simple, static, “not knowledge,” or folklore. This historic neglect (regardless of its cause racism, ethnocentrism, or modernism, with its complete faith in the scientific method) has contributed to the decline of IK systems, through lack of use and application. This legacy is still continued, as a result of which many professionals are still skeptical (Louise Grenier, 1998).

Unit Seven

Customary and Local Governance Systems and Peace

7.1 Indigenous and local governance

Indigenous systems of governance have been used to maintain social order across Ethiopian regions. The role of indigenous governance was indispensable before the advent of the modern state system. Anthropologists have been studying indigenous systems of governance in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. Some of the indigenous systems of governance have been well- studied while many other are not adequately studied. Understanding of indigenous systems of governance helps us know our cultures. We do not have space to take examples from every region and culture. For example the Oromo Gadaa, The Gedeo Baalle and Dere Woga of the Gamo are among indigenous systems of governance conflict resolution institutions in Ethiopia.

Question for discussion

Identify customary systems of governance and conflict resolution institutions of the various peoples of Ethiopia and your community? What are the different and similarities among those institutions? What are the strength and limitations of customary systems of governance and conflict resolution institutions?

7.2 Intra and inter-ethnic conflict resolution institutions

Conflicts and disputes exist in every society and community. Conflicts may arise between individuals, groups and communities within the same ethnic group. In some cases conflicts may involve groups from different ethnic background. Peoples across Ethiopian regions have indigenous institutions and mechanisms of conflict resolution and peacemaking. These institutions are parts of indigenous systems of governance.

There are different indigenous institutions of conflict resolution and peacemaking across regions and cultures in Ethiopia. Authors use different terms to discuss these indigenous institutions. The following are some of them: customary dispute resolution mechanisms; traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution; grassroots justice systems; and customary justice institutions. To get more information, see books edited by Alula Pankhurst and Getache Assefa (2008) and Gebre Y., Fekade A. and Assefa F. (2011).

Study findings reveal variations and similarities among indigenous institutions of conflict resolution in Ethiopia. Indigenous justice institutions and mechanisms share several common aspects including the following:

- ✓ High involvement of elders at different stages of conflict resolution and peacemaking process.
- ✓ Preference and respect for elders known for their qualities including experience in dispute resolution; knowledge of customary laws, procedures, norms and values of the society; impartiality, respect for rules and people; the ability of listening and speaking politely; honesty and tolerance.

- ✓ Indigenous dispute resolution practices focus on restoring social relationships, harmony, and peaceful coexistence.
- ✓ Indigenous justice systems also have differences in terms of hierarchies, procedures and level of complexities. For example,
- ✓ In some cultural settings, conflict resolution mechanisms involve several hierarchies and complicated procedures;
- ✓ The compositions and responsibilities of council of elders also vary from society to society. For example, different types of elders address different forms of disputes in some cultural settings; whereas the same body of elders deal with various types of disputes in other settings.



Reading Assignment: Getachew Assefa and Alula Pankhurst (2008) have outlined ten major characteristics of indigenous dispute resolution in Ethiopia. Public participation, voluntary and consensual proceedings, and forgiveness and compensation are among the major features listed by the authors. Read the last chapter Grassroots Justice in Ethiopia (2008) edited by Alula Pankhurst and Getachew Assefa take note on major characteristics of indigenous dispute resolution; their advantages and limitations in Ethiopia.

Indigenous/customary justice institutions have been widely used across Ethiopian regions and cultures. With some exceptions, customary justice institutions include three major components. The three components are 1) customary laws, 2) council of elders, and 3) customary courts or assemblies.

Strengths and limitations of customary justice systems/institutions

Study findings indicate that indigenous institutions of dispute resolution have strengths and limitations. Some of their strengths and limitations are outlined below. *Strengths of customary justice institutions*

- Incur limited cost in terms of time and resources/money; elders do not request payment for their services; fines and compensation are relatively small;
- Conflict resolution process are held in public spaces in the community; different parties (victims, offenders and community members) participate in the process; decisions are communicated in public;
- Decisions are easily enforced through community-based sanctions including social exclusion; compliance ensured through blessings and the threat of curses;
- Customary systems aimed at restoring community cohesion, social relations, collective spirit and social solidarity

- Rely on respect for elders, the tradition of forgiveness, transferring compensations, embedded in indigenous beliefs

Limitations of customary justice institutions

- ✓ Limitations related to protecting and safeguarding women's rights. Indigenous justice institutions are dominated by men. For example, the council of elders are not open to elderly women. Women are excluded from participation at customary courts and assemblies with a few exceptions.
- ✓ Indigenous institutions of dispute resolution and peacemaking are effective to resolve dispute and restore peace within the same ethnic group. Their potential in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts and restoring long-lasting peace is very limited.

7.3. Inter-ethnic conflict resolution

As noted above, one of the weaknesses of indigenous institution of peacemaking is their limitation in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts. However, there are some example of inter-ethnic conflict resolution institutions in some parts of Ethiopia. Abbo Gereb is one of the indigenous institutions that address inter-ethnic conflicts. It is a dispute resolution institution in Rayya and Wajirat district, Southern Tigray. Abbo Gereb, literally means the father of the river Gerewo. Abbo Gereb serves to settle disputes between individuals or groups from highland Tigray and lowland Afar. Conflict between the two groups often arise because of dispute over grazing land or water resources, particularly in dry season.

7.4 Women's role in conflict resolution and peacemaking

Ethiopian women participate in the process of dispute settlement in exceptional cases. For example, in some cultures, women participate in dispute settlement processes when cases are related to marriage and women's issues. Despite these weaknesses, women are not completely excluded for indigenous systems of governance, conflict resolution, and peacemaking activities. In some societies, women use their own institutions to empower, protect their rights, and actively participate in peacemaking activities. The next section discusses the role of women in conflict resolution and peacemaking. One of the limitations of customary justice systems, as noted above, is the marginalization of women. In most cases, indigenous institution of conflict resolution are dominated by men. This does not mean that women are completely excluded from conflict resolution and peacemaking activities. Three examples that illustrate the role of women in conflict resolution and peacemaking are outlined below. Read them and discuss issues related to women's role in peacemaking in Ethiopia.

Questions for discussion

Identify the role of women conflict resolution and peacemaking institutions in Different community in Ethiopia? What are the strength and weakness of women's institutions important to foster peacemaking in Ethiopia?

7.5. Legal pluralism: interrelations between customary, religious and state legal systems

Legal pluralism is an important concept in disciplines that study legal issues. It refers to the existence of two or more legal or justice systems in a given society or country. Legal pluralism indicates the co-existence of multiple legal systems working side-by-side in the same society. Legal pluralism is evident in the Ethiopian context. Multiple legal institutions, including customary laws and courts, state laws and courts, and religious laws and courts (e.g., the Sharia Law) work side-by-side in most parts of the country. The FDRE Constitution provides ample space for religious and customary laws and courts to address personal and family cases. The following two Articles show this reality.

- ✓ In accordance with provisions to be specified by law, a law giving recognition to marriage concluded under systems of religious or customary laws may be enacted (Article 34(4)).
- ✓ Religious and customary courts that had state recognition and functioning prior to the adoption of the Constitution shall be organized on the basis of recognition accorded to them by the Constitution. (Article 78(5))

Legal pluralism is a pervasive phenomenon in Ethiopia. This is because a single legal system does not have a capability to address all legal cases and maintaining peace and order.

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