

Chapter one Understanding civics and Ethics

1. What is Civics

- Civics is a term derived from Latin word '*civitas*' that means 'body politic' or in modern terms, political Community.
- Political community is understood as a social group characterized by recognition of shared interest, some mean for controlling a disruptive violence, and institution for making and implementing joint decisions.
- The term also refers to citizens. As a result we can consider civic education as citizenship education.
- In general, Civic Education is the study of:-
 - a. the rights, duties and responsibilities of citizens;
 - b. The concept, principles, culture and importance of democracy;
 - c. The concepts and values of rule of law, equality, justice, patriotism, responsibility, etc;
 - d. Contemporary global issues, challenges and problems;
 - e. State structure and government systems;
 - f. International relations and organizations;

2. What Ethics is?

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that attempts to understand people's moral beliefs and actions (these modules use the terms, 'ethics' and 'morality'; 'ethical' and 'moral' interchangeably, although traditionally 'ethics' described the process of thinking about people's morality). Ethics, or moral philosophy, considers theories about what human beings are capable of doing, alongside accounts of what they ought to do if they are to live an ethically good life. Ethics also explores the meaning and the ranking of different ethical values, such as honesty, autonomy, equality and justice, and it considers ethical quandaries that human beings face

in the course of living their own independent but, also, socially interdependent lives.

Ethics or moral philosophy: considers theories about what human beings are capable of doing, alongside accounts of what they ought to do if they are to live an ethically good life. Ethics may share common ground with the law, religious belief, popular opinion, professional codes and the dictates of authority figures, but it is also broader than all of these and offers a set of tools and values against which their appropriateness can be evaluated.

Invariably all ethical questions involve a decision about what one *should do* in a specific instance. Notice the word *should*. Ethical questions are not concerned with what one would do (an essentially psychological concern) but what one *ought to do*. Judgments about such decisions are generally expressed with words like right and wrong, should and ought, or obligation and duty.

Occasionally the term ethics is used interchangeably with morals. Business or medical ethics, for example, is generally synonymous with morals.

Although this is acceptable, a precise usage would apply the term's morals and moral to the conduct itself, while the terms ethics and ethical would refer to the study of moral conduct or to the code that one follows. Thus, the specific act of telling the caller you were home could be described as moral or immoral. But what makes any act moral or immoral, right or wrong fall within the province of ethics.

When we speak of moral problems then, we generally refer to specific problems, such as "Is lying ever right?" or "Is stealing always wrong?" in contrast, we can look at ethical problems as being more general and theoretical. Thus, "what makes any act, such as lying or stealing, right or wrong?" and "what makes any entity good?" are ethical problems. In short, morality refers to the degree to which an action conforms to a standard or norm of human conduct. Ethics refers to the philosophical study of values and of what constitute good and bad human conduct.

In dealing with human conduct from the perspective of obligation and value, ethics investigates a variety of related concerns. Among them are whether a standard of morality exists that applies to all people at all times everywhere, the precise nature of moral responsibility, the conditions under which one is morally accountable or responsible, and the proper end of law. When ethicists use word like "good" or "right" to describe a person or

action they generally means that the person or action conforms to some standard. A good person or action has certain desirable qualities.

Ethicists often disagree about the nature of those standards and desirable qualities and follow different paths in establishing standards and discovering which qualities are desirable. For purposes of understanding, though, we can view ethics as divided into two fields; normative ethics and non-normative ethics.

Generally, Ethics is:

1. The critical examination and evaluation of what is good, evil, right and wrong in human conduct (Guy, 2001).
2. A specific set of principles, values and guidelines for a particular group or organization (Guy, 2001).

Ethics is the study of goodness, right action and moral responsibility, it asks what choices and ends we ought to pursue and what moral principles should govern our pursuits and choices (Madden, 2000).

Morality

Morality is a complex concept. Though it is one of most frequently used terms, it can mean different things to different people. Morality is a commonly used word in most cultures. Some Scholars argued that if we do not know what morality is we cannot teach it. In crucial ways we do not know what morality is. Yet we must teach it because it is of prime importance and must be learned. Moreover, teaching must not be brainwashing; it must be moral. So, in order to understand Moral and Civics Education, the term “moral” needs to be understood

Morality can be viewed from different perspectives and let us start with the simple definition of the word itself. Morality from a dictionary definition (from Latin *moralitas* “manner, character, proper behavior”) refers to the concept of human action which pertains to matters of right and wrong – also referred to as “good and evil”. It can be used to mean the generally accepted code of conduct in a society, or within a subgroup of society. It relates to values expressed as: a matter of individual choice, those values to which we ought to aspire and those values shared within a culture, religious, secular, or philosophical community. This definition is clear when

morality is spelt out and agreed upon by others. However, it becomes ambiguous when defined by different ethnic groups, especially in the multicultural society, like Ethiopians.

Morality has been a topic of discussion for a very long time. According to Socrates "We are discussing no small matter, but how we ought to live" when issues of morality are discussed.

Socrates is rightly asserted that morality is not a small matter. In fact, moral philosophy is the attempt to achieve a systematic understanding of the nature of morality and what it requires of us. In Socrates' words it's "how we ought to live". Living in a multicultural Ethiopia, how we ought to live can be very complicated because of the diversity of culture that is vast and unique.

Morality is, at the very least, the effort to guide one's conduct by reason that is, to do what there are the best reasons for doing while giving equal weight to the interest of each individual who will be affected by one's conduct. It is important that in countries like Ethiopia, morality is shared as a common goal to ensure harmony and integrity.

Terms such as morality and ethics are often used interchangeably in everyday speech as referring to justified or proper conduct. But ethics is usually associated with a certain conduct within a profession, for example, the code of ethics for the teaching profession. Morality is a more general term referring to the character of individuals and community. In other words, Morality is used to refer to what we would call moral conduct while ethics is used to refer to the formal study of moral conduct. It can be claimed that morality is related to praxis, but ethics is related to theory.

Morality, whatever else may be said about it, is about things over which we

Morality is:

1. Morality is the informal system of rational beings by which they govern their behavior in order to lesson harm or evil and do good, this system, although informal, enjoys amazing agreement across time and cultures concerning moral rules, moral ideas and moral virtues (Madden, 2000)
2. Those principles and values that actually guide, for better or worse, an individual's personal conduct (Guy, 2001) have control that lead to "bettering human life". It is different in every society, and is a convenient term for socially approved habits.

ETHICS	MORALITY
Is philosophical study of the code, standards or norm of human conduct and it is more theoretical and general one.	refers to the code of conduct one follows while ethics is the study of moral conduct or the study of the code that one follows
Ethics establish the standards, norms, or codes to be followed by human beings are the study of morality, moral principles, and moral decision making.	is the conformity of human behavior to the established code of conduct .If an action conform to the established code, it is called moral ,if not immoral
Is the development of reasonable standards and procedures for ethical decision-making?	refers to the effort to guide one's conduct by reason while giving equal weight to the interests of each individual who will be affected by one's conduct

Is a set of normative rules of conduct, a code, a standards that govern what one ought to do when the well-being, or duties to oneself, others or institutions is at stake.	Has to do with what one should do, all things considered, not what, in fact, any of us <i>will</i> so in a particular instance
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1.2. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIC AND ETHICAL EDUCATION

- Similar with the development of democracy
- Originated in Athens Greece
- facilitate the development of responsible citizens

Ancient Rome

- There had also been a sort of citizenship education.
- Adopted in many areas of the world as Roman Empire expanded.

In Medieval Europe

- Citizenship education was tied closely to church and religious education

During Renaissance

- The church lost dominance over the state
- Education become secular

Revolutions

- England Revolution - 1688
 - American Revolution - 1776
 - France Revolution - 1778
- Emerge with modern democratic concept and advanced civic education in Europe

THE HISTORY OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

- ✓ The history of Civic Education in Ethiopia dates back to the time of Emperor Haile Selassie I. By then, the Citizenship Education called Moral Education (*Yegbre geb timihirt*). The Derg regime had its own Citizenship Education called Political Science. In the current education policy, we are having the Citizenship Education known as Civic and Ethical Education.
- ✓ The contents, forms and methods of the three differ to one another due to the differences in the political philosophy of the different regimes.

A. The Moral Education of the Imperial Era Was the first form of civic education in Ethiopia?

The Moral education was aimed at spreading the idea of the perpetual rule of feudal lords with a God-chosen emperor at the top. It took the lead in inculcating the values and tints of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the system of absolute monarchy (rule by one). In order to peruse this objective, Orthodox Christian moral teachings were given in almost all schools of the country by priests.

In the 1970s, civic education was offered as a component part of the history subject at grade eight under the chapter title of 'civics'. The basic purpose of civics was to introduce students to the Imperial rule of constitutional monarchy. Thus, the contents of the chapter on civics were built around Ethiopian crown, the United Nations, League of Nations and off citizen's entitlements.

B. The Political Education of the Derg Regime

After the collapse of the Imperial regime, the Military government (known briefly as the Derg) sought to construct the country and reorganize the society along the line of the then Soviet Union's version of socialist ideology.

The Derg adopted a form of citizenship program entitled "Political Education".

The fundamental objective of this political education was to create class-conscious hardworking body of citizens with national, international and scientific outlook.

The government introduced this program at various levels of the Ethiopian school system starting from grade four. In general, political education was highly skewed to inculcating the socialist ideology in the minds of the students.

C. The Civic and Ethical Education of the Current Era

Is different from the previous citizenship educations in that it is not meant to be used as an instrument to religious or political indoctrination.

- The current civic education aims at:
- helping students to become competent Ethiopia citizens
- developing a democratic national feeling and a strong sense of patriotism
- promoting democratic values and the culture of and respect for human rights
- understanding, applying and upholding the constitution and
- helping students to know the values and norms of Ethiopians

1.3 The purpose of civics and ethical education

The main purpose to be achieved of Civic Education is to create **GOOD CITIZENS**.

A good citizen is the one who is:

Informed:- well aware of what is happening where, why and when. Knowing what is going on inside and outside the state to be able to make informed choices and decisions.

Competent:- having required skills and abilities to perform activities very well.

Participant: - involving in the state's overall affairs and carrying out one's responsibility by participating in the social, economic, political, cultural, etc affairs of the state.

Tolerant: - accepting the differing views of others, e.g. in religious or political matters, and treating the people who hold these different views fairly. Being able to contain differences or diversities.

Patriotic:- being proud of one's country and showing respect, love, devotion, commitment and passion to the state and expressing all these in terms of practical actions to promote the state's peace, development and democracy.

Responsible:- being accountable/answerable for what he/she does. Doing things properly knowing that they will be questioned for what they do.

Transparent:- being open; readiness to share information.

Open-minded:- being free from prejudice and receptive to new ideas. Avoiding narrow-mindedness.

Committed: - having devotion to the state, ones profession, responsibility, etc.

Civic-minded:- being actively interested in community needs: taking an active interest in the community needs and affairs of the society.

Lawful: - showing due respect to the laws of the state and promoting the rule of law.

Virtuous: - having moral goodness or rightness. Acting in a way that the society desires individuals to act or behave.

Mutually respectful: - having the trait of mutual respect. Paying respect to each other.

1.4 Citizens rights and responsibilities

Rights of Citizens

In the legal relationship between you and your state, you have the following rights to enjoy:

1. **Protection** - you, as a citizen, have the right to claim protection from your state whenever your life or your property is at danger. In other words, if any wrong is done to you or your property by any other government or criminal groups, your states protect you and your property.
2. **Social service** - As a citizen you have the right to obtain social services such as health service, education, transportation, electricity, water, housing and other necessities from your state. The basis of social services is the notion that says: the government has a responsibility for alleviating the problems of poverty, unemployment and dependence. The benefits of social services in the contemporary world have become citizenship rights and their fulfillment as a duty of states. For instance, Article 25 of the UDHR provides that “Every one has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

The right to social services has also been accorded constitutional status in many countries, including Ethiopia. The FDRE constitution guarantees the right to social services as follows:

- Article 41(3). Every Ethiopian national has the right to equal access to publicly funded social services;

- Article 41(4). The state has the obligation to allocate ever increasing resources to provide to the public health, education and other social services;
 - Article 41(5) -The state shall, within available means, allocate resources to provide rehabilitation and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled, the aged, and to children who are left with out parents.
3. **The right to work** - you have the right to work in your country. Your state facilitates the working environment for you and other citizens
 4. **The right to vote and to be elected**- You have the right to hold government offices directly or through your representatives. In fact, there are certain limitations to this right such as mental defects, age and criminal records.

These are just few rights among many. Citizens have many other rights in relation to their state. The basic thing is that you have to enjoy your citizenship rights. On the other hand, you are expected to fulfill your citizenship responsibilities.

Responsibilities of Citizens

Citizens have multifaceted responsibilities to their country. The government itself is built up on the activities of its citizens. Citizens have the responsibility for creating good governance. The responsible citizen who he:

- Reads about civil matters in news papers, magazines, and books; and listens to political news on television and radio.

- Is well informed on local, state and national issues. If he is well informed, he can make an active and intelligent public opinion. A citizen should not be silent follower. He has to give his opinions to his government and his society. This is a citizen's responsibility. In order to give intelligent and matured opinion, he has to be well informed; he has to have enough information on his government and society - Information can be obtained from reading news papers, magazines, and books. It can also be procured from listening to news on television and radio.
- Takes an active part in politics, attends local political meetings and participates in the discussions of issues. Active participation in his country's affairs is the basic responsibility of a citizen. A citizen has big responsibility for rectifying any wrongs done by his government, or any maladministration, or any UN Just intentions of his government. This can be affected when that citizen takes an active part in politics in particular and in his country's affairs in general.
- Tolerant- This means that a responsible citizen must recognize the fact that people hold different religious and other beliefs - Then it is his responsibility to respect people right to their beliefs. As his responsibility, a citizen should respect the customs, ideas, ways of life and beliefs of other fellow citizens. A citizen who does not respect the ideas, customs, ways of life, and beliefs of others is irresponsible and chauvinist man. Irresponsibility and chauvinism leads to misunderstanding, and then to conflict and war. Thus, a responsible citizen recognizes the existence of different beliefs and ways of life in his society and respects them; and finally lives together through the principle of tolerance. Tolerance promotes mutual understanding and Co-operation, and then leads to growth and

prosperity. In our country Ethiopia, where religious and cultural diversity is clearly observable, tolerance is very essential to live and work together in peace. So, please be tolerant, and know that it is your citizenship responsibility.

- Preserves and helps develop basic social institutions. In a country there are basic social institutions such as family, economic, and political institutions. It is the responsibility of a citizen to preserve and help (to) develop these social institutions. These social institutions have important functions to society, of which that citizen is a part. Thus, a citizen has great responsibilities for preserving and developing these basic social institutions.
- Supports his family, his religion, his community, and his nation. The citizen has responsibility for supporting his family, his religion, his community, and his nation. When he observes weaknesses in this institution, he should not withdraw his support from them. Instead, he should actively try to improve them.
- Participates in national defense. Defending his country is the responsibility of a citizen. When their country is in a problem in relation to other country (ies), citizens of that country have great responsibility for defending the country.
- Prepares himself for duty in crisis. A responsible citizen always makes himself ready to bear responsibilities/duties in case of any crisis in his country. This can be done by enrolling in reserve units of the armed forces, or by developing skills, which may be useful in vital industries or in civil defense. In time of war there

are many responsibilities of citizens. For instance, a citizen has responsibility for conserving vital war materials, for donating blood if possible, and for Co-operating with civil defense organizations. If a citizen is in a position to know military secrets, he has responsibility for keeping his knowledge from enemy agents.

- Respects laws and rules of his country without any pressure. It is the responsibility of citizens to respect laws and rules operating in their country.
- Open-minded- A responsible citizen is receptive to different ideas and arguments. He is open to discuss his country's affairs with his fellow citizens. It is also the responsibility of a citizen to reject unsupported generalization and dogmatism.
- Preserves national historical heritages. A responsible citizen preserves national historical heritages of his country. He has the responsibility for protecting these heritages.
- Free from addiction of any kind. A responsible citizen is free from alcoholic and drug addictions. He has to keep his physical and mental health. Without physical and mental health, it is hardly possible to bear responsibilities. Since alcoholic and drug addiction harms person's physical and mental health, a responsible citizen refrains from taking these harmful things. He considers himself useful to his society and his country.

Therefore, a responsible citizen is the one who fulfills the aforementioned qualities; the one who exercises these qualities. There may also be other responsibilities which a citizen is expected to

shoulder. Hence, as a citizen, you are responsible for many things in your country. Irresponsible citizens may lose their citizenship rights. If they lose their citizenship rights, they may get into danger. So, irresponsibility is crime. If it is crime, it may result in statelessness, which brings displacement and suffering to individuals.