Mekelle University
Institute of paleoenvironment and Heritage conservation
Department of Anthropology

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Prepared by Anthropology department

Unit One
Introducing Anthropology and its Subject Matter

1. Definition and Concepts in Anthropology

Etymology definition the term **anthropology**

- ✓ is a **combination of two words** derived from **Greek language**
- ❖ ***Anthropos:*** is equivalent to the word ***mankind* or *human being***
- ❖ L***ogos****:* mean "**reason/study/science**"
- ❖ **Anthropology** means **the study or science of mankind or humanity** or "**reason about humans"**
- ❖ Moreover, man has two important characteristics: **biological and cultural.**
- ❖ Culture influences human physical structures and the vise-versa?

- ✓ Anthropology is the study of people :
- ❖ **Their origins, their development**, and **contemporary variations,** wherever and whenever they have been found.
- ❖ It 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**.
- ❖ Of all the disciplines that study humans, anthropology is by far the broadest in scope.

- In more specific terms, anthropology is the science which:
  - **Investigates** the strategies for living that are learned and shared by people as members of human social groups;
  - **Analyzes** the products of social groups: material objects (tools, cloths, houses, etc) and nonmaterial creations (beliefs, values, practices, institutions, etc).
- Anthropology is an intellectually challenging, theoretically ambitious subject,
- Which tries to achieve an understanding of **culture, society and humanity** through detailed studies of community life, supplemented by comparison.

- ✓ 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 .**

- ❑ The ultimate goal of anthropology is to develop an **integrated picture of humankind:**

❖ Anthropologists ask infinite questions about human being like,

✓ **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?**

- As a matter of simplicity and brevity, Anthropology primarily **offers two kinds of insight.**
- **First,** the discipline produces Knowledge about the **actual biological** and **cultural variations** in the world;
- **Second**, anthropology offers **methods and theoretical perspectives** enabling practitioners to explore, compare, understand and solve **societal problems**.

➢ Anthropology has a strong affinity with **natural sciences**

❖ 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 but not as an individual entity**.

2. The Historical Development of Anthropology

- A recent discipline given its present shape during the 20thc, but it has important indications in the historiography, geography, travel writing, philosophy and jurisprudence of earlier times.
- ✓ Anthropology as a scientific discipline, some would trace its roots back to the **European Enlightenment**, during the 18 century;
- ✓ Others would claim that anthropology did not arise as a science until the **1850s**;
- yet others would argue that anthropological research in its present-day sense only commenced after the First World War.

- Anthropology, considered as the science of humanity, originated in **"Western" countries: France, Great Britain, the USA and, Germany**.
- 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 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 a distinct field of study until the mid-nineteenth century.**

- Generally speaking, **anthropology as an academic discipline was born during the 19th century**, out of the intellectual atmosphere of **Enlightenment,**

- ✓ which is the eighteenth century social and philosophical movement that emphasized human progress and the question of reason, and based on the **Darwinian Theory of Evolution**.
- ✓ By the late **1870s,** anthropology was beginning to emerge as a profession.
- ✓ A major motivation for its growth was the **expansion of western colonial powers** and their consequent **desire** to **better understand the peoples living under colonial domination.**
- ✓ During its **formative years**, (in the 1870s and 1880s) anthropology became **a profession primarily in museums.**

- **Early anthropologists** mainly studied small communities who were technologically simple societies (**traditional and non-industrialized)**

❖ Anthropologists of the early **1900s emphasized the study of social and cultural differences among human groups.**

❖ Here, many of the **indigenous peoples of non-western world and their social and cultural features were studied in detail and documented**. This approach is called **ethnography**.

✓ By the mid-1900, however, anthropologists attempted to discover **universal human patterns** and the **common bio-psychological traits that bind all human beings.** This approach is called **ethnology**.

✓ Ethnology aims at the **comparative understanding and analysis of different ethnic groups across time and space.**

❑ In **Ethiopia**, professional anthropologists have been studying culture and society on a more intensive level only since the late 1950s.

❑ Almost inevitably, the initial emphasis was on ethnography, the description of **specific customs, cultures and ways of life**.

3. Scope and Subject Matter of Anthropology

- The breadth and depth of anthropology is immense; there no time and space left as far as man exists. In terms of :

✓ **Temporal dimension** covers the past, the present and even the future.

✓ **Spatial dimension**, covers all aspects of human ways of life experiences and existence, as humans live in a social group.

❖ Anthropology touches upon all aspect of human conditions as far as there is a **relation Between human beings themselves**, and **humans and natural environment**.

✓ Anthropological project also consists in conceptualizing and understanding **similarities and differences between social systems**

- As one of the foremost anthropologists of the twentieth century, Claude Lévi-Strauss, has expressed: "**Anthropology has humanity as its object of research, but unlike the other human sciences, it tries to grasp its object through its most diverse manifestations**" (1983: 49).

- In other words, anthropology studies humanity with its all aspects of existence, and in its all means of differences (diversities) and similarities (commonalities).

❖ **Wherever human beings live, there is always anthropology**.

✓ Usually anthropologists investigate the interrelationships taking as their point of departure a **detailed study of local life in a particular society or a delineated social environment**.

4. Unique Features of Anthropology

- Anthropology is unique in its **scope, approach, focus and method of study**.

- ✓ **Scope :** Anthropology has a broad scope.
- ✓ It is interested in all human beings, whether **contemporary or past**, "primitive" or " civilized".
- ✓ It is interested in many different aspects of humans, including their **phenotypic** characteristics, family lives, marriages, political systems, economic lives, technology, belief systems, health care systems, 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.
- ✓ Indeed, Anthropology is the **broad study of human kind, around the world and throughout time**

- ✓ **Approach**: In its approach anthropology is **holistic, relativistic, and focused**
- ❖ **Holistic**, in a sense, it looks any phenomena from different view points.
- ❖ Anthropology seeks to understand human beings as **whole organisms** that adapt to their environments through a **complex interaction of biology and culture.**
- ❖ **Relativism**, Anthropology tries to study and explain a certain belief, practice or institution or a group of people **in its own context.**
- ❖ It does not make value judgment, i.e., it does not hold the position that a given belief or practice is '**good' or 'bad**'.

- ✓ Anthropology's **comparative perspective** helps to understand differences and similarities among human beings across **time and place**.
- ✓ Important perspective is a way of looking at people's ideas.
- ❑ It considers **insiders views** as a primary focus of any anthropological inquiry. **Anthropological studies give attention**
- ✓ To how people perceive themselves and understand their world;
- ✓ how a particular group of people **explain about their action**, or **give meaning** to their behavior or cultural practices.
- ✓ This is what anthropologists call an **emic perspective**.
- ✓ It helps to understand the **logic and justification behind group behavior and cultural practices.**

- ✓ Unique feature of anthropology is its **research approach**
- ❖ Anthropology is highly dependent on **qualitative research** to understand the meaning behind any human activity.
- ❖ Extended fieldwork, participant observation, in-depth and key informant interviews and focus-group discussion are qualitative research instruments to explore change and continuities in human societies.
- ❖ **Ethnographic fieldwork** is an important strategy which normally requires spending a year or more with research subjects and document realities occurring across time.
- ❖ For most anthropologists, fieldwork is a process requiring them to tune-in; hangout; and hang-on' to the societies and cultures they are interested to study.

✓ Focused

- Anthropology Focus more on the local than the big social processes has been another exclusive approach in the discipline.
- Paying great attention to **local or micro-social processes** certainly helps us to better understand big changes in societies.
- A detailed account of an event or a phenomenon discovers multiple realities in a community.

5. Misconceptions about Anthropology

- Due to **lack of appropriate awareness** of its nature there are a number of misconceptions associated with anthropology:

1. **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.**

2. Only study the rural people and rural areas:

- As a matter of fact, most of the studies conducted during the formative of the discipline focused on rural areas.
- But now, anthropologists are also interested in the study of **urban people and urban areas.**

3. The **study/analysis of fossil evidences of the proto-humans** like that of Lucy/Dinkinesh.

- It is true that anthropology is interested in the question of the origin of modern human beings.
- However, this does not mean that anthropology is all about the study of human evolution.
- It studies both the **biological and the cultural aspects** of humans and examines the existing human physical and biological variations and cultural diversity.

4. **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.

5. It is also misconceived that the **purpose of anthropology** is to study in order to **keep and preserve primitive, communities far from development and** anthropologists are advocates of defunct, obsolete cultural practices in museums.

- Rather, anthropologists‘ **duties are to support those communities**' capacity to empower themselves in development processes.
- ✓ 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 "**primitiveness**";
- Instead of imposed policies and ideas coming from outside, it play active roles in bringing positive change and development in their own lives.

6. The Relationship between Anthropology and Other Disciplines

- Anthropology greatly overlaps with sociology, psychology, political sciences, economics, history and other social science disciplines that study human society.
- However, anthropology differs from other social sciences and the humanities by its:

✓ broad scope,

✓ unique approach,

✓ perspective,

✓ unit of analysis and

✓ methods used.

- In **its scope**, anthropology studies humankind in its entirety.
- In its **approach**, anthropology studies and analyzes human ways of life holistically, comparatively and in a relativistic manner.
- In its **perspective**, anthropology approaches and locates dimensions of people‘s individual and communal lived experiences, their thoughts and their feelings in terms of how these dimensions are interconnected and interrelated to one another, yet not necessarily constrained or very orderly, whole.
- The perspective is also fundamentally empirical, **naturalistic** and **ideographic** [particularizing] than **nomothetic** [universalizing] one.
- In its **method of research**, it is unique in that it undertakes **extended fieldwork** among the study community and develops intimate knowledge of the life and social worlds of its study group/society through employing those **ethnographic data collection techniques** such as participant observation, key informant interview and focus group discussions.

7.Contributions of Anthropology

- Anthropologists must draw on theories and data from a number of other disciplines in the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences. Accordingly, its contributions are immense.
- By studying anthropology, we get the following benefits, among others.

✓ First, the emphasis on the **comparative study of cultures**, should lead us to the conclusion that our culture is just one way of life among many found in the world, and that it represents one way (among many possible ways) to adapt to a particular set of environmental conditions.

✓ Through the process of contrasting and comparing, **we gain a fuller understanding of other cultures and our own.**

- ✓ Anthropology also helps us **better understand ourselves or our own ways of life**. As a mirror of human life, by studying others, we can better understand ourselves.
- ✓ Hence, it gives an opportunity **to understand and to be critical about the ways of lives of our own community. Eg**
- ❖ 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.

- Second, anthropology gives us **an insight into different ways and modes of life of human society** (social and cultural diversity), which helps to understand the logic and justification behind **group behavior and cultural practices**.
- Knowledge about the rest of the world is particularly important today because the world has become increasingly interconnected.
- So, today it is important that we not only know something about other peoples of the world.
- But also grasp how our everyday decisions are influencing them in a multitude of ways and how others‘ decisions are also influencing ours.

- Through its distinctive methodology offers a unique perspective on how local cultural groups are engaging with the processes of globalization.
- Although many pundits discuss the consequences of globalization by talking to only government and business leaders, but cultural anthropologists are more likely to see what is actually occurring on the ground and how the local people themselves talk about their life experiences in a time of rapid globalization.
- Because of its **relativistic approach**, anthropology helps us to be more sensitive to and appreciative of cultural diversity and variability.
- It helps us to avoid some of the misunderstandings that commonly arise when individuals of different cultural traditions come into contact.

- Anthropology helps us fight against prejudice and discriminations
- It helps us fight against ethnocentrism:
  - **Ethnocentrism** is the belief that one's own culture and one's own way of life is superior to others‘ cultural, social and material lives.
  - This arises from ignorance about other ethnic groups and their ways of lives.
- **Anthropology is also used as a tool for development**
  - ✓ Anthropology, in its applied perspective, is also used as a tool for development.
  - ✓ **Paying attention to local conditions** is crucial to solve community problems.
  - ✓ The application of anthropological knowledge and research results has become important element **to ensure people‘s rights in development** and to be **able to sustain a project‘s life**.

- Anthropologists are better equipped with the **knowledge, skills and methods of identifying the needs and interests of local people** for the betterment and change of their lived experiences.
- It recognizes the advantages of consulting local people to design a culturally appropriate and socially sensitive change, and

✓ Protect local people from harmful policies and projects that threaten them. In general, anthropology is able to suggest sound solutions to all things human.

✓ **For example**, it is often applied in areas of Environmental Change, Health and Nutrition, Globalization, Social Justice and Human Rights, cultural resource management (CRM) and Cultural Dimensions of Civil and Religious Conflicts.

Group Assignment

Unit Two
Sub-fields of Anthropology

2.1. Archaeological Anthropology

- **Archaeology** studies the ways of lives of past peoples by excavating and analyzing the cultural/physical remains (**Artifacts** and eco-facts).
- Archaeologists study artifacts to get clues about values, beliefs, and norms; in general, about the cultures of societies that existed in the past.
- **Artifacts** are material remains made and used by the past peoples and that can be removed from the site and taken to the laboratory for further analysis.

E.g Tools, ornaments, arrowheads, coins, and fragments of pottery

- **Features,** like artifacts, are made or modified by past people, but they cannot be readily carried away from the site.

✓ **Archaeological features** include such things as house foundations, ancient buildings, fireplaces, steles, and postholes.

- **Eco-facts** are non-artfactual, organic and environmental remains such as soil, animal bones, and plant remains that were not made or altered by humans; but were used by them.
- Eco-facts provide archaeologists with important data concerning the environment and how people used natural resources in the past.
- Archeological anthropology has three major goals:

1). classifying and sequencing material culture;

2) reconstructing ancient ways of life; and

3) explaining and delineating cultural processes

- Archaeology has also its own subfields or areas of specialties. The most important ones include:- **Prehistoric Archaeology, Historical Archaeology, Ethno-archaeology**

Prehistoric Archaeology

- Prehistoric archeology investigates human prehistory; that is the periods of time in a region before the art of writing developed.
- Between 6,000 years ago and the time of the first stone tools (the first artifacts), around 2.5 million years ago.
- Many anthropological archeologists study **societies that did not leave behind any written records.**
- Prehistoric archeology 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 archeologists can gain insights into the ways in which the ancient foraging peoples lived

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 archeologists has been to help preserve historical sites.
- Historic archaeology takes advantage of the fact that about 6,000 years ago, some human groups invented language and began to write down things that can tell about the past.
- Historian archaeologists work together with historians to interpret artifacts of societies of the recent past

Ethno archeology

- This may be regarded as an aspect of prehistoric archeology.
- Ethno-archaeologists study material culture of current societies (e.g., pottery products) to understand the cultures (life styles) of past societies
- 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**.
- We Ethiopians have very glorious past. Archaeological findings in **north, south, east and western part of the country** have shown our country belonged to those countries which have old civilization.

2.2 Linguistic Anthropology

- Language is a key to explore a culture.
- ✓ **Language** is basically a system of information transmission and reception.
- ✓ Humans communicate messages by sound (speech), by gesture (body language), and in other visual ways such as writing.
- ✓ Analogous to genes that carry and transmit genetic materials to descendants, languages hand down cultural traits from one generation to another.
- ✓ In fact, some would argue that language is the most distinctive feature of being human.
- ✓ Although animals could develop certain behaviors through conditioning that mimic to humans, they do not have a capacity to pass on their own offspring.
- ✓ This is the boundary between human beings and other animals including higher primates.

- **Linguistic anthropology** generally focuses on the **evolution of languages** by studying contemporary human languages as well as those of the past.
- ✓ It studies how language is used within a society, and how the human brain acquires and uses languages.
- ✓ It tries to understand languages variation in their structures, units, and grammatical formations.
- ✓ It gives special attention to the study of **unwritten languages**.
- ✓ Indeed, linguistic anthropology or anthropological linguistics **studies human language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice in its social and cultural context, across space and time.**
- Linguistic anthropology is divided into four distinct branches or areas of research:

1. Structural or Descriptive Linguistics,
2. Historical Linguistics,
3. Ethno-Linguistics, and
4. Socio-linguistics.

Structural /Descriptive Linguistics

- ✓ Structural linguistics studies grammatical patterns of languages to identify the similarities and differences among contemporary languages.
- ✓ It examines sound systems, grammatical systems, and the meanings attached to words in specific languages to understand the structure and set of rules of given language.
- ✓ Every culture has a distinctive language with its own logical structure and set of rules for putting words and sounds together for the purpose of communicating.
- ✓ In its simplest form, the task of the descriptive linguist is to compile dictionaries and grammar books for previously unwritten languages.
- ✓ For structuralist linguist or structural linguistic anthropologist, even if there are thousands of human languages, at least structurally all of them are similar making it possible for us to grasp and learn languages other than our so called **mother tongue**‘.

- **Ethno-linguistics (cultural linguistics):**

✓ Examines the relationship between language and culture.

✓ In any language, certain cultural aspects that are emphasized (such as types of snow among the Inuit, cows among the pastoral Maasai, or automobiles in U.S. culture) are reflected in the vocabulary.

✓ Moreover, cultural linguists explore how different linguistic categories can affect how people categorize their experiences, how they think, and how they perceive the world around them.

Historical linguistics:

✓ Deals with the emergence of language in general and how specific languages have diverged over time.

✓ It focuses on the comparison and classifications of different languages to differentiate the historical links between them.

- **Socio-linguistics**:

✓ Sociolinguistics examines how the use of language defines social groups.

✓ It investigates linguistic variation within a given language.

✓ No language is a homogeneous system in which everyone speaks just like everyone else.

✓ One reason for variation is geography, as in regional dialects and accents.

✓ Linguistic variation also is expressed in the bilingualism of ethnic groups.

2.3. Socio-Cultural Anthropology

- This branch of anthropology is called differently in different parts of the world.
- ✓ It is called cultural anthropology in North American universities; ethnology in countries such as Germany; and social anthropology in other countries including the United Kingdom and Ethiopia.
- ✓ The name socio-cultural anthropology, however, appears to be more commonly used to refer to this largest sub-field of anthropology.
- ✓ Socio-cultural anthropology studies contemporary societies and cultures throughout the world. In the past, however, mainly social anthropologists from the Western world conducted ethnographic fieldworks in non-Western societies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania.

- ✓ Society is the group of people who have similar ways of life, but culture is a way of life of a group of people.
- ✓ Society and culture are two sides of the same coin. Sociocultural anthropology describes, analyzes, interprets, and explains social, cultural and material life of contemporary human societies.
- ✓ It studies the social (human relations), symbolic or nonmaterial (religious, language, and any other symbols) and material (all man-made objects) lives of living peoples.

- Socio-cultural anthropologists engage in two aspects of study: **Ethnography** (based on field work) and **Ethnology** (based on cross-cultural comparison).

- ✓ Ethnography provides a comprehensive account of a particular community, society, or culture.
- ✓ It describes the features of specific cultures in as much detail as possible including local behavior, beliefs, customs, social life, economic activities, politics, and religion.
- ✓ These detailed descriptions (ethnographies) are the result of extensive field studies (usually a year or two, in duration) in which the anthropologist observes, talks to, and lives with the people he or she studies.
- ✓ During ethnographic fieldwork, the anthropologist (ethnographer) gathers data that he or she organizes, describes, analyzes, and interprets to build and present that account, which may be in the form of a book, article, or film.

- ✓ **Ethnology** is the comparative study of contemporary cultures and societies, wherever they may be found.
- ✓ It examines, interprets, analyzes, and compares the results of ethnographic data gathered in different societies.
- ✓ It uses such data to compare and contrast and to make generalizations about society and culture.
- ✓ In other words, Ethnologists seek to understand both why people today and in the recent past differ in terms of ideas and behavior patterns and what all cultures in the world have in common with one another.
- ✓ Looking beyond the particular to the more general, ethnologists attempt to identify and explain cultural differences and similarities, to test hypotheses, and to build theory to enhance our understanding of how social and cultural systems work.
- ✓ Indeed, the primary objective of ethnology is to uncover general cultural principles, the —rules‖ that govern human behavior.

- ✓ Socio-cultural anthropology uses ethnographical and ethnological approaches to answer all sort of questions related to culture and human societies.
- ✓ To properly address emerging questions related to culture and societies, it has been sub-divided into many other specialized fields as:

1. Anthropology of Art,
2. Medical Anthropology,
3. Urban Anthropology,
4. Economic Anthropology,
5. Political Anthropology,
6. Development Anthropology,
7. Anthropology of Religion,
8. Demographic Anthropology,
9. Ecological Anthropology,
10. Psychological Anthropology,
11. Ethnomusicology, etc.

- ✓ All of them are considered to be the **applied areas of anthropology**.

2.4. Physical/Biological Anthropology

- Physical anthropology is a branch of anthropology that focuses on the **biological aspects of human beings**.
- ✓ It has sub-fields such as biological anthropology,
- ❖ forensic anthropology,
- ❖ primatology,
- ❖ paleoanthropology,
- ❖ population genetics, and
- ❖ human ecology.
- The subfields of physical anthropology are closely related to natural sciences, particularly biology.
- ❖ There are two major areas of research in physical anthropology:
  1) human evolution, and
  2) modern human variation.

- ✓ Research in human evolution shows that the origin of humanity is traced back over 6 million years.
- ✓ Africa is found to be the cradle of human beings. Research findings indicate that East Africa, especially the Great Rift Valley, is the origin of mankind.
- ✓ The oldest fossils of human ancestors were discovered in this part of the continent.
- ✓ The discovery of fossils such as
- ❖ **Lucy/Dinknesh (Australopithecus Afarensis**) in the Afar Region shows that Ethiopia is among African countries regarded as the origin of human ancestors.

- ✓ Physical anthropologists study how culture and environment have influenced biological evolution and **contemporary human variations.**
- ✓ Human biology affects or even explains some aspects of behavior, society, and culture like marriage patterns, sexual division of labor, gender ideology etc.
- ✓ The features of culture in turn have biological effects like the standards of attractiveness, food preferences, and human sexuality.
- ✓ Biological variations such as
- ❖ Morphology/structure,
- ❖ Color, and
- ❖ Size are reflections of changes in living organism.
- ✓ Since change occurs in the universe, it also applies in human beings.

- Human biological variations are the result of the cumulative processes of invisible changes occurring in human life.
- These changes have been accumulated and passed through genes.
- **Genes** are characteristics that carry biological traits of an organism, including human beings.
- The major sources of biological variations are derived from the interrelated effects of **natural selection, geographical isolation and genetic mutations.**

- ✓ Physical anthropology is essentially concerned with two broad areas of investigation: **human evolution** and **genetic**s.
- ✓ **Human evolution** is the study of the gradual processes of simple forms into more differentiated structures in hominid.
- ✓ It is interested in reconstructing the evolutionary record of the human species using fossils/bones.
- ✓ **Human evolution** is further divided into three specialties: Paleoanthropology and Primatology.
- ✓ **Palaeoanthropology** (paleo meaning: old) is the study of human biological evolution through the analysis of fossil remains from prehistoric times to determine the missing link that connect modern human with its biological ancestors.
- ✓ **Primatology** studies about primates or recent human ancestors to explain human evolution.
- ✓ Primatologists study the anatomy and social behavior of such non-human primate species as gorillas and chimpanzees in an effort to gain clues about our own evolution as a species.

Evolutionary and Paleo-anthropological perspectives on human origin

- One of the major questions anthropologists grapple with is the origins of humankind.
- The fossil record preserves evidence of past life on Earth, tracing a progression of simple one-celled organisms to increasingly diverse forms.
- How did these different forms of life emerge and new species arise?
- The biological explanations for this process are the focus of this section.
- Comprehensive theories of evolution concerning the evolution of life were developed only during the 19thcentury.
- They were made possible through discoveries in many different areas.
- Indeed, the value of evolutionary theory is its utility as a unifying explanation for a wide variety of phenomena.

- ✓ Anthropologists today rely on scientific views of evolution in order to explain human origins.
- ✓ Simply put, evolution refers to a process and gradual change in specie over time.
- ✓ 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; and
- ❖ **Selection**: The fact that not all offspring survive, and those that do tend to be the ones best suited to their environment.

- **Charles Darwin** is known for his theory of **natural selection** in the evolution of species and the idea of **survival of the fittest**.
- One of Charles Darwin‘s contributions to civilization was that he demonstrated that humanity was part of the world of living things.
- For thousands of years, Western civilization, backed up by the biblical story of creation, held humanity as a special creation fundamentally different from all other living things.
- By Darwin‘s time, many were beginning to question this creationist view. But the cultural pressure to conform to the dominant religion prevented most from saying so out loud.
- Yet, Darwin‘s ideas and many others that it fertilized set the foundation for a new study:

✓ the study of humans as living, evolving creatures in many ways no different from the rest of animal life.

- Today, anthropologists have accumulated a huge amount of data, much of it based on studies of DNA, the molecule that shapes all Earth life, to back the claims Darwin made in 1859.

- 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 fist appear?
  - What were our ancestors like?
  - Can we learn about human behavior from the behavior of our nearest relatives, the chimpanzees and gorillas?
  - Is our species still evolving?
  - How do modern human genetics, population growth, and other current issues play out from a biological perspective?
- The answers to the above mentioned questions are the changes through time of the properties of a living species.
- That is, evolution is the foundation of the life sciences. Many kinds of life forms have become extinct (like the dinosaurs), but each of today‘s living species (including humanity) has an evolutionary ancestry that reaches far back in time.

Anthropological perspectives on racial types and human physical variation

- People come in many colors and shapes: Why is this? How did these variations come about, and what do they mean for humanity as a species?
- The answer comes from the study of human biology by physical anthropologists.
- Biologically speaking, a race is a group of organisms of the same species that share similar physical (and genetic) attributes and specific geographic regions.
- Like any other living thing, human beings adapt to their environments through an evolutionary process
- Adaptation can be understood as a process (behavioral and/or biological) that increases the likelihood of survival for an organism. An adaptation can be a mutation that confers an advantage.

- **Skin color**—one of the most visible human characteristics - is a good example of adaptation to a particular environment
- Another example of biological adaptation in human beings is the difference of **stature** between arctic (such as Inuit) and East African (such as Maasai) people.

Unit Three
Human Culture and Ties that Connect Society

1. Conceptualizing Culture: What Culture is and What Culture isn't

Definition of Culture

- E.B. Tylor defined culture is, **'that a complex hole** which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'.
- Malinowski defined culture as the '**cumulative creation of man**'. He also regards 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."

- 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 the other.

- 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.

1. Culture is learned: Culture is not inherited biologically, but socially learned by human beings.

- ❖ It is not an inborn tendency. There is no cultural instinct as such. Culture is often called '**learned behavior**'.
- ❖ Enculturation is specifically defined as the process by which an individual learns the rules and values of one's culture.
- ✓ For instance:
- Closing eyes while sleeping- is physiological and unlearnt behavior.
- Shaking hands, dressing, wearing ornaments, cooking food, driving car, enacting a role in a drama, singing, worshiping etc.. are all ways of behavior learned by man culturally**.**

***2. Culture is all- encompassing*:**

- Culture encompasses all aspects, which affect people in their everyday of their 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, the things each new generation must learn and to which they eventually add.

3. Culture is social:

- ✓ Culture does not exist in isolation.
- ✓ Neither it is an individual phenomenon.
- ✓ It is a product of society.
- ✓ It originates and develops through social interactions.
- ✓ It is shared by the members of the society.
- ✓ No individual acquires culture without association with other human beings.
- ✓ It is the culture which helps man to develop human qualities in human environment.

4. Culture is transmissive:

- ❖ Culture is capable of being transmitted from one generation to the next.
- ❖ Socialization plays a significant role in transmitting.
- ❖ It is transmitted through language.
- ✓ **Language is the main vehicle of culture** and **language itself is part of culture**.
- ✓ Once language is acquired, it unfolds wide arena to the individual. Transmission of culture may take place by imitation as well as by instruction.

5. Culture is shared:

- ❖ Culture in the anthropological and sociological sense, is something shared.
- ❖ It is not something that an individual alone can posses.
- ❖ 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 cooperate hence confusion and disorder world result.
- ✓ For instance:
- ▪ Language, customs, traditions, beliefs, ideas, values, morals etc are all shared by people of a group or society.
- ➢ Therefore, culture is something **adopted, used, believed, practiced or possessed by more than one person**.
- ✓ It depends upon group life for its existence.

6. Culture is symbolic

- Symbolic thought is unique and crucial to humans and to culture. Symbolic thought is the human ability to give a thing or event an arbitrary meaning and grasp and appreciate that meaning Symbols are the central components of culture.
- **Symbols** refer to anything to which people attach meaning and which they use to communicate with others.
- More specifically, symbols are words, objects, gestures, sounds or images that represent something else rather than themselves.
- Symbolic thought is unique and crucial to humans and to culture. It is the human ability to give a thing or event an arbitrary meaning and grasp and appreciate that meaning.
- There is no obvious natural or necessary connection between a symbol and what it symbolizes.
- Culture thus works in the symbolic domain emphasizing meaning, rather than the technical/practical rational side of human behavior.
- All actions have symbolic content as well as being action in and of themselves. Things, actions, behaviors, etc, always stand for something else than merely, the thing itself.
-

7. Culture seizes nature

- Culture imposes itself on nature. It suppresses the natural, biological instincts in us and expresses it in particular ways.
- For example, we as biological beings feel the desire for food; but what type of food to eat, how many times per day to eat, with whom to eat, how much to eat, how fast or slow to eat, etc, are all determined by the cultural values and norms of a particular group of people.
- Or, we feel the desire to urinate, but one cannot do that anytime and anywhere, unless one is an animal, an immature child or a mentally sick person.

8. Culture is patterned

- Cultures are not haphazard collection of customs and beliefs, but are integrated, patterned systems the parts are interrelated
- Culture is an integrated whole, that is the parts of culture are interrelated to one another.
- No one single cultural trait has its meaning outside of its integrated context.

9. Culture is continuous and cumulative:

- ❖ Culture exists as a continuous process.
- ❖ In its historical growth it tends to be come cumulative.
- ✓ Therefore 'culture is a growing whole' which includes in itself, the achievements of the past and the present and makes provision for the future achievements of the mankind.
- ❖ Culture may thus be conceived of as a kind of stream flowing down through the centuries from one generation to another- 'the social heritage' and – 'the memory of human race'.

10. Culture is consistent and integrated:

- ❖ Culture, in its development has revealed a tendency to be consistent. At the same time different parts of culture are inter connected.
- ✓ For instance:
- ❖ The value system of a society is closely connected with its other aspects such as morality, religion, customs, traditions, social, economic and political organizations.

11. *People use culture creatively*

- There is difference between ideal culture and real culture.
- **What culture-rules say and what people do may be different**;
- ✓ cultural rules tell us what to do and how to do it, but we don't always do what the rules dictate. We use culture creatively

12. Culture is gratifying:

- Culture provides proper opportunities and prescribes means for the satisfaction of our needs and desires. These may be biological or social in nature.
- For instance: material possessions, status, wealth, name, fame, family, kinship relations etc… fulfills human needs and desires in cultural ways. Culture determines and guides the varied activities of human beings. Therefore, culture is defined as the process through which human beings satisfy their wants.

13. Culture varies from society to society:

- ❖ Every society has a culture of its own.
- ❖ It differs from society to society.
- ❖ Culture of every society is unique to itself.
- ❖ Cultures are not uniform.
- ✓ Cultural elements such as customs, traditions, morals, ideals, values, ideologies, beliefs, practices, philosophies, institutions etc are not uniform everywhere.
- Culture varies from time to time.
- No culture ever remains constant or changeless.

14. Culture is super organic:

- Culture is sometimes called **'the super organic**'.
- Herbert Spencer states that culture is neither organic nor inorganic in nature but above these two.
- Every society considers its culture as an ideal.
- It is regarded as an end in itself.
- It is intrinsically valuable.
- ✓ They are proud of their culture.

15. Culture is adaptive and maladaptive

- People **adapt** themselves to the environment using culture.
- The ability to adapt themselves to practically any ecological condition, unlike other animals, makes humans unique.
- This ability is attributed to human's capacity for creating and using culture.
- Culture has also **maladaptive dimensions**. That is, the very cultural creations and achievements of peoples may turn out to threaten their survival.
- When we see the contemporary problems of the environments, the side effects of rapid growth and in science and technology, etc, we see that culture is also maladaptive.

16. 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 are 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.**

Culture is dynamic and adaptive:

- ✓ Though culture is relatively stable, it is not altogether static.
- ✓ It is subject to slow but constant changes.
- ✓ Change and growth are latent to culture. Hence, culture is dynamic. Therefore, culture is responsive to the changing conditions of the physical world.
- ✓ It is adaptive. It also intervenes in the natural environment and helps man in his process of adjustment.

- For instance: technology-helps us to deal with the natural environment and so that to ensure survival.

Aspects/Elements of Culture

- Culture is reflected through the various components such as values, norms, languages, myths, customs, rituals and laws.
- Two of the most basic aspects of culture are **material and nonmaterial culture.**
- **Material culture**
- Material culture consists of human-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.

❖ 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 are listed as follows:

Values

- Values are the standards by which members 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 non-material 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 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) Folkways: 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.

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

- In studying human diversity in time and space, anthropologists distinguish among:
- Universal,
- Generalized, and
- 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), and
- Other traits are particularities (unique to certain cultural traditions).

❑ Universality:

- ✓ Universals are cultural traits that span across all cultures.
- ✓ Most are biological that distinguish us from other species long period of infant dependency, year-round sexuality, complex brain that enables use of symbols and use of languages and tools.
- **Social universals** life in groups some kind of family organizes on social life and depends on social interactions for expression and continuation of the society.

E.g. Incest taboo, exogamy (marriage outside one‘s group).

- ✓ A great example of universality is that whether in Africa, 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.

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, or Independent innovation of same cultural trait
- **E.g.**, farming and nuclear family.

Particularity:

- Trait of a culture that is not widespread.
- Cultural particulars include the specific practices that distinguish cultures form one another.
- E.g all people become hungry but the potential food sources defined as edible vary across cultures,
- i.e. what is appealing to eat in one society may be considered repulsive or simply unbelievable in another (for example donkey meat in Ethiopia).
- Particularities are becoming rarer in some ways but also becoming more obvious. Borrowed cultural traits are modified.
- E.g. marriage, parenthood, death, puberty, birth all celebrated differently

Ethnocentrism , Cultural Relativism and Human right

Ethnocentrism

- All of us often tend to judge the behavior of other people in other groups by the standards of our own culture.
- 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 center or axis of everything**, and we scale and rate all others with reference to it.
- Ethnocentrism leads us to minimize our appreciation to other people
- Anthropologists endeavor as far as possible to avoid ethnocentrism.
- It is not logically possible and proper to underestimate or overestimate or judge other cultures on the basis of one's cultural standard.
- **Ethnocentrism**, in general, is an attitude of taking one's own culture and ways of life as the best and the center of all and on the other hand, regarding other ethnic groups and cultures as inferior, bad, full of errors, etc.
- **It is the tendency to apply one's own cultural values in judging the behavior and beliefs of people raised in other cultures**.
- **It is a cultural universal**. People everywhere think that familiar explanations, opinion, and customs as true, right, proper and moral. They regard different behavior as strange or savage.

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. This approach is called cultural relativism.
- It suspends judgment and views 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;
- ✓ 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;
- ✓ 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.

❑ Cultural relativism may be regarded as the **opposite of ethnocentrism**.

❑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 Change

- Culture changes in several ways;
- How and why cultures change and briefly review some of the widespread changes that have occurred in recent times.
- 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.
- Culture change can occur as a result of the following Mechanisms:

1. **Diffusion**
2. **Acculturation**
3. **Invention and**
4. **Globalization**

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

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 today's world, much international diffusion is indirect-culture spread by the mass media and advanced information technology

ii. **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: 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 why 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.

vi. 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 modem 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).
- ✓ They learn to play various social roles and to change behavior and identity depending on the situation.

- **Marriage** is defined as basically a sexual union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are considered the legitimate offspring of both parents.
- Main purpose of marriage is
  - To create new social relationships, rights and obligations between the spouses and their kin, and
  - To establish the rights and status of children when they are born.

❖ **In traditional, simple societies**,

- ✓ Marriage is often more of a relationship between groups than one between individuals.
- ✓ Idea of romantic love is less common in traditional (nonindustrial) societies
- ✓ Marriage, thus, is a group concern in such societies.

❖ **In industrial societies**,

- ✓ Marriage is more of individual matter.
- ✓ Marriage is joins individuals and relationship between individuals can be severed (broken) more easily than those between groups .

- **Rules of Marriage**

✓ Societies also have rules that state whom one can and cannot marry.

✓ Every society knows 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 is known as incest taboo.

✓ 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.

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.

❖ **Exogamy** requires that people marry outside a group to which they belong.

❖ It bars marriage within smaller inner circle, i.e. one's own close relatives.

❖ One of the main concerns of exogamous marriage rule is prohibition of incest, i.e., marrying or sexual contact between blood relatives

- 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 social group (e.g. their own tribe, nationality, religion, race, community, social class, etc). 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

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 preceding generation.

Parallel Cousins: When marriage takes place between the children of the siblings of the same sex, it is called parallel cousin marriage.

- ✓ 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 widow of a 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.

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. Involves multiple wives (i.e man marrying more than one woman at a time)

✓ polygyny is much more common than polyandry

❖ **Polyandy:** the marriage of a woman to two or more men at a time

❖ Involves multiple husbands (i.e. one woman married to more than one man at a time).

✓ The most common form of polyandrous marriage is termed as **fraternal polyandry**,

✓ **Fraternal polyandry** which involve two or more brothers taking a single woman as their wife.

✓ Polyandrous marriage is very rare and it occurs mainly in South Asian c societies such as Tibet, Burma, Nepal, India, and so on.

❑ 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 and Disadvantages of Polygamous marriage

- Having two/more wives is often seen as a sign of prestige.
- Having multiple wives means wealth, power, and status both for the polygnous 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.

❑ 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/wealth,
2) Bride Service and
3) Dowry

- **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/wealth.
- ✓ Anthropologists identified a number of important functions that the institutions of bride price/wealth performed for the well-being of the society.
- ❖ For example, bride price/wealth 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.

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

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.

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

1. Nuclear family and
2. Extended family.

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 unclear 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, child care, 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, and have no control over whether or not their children remain married.

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 are 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.

Functions of Marriage and Family

- ✓ Family performs certain specific functions which can be summarized 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 ensures 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 one‘s 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 acculturating children is distributed among parents.
- ✓ Moreover, family behaves as an effective agent in the transmission of social heritage.

Kinship

- A significant concept in Anthropology
- kinship is vitally important, 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 **affinal relationship**‖, and the relatives so related are called „**affinal kin**“.

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 are related to this rule of descent.

✓ **There are three important rules of descent:**

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 is 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 societies individuals are free to show their genealogical links either through men or women.

- ✓ Some people of such a 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

Culture areas and culture contact

- Culture areas refers to a cluster of related cultures occupying a certain geographical region.
- In anthropology the concept of culture area has been used beginning from the 1920s where Afred Kroeber and his contemporaries were interested in examining the concentration of cultural trains in a given geographic area.
- In the context of Ethiopia, we may come up with different culture are in relation to subsistence.

These are:

1. **Plough culture,**
2. **Enset culture area, and**
3. **Pastoral societies‘ 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.
- ✓ The area often called plough culture has been a subject of anthropological inquires over the past seven decades starting from the 1950s.
- ✓ Some of the ethnographers who studied the area that we call plough culture are

Donald Levine,

Allen Hobben,

Fredrick Gamst and

Jack Bauer.

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 to 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.

- ## 4.1 Definition of concepts
- **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 and drinks, and working and living together.
- The nature and level of marginalization varies from society to society as a result of cultural diversity.
- **Vulnerability** -the state of being exposed to physical or emotional injuries.
- People exposed to possibilities of attack, harms or mistreatment, and need special support.
- **Minority groups:** refers to a small group of people within a community, region, or country, in terms of language, religion, race……

4.2 Gender-based marginalization

- It is closely related to gender inequality which involves discrimination on a group of people based on their gender.
- It involves exclusion of girls and women from a wide range of opportunities and social services such as education, employment, property ownership and inheritance.
- Women and girls are also vulnerable to gender-based violence such as rape, child marriage, abduction/forced marriage, domestic violence and female genital cutting/mutilation.
- There are some customary practices that affect the health and wellbeing of girls and women. These practices collectively are called harmful traditional practices (HTPs). examples: female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage.

4.3 Marginalized occupational groups

- The most marginalized occupational groups are tanners, potters, weavers and ironsmiths.
- **weavers** produce cultural clothes highly demanded by thousands and millions of people. People dress cultural clothes in different occasions such as cultural festivals, days of nations and nationalities, weddings and religious celebrations.
- **Iron smiths** make and repair iron articles without using machines. They produce farming tools such as plough shares, sickles, hoes, and household utensils (e.g., knives and axes)
- **Tanners** make leather products that serve community members.
- **Potters** produce pottery articles essential for food processing and serving and fetching water.

Cont.…

- Marginalization of despised occupational groups such as crafts-worker is manifested in many ways in different parts of Ethiopia.

Type of marginalization	Manifestations of marginalization
Spatial marginalization	▪ live on the outskirts of villages ▪ segregated at market places (outskirts of markets) ▪ Expected to give way for others and walk on the lower side of the road.
Economic marginalization	▪ Excluded from certain economic activities including production and exchanges. ▪ They have a limited access to land and land ownership.
Social marginalization	▪ Excluded from intermarriage, membership of associations such as iddirs, they do not share burial places with others; ▪ When they are allowed to participate in social events, they must sit on the floor separately-sometimes outside the house or near the door.
Cultural marginalization	▪ Labeled as impure and polluting; they are accused of eating animals that have died without being slaughtered; ▪ considered unreliable, lacking morality, respect and shame.

Source:- Dena Freeman and Alula Pankhurst (2001),

4.4 Age-based vulnerability

- Age-based vulnerability is susceptibility of people, especially children and older people, to different forms of attack.

4.4.1 Children: Discrimination and vulnerability

- Both boys and girls are exposed to some harm and abuse in the hands of older people. However, younger girls are exposed to double marginalization and discrimination because of the gender.
- Girls are exposed to harmful traditional practices (HTPs) such as female genital mutilation/cutting. Minor girls are also exposed to early/child marriage in many parts of Ethiopia.
- According to international human rights conventions, child marriage is regarded as violation of the rights of the child.

Cont.…

Child 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.
- Inhibits girls' personal development; it hinders girls‘ chance to education and future professional development.
- Exposes young girls to sexual abuse by their older husbands.
- Leads to early pregnancies, which increases risks of diseases and complications during delivery, fistula, and death of the mother or child.

It is illegal practice according to the Criminal Code of Ethiopia, however, child marriage is still practiced in different regions of the country.

Factors encouraging child marriage

Social norms and economic factors are the two major drivers

- **Social norm:-** Premarital sex and pregnancy would expose the girl and her family to social exclusion in many parts of Ethiopia.
- Family social status are associated with sexual purity of girls.
- Parents incline to marry off their daughter before the girl reach at the stage of puberty to avoid the possibility of pre-marital sex and pregnancy.
- Community members influence unmarried teen-age girls to get married as early as possible.
- They do this through social pressure including insulting unmarried young girls.
- **Economic issues:** In many areas of Ethiopia marriage provides economic security for young girls. Parents‘ desire to get a good husband for their daughter.

4.4.2 Marginalization of older persons

- ✓ The phrase **older persons‘ refers to adults with the age of 60 and above**.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ They play crucial role in protection of tradition, culture, and history, mentoring younger people, resolving disputes, and restoring peace across Ethiopian cultures.
- ✓ Rural-urban migration, changes in values and life style, education and new employment opportunities lead to so many changes.
- ✓ Care and support for older men and women tend to decline as younger people migrate to urban areas and exposed to economic pressure and new life styles.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Older persons are marginalized because they are considered as social burden rather than social assets.

4.5. Religious and ethnic minorities

There are several examples of marginalization and discrimination targeting religious and ethnic minorities in the world. examples

- The Jewish people suffered from discrimination and persecution in different parts of the world.
- Muslim Rohingyas are among the most marginalized and persecuted people in the world. In recent years, more than half-a-million Rohingyas fled from their homes in Nyanmar to neighboring countries such as Bangladesh.
- As people living in refugee camps, the Rohingyas are vulnerable to problems such as malnutrition and physical and sexual abuse.

4.6. Human right approaches and inclusiveness: Anthropological perspectives

- All forms of marginalization and discrimination against vulnerable and minority groups contradict the principles of human rights.
- 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

Explore the human rights treaties

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a human rights treaty approved by the United Nations in 1989. The Convention has 41 articles focusing on the survival rights, development rights, protection rights and participation rights of the child.

Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a human rights treaty endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979.

5.1. Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity

Ethnic Groups

- Different definitions have been proposed to define "ethnic group'.
- **Max Weber (**1978)" 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"
- **Anderson** (1983), "as an imagined community that possesses a character and quality"
- **Schermerhorn** (1996), "as a unit of population having unique characteristics in relation with others, binding with common language, myth of origin, and history of ethnic allegiance"

- Scholars mainly use it to explain contact and inter-relationship between groups.
- 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.
- in a context of inter-ethnic interaction, group distinctiveness strongly depends on identification of self and ascription by others and members of a certain ethnic group will be evaluated in accordance with their performance‘ of the value standards and “possession‘ of diacritical features designing the group against other.

- Ethnic groups constitute an identity as defined by outsiders who do not belong to the group but identify it as different from their own groups and by insiders who belong to the same group.
- This generally becomes the basis of mobilizing group‘s consciousness and solidarity and which in certain situation result in political activities

- Hutchinson and Smith‘s (1996) identified six main features that the definition of an ethnic group, predominantly consists. This includes;

1. A **common proper name**, to identify and express the “essence” of the community;
2. 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;
3. **Shared historical memories**, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration;
4. One or more elements of **common culture**, which need not be specified but normally, include religion, customs, and language;
5. **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
6. 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.
- ✓ An individual can choose to associate with a group especially if other choices are available (i.e., the person is of mixed ethnic etc).
- Affiliation can be influenced by racial, birth, symbolic, and cultural factors (Cheung, 1993).
- Racial factors involve the use of physiognomic(human face) and physical characteristics, birth 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

- 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

- Locating oneself in relation to a community and society is not only a psychological phenomenon, but also a **social phenomenon** in the sense that the internal psychological states express themselves objectively in external behavior patterns that come to be shared by others.
- Thus, individuals locate themselves in one or another **community internally by states of mind and feelings**, such as self-definitions or feelings of closeness, and externally by behavior appropriate to these states of mind and feelings.
- **Behavior** according to cultural patterns is thus, an **expression of identity and can be studied as an indication of its character**.

❖ **Aspects of ethnic identity**.

Objective and subjective aspects of ethnic identity

❖ **Objective** aspects refer to observable behavior, 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 belief systems, social organizations etc.

The subjective aspects of ethnic identity refer to images, ideas, attitudes, and feelings.

- ❖These, of course, can also be interconnected with the objective aspects.
- ❖But, it should not be assumed that, empirically, the two types are always dependent upon each other.

There are many empirical cases in **Ethiopia** where the subjective aspects have become important factors, even when the objective markers are significantly weakened.

- ✓A third-generation person may retain a higher degree of subjective aspect of identity than objectively visible markers.
- ❖We can distinguish at least three types of subjective aspects of identity:

(1) cognitive,

(2) moral, and

(3) affective.

5.2. Ethnicity: *Identification and Social Categorization*

Ethnicity: What's in a name?

- ✓ Ethnicity and nationalism have grown in political importance in the world, particularly since the Second World War.
- ✓ Ethnic and national identities also become strongly pertinent following the continuous influx of labour migrants and refugees to Europe and North America, which has led to the establishment of new, permanent ethnic minorities in these areas.
- ✓ During the same period, indigenous populations (such as Inuitsand Sami) have organized themselves politically, and demand that their ethnic identities and territorial entitlements should be recognized by the State.
- ✓ Finally, the political turbulence in Europe has moved issues of ethnic and national identities to the fore front of political life.
- ✓ At one extreme of the continent, the erstwhile Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have split into over a dozen ethnically based states.
- ✓ Ethiopia, where issue of ethnic and national identities is contested and ethnicity has become the official organizing principle of the state since 1991.

Ethnicity : A Short Historical Overview

- ✓ 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. According to John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (1996),
- ✓ the term **ethnicity** is relatively new, first appearing in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1953.

The term itself –Ethnicity

- ✓ The English origin of the term ‘ethnicity‘ is connected to the term ethnic, which is much older and has been in use since the Middle Ages.
- ✓ The word is derived from the Greek term ‘ethnos‟ (which in turn, derived from the Latin word ‘ethnikos‟), 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)
- ✓ 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

- What is obvious from this short history of the term is the fact that ‘**ethnicity‘** contains a multiplicity of meanings.
- Such a flexibility and ambiguity of the concept allows for deep misunderstandings as well as political misuses.
- As Jack David Eller put it, some of the most mystifying problems arise from the vagueness of the term and phenomenon called ethnicity and from its indefinite and ever-expanding domain (Eller, 1999:8).
- In other words, ethnicity is vague, elusive and vast.
- We need to conceptualize ethnicity and its related concepts of ethnic group and ethnic identity from different scholarly viewpoints.

Conceptualizing Ethnicity and Ethnic group

- Scholars have been trying to conceptualize it from different perspectives and as a result, different definitions have been proposed to define ethnic group‘.
- As 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 (Max Weber, 1978).
- In other words, ethnic groups are those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities in physical type, customs, memories of colonization and migration.
- It does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists, but whether it is *believed* to exist.

Cont.….

- Nevertheless, popular discourses, in both Europe and North America, have *racialized*“ the concept of ethnicity, that is race‘ was largely preserved (in its quasi-biological sense) and has only now been used interchangeably with ethnicity‘.
- As Jack David Eller put it, some of the most perplexing problems arise from the vagueness of the term and phenomenon called ethnicity and from its indefinite and ever-expanding domain… ethnicity is vague, elusive and expansive (Eller, 1999).

Cont.…

- The fall of communism and the breakup of the Soviet-style federations along ethnic‘ lines and the emergence of ethnic cleansing‘ policies in the Balkans and the Caucasus have further complicated these definitional issues.
- With the wars on former Yugoslav soil, extensive and influential mass media coverage of *ethnic conflict*‘ has seen the term *ethnic*“ degenerate into a synonym for *tribal*, *primitive*, *barbaric* and *backward*.
- What is obvious from this short history of the term is the fact that _ethnicity‘ contains a multiplicity of meanings. Such a plasticity and ambiguity of the concept allows for deep misunderstandings as well as political misuses.

Cont.…

- Barth in his introduction to the collection of "*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries"*, Barth (1969), outlined in detail a model of ethnicity.
- Barth began with what actors believe or think: ascriptions and self-ascriptions.
- A categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background.
- To the extent that actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense.

Cont.…

- 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 (F. Barth,1969).
- Barth (1969) further illustrated that, in a context of inter-ethnic interaction, group distinctiveness strongly depends on identification of self and ascription by others and members of a certain ethnic group will be evaluated in accordance with their performance‘ of the value standards and possession‘ of diacritical features designing the group against other.

Cont….

- 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).
- Ethnic groups constitute an identity as defined by outsiders who do not belong to the group but identify it as different from their own groups and by —insiders who belong to the same group. This generally becomes the basis of mobilizing group‘s consciousness and solidarity and which in certain situation result in political activities (Kasfir, 1976).

Cont.…

- Barth focused not upon the cultural characteristics of ethnic groups but upon relationships of cultural differentiation, and specifically upon contact between collectivities thus differentiated, 'us' and 'them' (Eriksen, 2002).
- we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences.
- The features that are taken into account are not the sum of 'objective' differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant…not only do ecological variations mark and exaggerate differences; some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored, and in some relationships radical differences are played down and denied (Barth, 1969: 14).

Cont.…

- The cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies would seem analytically to be of two orders:
- (i**) overt signals or signs -** the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity, often such features as dress, language, house-form, or general style of life
- (ii) **basic value orientations**: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged.
- Since belonging to an ethnic category implies being a certain kind of person, having that basic identity, it also implies a claim to be judged, and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to that identity.

Cont….

- ***Ethnic categories provide an organizational vessel*** that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems.
- They may be of great relevance to behavior, but they need not be; they may pervade all social life, or they may be relevant only in limited sectors of activity.
- There is thus an obvious scope for ethnographic and comparative descriptions of different forms of ethnic organization.
- In its most general notion, for Barth, **ethnicity is seen as a social organization of culture difference'**.

- 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, as an identification, is collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and the categorization of others, and internalized in personal self identification.

- ✓ 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).
- ✓ 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.

5.4. Theories of Ethnicity: Primordialism, Instrumentalism and Social Constructivism

Three Basic Anthropological Approaches for Understanding Ethnicity

Perspective	Description
Primordialist Approach	Ethnicity is fixed at birth. Ethnic identification is based on deep, „primordial" attachments to a group or culture
Instrumentalist Approach	Ethnicity, based on people"s "historical" and "symbolic" memory, is something created and used and exploited by leaders and others in the pragmatic pursuit of their own interests.
Constructivist Approach	Ethnic identity is not something people "possess" but something they "construct" in specific social and historical contexts to further their own interests.

The Primordial Model of Ethnicity

- ✓ The Primordialist approach is the oldest in anthropological literature. It was popular until the mid-1970s.
- ✓ The roots of Primordialist thinking can be traced back to the German Romantic philosophers, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), proclaimed the primacy of emotions and language, and defined society a deep-seated, mythical community.
- ✓ Herder envisaged that every people had its own values, customs, language and spirit‘ and argued for the atavistic power of the blood and soil that bound one closely with one‘s people.
- ✓ Indeed, Primordialism is an objectivist or essentialist theory which argues, that ultimately there is some real, tangible, foundation for ethnic identification.

Cont.…

- 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.
- Globalization started as an economic phenomenon and end up as a phenomenon of identity.
- Traditional ways people defined who they were have been undermined.

Cont….

- Modernity has, remade life in such a way that —*the past is stripped away, place loses its significance, community loses its hold, objective moral norms vanish, and what remains is simply the self.”*
- The result of this process has been a loss of identity resulting in fragmentation and rootlessness (anomie) at the personal level and the blurring of identities at the collective level.
- Some scholars claim that there have been irreconcilable and unbreakable barriers between the above divergently contending, but dominant approaches of ethnicity.

- Banks (1996) portrayed the divergences between the leading theories of ethnicity as follows:
- ...the contents of ethnic identity versus its boundary, the primordial gut feeling of an identity versus its instrumental expression, the individuals versus the group, ethnicity as an all-inclusive general theory versus ethnicity as a limited approach to particular problems are the polar extremes central in theories of ethnicity…. (Banks, 1996: 47).
- These divergently contending models of ethnicity are discussed briefly as follows.

Cont.…

- The anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, articulated ethnicity as a natural phenomenon with its foundations in primordial ties - deriving mainly from **kinship, locality and culture** (Geertz 1963).
- 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.
- Geertz further argues that in some respects these putative 'primordial attachments' are actually likely to be stimulated and quickened by the political modernization of nation-building.
- In its general sense then, it can be said that ethnicity is something given, ascribed at birth, deriving from the kin-and-clan-structure of human society, and hence something more or less fixed and permanent (Geertz, 1963; Isaacs, 1975; Stack, 1986).

Cont.…

- A model by Isaacs (1974) primordial ties as a means of explaining the power and persistence of ethnic identity, which he called ***basic group identity*‘** (Jones 1997:65–66).
- Isaacs‘s basic group identity was linked to ethnic identity, which was argued to be assigned at birth and more fundamental and natural than other social links.
- 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.

Cont.…

- Anthony D. Smith (1986), elements of ethnic identification as psychological and emotional, emerging from a person‘s historical and cultural backgrounds.
- The core‘ of ethnicity resides in the myths, memories, values, symbols and the characteristic styles of particular historic configurations, i.e., what he calls „*a myth-symbol complex*“.
- The durability of the ethnic group resides in the forms and content of the myth-symbol complex.
- The central importance for the survival of ethnic group are diffusion and transmission of the myth-symbol complex to its unit of population and its future generations.

Cont.…

- Smith emphasizes the extraordinary persistence and resilience of ethnic ties and sentiments, once formed and argues that they are essentially primordial since they are received through ethnic socialization into one‘s ethnic and are more or less fixed. And, regards primordial ties as the basic organizing principles and bonds of human association throughout history.
- To sum, 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** (Smith, 1986). By this, ethnicity is an ascribed status and ethnic membership is fixed, permanent and primarily ascribed through birth.

Instrumentalist (Situational) Theory of Ethnicity

- 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 (Eidheim, 1971, and Esman, 1994).
- Banks (1996) explained the instrumentalist understandings of ethnicity as ***an instrument of group mobilization for political and economic ends***.
- Ethnicity is something that can be changed, **constructed or even** manipulated to gain specific political and/or economic ends.
- Proponents of this perspective (e.g., Abner Cohen, Paul Brass and Ted Gurr) 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.

Cont.….

- *Ethnic group is a collectively organized strategy for the protection of economic and political interests*.
- 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).
- 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" (Ross, 1982).*

Cont.…

- It would suggest that the ***ethnic group*** should be regarded *not as a community* at all but as *a rational and purposive association*.
- A more moderate view is that there is indeed a cultural content in an ethnic community, but that the boundaries of the group, which has that culture, depend upon the purpose in hand.
- The pursuit of political advantage and/or material self-interest is the calculus, which is typically, held to inform such behavior.

Constructivist Theory of Ethnicity

- Ethnicity is something that is being negotiated and constructed in everyday living.
- It depends on historical, social and the presence of ethnic raw material to be utilized. 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*** and the role of individual agencies and circumstances in triggering the historical and social factors.
- However, this does not mean that all subjectivists reject all objective aspects of ethnicity. Some, in fact give them significant attention.

Cont.…

- F. Barth is the leading figure of this approach. Barth viewed ethnic identity as an ***individualistic strategy*** in which individuals move from one identity to another to advance their personal economic and political interests, or to minimize their losses (Jones 1997:74).
- Following Barth, ethnic identity forms through boundary maintenance and interaction between individuals.
- Depending on each social interaction, a person‘s ethnic identity can be perceived or presented in various ways.
- In fact, Barth took a rather extreme position. For him, ethnic boundaries were psychological boundaries; ethnic culture and its content were irrelevant.

Cont.…

- Overall, interaction between individuals does not lead to an assimilation or homogenization of culture.
- Instead, cultural diversity and ethnic identity are still maintained, but in a non-static form. Cultural traits and even individuals can cross over ethnic boundaries, which in turn can transform an ethnic group over time.
- Ethnic group is hence a result of group relations in which the boundaries are established through mutual perceptions and not by means of any objectively distinct 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).
- **This provoked that ethnicity is dynamic that changes through time and space; and ethnic identities are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed.**

Unit Six
Customary and Local Governance Systems and Peace Making

Indigenous and local governance

- Indigenous systems of governance have widely been employed to maintain social order across Ethiopian regions.
- The role of indigenous governance was indispensable before the advent of the modern state system.
- Some of the indigenous systems of governance have been well-studied while many others have got little attention by scholars.
- Understanding of indigenous systems of governance helps us know our cultures and will also help us enhance inter-cultural understanding.
- We do not have space to take examples from every region and culture. Hence, we have outlined some examples of indigenous systems of governance to start discussions.

The Oromo Gadaa

- The Gadaa of the Oromo is one of the well-studied indigenous systems of governance. Various scholars have been studying the Oromo Gadaa since the 1950s. Paul Baxter, Eike Haberland and Asmerom Legesse are the scholars who studied the Oromo Gadaa.
- Asmerom, a famous anthropologist, is widely known for his ethnographic studies on the Oromo political system.
- He published a lot on the Gaada system, particularly focusing on the Borena Oromo. The following are two of his books: Gadaa: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society, published in 1973; and Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous Political System, printed in 2000.

Cont….

- The Gadaa system is an age grading institution of the Oromo that has a complex system of administration, law making and dispute settlement‘ (Pankhurst and Getachew 2008).
- The Gadaa is a highly celebrated institution of governance and dispute settlement among the Oromo people. Gadaa is widely mentioned as an egalitarian (democratic) system of governance.
- In the Gadaa system, political power is transferred from one generation set (Luuba) to another every eight years.
- Gaada officials such as the Abba Gaada and Abba Seera (father of law) serve for eight years and leave their position to the new generation of Gadaa officials.

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- The *Gaada* system involves a continuous process of law making and revision. The law making process has rooms for wider participation of the people.
- ***Gumi gaayo,*** a law making assembly of the Borana Oromo, is a good example. *Gumi gaayo* is held every eight years to revising, adapting, making and publicizing the customary law (*seera*) and custom (*aadaa*) of the Oromo.
- The Waliso Oromo have a law making assembly known as *yaa‟iiharaa*, an equivalent of *gumigaayo*, held every eight years.
- The Gaada is an indigenous system of governance, conflict resolution, and peacemaking.
- The indigenous system of governance among the Oromo also include institutions of conflict resolution such as the *Jaarsa Biyyaa* (literally: elders of the soil/land) institution.

The Gedeo Baalle

- The Gedeo of southern Ethiopia have an indigenous system of governance **called *Baalle*.**
- The *Baalle* and the *Gaada* system of the Oromo have some similarities., both have grading system and exercise periodic transfer of power (i.e., every eight years). The role of religion is high in the two indigenous systems of governance.
- Moreover, the customary law of the Gedeo is called *Seera*.
- **The Ya‘a**, the general assembly, is the highest body of the Gedeo indigenous system of governance.

Cont….

- The Baalle is a complex system which has three administrative hierarchies: **Abba Gada**, **Roga** (traditional leader next the Abba Gada), and two levels of council of elders known as Hulla Hayyicha and **Songo Hayyicha.**

✓ The Abba Gada is the leader of the Baalle.

- The Baalle system has a body of laws called Seera.
- Conflicts are resolved by the Songo hayyicha at village level.
- When disputes are not settled at the village level, cases can be referred to first to the **Hulla Hayyicha** and finally to the **Abba Gada**.
- In general, the Gedeo system of governance has the following major institutions: the ya‟a (general assembly), the Seera (customary law), the Abba Gada, and council of elders (Getachew, 2014).

Dere Woga of the Gamo

- The Gamo are among Omotic peoples of southern Ethiopia. Unlike their neighboring people such as Wolayta and Dawro, the Gamo did not have a centralized political system.
- The Gamo people were organized into several local administrations locally known as ***deres***.
- According to anthropological findings, most of *deres* were governed by a ***ka‟o* (king) and *halaqa* (elected leader).**
- The Gamo indigenous system of governance embraces the ***dere woga*** (customary law) and the ***dubusha*** *(*assemblies/ customary court).
- The highest body of the indigenous governance is the **dere dubusha**, a general assembly that is responsible to make and revise customary laws, resolve major disputes that cannot be solved at the lower levels.

Intra-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 or different ethnic background.
- Peoples across Ethiopian regions have indigenous institutions and mechanisms of conflict resolution and peace making.
- 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 (customary, dispute resolution mechanisms; traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution; grassroots justice systems; and customary justice institutions).

Cont.…

- There are variations and similarities among indigenous institutions of conflict resolution in Ethiopia.
- Indigenous justice institutions and mechanisms share several common aspects including the following:

ሯ High involvement of elders at different stages of conflict resolution and peacemaking process.

ሯ 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.

ሯ Indigenous dispute resolution practices focus on restoring social relationships, harmony, and peaceful coexistence.

Cont.…

- 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.

- Public participation, voluntary and consensual proceedings, and forgiveness and compensation are among the major features of Indigenous dispute resolution

Cont.…

- 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.

❖ **Customary law:** refers to a body of rules, norms, and a set of moral values that serve as a wider framework for human conduct and social interactions. E.g. Sera of the Sidama, dere woga of Gamo, Seera Addaa of the Oromo; Ye Siltie Serra of the Siltie, Gordena Sera of Kestane Gurage).

❖ In most cases, customary laws are available orally. Some customary laws are published in recent years. For example, the Sebat Bet Gurage published their customary law named Kitcha: The Gurage Customary Law in 1998. Similarly, Kistane/Sodo Gurage have a written version of customary law known as Gordena Shengo.

Cont.…

- ***Council of elders:*** *refers* highly respected and well-experienced community members who have a detail knowledge of the customary laws.
- Members of the elder‘s council are also known for their personal qualities such as truthfulness and experience in settling conflicts.
- Elders often serve their communities on voluntary basis without any payment. The number of the elders varies based on the nature of the case. The institution of council of elders has different names in various ethnic groups: Yehager Shimagile (Amhara), Jaarsaa Biyyaa (Oromo), Baliqenet (Siltie), Hayyicha (Gedeo), Guurtii (Somali), Dere Cima (Gamo), Deira Cimma (Wolayita), and Cimuma (Burji).

Cont.…

- ***Customary courts*** are public assemblies that serve two major purposes: (a) hearing, discussing and settling disputes, and (b) revising, adapting, and making laws.
- For instance, among the Siltie people, called Raga System while the Gamo use the term *Dubusha* to refer to customary courts.
- Let us summarize the Gamo customary justice system to portray the three major structures. The customary justice system of the Gamo people of Southern Ethiopia has the following branches: 1) *Dere Woga*, customary laws, 2) *Dere Cima*, council of elders, and 3) *Dubusha*, customary courts or assemblies.

Cont.…

- Among the Gamo structure of the customary courts/ *dubushas* assembly/ has three levels: Guta dubusha, at the village level; sub-dere dubusha, at the kebele level; and dere dubusha at the higher level.
- Minor cases and disputes are resolved by the *dere cima*, council of elders.
- Indigenous governance of the Gamo is embedded in the Gamo belief system.
- According to the indigenous belief, dere dubusha is a sacred place where supernatural power exists. It is a place where curses are uttered in its name; justice is delivered; and important assemblies are held.
- It is believed that telling a lie and hiding the truth, especially at *dubusha* assemblies, are considered as violation of taboo, which would lead to spiritual pollution and then leads to misfortunes including lack of fertility, illness, and death of human beings and livestock.

Strengths and limitations of customary justice systems/institutions

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

Cont….

Limitations of customary justice institutions

- Limitations related to protecting and safeguarding women‘s rights. Indigenous justice institutions are dominated by men. 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.

- How do you explain this problem?
- Is there a possibility of crafting hybrid institutions to resolve disputes occurring between different ethnic groups? Discuss this issue among your classmates.

Inter-ethnic conflict resolution institutions

- Abbo Gereb is one of indigenous dispute resolution institution in Rayya and Wajirat district, Southern Tigray that address inter-ethnic conflicts.
- It is. 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.
- When conflict arises between parties, notable elders from Tigray and Afar come together to resolve the dispute and restore peaceful relations.

Intra and inter-ethnic conflicts have become common in our country in recent years.
- What do you think are the causes of these conflicts?
- Is it related to the decline of respect for the elderly in recent times?
- Or has the culture of peaceful coexistence deteriorated?

Cont.…

- Most of the elders involved in inter-ethnic conflict resolutions are bilingual: speaking Tigrigna and Afar (Shimeles and Taddese 2008).
- Ethnographic findings also reveal the existence of inter-ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms when conflicts arise between Afar, Issa, Tigrayans and Argobba.
- The mechanisms of inter-ethnic disputes have different names. It is called Xinto among the Afar, Edible among the Issa, Gereb among the Tigrayans, and Aboroge among the Amhara (Alula and Getachew, 2008).

Do you know institutions/mechanisms of conflict resolution that address inter-ethnic conflicts? Bring your experience and knowledge to class discussion!

Women's role 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.
- In some societies, women use their own institutions to exercise power, protect their rights, and actively participate in peacemaking activities.

A. Women's peacemaking sticks

- *Sidama women have two instruments of power: the **Yakka and the Siqqo.** The Yakka is women's association or unity group. The Siqqo is a stick that symbolizes peace and women honor.*
- *Mobilizing the Yakka and holding the Siqqo, Sidama women stand for their customary rights. E.g, when a woman is beaten up by her husband or a pregnant woman is mistreated, if a man prohibits his wife from Yakka participation, the women group impose a fine on him. The fine could be an ox.*
- *If a woman is ill-treated by her husband, the Yakka leader (known as Qaritte) mobilizes the Yakka and leads them to the house of the man. The husband would not have a choice when he is surrounded by the Yakka holding their Siqqo shouting and singing. If he is found guilty, the man would be forced to slaughter a sheep and give part of it to the Yakka. Sidama women also use their Siqqo to make peace between quarrelling parties.*

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- *Oromo women also have a peace stick called Sinqee.*
- *Sinqee serves the purpose of protecting women‟s rights and making peace. Quarrelling men stop fighting when a woman stands between them holding her Sinqee.*

B. Don Kachel: Agnuak women peacemaking institution

Agnuak women have a peacemaking institution known as Don Kachel. Literally, Don Kachel means „let us all live in peace‟. It involves a peace-making movement initiated by Jaye, a group of wise and elderly Agnuak women. The Jaye start a peace-making movement based on information gathered through women's networking.

Cont.…

- *The Jaye quickly act upon receiving information about, for example, a heated argument that could lead to conflict and fighting.*
- *The Jaye call the disputing parties for a meeting to settle the dispute. A few neutral observers will also be invited to monitor the process of the meeting.*
- *After examining the arguments of the two parties, the Jaye give their verdict. The party that caused the conflict request for forgiveness in public and pay some compensation.*
- *A sheep or goat is slaughtered after the conflict resolved; the meat is cooked and shared by participants of the meeting.*
- *Finally the Jaye would announce the meeting is over, the problem resolved, using these words „Now let us all live in peace together!" The practice of Don Kachel is currently being adopted by other ethnic groups including the Nuer, Mejenger, Opo, and Komo.*

Women's institution of reconciliation: Raya-Azebo, Tigray

- *Elderly and highly respected women in a village in Raya-Azebo, Tigray established a reconciliation institution called the* ***Debarte.***
- *The Debarte plays an important role in avoiding harms associated with the culture of revenge. A man may kill another man in a fight. The incident would trigger the feeling of revenge among male relatives of the murdered man. In such a tense situation, the wife of the killer requests for the Debarte intervention.*
- *The Debarte quickly start their intervention to stop the act of revenge. The Debarte instruct the murderer's wife to gathering her female relatives together.*
- *The wife and her female relatives get ready wearing their netela upside down and covering their hair with black cloths to show their grief and regret.*

Cont..

- *After these preparations, the Debarte lead the female relatives of the killer to the home of the murdered man. The women cry loudly while walking to their destination.*
- *As they come near to the home of the killed person, they utter the following words: „Abyetye ezgio! Abyetye ezgio!“ „Oh God help us! God help us! Upon their arrival at the compound of the victim, the Debarte kneel down and cover their heads with the dust of the compound.*
- *They beg the relatives/family of the murdered man to give up revenge and consider forgiveness.*
- *Initially, the relatives may not respond to the request; however, they will change their mind and open the door to show their consent for reconciliation. After persuading the victim's relatives to give up revenge, the Debarte give the way for elders who start the peace-making process.*

Cont.…

- The function of women‘s peacemaking institutions such as *Siqqo* has been declining. There are attempts to renew these institutions.
- *Sinqee* associations are now recognized and supported by women‘s affairs and culture and tourism offices in Oromia.
- Refugee centers for abused women, legal and financial support, and capacity building trainings.
- The role of women as mothers has been highly respected in Ethiopia. At times of potential conflict, women, bearing their breast, would say the following to stop conflicts: “*please stop quarreling for the sake of my breast that feeds you*!” Women use powerful words such as “batebahuh tutie” in Amharic speaking areas to influence quarrelling individuals.

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

- Legal pluralism 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.
- Pluralism as a normative concept, also refers to a system that recognizes other norms emanating outside state institutions along with a state legal standards.
- The existence of multiple ethnic groups in Ethiopia has not only made the country home to diverse cultures but also, a place of diverse legal systems.

Cont.…

- 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 1995 Constitution of the FDRE grants specific rights to ethnic groups, and also provides some spaces for religious and customary laws and courts to address personal and family cases.

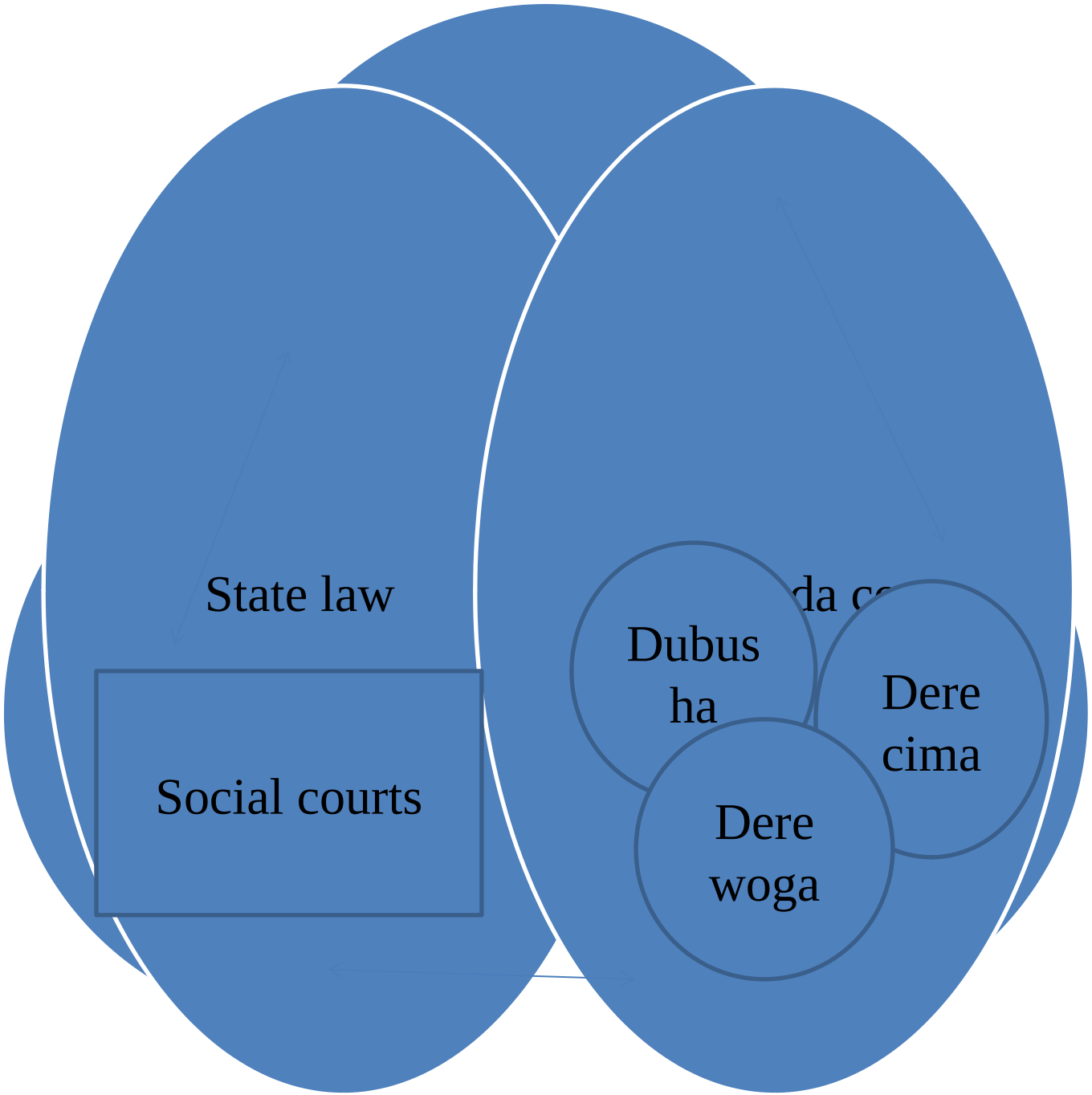
The following two Articles show this reality.

ኦ a law giving recognition to marriage concluded under systems of religious or customary laws may be enacted (Article 34(4).

ኦReligious 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))

Cont.…

- 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.
- The relation between the various legal systems is characterized by cooperation and competition.
- Legal hybridism indicating one cannot stand without the cooperation of the other legal systems.
- Justice institutions work side-by-side in most parts of the country, especially in remote and rural areas: state/formal justice institutions, customary justice institutions, and religious courts.


State law
Social courts
Dubus
ha
Dere
cima
Dere
woga

Unit Seven
Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices

Unit Learning Outcomes:

Up on the successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify who indigenous people are, and their knowledge
- Describe the significances of indigenous knowledge
- State the challenges facing indigenous knowledge
- Suggest viable ways of promoting and protecting IK

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

- IKS 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.
- IKS is not just a set of information that is in the minds of the people, which can be simply taped and applied.
- It is accessible by recall and practice (Mangetane, 2001).
- IKS is embodied in culture and is described as an integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs and behavior.

Cont.…

- It 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).
- In sum, IKS refers to a total of knowledge and practices, whether explicit or implicit, used in the management of socioeconomic, ecological and spiritual facets of life (Hoppers, 2005: 2), stored in the collective memory and communicated orally among members of the community and to the future generations [through, stories, myth, songs, etc].

Indigenous Knowledge

- IK has no single definition, due to the differences in background and perspectives of the authors.
- According to Warren (1991), Ik is the local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society.
- IK contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms.
- 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.
- IK exists in rural and urban societies as part of life that their livelihood depends on specific skills and knowledge for survival.

Cont.…

- IK is large body of knowledge and skills which is developed outside the formal system (World Bank, 1998).
- IK has different but closely related names such as 'folk knowledge', 'local knowledge or wisdom', 'non-formal knowledge', 'culture', 'indigenous technical knowledge', 'traditional ecological knowledge', 'traditional knowledge', and others.
- All these terms have similar concepts and refer to how members of a community perceive and understand their environment and resources, particularly the way they convert those resources through labor (Akabogu, 2002).

Cont.…

- In sum, indigenous knowledge is the knowledge that people in a given community have developed over time, and that continues to develop.
- It is based on experience, often tested over centuries of use, adapted to local culture and environment, dynamic and changing (International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, IIRR, 1996).

Special Features of Indigenous Knowledge

- Ellen and Harris (1996) identified the following special features of IK that distinguish it broadly from other knowledge.

- **Local**, in that it 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.
- **Tacit knowledge** and, therefore, not easily codifiable.
- **Transmitted orally**, or through imitation and demonstration. Codifying it may lead to the loss of some of its properties.
- **Experiential rather than theoretical** knowledge. Experience and trial and error, tested in the rigorous laboratory of survival of local communities constantly reinforce IK.
- **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.
- **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

- Today, both scholars and public policy makers are recognizing the importance of various local or culture-based knowledge systems in addressing the pressing problems of development and the environment.
- 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).
- IKS enable people to develop strategies for handling household and communal activities (Mangetane et al., 2001).
- 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.

- 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 (Amare, 2009).
- The loss of IK would impoverish society because, just as the world needs genetic diversity of species, it needs diversity of knowledge systems (Labelle, 1997).
- The rapid change in the way of life of local communities has largely accounted for the loss of IK.
- Younger generations underestimate the utility of IK systems because of the influence of modem technology and education.
- Development projects cannot offer sustainable solutions to local problems without integrating local knowledge (Warren, 1991).

- "Since IK is essential to development, it must be gathered, organized and disseminated, just like Western knowledge"(Agrawal, 1995 in Amare, 2009).
- As IK is the key to local-level development, ignoring people‘s knowledge leads possibly to failure.
- Similarly, "one should not expect all the expertise for third world development to come from developed nations, academic institutions, multinational corporations or NGOs" (Amare, 2009).
- It has been suggested that IK, and the technical expertise developed there become vital tools for rural development(Atte, 1989).

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

- Modernization has threatens the preservation and continued development of IK systems (Sherpa, 2005).
- The growth of national and international markets, the imposition of educational and religious systems and the impact of various development processes are leading more and more to the homogenization of the world‘s cultures (Grenier,1998) .
- Consequently, indigenous beliefs, values, customs, know-how and practices may be altered and the resulting knowledge base incomplete.

- ✓ IK has the following limitations and drawbacks and these must be recognized as well (Amare, 2009):
- ✓ IK is sometimes accepted uncritically because of naive notions that whatever indigenous people do is naturally in harmony with the environment.
- ✓ Thrupp (1989) argues that we should reject romanticized and idealistic views of local knowledge and traditional societies.
- ✓ There is historical and contemporary evidence that indigenous peoples have also committed environmental sins‘ through over-grazing, over-hunting, or over-cultivation of the land.
- ✓ It is misleading to think of IK as always being good‘, right or sustainable‘. Quite often the overlooked feature of IK, which needs to be taken into account, is that, like scientific knowledge, sometimes the knowledge which local people rely on is wrong or even harmful.

- Practices based on, for example, mistaken beliefs, faulty experimentation, or inaccurate information can be dangerous and may even be a barrier to improving the wellbeing of indigenous people.
- Doubleday (2003) pointed out that knowledge is power, so individuals are not always willing to share knowledge among themselves, or with outsiders.
- Knowledge is a source of status and income (as is the case, for example, with a herbalist) and is often jealously guarded.
- A related issue is that some indigenous peoples fear that their IK will be misused, and lacking the power to prevent such abuses, they choose to keep quiet.

❑Indigenous Knowledge and Development

- International and national development agencies have recognized the value of **participatory approaches to decision-making** for sustainable approaches to development .
- Development activities that work with and through indigenous knowledge and organizational structures have several important advantages over projects that operate outside them.
- Indigenous knowledge provides the basis for **grassroots decision-making,** much of which takes place at the community level through **indigenous organizations** and **associations** where problems are identified and solutions to them are determined.
- Solution-seeking behavior is based on **indigenous creativity**

❑Leading to experimentation and

❑ Innovations as well as the

❑Appraisal of knowledge and

❑ Technologies introduced from other societies.

- The most **cost-effective way** in which indigenous knowledge can be systematically recorded and stored so it can be used to facilitate national development efforts may be through the **growing global network of indigenous knowledge resource centers.**
- National indigenous knowledge resource centers are **organizational structures through which indigenous knowledge is**
  - **Recorded,**
  - **Stored,**
  - **Screened for potential economic uses at the national level, and**
  - **Distributed to other centers in appropriate ways.**
- Innovative technologies discovered and used in one part of the world can often work equally well in similar eco-zones in other parts of the world.
- National centers are in a position to facilitate and control the sharing of indigenous knowledge.
- This type of information exchange has already begun through multilateral and bilateral donor efforts.

- National centers can serve as vehicles to introduce indigenous knowledge components into the formal curricula from primary school through the university as well as in extension training institutes.
- This can help to augment the declining capacity of the traditional means of transmission of this knowledge due to universal primary education now operating in most newly-independent nations
- National indigenous knowledge resource centers are beginning to conduct inventories of knowledge that can be of primary utility in development programs
- National centers can also identify and delineate the structure and functions of indigenous organizations that exist in every rural community.

The erosion of IK systems

- 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** : due to **in-migration or government relocation** schemes
- In the case of large development projects, such as dams' standards of living maybe compromised. With poverty, opportunities for short-term gain are selected over environmentally sound local practices.
- **Introduction of market-oriented agricultural and forestry practices** focused on **mono-cropping is** associated with losses in IK and IK practices, through losses in **biodiversity and cultural diversity.**
- **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 adapt varieties to difficult growing conditions, contributing to the termination of local varieties.
- However, the failure of green-revolution technology strongly suggests that uniformity is a poor long-term strategy.
- With **deforestatio**n, 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.

- Because 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.