

4.1 Definition of concepts What is marginalization? Marginalization is defined as a treatment of a person or social group as minor, insignificant or peripheral. Marginalization involves exclusion of certain groups from social interactions such as marriage relations, sharing food and drinks, and working and living together. For example, minority occupational groups (e.g., potters and tanners) are not allowed to be members of community-based associations (e.g., Iddirs) in some parts of Ethiopia. In some cultural settings, marginalization involves excluding certain groups from basic economic rights including rights to property ownership, and rights to be engaged in certain economic activities of jobs. Who are mostly marginalized? Marginalization affects certain social groups in a given community or society. The targets of marginalization may vary from society to society. Women, children, older people, and people with disabilities are among marginalized groups across the 87 world. The nature and level of marginalization varies from society to society as a result of cultural diversity. Religious, ethnic, and racial minorities are also among social groups affected by marginalization in different societies and cultures. Minority occupational groups such as crafts-workers are targets of marginalization in some cultural contexts. For example, occupational minorities such as tanners, potters, and ironsmiths are marginalized in Ethiopia. What is vulnerability? Vulnerability refers to the state of being exposed to physical or emotional injuries. Vulnerable groups are people exposed to possibilities of attack, harms or mistreatment. The impacts of attacks and harms are not limited to physical damages. They could also lead to long-term problems including emotional disorder (e.g., psychological trauma) and social or relational problems. For example, girls and women are vulnerable to gender-based violence such as harassment, rape, and forced marriage. Young girls are exposed to child/early marriage (including marriage before the age of 15) in some parts of Ethiopia. Child marriage would lead to adolescent or teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy in turn leads to a severe reproductive health problems such as fistula. In addition to physical damage and psychological disorder, women with fistula suffer from isolation from social interactions. . Vulnerable persons/groups need special attention, protection and support. For example, children (especially child girls) must be protected from harmful practices such as child marriage and genital cutting. Older-persons and people with disabilities also need special support and protection as they are exposed to risks and neglect because of their age and disabilities. Universities and other educational institutions have introduced special education programs for students with disabilities to help them learn better. Minority groups The phrase 'minority group' refers to a small group of people within a community, region, or country. In most cases, minority groups are different from the majority population in terms of race, religion, ethnicity, and language. For example, blacks are minorities in the United States of America. Christians would be minorities in a 88 Muslim majority country. Muslims would be minorities in a predominantly Christian society. Hence, minority groups can be ethnic minorities, religious minorities, or racial minorities in a given community, region or country. There are different forms of marginalization. In this unit we will discuss forms of marginalization that violate the rights and wellbeing of girls and women, older persons, and minority social groups. We will discuss gender-based marginalization in the following section. First, reflect your views on the questions listed below. . 4.2 Gender-based marginalization Sex and gender In order to understand the meaning of gender, we need to discuss the difference between these two concepts: sex and gender. Sex differences between female and male human beings are closely associated with biological differences. This means that women and men are genetically (e.g., variation in types of chromosomes and hormones) different. Biological differences between women and men are expressed in terms of hormonal and physiological differences. The main sexual differences between men and women include the following: 1 Primary differences: contrasts in sexual and reproductive organs (e.g., only women can get pregnant, give birth and nurture newborn) 2 Secondary differences: contrasts in breasts, type of voice, and distribution of hair; and Reflect on the following questions 3 What kind of marginalization do you observe in your social environment? 4 Who are the most marginalized groups? 5 What are the major causes for the marginalization of those groups of people? 6 What are the manifestations of the marginalization? 89 7 Other variations: differences in height (men tend to be taller), weight (men tend to weigh more), and physical strength (Kottak 2005). The concept gender has a difference meaning. The meaning of gender is closely related to socially/culturally constructed characteristics of females/women and males/men. Gender differences are expressed in gender roles (i.e., behaviors expected from females and males in a given cultural setting. Gender roles are tasks and activities a culture assigns to men and women (Kottak 2005). For example, based on traditional roles of male and female roles, men are expected to be leaders, assertive, and ambitious. Women are expected to be passive, caring (helpful), and nurturing. This includes gender division of labor observed in many cultures. For example, in many African societies, especially in rural areas, women's roles are dominated by indoor activities including child care and home management. Men's roles include working outdoors, travelling to distant areas as hunters, traders, and warriors. Gender-based marginalization is closely related to gender inequality. Gender stereotypes play an important role in encouraging unequal treatment of men and women. Gender stereotypes refer to strongly held views about the characteristics of males and females. Gender inequality involves discrimination on a group of people based on their gender. Gender inequality mainly arises from cultural values, norms, and beliefs rather than biological differences between women and men. The manifestations of gender inequality varied from culture to culture. Girls and women face some level of marginalization and negative discrimination in most societies Reflect on the following questions 8 What are the effects of the above mentioned biological differences between women and men? 9 Examine the effects of primary differences, secondary differences, and other physical differences listed above. 90 across the world. As a result, women are exposed to social and economic inequalities involving unfair distribution of wealth, income, job opportunities, and political power. Gender-based marginalization is a global problem. It involves exclusion of girls and women from a wide range of opportunities and social services. Gender disparities in education are good examples. Girls in developing countries, especially those who live in remote and rural areas, face challenges to pursue formal education. For example, the enrollment of girls in higher education is much lower than that of boys in most African countries. Moreover, women do not enjoy equal employment opportunities. Women do not have equal property rights in many cultures in Ethiopia. For example, they are excluded from the right to own and inherit key family resources such as land. Women and girls are also vulnerable to gender-based violence such as rape, child marriage, forced marriage, domestic violence and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). There are some customary practices that affect the health and wellbeing of girls and women. Collectively, these practices are called harmful traditional practices (HTPs). We will discuss two examples: female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage in this unit. Child marriage will be discussed under age-based marginalization. Let us begin with female genital mutilation/cutting, which is widely practiced in most regions of Ethiopia. Female genital mutilation/cutting Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is regarded as a form of gender-based violence. According to sources, more than 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone FGM/C. Moreover, more than 3 million girls are at risk of FGM/C every year (Shell-Duncan, Naik, & Feldman-Jacobs 2016). FGM/C is practiced in 28 countries in Africa. The prevalence of the practice is very high in some countries. For example, the prevalence of FGM/C among women aged 15-49 years in some African countries was very high. It was 98% in Somalia, 93% in Djibouti, 87% in Egypt and Sudan, and 83% in Eritrea. Nigeria (25%), Senegal (24%), and Kenya (21%) have a relatively low prevalence of FGM/C (UNFPA & UNICEF, 2017). 91 The prevalence of FGM/C in Ethiopia is lower than the prevalence of the practice in countries such as Somalia but higher than the prevalence in Kenya and Senegal. Around 65% of girls and women in the 15 to 49 years age category are circumcised in Ethiopia (UNFPA & UNICEF, 2017). FGM/C is practiced in most of the regions in Ethiopia including Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and Somali regions. The prevalence of FGM/C is very high in the following regions: Somali (99%), Afar (91%), Harari (82%), and Oromia (76%). Tigray (24%) and Gambela (33%) exhibit low FGM/C prevalence. According to the sources, the prevalence of FGM/C in girls and women aged 15-49 years has been declining from 80% in 2005 to 65% in 2016. The prevalence of the practice has been declining significantly among girls under 15 years (CSA & ICF 2016). The following figure shows the prevalence of FGM/C in different regions of Ethiopia based on the findings of the 2016 Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey. Figure: Prevalence of FGM/C among women aged 15-49 years in Ethiopia by region Source: CSA & ICF 2016 92 The age of girls undergone FGM/C varies across regions and cultures in Ethiopia. FGM/C is performed shortly after birth in Amhara, Tigray and Afar regions as well as in northern parts of Oromia. In southern Ethiopia, FGM/C is practiced when girls are approaching the age of marriage. It is practiced mostly as a rite of passage and preparation for marriage. In most cases, the practice could lead to severe bleeding and infections. This is because FGM/C is performed by traditional practitioners who do not have medical training and equipment. Key drivers of FGM/C Different factors support the continuation of FGM/C. The major factors include maintenance of cleanliness, preservation of virginity, discouraging promiscuity, increasing marriageability, enhancement of fertility, improvement of male sexual satisfaction, social acceptance, fear of marginalization, and compliance with tradition and religious requirements. Let us see some of the major factors (e.g., beliefs, values, and norms) that support the continuation of FGM/C. 1. Belief in impurity FGM/C-related marginalization is enforced by norms and taboos (strongly cherished social norms) embedded in indigenous belief systems. The concept taboo is defined as 'a ritually sanctioned prohibition against contact with things, a person or an activity'. Things or persons subject to taboo are regarded as sacred or impure. There is a belief that breaching of a taboo has implications including pollution and supernatural sanctions (Buckser, 1997). A recent ethnographic study reveals that taboos are the major drivers of FGM/C in some cultural settings in southern Ethiopia. In some societies uncut/uncircumcised women are considered impure. They are also regarded as polluting to others including men having sex with them. As a result, marriage and casual sexual contact with an uncut woman is regarded as breaking of taboo. Breaking such taboos, according to indigenous beliefs, would have two major implications: 1) it pollutes the transgressor (in this case the man who married uncut girl/woman); and 2) the pollution would be followed by misfortunes. According to the local belief, a man who marries an uncut woman would be exposed to misfortunes such as health problems, infertility, and diminishing farm yield and family wealth (Getaneh 2016). 93 The belief related to purity and impurity has a wide range of implications. First, uncircumcised girls are considered as impure. Second, they pollute men who have sex with them. Third, marriage to uncircumcised girls would bring about misfortunes (e.g., illness, infertility, conflict, death). As a result of this belief, men avoid marriage relationship with uncircumcised girls. Hence, according to cultural beliefs, girls must be circumcised to be clean and ready for marriage. 2. Discouraging promiscuity The term promiscuous has the following dictionary definition. It refers to a person who has a lot of different sexual partners or sexual relationships. In societies where FGM/C is a social norm, there is a belief that uncircumcised girls have high or extraordinary sexual desire. As the result, uncut girls/women are considered as promiscuous. According to such beliefs, uncut women, including uncut married women, would have sexual relationship with multiple partners. This, in turn, would affect marriage stability and increases the rate of divorce. In many cultures, FGM/C is practiced to reduce the sexual desire of girls and women. 3. Preserving virginity In many Ethiopian cultures, social norms prohibit premarital sex and pregnancy. The value attached to virginity is very strong in order to discourage premarital sex. In some parts of Ethiopia child girls (girls before the age of 18, sometimes before the age of 15) get married to avoid the possibility of premarital sex. Girl's reputation and family social status are associated with sexual purity (virginity) of girls. FGM/C helps preserving girls' virginity, which is considered as a precondition for marriage in many cultures. For example, Type III FGM/C (also called infibulation) is practiced to prevent girls from premarital sex until they get married. 4. Fear of ill-manner There is a wide spread belief that uncircumcised girls would be disobedient, powerful and ill-mannered. Hence, FGM/C is practiced as a means of moderating the behavior of girls and women. 5. Social sanctions 94 Social sanctions are used to control the behavior of members of a given society or community. Avoiding FGM/C is considered as violation of social norms in FGM/C practicing societies. Hence, parents and girls abandoning FGM/C will be punished through social sanctions including isolation from the community. Parents of girls let their daughter undergo the practice mainly because of an overwhelming fear that their daughter and the entire family will be marginalized if they refuse to comply with social norms related to FGM/C. In many cultures, a girl who has not been cut is often ridiculed, insulted and driven out of her community. They will also have a little chance of marriage within the community.

- Negative impacts of FGM/C As noted earlier, FGM/C is considered as violation of the rights of girls and women. The practice also has negative implications for the health, social and psychological wellbeing of girls and women. The following are some of the negative impacts of the practice: severe bleeding during and after the practice, different forms of infections, pain during sexual intercourse, and complications during child delivery. The practice could also lead to emotional disorder and psychological trauma.

4.3 Marginalized occupational groups According to anthropological findings, there are occupational minorities marginalized from other groups in many parts of Ethiopia. The most marginalized occupational groups are tanners, potters, weavers and ironsmiths. Craft-workers such as potters and tanners are considered as impure. As a result, they are excluded from social interactions, ownership of economic resources (e.g., land), economic activities such as farming, and participation in community-based associations and certain cultural celebrations. The above mentioned minority occupational groups are marginalized despite their contributions to their respective communities. Craft-workers fulfill the demands of their respective communities by producing articles such as traditional hand-woven clothes, household utensils, and farm tools. Despite their important contributions, however, they are marginalized by the dominant and majority groups. For examples, weavers produce cultural clothes highly demanded by thousands and millions of 95 people. Many people use cultural clothes during annual celebrations, religious holidays, weddings, culture days, and mourning. The demand of cultural dresses has been increasing in Ethiopia in the last three decades. People dress cultural clothes in different occasions such as cultural festivals and religious celebrations. Despite their contributions, weavers are marginalized from the wider society in many parts of Ethiopia. Reading A book edited by Dena Freeman and Alula Pankhurst (2001) is an important reading material on marginalized occupational groups in Ethiopia. The title of the book is 'Marginalized Minorities of Craftworkers and Hunters in Southern Ethiopia'. The book focuses on marginalized occupational groups in 14 ethnic/cultural groups including the Gurage, Kambata, Kafa, Dawro, Gamo, Sidama and Konso. Read chapters from the book and discuss some of the issues among your classmates or during class discussion. Ironsmiths are among occupational groups marginalized in many cultural setting in Ethiopia. Ironsmiths make and repair iron articles without using machines. They contribute a lot especially in rural areas. Ironsmiths serve rural communities by producing farming tools such as plough shares, sickles, and hoes. Most rural families in Ethiopia widely use household utensils (e.g., knives and axes) made by ironsmiths. Tanners make leather products that serve community members. Potters produce pottery articles essential for food processing and serving, brewing traditional beer and fetching water. Despite their contributions, these craft-workers are considered inferior and marginalized from wide areas of social interactions and economic activities. Craft-workers such as potters and weavers have big contributions to their respective communities; however, they are excluded and mistreated by the majority groups.

What do you think the reason for the marginalization of these occupational groups?

What is the impact of this practice to the development of the 96

Marginalization of despised occupational groups is manifested in many ways in different parts of Ethiopia. Dena Freeman and Alula Pankhurst (2001), well-known anthropologists, identified different forms of marginalization targeting minority occupational groups. Some of them are summarized in the following table.

Table: Types and manifestations of marginalization of craft-workers	
Type of marginalization	Manifestations of marginalization
Spatial marginalization	Craft-workers settle/live on the outskirts of villages, near to forests, on poor land, around steep slopes.
	They are segregated at market places (they sell their goods at the outskirts of markets).
	When they walk along the road, they are expected to give way for members of the dominant group and walk on the lower side of the road.
Economic marginalization	Craft-workers are excluded from certain economic activities including production and exchanges. In some cultures they are not allowed to plow the land and cultivate crops.
	They have a limited access to land and land ownership. In some rural societies, they are completely excluded from ownership of farm land.
Social marginalization	Craft-workers are excluded from intermarriage (i.e., marriage with members of the dominant group). As a result, they exercise endogamous marriage.
	Craft workers do not share burial places with others; they are excluded from membership of associations such as iddirs.
	When marginalized groups are allowed to participate in social events, they must sit on the floor separately-sometimes outside the house or near the door.
Cultural marginalization	Cultural marginalization Cultural marginalization is manifested in negative stereotyping such as the following:
	Occupational minorities are labeled as impure and polluting; crafts industry in Ethiopia?
	What solution do you suggest to eradicate the marginalization of crafts workers and protect their rights? Write your answer and read it in the class.

97 they are accused of eating animals that have died without being slaughtered;

Occupational minorities are also considered unreliable, lacking morality, respect and shame. Source: Dena Freeman and Alula Pankhurst (2001)

The above table summarizes forms of marginalization targeting occupational minorities such as potters, tanners, and ironsmiths. Manifestations of marginalization outlined above illustrate the level of discrimination against craft-workers. These are examples. You may find other forms of marginalization when you read the literature on this issue. There are different arguments related to this issue. Read the questions listed in the following box and discuss them with your classmates.

4.4 Age-based vulnerability What is age-based vulnerability? Age-based vulnerability is susceptibility of people, especially children and older people, to different forms of attack, physical injuries and emotional harms. For example, children and older people (people aged 60 and above) are exposed to various forms of attack, harm and mistreatment because of their age. As a result, vulnerable persons/groups need special attention, protection

The marginalization of craft-workers is an issue of human rights. Provide your critical reflection on the following questions.

How do you evaluate the negative stereotypes against craftworkers?

What are the short and long-term impacts of such stereotypes targeting occupation minorities?

Some people argue that marginalization of craft-workers is one of the factors that hinders the development of craftworks and small scale manufacturing in Ethiopia. Do you agree? If you do what are your reasons?

98 and support. In this section, we will discuss some example related to children and older people.

4.4.1 Children: Discrimination and vulnerability Children are among vulnerable groups exposed to harm because of their age. Both boys and girls are exposed to some harm and abuse in the hands of older people. However, younger girls are exposed to double marginalization and discrimination because of the gender and age. Child girls are exposed to various kinds of harm before they reach at the age of maturity. As discussed earlier in this unit, 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. Child marriage: Child marriage refers to marriage which involves girls below the age of 18. The prevalence of child marriage is declining in Ethiopia and other African countries. However, it is still widely practiced in different regions of Ethiopia. According to international human rights conventions, child marriage is regarded as violation of the rights of the child. 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.
 - Child marriage inhibits girls' personal development; it hinders girls' chance to education and future professional development.
 - Child marriage exposes young girls to sexual abuse by their older husbands.
 - Child marriage leads to early pregnancies, which increases risks of diseases and complications during child delivery, fistula (a severe reproductive health problem affecting thousands of women in Ethiopia), and death of the mother or child.

Child marriage is an illegal practice according to the Criminal Code of Ethiopia. Despite these legal restrictions, however, child marriage is still practiced in different regions of the country. Examine the facts listed below.

99 Facts about child marriage in Ethiopia

 - Forty percent of all women who are in their early twenties married before the age of 18.
 - The figure for Amhara region is 56%.
 - Eight per cent of girls aged 15-19 were married before they reach at the age of 15.
 - The figure for Amhara region is 39%.

Uneducated girls, girls from poor family, and girls living in rural areas more likely marry earlier than rich-family, urban and educated girls (Harper et al, 2018, page 44). Read more on child marriage and its implications for the wellbeing of girls. Factors that encourage child marriage According to study findings, there are various factors that drive child marriage. Social norms and economic factors are the two major factors that support the continuation of the practice. Social norms Social norms contribute a lot for the continuation of child marriage in many parts of the world. Sexual purity of girls is one of the social norms that influence parents and relatives to protecting girls from pre-marital sex. Premarital sex and pregnancy would expose the girl and her family to social exclusion in many parts of Ethiopia. The value attached to virginity is another factor that encourages child marriage. Girl's reputation and family social status are associated with sexual purity of girls. Parents incline to marry off their daughter before their daughter reaches 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. Komoker, an Amharic term, is the widely used insult to ridicule girls considered to be late to get married. Economic factors Economic issues are among the major factors that support the continuation of child marriage. In many areas of Ethiopia marriage provides economic security for young 100 girls. Hence, parents, in some cases girls, support child marriage for economic benefits such as access to land and other resources. Parents' desire to get a good husband for their daughter is also another reason.

- 4.4.2 Marginalization of older persons We have discussed age-based marginalization considering the vulnerability of children. Age-based marginalization also affects older people. The phrase 'older persons' refers to adults with the age of 60 and above. The number of older people is increasing globally. According to the estimation of the United Nations (2009), the number of older people will increase to 2 billion by 2050. Eighty percent of the 2 billion older persons would live in low and middle-income countries. This means Africa would have a large number of older adults after 30 years. Ethiopia, the second populous country in Africa, would also have millions of older persons after three decades. People's attitude towards older persons is changing over time in Ethiopia and all over the world. Older men and women have been respected across Ethiopian cultures. Older persons have been considered as custodians of tradition, culture, and history. The role of older persons has been crucial in mentoring younger people, resolving disputes, and restoring peace across Ethiopian cultures. Situations are changing as family structures and living patterns are changing from time to time. Rural-urban migration, changes in values and life style, education and new employment opportunities lead to so many changes. Care and support for older men Read about the impacts of demographic changes - What do you think about this demographic change? What are the potential challenges of an increasing population of older people? - Ethiopia currently has large number of younger people. What are the advantages and challenges of having large population of young people in countries like Ethiopia? 101 and women decline as younger people migrate to urban areas and exposed to economic pressure and new life styles. Ageism is a widely observed social problem in the world. Ageism refer to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people based on their age. Older women and men enjoyed a certain level of support and respected in the past. This was true in many cultures of Ethiopia. Things have been changing in recent times. Older people are facing various problems as a result of modernization, globalization, and urbanization. Older people are exposed to social exclusion because of their lower social and economic status. In most cases, older people are excluded from social, cultural, political and economic interactions in their communities. Older persons are marginalized because they are considered as social burden rather than social assets. Communities do not provide older persons with opportunities to contribute to their communities. 4.5. Religious and ethnic minorities We have discussed the marginalization of different social and occupational groups in different socio-cultural contexts. Religious and ethnic minorities also face different forms of marginalization. There are several examples of marginalization and discrimination targeting religious and ethnic minorities in the world. Let us mention two widely known examples. Discuss changes related to older people? What kind of challenges do older men and women face in Ethiopia? Do the challenges vary in rural and urban areas? Do you think that respect for older people is declining over time? What kind of change do you observe in social and economic status of older people in the community you come from? 102 The Jewish people suffered from discrimination and persecution in different parts of the world. They were targets of extermination in Germany and other Western European countries because of their identity. More than 6 million Jewish people were killed during the period of Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Party in Germany. This large scale extermination of the Jewish people is called the Holocaust. Muslim Rohingyas are among the most marginalized and persecuted people in the world. According to Abdu Hasnat Milton et al (2017), the Rohingya are 'one of the most ill-treated and persecuted refugee groups in the world'. In recent years, more than half-a-million Rohingyas fled from their homes in Myanmar to neighboring countries such as Bangladesh. As people living in refugee camps, the Rohingyas are vulnerable to problems such as malnutrition and physical and sexual abuse. These are among the widely known examples of discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities. The problem is not limited to specific areas, regions or countries. Although the level of the problem varies in different contexts, religious and ethnic minorities face different forms of discrimination in many parts of the world. Reflect on these questions Ethiopia has been facing identity-based conflicts in in different regions in recent years. Several people lost their lives as well as their property. Thousands of people were also displaced as a result of identity-based conflicts. Public facilities and private investments were also destroyed. Do you consider discrimination targeting minority religious and ethnic groups as a major problem in our country? If you think it is a major problem, what are the causes of marginalization of minority ethnic and religious groups? How do we protect minority groups from marginalization 103 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. The major human rights conventions denounce discrimination against women, children, people with disability, older people and other minority and vulnerable groups. For example, people with disabilities have the right to inclusive services and equal opportunities. Hence, buildings and compounds of service giving institutions (e.g., schools and hospitals) must be accessible to people with disabilities. The human rights of women and girls include right to be free from harmful practices such as forced marriage, child marriage, and female genital mutilation/cutting. Any form of discrimination, exclusion, and gender-based violence also violate the human rights girls and women. and discrimination? Explore the human rights conventions 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. Read the two conventions and outlines articles that denounce exclusion and discrimination against children and women. 104 Anthropology appreciates cultural diversity and commonality. Do you remember the meaning of cultural relativism? It is one of the guiding principles in social anthropology. It is about the importance of understanding the values, norms, customs and practices of a particular culture in its own context. This requires appreciating the life styles of others including their dressing styles, food habits, beliefs, rituals and celebrations. It also requires avoiding value judgments such as saying 'this custom is backward or primitive'. This does not mean that we need to appreciate every custom and practice. Anthropologists do not support/appreciate customary practices that violate the rights and wellbeing of individuals and groups. For example, anthropologists do not support the following harmful practices in the name of cultural relativism: Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C): Anthropologists do not support FGM/C for practical reasons: FGM/C violates the rights of girls to physical integrity. Moreover, it has short and long term consequences for the health of girls and women. Early/child marriage: Anthropologists do not support child marriage for similar reasons: Child marriage violates the rights of young girls to make decision about their future. It destroys their chance to education, and personal and professional development. Child marriage negatively affects the physical and psychological wellbeing of young girls. Dear Students, we are finalizing this unit. Please reflect on the following issues before you move on to the next unit: How do you understand cultural relativism? Do we need to support/appreciate harmful customary practices in the name of cultural relativism?