Chapter One: Understanding of Citizenship and Ethics/Morality

1.1.1. Civic Education

Since human being is a social animal and couldn't live alone, he/she has to respect certain fundamental principles and values to live together with his/her fellow beings and consequently build peaceful society and lead prosperous life

Mill: progressive and peaceful setting subsists in a given society as far as that society develops the qualities of its members and generates good citizens.

Aristotle: citizens of a State should always be educated to suit the constitution of a State.

The subject assumed different names and purposes depending on countries' ideologies and thus the definition of the discipline vary across States.

Examples:

> ➢ **Right Education** (in South Africa),
> ➢ **Citizenship Education** (in United States of America and Germany),
> ➢ **Citizenship and Character Education** (in Singapore),
> ➢ **Civics and Ethical Education** (in Ethiopia)

The most cited definition: civic education is an education that studies about the rights and responsibilities of citizens of a politically organized group of people.

Patrick (1986): Civic education is the knowledge of the constitutions, the principles, values, history and application to contemporary life.

(UNDP, 2004): civic education as a way of learning for effective participation in a democratic and development process.

Aggarwal (1982): Civic education is the development of ideas, habits, behaviours and useful attitudes in the individual which enables him to be a useful member of the society.

These different concepts and meanings were used to differentiate between a maximal and a minimal civic education:

> ➢ **Minimal**: is content-led, teacher-based, whole-class teaching and examination-based assessment.
> ➢ **The maximal**: is comprised of knowledge, values and skills, and aims to prepare students for active, responsible participation.

It also extends learning beyond the curriculum and classroom to all activities inside and outside school.

1.2 Nature of Ethics and Morality

A.What Ethics is?

Ethics: is a branch of philosophy that attempts to understand people's moral beliefs and actions.

Ethics, or moral philosophy, considers theories about what human beings are capable of doing, alongside accounts of what they ought to do if they are to live an ethically good life.

Ethics also explores the meaning and the ranking of different ethical values, such as honesty, autonomy, equality and justice, and it considers ethical quandaries that human beings face in the course of living their own independent but, also, socially interdependent lives.

Ethics share common ground with the law, religious belief, popular opinion, professional codes and the dictates of authority figures, but it is also broader than all.

Ethics is used interchangeably with morals. Business or medical ethics, for example, is generally synonymous with morals. Although this is acceptable, a precise usage would apply the term's morals and moral to the conduct itself, while the terms ethics and ethical would refer to the study of moral conduct or to the code that one follows.

When we speak of moral problems: we generally refer to specific problems, such as "Is lying ever right?" or "Is stealing always wrong?"
We can look at ethical problems as being more general and theoretical. Thus, "what makes any act, such as lying or stealing, right or wrong?" and "what makes any entity good?" are ethical problems.

Morality is:

   ➢ Those principles and values that actually guide an individual's personal conduct (Guy, 2001)
   ➢ Morality is the informal system of rational beings by which they govern their behaviour in order to lesson harm or evil and do good. This system, although informal, enjoys amazing agreement across time and cultures concerning moral rules, moral ideas and moral virtues (Madden, 2000)

1.4 The relationship between Morality / Ethics and Law

LAWS:

   ➢ Against morals and ethics, laws are norms, formally approved by state, power or national or international political bodies.
   ➢ Many laws are instituted in order to promote well-being, resolve conflicts of interest, and promote social harmony

There are several reasons why ethics is not law:

First, <u>some actions that are illegal may not be unethical</u>. Speeding is illegal, but one might have an ethical obligation to break the speed limit in order to transport someone to a hospital in an emergency.

Second, <u>some actions that are unethical may not be illegal</u>. Most people would agree that lying is unethical but lying is only illegal under certain conditions, e.g. lying on an income tax return, lying when giving sworn testimony, etc.

Third, <u>laws can be unethical or immoral</u>. The United States had laws permitting slavery in the 1800s but most people today would say that those laws were unethical or immoral. Although we have moral and ethical obligations to obey the law, civil disobedience can be justified when immoral or unethical laws exist.

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

Finally, <u>we use the coercive power of government to enforce laws</u>. People who break certain laws can be fined, imprisoned, or executed. People who violate ethical or moral standards do not face these kinds of punishments unless their actions also violate laws. Often we "punish" people who disobey moral or ethical obligations by simply expressing our disapproval or by condemning the behavior.

1.5 The Importance/Goal of Moral and Citizenship Education

Civic education is a discipline that deals with virtue traits rooted in values of respect and culture of tolerance to make individuals responsible and efficient member of their community. It teaches the values and sense of commitment that define an active and principled citizen, how to make responsible decisions, solve problems, care about others, contribute to society, and be tolerant and respectful of diversity.

In higher educational institutions of Ethiopia, civics and ethics/moral education is given with the aim of educating students about democratic culture, ethical values and principles, supremacy of constitution, the rule of law, rights and duties of citizens.

Generally, the necessity of delivering the course emanates from:

 One: The need to instil citizens about their rights and duties: The two phrases rights and duties co-exist with each other that regulate the values and behavioural patterns of an individual.
Four issues to look into the interplay between rights and duties:
(a), one's right implies the other's duty. This means every right of an individual automatically imposes a duty on others. E.g the right to freedom of movement imposes a duty on others not to interfere with the right of movement of any body, except regulated by law.

(b) one's right implies one's duty to recognize similar rights of others. This implies that every exercise of right is subject to restrictions. E.g one has the freedom of speech and expression, but, at the same time, the practitioner has to bear in mind that the exercise of free speech and expression in no way affects the rights of others.

(c) one should exercise his rights for the promotion of social good. If any person tries to misuse the rights, which affect the rights of others or of the society or state, the Government has a duty to take appropriate legal action to prevent such acts.

(d) *the State being a nucleus organ needs to take care of the social and legal interests of all its individuals*. From this point of view, the State has the obligation to discharge duties towards its citizens.

Two: **The Need for Participant Political Culture**: Political culture is the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system.

Taylor: describes political culture as the norms of conduct both of and between the various political actors operating in society, together with the concomitant expectations and understandings of the rights and responsibilities of citizens, representatives, public servants and so on.

Political culture shapes what people expect of their political system.

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

There are three political cultures:

> **parochial cultures**: in this culture citizens have low cognitive, affective, and evaluative orientation regarding the political systems, government powers and functions and even their privileges and duties. In such political culture, the role of citizens in the political sphere of their countries is insignificant since individuals thinks of their families advantage as the only goal to pursue.

> **subject cultures**, there is high cognitive, affective, and evaluative orientation towards the political system and policy outputs, but orientations towards input objects (like political parties) and the self as active participants are minimal. Thus, orientation towards the system and its outputs is channeled via a relatively detached, passive relationship on the part of the citizen. Subject cultures are most compatible with centralized, authoritarian political structures.

> **Participant cultures**: members of society have high cognitive, affective, and evaluative orientation to the political system, the input objects, the policy outputs, and recognize the self as an active participant in the polity. Largely, participant cultures are most compatible with democratic political structures because the qualities and attitudes of citizens determine the health and stability of a country's democracy.

In active citizenship participation is not restricted simply to the political dimension rather it also includes socio-cultural and environmental activities.

Generally, the subject plays undeniable role in democratization process through solving societal problems, socializing and re-socializing individuals by instilling desired values, helping individuals develop feeling of respect to others, develop a sense of belongingness and patriotism, and the like.

Three: The Need for Relevant Knowledge, Skills and Positive Attitudes: Relevant knowledge is a type of knowledge which is useful in dealing with a particular problem at a period of time.

- ➢ Knowledge would remain **inert** knowledge unless it is functional or put into practice to achieve a certain goal.
- ➢ Still knowledge would remain **infirm** if the person is not equipped with right attitudes and requisite skills which are basic to enable him/her perform his/her role as a credible member of a society.

Four: **the need of fostering intercultural societies**: The recognition of cultural diversity is certainly meritorious. But civics and ethics education could move a step forward by appealing to the notion of inter-culturalism, which asserts the need for relationship, dialogue, reciprocity and interdependence.

Beyond differences of semantics, civics and ethics education is a useful instrument not only towards tolerating or celebrating each other, but also about nurturing dynamic exchanges based on interaction, openness and effective solidarity.

The issue of inclusiveness: By framing a universal concept of citizenship constructed on the attributes/identities and practices of male subjects, gendered relations and the private sphere have been neglected. Civics and ethics as a subject is thought to nurture new and inclusive relations and practices in both public and private spaces that recognize gender differences while ensuring inclusiveness and equity.

Five: **the issue of peace-building**: in an environment characterized by increasing militarization, terrorism, civil wars and genocidal acts, it is urgent for citizenship education to advance pedagogical strategies to promote cooperation, dialogue, and a sustainable peace that is based on justice.

It is obvious that civics and ethics alone cannot bring peace to our planet, yet it can make a valuable contribution to create the subjective conditions for more peaceful situations.

This includes the development of competencies for peacemaking, conflict resolution, healing, reconciliation and reconstruction.

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

- o Respect for life
- o Respect for reasoning
- o Fairness
- o Concern for the welfare of others
- o Respect for diversity
- o Peaceful resolution of conflict

In sum the goals of teaching civics and ethics at any level of educational institutions is to produce competent, high moral standard society and responsible citizens who can ask and use

their rights and fulfill their obligations in accordance with the laws of their respective country. Democracy doesn't deserve its name without citizens' participation.