



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE**  
**CENTER FOR FEDERAL STUDIES**

*Language policy and its impact on rights of individuals belonging to Minorities to job opportunity under the current federal system. A case study of Abomsa town in Merti Woreda of Oromia region.*

*Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Art in Federal Studies*

*By – Alem Zergaw*

*Advisor - Abebe Teklehaimanot Kahsay (Major General)*

Addis Ababa

2015

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE**  
**CENTER FOR FEDERAL STUDIES**


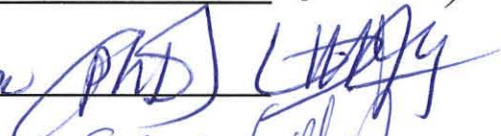
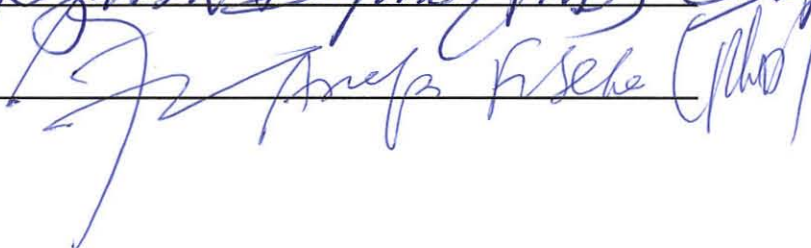
**Language policy and its impact on rights of individuals belonging to Minorities to job opportunity under the current federal system. A case study of Abomsa town in Merti Woreda of Oromia region.**

**By**

**Alem zergaw**

**Approved By The Board Of Examiners:**

**Signature**

Abebe Teklehaimanot (M/G)   
Regassa Beyin (PhD)   
Prof. Fiseha (PhD) 

## Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgement.....	i
Acronyms .....	ii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1. Background of the Study .....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.3. Objective of the Study .....	4
1.3.1 General Objective .....	4
1.3.2 Specific Objectives.....	4
1.4. Research Questions .....	5
1.5. Literature Review .....	5
1.6. Significance of the Study .....	8
1.7. Scope of the Study.....	8
1.8. Research Methodology.....	9
1.8.1 Research Design.....	9
1.8.2. Sampling Techniques .....	9
1.8.3. Methods of Data Collection.....	9
1.8.3.1 Interview .....	9
1.8.3.2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD).....	9
1.8.4. Method of Data Analysis.....	10
1.9. Organization of the Paper .....	10
CHAPTER TWO.....	11
2. Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks.....	11
2.1. Definition of key Terms and concepts .....	11
2.1.1. The Concept of Minority .....	11
2.2. Types of Minorities .....	13

2.2.1. Ethnic Minorities.....	13
2.2.2. Linguistic Minorities .....	13
2.2.3. Religious Minorities .....	14
2.3. Concepts of Language Policy and the Distinctions between National, Official and Working Languages .....	14
2.4. Conceptual and Theoretical Issues on collective and Individual Rights In Line With Employment Rights.....	16
2.5. Language Policy In Federal States: The Experience Of Canada And Switzerland .....	18
2.5.1. Switzerland .....	18
2.5.2. Canada .....	20
2.5.3. Language Policy of Federal Ethiopia .....	22
2.6. Civil Service Employment in Ethiopia and Particularly the Study Area.....	23
CHAPTER THREE .....	25
3. Data Analysis and Discussion .....	25
3.1. Language Policy And Its Impacts On Minority Individuals .....	26
3.2. Challenges for becoming familiar with regional working language.....	30
3.3. Impacts of Collective Rights on Minority Individuals.....	32
CHAPTER FOUR .....	35
4. Conclusion and Recommendations.....	35
4.1. Conclusion.....	35
4.2. Recommendations.....	36
Bibliography.....	38
APPENDIX .....	42

## **Acknowledgment**

Above all, I would like to praise the Almighty God and his mother Saint Virgin Marry; indeed this paper would not have been possible without their support.

I am deeply grateful to my advisor Major General Abebe Tekelehaimanot for his invaluable advice and encouragement while doing this research. This paper could have not appeared in this form had it not been for his valuable consultation and correction of the whole draft thesis.

My special indebtedness also goes to different officials and individuals work in different civil service offices of Abomsa town that cooperated in responding to my interview. Finally my special thanks also go to my mother and my husband without their love; encouragement and assistance this paper would have never been completed.

## **Acronyms**

AEO ---African Economic Outlook

CESCR- --International covenant on economic social and cultural rights

COC- --Certificate of compliance

CSA- --Central Statistics Agency

EPRDF---Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

EUCFR- --European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights

ICCPR--- International Convention on Civil And Political Rights

ICERD---International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

ILO--- International Labor Organization

MoFED --Ministry Of Finance and Economic Development

NEPS ---National Employment Policy and Strategy

NGO---Nongovernmental Organization

OPDO--- Oromo People Democratic Organization

SNNP---Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples

TVET- ---Technical and Vocational Education Training

UDHR---- Universal Declarations of Human Rights

UN- ---United Nations

PSCBP - Public Sector Capacity Building Program

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Many scholars define the term federalism in different ways. As noted by Elazar (1987), 'federalism is a constitutional arrangement involving two or more orders of government combining elements of shared rule and self-rule. These shared rule through a common government for certain specified purposes and regional self-rule for constituent region units of government for other purposes. The objective of this is to combine and enhance unity and diversity by accommodating, preserving and promoting distinct identities within a large political union (Watts, 2013). Currently, the federal political systems are progressively used by states as a mechanism to accommodate ethnic diversities. This has happened from the potential of the federal ideas as a way of peacefully reconciling unity and diversity within a single political system. Hence, federal system help to prevent and manage ethnically inspired or associated conflicts and in this way ensure stability within the state (Beken, 2007). Today, there are around two dozen of countries including Ethiopia in the world with federal form of government and state structure.

After the demise of the military regime in 1991, the new Ethiopian leaders of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) declared their commitment to a clean break with the past and established a political system that ensure equality, rule of law, and the right to self-determination for all ethnically defined groups in the country. The recognition of Ethiopian ethnic diversity became the central principle of the new regime's policy (Getahun, 2007 and Assefa, 2006). The 1995 constitution establishes a federal and democratic state structure which gave autonomous right to federated units. It has acknowledged past operation and exploitation of ethnic groups. Furthermore, it clearly states that the constitution is an expression of sovereignty of nations, nationalities and peoples. As noted in the constitution, every nation nationality and people in Ethiopia has the right to speak, write and develop its own language, as well as to develop and to promote its culture and to preserve its history (art.39/1-4).

The current federal system constitutes nine regional states and two city administrations of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. One can categories these constituent

units into two in terms of ethnic composition. The first categories composed of Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia and Somali. These states have one dominant ethnic group and their language as the working languages. Other minority ethnic groups live within these states. These minorities composed of both indigenous minorities with their defined territory and non-indigenous migrants who came in search of economic opportunities from other part of the country (Fiseha Haftesion 2008:10). The second categories are the multi-ethnic regions states such as, SNNPRS, Benishangul-Gumuz Gambella and Harari. These regional states are home to different ethnic groups. The first three states adopted Amharic as their official working languages; while the state of Harari uses the two languages spoken by the two major ethnic groups of the region i.e. Harari and Oromiffa.

Both in terms of population and territorial size, the Oromia regional state is the most populous and largest region in the country. In this regional state, the Oromiffa is the working language of the region. This study examines the impacts of language policy under the current federal system up on minorities taking Abomsa town which is the administrative town of Merti Woreda in the Oromia region. The Merti Woreda found in the Arsi zone in Oromia regional state. In terms of ethnic composition in the woreda, the Oromo is the dominant nation followed by Amhara minority group. The Oromo constitutes 75.29% while the Amhara is 26.3 % in the Woreda. However, there are other minorities constitute 2.45% of the total population in the Woreda (CSA, 2007). The total population in Abomsa town is 14,564 (ibid). From this total population, minorities constitute 4,396 populations in the town. From different minorities, Amhara, Guragie and Tigrie minorities constitute highest number. Therefore, this study investigates the impacts of existing language policy under the current federal system on the job opportunities of those minorities in the study Woreda administrative town.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

The current federal system attempts to integrate historically marginalized groups. As the federal system uses inter alia as ethnicity as the basis to form regions units, the federal system coincide ethnicity and territoriality. In ethnic based federal regional units, the ethnic based boundary delimitation has created a major ethnic group in the region (Assefa, 2007). In this regard, Hileyesus further notes that:

...in Ethiopia there is not any one ethnic group that claims to be in a majority position at the federal or national level. However, the 1995 constitution of Ethiopia tries to create majority ethnic groups at the regional level by making ethnicity incongruent with the territorial demarcation of the constituent units of the federation. Thus, this ethno – territorial organization left a number of ethnic groups as a minority outside their designated ethno-territorial setting. They are considered to be migrants or exogenous groups (2012:10).

In a multi-lingual country with federal state structure like Ethiopia, the use of language should be guided by a language policy as it is difficult to manage different languages without any rules and regulations. In this regard, the 1995 constitution recognized equal status and protection to all languages of the country. Each regional state has constitutionally entrenched power to determine its working language. Accordingly, some regional states have adopted Amharic as working language as the case at federal level while others chose their own working language.

Regional states' choose of their own working language has its own serious impacts on the individual right to move, live and work in different parts of the country. This contradicts with constitutionally declared individual rights to move, work and live in any part of the country (art. 41/1). Practically, however, these rights have been jeopardized mainly due to the fact that anyone who aspires to get job and other opportunity should fluently speak the working language of the area. Thus, the existing language policy under current federal system has its own impacts on the individual rights of movement and working in the area of their interests. Accordingly, the constitutionally accorded rights to move and work have been practically restricted by the language policy of federal system.

As Ethiopia adopted federal system, the regional units have their own constitution. As one of the federal national regional units, the Oromia region has its constitution. Regarding the minority and individual rights in the region, the regional constitution

mentions the working language of the region as a mandatory criterion to get appointment and recruitment in any political and civil service of the region (art. 33). Accordingly, this constitutional language policy ultimately contradicts with the individual rights recognized in the federal constitution. There is a gap that should be thoroughly investigated. In this regional state, exogenous or migrant minorities who are not familiar with the working language encounter problems to get job and other opportunities. This study therefore examines this language policy impacts on the rights to work in public sector by individuals belonging to minorities taking the Abomsa town of Merti- Moreda in Arsi zone of Oromia region as a case study.

### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of language policy on individuals that belong to minorities related with job opportunity particularly in public sectors in Abomsa town of Merti –Woreda under the current federal system. As a result it show how the tension between individuals and collective rights could be minimized and recommend solutions to uphold the rights of individuals that belong to minorities.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

This study has the following specific objectives;

- To explore how the current federal political system addresses the rights of individuals belonging to minorities to work in public sectors of the study area.
- To examine impacts of the adopting separate regional language on individuals those belong to minorities' rights to work in public sectors.
- To redress the actual problem and recommend relevant solutions to problems identified by the study.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

The study tries to address the following questions;

- ❖ How has the issue of the rights of individuals that belong to minorities to work in the public sectors been addressed under the current federal political system in the study area?
- ❖ What are the impacts of the adopting separate regional language on individuals that belong to minorities' rights to work in public sectors in the study area?
- ❖ What are the possible solutions?

#### **1.5. Literature Review**

The FDRE constitution has enshrined the character of the UDHR and article 26 of the ICCPR. In line with this, Article 25 states that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal and effective protection of the law without discrimination on grounds of national or social origin, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, property, birth or other status. The recognition of equality and non- discrimination are the basic normative foundations of the Constitution underpinning further minority rights.

Article 5/1 of the Federal constitution is an important article in relation to minorities and languages. This article states that all Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal recognition. The recognition of all Ethiopian languages, despite the number of speakers and whether they are regional or minority languages is an important step towards the implementation of minority rights in Ethiopia.

As regards to the definition of minority, there is no internationally agreed definition as to which groups constitute minorities. And also there has not been a consensus at the international level on the type of entitlements different categories of minorities such as, (indigenous, national, immigrant) should have and how to differentiate these groups in different contexts (Kymlicka, 2007). However, according to the United Nation Human Rights Commission the existence of a minority is a question of truth and that any definition must include both objective factors such as, the existence of a shared ethnicity, language or religion and subjective factors like believing in common identity, individuals must identify themselves as members of minority.

The difficulty in arriving at a widely acceptable definition of minorities lies in the variety of situations in which minorities live. Some live together in well-defined areas, separated from the dominant part of the population. Others are scattered throughout the country. Some minorities have a strong sense of collective identity and recorded history; others retain only a fragmented notion of their common heritage (Abera, 2008 and Kristin Henrard, 2010).

The term minority according to the United Nations minority declaration refers to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. According to Kristin Henrard (2010), the concept minority can be applied in plural societies, including those without a clear majority population. The Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Francesco Capotorti (1977: 2) define minority as:

*A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State in a non-dominant position, whose members—being nationals of the State—possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.*

*Operational definition:* this study intends to focus on individuals belonging to minorities who migrate from other regions in recent past in search of economic opportunities and live in the Abomsa town of Merti Woreda. These minority individuals have different ethnic backgrounds; mainly represent Amhara Guragie and Tigrie. Thus, they are non-indigenous minorities.

Ethiopia has ratified different conventions which deal on human rights. Among them; International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which can be applicable implicitly or explicitly for the protection and promotion of minority rights (Haileyesus, 2012:10).

Minority rights has been treated at the international level in relation to the universal human rights declaration and various covenants and their provisions on the right of ethnic, racial, religious and language groups (Pentassngalia, 2005 in Haileyesus). By

adoption of several minority treaties the recognition and protection of minority rights under international law began with the League of Nations. In 1945 league of nations' replaced by the United Nations and gradually the UN developed a number of norms, procedures and mechanisms concerned with minorities (David.W, 1997 cited in Tokuma Daba2010:13). Particularly, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (hereinafter: United Nations Minorities Declaration) recognize and protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities (United Nations Human Rights Commissioner, 2010). The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities which was adopted in 2000 by council of Europe is also one instrument to protect rights of minorities.

For instance, Article 27 of ICCPR states that: *In those state in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belong such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion or to use their own language.* On the other, United Nations Minorities Declaration adopted by the UN general assembly in its art 1(1) says, *states shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.*

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities adopted by council of Europe in 2000 and art.4 (2) stated that; *the parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measure in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.*

The UN Declaration on the Right to Development was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 4 December 1986. In this Declaration the right to development is formulated as a right to which both individuals and peoples are entitled. For example, Art.1(1) provides that `the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are

entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.' This is immediately followed by a provision that shows that individuals must be regarded as the main subject of development. Article 2 reads: the human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development'.

However, there is controversy on the issue of individual and collective rights in between different scholars. Group rights considered as a potential threat to individual rights; group rights are often rights claimed against, or over individuals (Peter Jones, 1999:81). Other, says they are complementary and not threat each other.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

This study may have the following significances;

- In the first place, it may have national significances thereby generating some information for other internal- minorities who live in different regions of Ethiopia with the issue of language and job opportunity.
- It may provide valuable or concrete evidence for policy makers of state of Oromia and other concerned bodies who work on the affairs of constitution and its implementation with regards to minorities and job opportunities who live in the Oromia region.
- It may help to understand the extent to which the current federal system of government addresses the problem facing these internal migrant minority individuals in accordance with work opportunity in the public sector of the host region.
- Finally, this study may serve as a base line for future further research in the area since this issue needs more investigation.

### **1.7. Scope of the Study**

The study principally explores impacts of existing federal system language policy on minority individuals' rights to move and work in any parts of the country taking Abomsa town of Merti Woreda in Arsi Zone of Oromia region as a case study. Therefore, the study emphasis on individuals belonging to minorities residing in the town and the challenges they have been facing to get job opportunity due to the language policy.

## **1.8. Research Methodology**

### **1.8.1 Research Design**

This study is based on qualitative case study. Therefore, the research design for this study is exploratory case study design. The qualitative case study design helps to get information about the human side of an issue like beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals. In the study of social relations, the advantage of this study design is that it helps to get the perspectives of the participants and their diversity (Flick, 2002).

### **1.8.2. Sampling Techniques**

The study employed purposive sampling techniques. Participants of the study were selected using this technique from employed and unemployed individuals and government officials who work at different civil service institutions in Abomsa town. In addition, some public sectors service recipient also involved. To meet the adequate number participants, the study employed a snow ball sampling technique.

### **1.8.3. Methods of Data Collection**

This study employed both primary as well as secondary sources to collect different data. The primary data collection instruments include: interview and focus group discussion with different concerned individuals who are important for the study. The document analysis included the federal constitution and the Oromia regional state constitution, proclamation of civil service and other relevant documents. The study used the secondary sources, such as books, journals, articles, thesis, dissertations and others that would help to make the study more comprehensive.

#### **1.8.3.1 Interview**

The study utilizes a series of unstructured and semi- structured interviews with key informants. Feasible interviews embraced with different government officials who work at different civil service institutions. In addition, employed individuals from different offices and unemployed persons also interviewed. In the study, some service recipients who have different ethnic backgrounds involved.

#### **1.8.3.2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

Focus group discussion can serve as a primary means of collecting qualitative data (Morgan, 1997). The participants of discussion include employed and unemployed

individuals who have diploma and TVET certificate in different professions. Discussion was held with five groups, each of which embraces 6-7 individuals. In addition, spontaneous group discussions conducted with those un-employed youngsters during my informal interview at different places. Because of the ‘sensitivity’ of the topic itself, made my informants and participants skeptical to expose themselves fully. As a result, the names of the research population are kept anonymous and in most cases the collective name like “informants”, “higher officials”, and “participants of FGD” are used as alternatives in the paper.

#### **1.8.4. Method of Data Analysis**

The study investigated the impacts of language policy on minority individuals’ particularly related with job opportunities in the public sectors under the current federal system. Thus, after accomplish the collection of significance data on the issue the study analyzed the data through descriptive and narrative method of analysis. Different data assists to the study breakdown through these techniques of analysis.

#### **1.9. Organization of the Paper**

This study has four chapters. The first chapter deals with the background to the study area, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significance of the study and research methodology. The second chapter focuses on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The conceptual frameworks mainly focus on the concept and types of minorities, the concept of language policy and distinctions between different terms of language in use. The theoretical framework focuses on employment rights and human rights, group and individual rights and civil service employment covered.

The experience of federal states particularly the practice of Canada and Switzerland including Ethiopia also discussed. In chapter three, the collected data is analyzed and discussed briefly. Specifically, the main themes that are dealt with under this chapter include; language policy and its impacts on minority individuals and reasons for not to be familiar with the working language of the area discussed. In addition the impacts of collective rights on individuals that belong to minorities of the study area also discussed. The fourth chapter concludes the main themes of the study thereby providing some recommendations that may contribute to solve the problem facing these minorities in the other regions in general and of the study area in particular.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks**

#### **Introduction**

This section of the paper deals with the conceptual and theoretical frames by examining different literatures. It has six parts. In the first place, the definition of key terms and concepts mainly the term minority defined by observing different international documents and putting different authors explanations on the issue of minorities. Types of minorities are also discussed. In the third section the concept of language policy and distinctions between National, Official and Working Languages observed. The fourth part of this study focuses on the conceptual and theoretical issues on collective and individual rights in line with employment rights. The fifth part of this chapter emphasizes on the Language policy of Federal states by looking at the experience of Canada and Switzerland including Ethiopia. Finally, the issue of Civil service sector employment in Ethiopia and particularly in Oromia region and the study area also discussed.

#### **2.1. Definition of key Terms and concepts**

##### **2.1.1. The Concept of Minority**

There is lack of consensus among scholars on the term of minority and still no generally accepted definitions. The reason for disagreement is attributable to the complexity and diversity of the minority phenomenon and the fear of states regarding the consequences of the recognition of minorities since, states fear that the acceptance of one binding definition may bring about secessionist movements and may lead to the disintegration of the state according to Kristin Henrand, (2010:2). There seems to be the view that the existence of a set definition will induce more groups to claim the status of minority (Ibid).

However, eventually the problem of minorities had obtained global character in its nature and scope, the adoption of a generally accepted definition of minorities seemed increasingly necessary (Welimeir Ashby as cited in Aberra Dagafa, 2008:22). Despite the difficulty in arriving at a universally acceptable definition, various characteristics of minorities have been identified, which, taken together, cover most minority situations. According to Halida Nasic, (2007:8) minority is defined as: “a non-

*dominant group of individuals who share certain national or ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics that are different from those of the majority population is the most commonly used description of a minority in a given State”.*

The international covenant on civil and political rights was the first international binding instrument regarding the protection of minorities. According to Manfred Nowak (2005) cited in Halida Nasic (2007:6), the most widely-accepted legally binding provision on minorities is Article 27 of the ICCPR. Article 27 adopted by the General assembly in 1966, deals about the question of minorities and states that ‘*in those states in which ethnic or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language*’.

With regards to the general definition of minorities, Francesco Caporti and Jules Deschenes cited in (Henrand K, 2010:18), who were the two special Rapporteurs of the UN sub commission define minority as the following. Caporti define minority as;

*“a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position ,whose members—being nationals of the state —possess ethnic ,religious or lingustic characterstics differing from those of the rest of the population and show ,if only implicitly ,a sense of solidarity ,directed towards preserving their culture ,traditions ,religion or language”.*

On the other, Deschenenes define minority as-

*“a group of citizens of a state, constituting a numerical minority and in a non-dominant position in that state, endowed with ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from those of the majority of the population, having a sense of solidarity with one another, motivated, if only implicitly, by a collective will to survive and whose aim is to achive equality with the majority in fact and law.*

Here, there is similarity between the two definitions, i.e. the numerical factor, non-dominant position, possession of distinguishing characteristics, being nationals of the given state and sense of solidarity is given out as the necessary requirements for identifying minority.

Generally, a comparison of various proposals of definition by the academia and organs of international organizations does enable one to identify recurring elements that arguably denote essential characteristics of minorities, some of which are objective, others subjective (Henarde,2010:5). Meaning, the subjective and objective components needed to define the definition of minorities. The objective characteristic of minority indicates population group with ethnic, religious or linguistic features which are different from the rest of the population. Whereas the subjective characteristic more specifically referring to the wish to preserve the separate minority identity (the will on the part of the members of the groups in question to preserve their own characteristics).

## **2.2. Types of Minorities**

### **2.2.1. Ethnic Minorities**

Ethnic minority is a group having its own culture, language or history and such group has to be a self –conscious group, whose members want to uphold its particularities (Weber Max, cited in Ann Morning, 2005). Both subjective and objective features are required for a group of people to qualify ethnic minority. A certain ethnic groups are entitled to claim minority protection when they have cultural, historical and linguistic characteristics that distinguish them from the rest of the population.

### **2.2.2. Linguistic Minorities**

In this, language is considered as the essential or central criteria in the definition of linguistic minorities. It is possible for persons belonging to a certain ethnic groups to speak many languages and to belong to different linguistic minority. According to Michal Tannen baum and Netta Abugov (2010:2)Language is not only a crucial tool for a nation, but also a legitimate and natural means of justifying its existence and an aesthetic-affective realization of a community's internal essence. It is a central form of expression and communication, the protection of linguistic rights must be guaranteed in connection with other rights, including, the right to education, access to the media, and participation in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs (ibid).

Article 27 of the ICCPR recognizes that, a linguistic group shall not be denied the right to use its own language in private or in public, in community with other members of the group. Most of the time, members of the minority are not in equal

footing with the members of the majority. There is a need to treat differently those belonging to the minority till they come near to equality with the members of the majority. Protection of the linguistic group is just protecting the dignity of the individuals belonging to such group.

### **2.2.3. Religious Minorities**

It is not an easy task to define religion and religious minorities in particular. A certain group qualifies religious minority when its religion differs either from the state religion or the majority or the rest of the groups. The religious rights has also limitation as of other rights restriction, for instance during the practice it does not jeopardize the religion of other religion followers. Apart from the guarantee against discrimination based on religion under general individual Human rights, article 27 of the ICCPR and the Minority Declaration do recognize religious Minorities. They should not be forced to downgrade their religion or should not be forced to change their religion. Hence, as of other minority groups, religious minorities rights should be protected and realize their rights freely.

### **2.3. Concepts of Language Policy and the Distinctions between National, Official and Working Languages**

Language is a cultural system based on signs, phones, gestures and symbols which allows for making and transmitting the outcome of social experience; it is on the language that the intellectual processes of human beings are based (Maciej Aleksandrowicz, 2011). In addition, Language is a tool of communication, allows for human integration; through language people are able to identify their group identity and shape their sense of community belonging. Alan Patten,(2008:2) *stated that , every society in the world is characterized by at least some degree of linguistic diversity; for instance in Canada and Switzerland where more than a quarter of the populations are members of historically rooted ethno-linguistic minorities.*

In multilingual nations, the use of language is usually supported by a language policy. The concept of language policy is mainly related to decisions, rules regulations and guidelines about the status, use, domains and territories of language and the rights of speakers under question (schiffman, 2005 as cited in Getachew, 2006:40). At this point one can understood that, language policies are concerned with determining the status of language in which it implies that whether language should be used as

national language, official language, working language, or language of instruction etc. The other is language policies are anxious with domains use, and territories of languages also imply that which language should be used in education, administration etc (Getachew and Anteneh, 2006).

Different names are given by different countries for the language (s) picked up and employed as the language(s) of the state. Some countries use the term “national language”, or “official language” and others may use “working language”. Let see the concept of these different terms of language.

To begin with a National language, it is a language which has some connection with a people and perhaps by extension the territory they occupy. The term is used variously. A national language may for instance represent the national identity of a nation or country and it may alternatively be a designation given to one or more languages spoken as first languages in the territory of a country (Abraham Demoz, 1999). According to him, the very term of national language has a bad connotation since it gives the impression that native speakers of the language are more important ,loyal and useful to the state than non- speakers of the so called national language.

An official language is a language that is given a special legal status in a particular country, state or other jurisdiction. Typically a country's official language refers to the language used within its government – its courts, parliament, administration, etc. to run its operations and conduct its business. As Abraham Demoz (1999) noted, it is a language used in exercise of some portion of the sovereign power either in making, executing or administering the laws. And also it does not typically refer to the language used by a people or country, but by its government.

It is difficult to establish clear difference between official and working language. However, working language is also a procedural language that is given a unique legal status in a given state, supranational company, society or other body or organization as its primary means of communication (Emmanuel Aito, 2005). It is primarily the language of the daily correspondence and conversation, since the organization usually has members with various differing language backgrounds. Most international organizations have working languages for their bodies. The term working language emphasizes the practical aspect of the reasons for designation of one or a few

languages as a common currency (ibid). In Ethiopia currently the term “working language” is used by the two tiers of government in order to perform all governmental activities. However, in the case of foreign countries experience the writer of the paper will use according to the given names of the countries.

#### **2.4. Conceptual and Theoretical Issues on collective and Individual Rights In Line With Employment Rights**

To begin with, human rights can be taken as group (collective) as well as individual forms. However, there is a strong debate going on over group and individual rights, as well as on group rights and human rights between scholars for a long time. Moreover, according to Peter Jones (1999:81-83), there are two kinds of argument among scholars particularly on the issue of group rights and human rights. Some argue that human rights are the rights of human beings and each human being is an individual being not group. Groups may have rights of some sort, but whatever those rights might be, they cannot be human rights. Human rights must be rights born by human individuals. Peter Jones concludes that by saying the following;

*... Serious commitment to human rights is commitment to the idea that there are certain rights that human beings possess, or should possess, simply as human beings. If a right is to have a serious claim to be a human right, it must be a right that we can plausibly ascribe to human beings as such and one that we can plausibly ground in their humanity. The adjective “human” indicates both the range of beings that have the right and the status in virtue of which they have it. The inquiry is not whether international instruments categorize group rights as human rights but the issue is whether that categorization is defensible.*

The preamble of UN’s Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social And Cultural Rights characterize the rights set out in each covenant as human rights. By their nature Political and civil rights constituted the first generation and socio economic rights as the second generation human right, both sorts of human rights focused on individual as their bearers. Whereas, the third generation or solidarity human rights include rights to goods such as development, peace, a healthy environment etc are collective in nature and rights that are often more intelligibly born by groups than by individuals.

Unlike individual rights, a group (collective) right is a right held by a group as a group rather than by its members separately. Jack Donnelly, (2003:26) describes that with the exception of the right to self determination, all the rights in the universal declaration and the covenants are the rights of Individuals. According to Peter Jones (2008), the group in “group right” describes the nature of the right –holder; it does not describe the mere fact that the right is confined to the members of group rather than possessed by all members of a society or by humanity at large. Thus, collective rights are rights pertaining to collectivities in order to protect some collective interests. In similar way Jack Donnelly (2003), describes that Individual and group rights differ in who holds the right- individuals or group actors- not in their sociality and many individual human rights are characteristically exercised, and can only be enjoyed through collective action.

Individual and group interests show inconsistency or inevitably clash each other. According to Mc Donald (1998) and Waldron (1993) as cited in Peter Jones, (2008:89) ; it may prove impossible to anticipate and avoid every conflict amongst rights, but, even if it does, we need not suppose that conflicts will arise more commonly between group rights and individual rights than amongst individual rights themselves. Probably the most intriguing issue in the debate surrounding collective rights concerns their relation to individual rights. Some conceive group rights as potential threats to individual rights; group rights are often rights claimed against, or over individuals. According to Will kymlicka, (1995) cited in Caroline West, (2005:4), many liberals are opposed to group rights altogether on the grounds that “collective rights are inherently in conflict with individual rights”.

For some others, the conceptual difference between individual and group rights does not have any antagonism rather both coexist more or less peacefully, but it is also possible for them to enjoy a more positive and mutually supportive relationship (Peter Jones, 2008). And also they regard some group rights as close complements of individual rights plus the two sorts of rights are united by the same underlying values and concerns. Even if there is division on the concern of group rights and individual rights, it is obvious that group rights sometimes threatens individual’s rights.

Internationally recognized individual human rights can contribute greatly to maintaining and transmitting minority identities. Different minorities’ especially

linguistic minorities can readily argue that it is discriminatory to provide access to public-service a dominant language (Jack Donnelly, 2003:212).

Employment right may be perceived as both collective and individual rights. For instance the UN Declaration on the Right to Development which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 4 December 1986, the right to development which has direct link with employment, is formulated as a right to which both individuals and groups.

Article 1(1) provides that;`

‘the right to development is an inalienable human rights by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized’.

This is immediately followed by a provision that shows that individuals must be regarded as the main subject of development. In addition, Article 2 reads as: the human person is the central Subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development. So, within a certain group, individuals should not be discriminated from participating in different economic activities and can have the right to engage and contribute in various development activities.

## **2.5. Language Policy In Federal States: The Experience Of Canada And Switzerland**

### **2.5.1. Switzerland**

Switzerland is a multilingual state in which German, French, Italy and Romance languages are used as national language. The latter is recognized as official so far as the communications are between the federal government and its Romantsch speaking citizens (Fleiner, 2002:100 cited in Fiseha Haftetsion). Though, there are other migrant residents who live in the country that belong to either the Swiss or other linguistic groups. The country is divided in to administrative divisions called cantons and they are 26 in number.

The 1848 constitution of Swiss mentions that German, Italian and French as the three national languages on equal footing. However, the change has been made in March 1996, when an overwhelming majority of voters accepted a change to article 116 of the federal constitution, allowing the federal government to increase its support for Romanch and Italian language and culture (Froidevaux, 1996 cited in Grin, 1998).

According to Francois Grin, 1998, the root of the Swiss way of managing linguistic and cultural diversity is quite different from those of other multilingual countries and the Swiss federation is considered as one of the best examples of official multilingualism. The education and linguistic policies are formulated and applied in a capillary way, at the micro- level. In Swiss there is no language policy at the federal level as all decisions concerning the public use of language are made by the Cantons, and also each Canton adopts its own official language without the interference of the federal government and they can bar the use of any other language apart from the official language of the Canton in public use, including in education and commerce though there is flexibility when it comes to private use (Schmid, 1981; Schiff man, 1996 cited in Elisa Fulgenzi,1999). In addition, it recognizes all the indigenous languages of the country as national.

However, there are also some problems that challenge this model. There is a concern that the Swiss way of dealing with diversity pays insufficient attention to the presence of immigrants from an increasingly diverse linguistic and cultural background. For instance, Fiseha Haftesion (2010) in his article explains that, the strict territorial nature of the language policy implemented by the Cantons makes communal interaction less easy which increasingly challenges unity at the national level. The other problem in relation to the territorial nature of the language policy is the fact that it denies residents from other Cantons and immigrants the chance to educate their children in their mother tongues.

Therefore, with regarded to employment issue in Swiss, based on different literatures that deal about language policy of Switzerland, one can conclude that by saying the territorial nature of language policy creates problem for citizens of Swiss from other cantons. Under Article 70(2) of the Swiss constitution, cantons are given responsibility for choosing their official language. This indicates that, the

governmental activity within of those cantons has running by the chosen languages as enshrined in the constitution.

### **2.5.2. Canada**

Canada is a large country with a relatively small population of 30 million and it has a parliamentary democracy. It became a federation during the year of 1867 with two distinct jurisdictions of political authority; the federal government and the provincial governments. The state Canada has ten province and three territories (Ronald L. Watts, 1999:18).

Canada is a bilingual federal state (in which English and French languages are official languages of the state) with the passage the constitution act, 1982, the concept of official languages was enshrined in the constitution. In 1969, the federal government established a more formal framework for the use of English and French in its very first official language act (Martin Howard, 2007). Section 16 of the Canadian charter of rights and freedoms (the charter) establishes English and French as the official languages and confers equal status and equal rights and privileges. In addition to dealing that English and French are to have equality of status and equal rights and privileges for all the purposes of the parliament and government of Canada, the act particularly imposes duties on all federal institutions to provide their services in either English or French. In 1973, English and French languages become the working language of federal civil services (ibid).

In addition to the protection and promotion of Canada's two official languages, English and French the so called 'linguistic duality', there has been legislative support for the non –official languages since the late 1960s (Duff and Li, 2009). Accordingly, Canada has a national commitment to education in languages other than English, largely because of the historical status of French in Canada; francophone's are the largest linguistic minority nationally, and it is the mother tongue of approximately 22% of Canadians whereas, English is 58%,(Statistics Canada, 2007). The remainder of Canadians approximately 20% of the total of just over 31 million – speak neither English nor French as a mother tongue and are often referred to as 'allophones' (Statistics Canada, 2007).

In 1971, the federal government declared a policy of multicultural and the multiculturalism policy pledged to promote respect and support for all of Canada's languages and cultures (Marie Eve, 2013). The policy stated that 'the government will continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages (through official language training for immigrants) in order to become full participants in Canadian society (Saouab, 1993, p.4 cited in Barbara Burnaby, 2008).

An indigenous (Aboriginal) language also gets an official status in some province of Canada. Nine indigenous languages have been made official languages in the North West territories together with English and French. In addition, since 1960's aboriginal languages have increasingly been taught in aboriginal and provincial schools as subject of instruction. Aboriginal language immersion programs have begun in several southern communities, where the children start school speaking only or mainly an official language (Martin Howard, 2007).

The language policies of Canada's province and territories vary substantially between different provinces. Meaning at provincial level, some provinces have adopted a number of language laws. For instance, Newbrunswick passed its own official languages act in 1969, reflecting the principle of equality enshrined in the federal act. Thus, Newbrunswick constitutes Canada's only official bilingual province thereby using French and English languages. Whereas other provinces outside Quebec have similarly adopted the principle of linguistic equality through which their legislation, policies or practices ensure that arrange of provincial services can be accessed in French, Quebec is officially monolingual in contrast to Canada's official bilingual state (Patricia A. & Duanduan Li, 2009:6)..

The federal government funds the provincial and territorial governments to create new services or improve existing services in the minority language and to promote greater understanding between the two linguistic communities. There is cost sharing agreement between two tires of government with respect to health and social services, legal services and municipal affairs in every province and territory (Marie-Eve, 2013:8-9). The federal government also offers direct support for official language minority community.

With regards to the employment issue, each province in Canada adopts language law and select working language. However, the province called New Brunswick is official bilingual which creates great employment opportunities for both French as well as English language speakers. But it is difficult for non speakers of both languages. In other province, in Quebec the majority residents are French speakers. It is difficult for those non speakers to obtain job unless they speak French language.

### **2.5.3. Language Policy of Federal Ethiopia**

Ethiopia is a multilingual and multicultural country. There are more than 75 languages spoken within the country and that can be grouped under different language families: Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic and Nilotic.

During the reign of imperial regime, the 1931 constitution which was the first written constitution in Ethiopian history legitimized the absolute power of the emperor and did not say anything regarding language. However the second 1955 constitution gave little concern. Article 125 of the 1955 constitution declares “the official language of the empire is Amharic”. Generally (FisehaHaftesion2010:58) summarized it as follows: *The language policy of Ethiopia during the imperial era was guided by language Rationalization around the Amharic language.*

After the fall of imperial regime, the country was ruled by the military government. The national literacy campaign during that time was positively impacted on the use of other languages in the country. In the campaign, fifteen languages were used for conducting the educational campaign where other Ethiopian languages were used for educational purposes (GetachewAnteneh, 2006). However, the military regime pursued the same language rationalization approach perused by the earlier regime. Amharic was the only language used in all administrative levels including the lowest level i.e. called the kebele (equivalent to sub-district) and remained the sole language of the judiciary (ibid). However, the rule of military regime becomes ended in 1991.

In 1991 the Ethiopian peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power in. The transitional government first developed the charter which mainly focused on the rights of nations and nationalities. Article 2 of the transitional charter states; *Nations, Nationalities and Peoples have the right to self-determination, each*

nation, nationality and peoples has the right to preserve and guard its identity, develop its culture and history and use its own language. The 1994 constitution which came into effect since 1995 has adopted a similar language policy that affirms the equal protection extended to all languages of the country (Art. 5 of the FDRE constitution). On the basis of the constitutional rights, each region can determine their working languages. Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia and Somali have employed their own working language. SNNP, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela and Harari have followed a different way in selecting the working language at the state level.

In the case of Switzerland and Canada, both federal states are homes to different linguistic and cultural groups. Thus, in order to manage differences these states have created a language policy thereby accommodating varied linguistic groups. So far, each canton in Switzerland and province in Canada has been given constitutional rights to determine their official languages. Thus, we can sketch a lesson from these countries the recognition of linguistic and cultural diversities which enhance unity and leads to development.

To sum up, in similar with Swiss cantons and provinces in Canada the current federal system of Ethiopia recognizes cultural and linguistic differences of nation and nationalities of Ethiopia. Thus, all regional states have given constitutional rights to determine the working language. However, it is obvious that different minorities coming from other regions within the country and not familiar with the working language of the respective region face problem to get job opportunity mainly in the area of public sector similar with Swiss and Canada citizens. Particularly, in the Abomsa town of Merti-Woreda minority individuals face these kinds of problem as a result of language.

## **2.6. Civil Service Employment in Ethiopia and Particularly the Study Area**

Different author define civil service sector in different ways and (Tesfayye Debela2010: 76) is taken as working definition; “*civil service sectors are organizations that are the arms of the government to implement development and economic policies of a country*”. These institutions are created and governed by the government of a given state. Other authors like, sikhngo, D and Daniela, D (2011:3) argues that, the public sector consists of governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies ,enterprises and other entities that deliver public programs

,goods or services. Finally, Adebabay Abay (2011:1) define public sector as the following;

*The public sector is the life blood of any government. It is because; the implementation of government policies and strategies is highly dependent on the courage and passion of the civil service. When the capacity of the civil service to discharge its responsibility is low, the implementation of government policies and strategies will fall in a trap.*

The country embarked on the task of economic adjustment and reconstruction through economic reform (Homdok, 2003). Between the year of 1992 and 1994 the first reformation took place to allocate staff from the center to the newly formed regional state (i.e. to those nine regional states).The transformation process continued and employed in different periods of times with the aim to improve the efficiency of public –service delivery under the Public Sector Capacity Building Program(PSCBP).

There are different decentralized civil service sector bureaus' in all the nine Ethiopian regional states. The foundation of decentralized form of governance in the country has been laid down by the 1995 Ethiopian federal constitution and the current administrative system in Ethiopia comprises five levels of governance institutions; they are federal, regional, zonal, woreda and kebele administration. These different civil sector offices create ample job opportunities for a number of individuals in each region.

The Oromia regional state geographically divided into eighteen zonal administrations and one hundred eighty woredas. It has decentralized civil service offices in the zone as well as woreda level. The zonal administrations in effect act as an intermediary between the woreda governments and the Oromia regional government bureaus.

Article 5 of the Oromia constitution declares that Oromiffa as the working language of the region. Accordingly, this language is the working language of civil services offices in Oromia region and in all respective zones and woredas. In Abomsa, which is the capital of Merti Woreda there are different civil service offices which generate job for individuals and serve the society at large.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. Data Analysis and Discussion**

#### **Introduction**

This section of the study deals with analysis and discussion of data and it has three parts. Impacts of the current language policy on minority individuals mainly to get job opportunities in the areas of public sector analysed and discussed in the first part. In this the study briefly examines the problem that observed on both unemployed individuals that belong to minorities and service recipients. Different challenges hampering minority individuals from becoming familiar with regional working language and these difficulties discussed in the second sections of the study. So far, various reasons are given by some minority individuals and government officials. On the third part of the study, the impacts of collective rights on minority individuals explored. In this section, the impacts of collective rights on minority individuals' rights to work mainly in public sector examined in brief.

### 3.1. Language Policy and Its Impacts on Minority Individuals

To begin with, it is not an easy task to define the term minority and to know 'who are minorities' as seen in the literature part of the study. However, by comparing different international documents I tried to define the term minority and to show different types of minorities. Basically, as per the Capotorti Deschenes definition all ethnic groups in this study area other than the Oromo constitute non- indigenous minorities. They came from other regions and settled in Abomsa town in recent past in search of different economic interests.

It is a given fact in multi-ethnic federations like Ethiopia in which the objective of the federation is forging unity in diversity; the issue of language policy touches every aspect of the countries political, economic, social, cultural and educational affairs. Infact the main concern of FDRE constitution is empowering those ethnic groups which inhabited in an identified contiguous territory to exercise the right to territorial autonomy in which they determine their destiny by having their own institution and government. Thus, art.5 (3) of the FDRE constitution sets the "*right to choose the working language for all federations*". Thus, the right of ethnic groups to officially use their own language in public affairs is constitutionally recognized only when they are territorially concentrated.

The right to work in everywhere in particular for migrant minorities is possible when one understand the respective region working language. As a result, the language policy of regional state, affects free movement of individuals citizens. Most civil service sector activities in the study area are doing by the region working language. Actually, this problem observed in the public or civil service sector activities not in private sectors or any other activities of the study area.

There is unclear standard at international level as to the status of groups who constitute dispersed minority in one or more regions having their own home region. Likewise, the FDRE constitution has not also provide guidelines to dispersed ethnic minority groups. Therefore, the current language policy created certain constraints particularly on dispersed minorities those left their original land and migrated to other regional states; principally not to recruit and work in public sectors.

In Abomsa which is the administrative town of Merti Woreda there is problem of unemployment. In particular, indispensable numbers of minorities who graduated in

different field of study and not capable of understanding the working language face problem of getting employed in the public sector offices. Most of them are qualified in different professions.

Population of the town, number of employees and unemployed personnel's data is shown in table 3.1 below.

Table: 3.1 the total population, employed and unemployed individuals numbers in Abomsa town

Total population of the town	Productive age population between (15-64)	Employed individuals	Unemployed persons
14,655	5,922	5,224	698

Source: CSA, 2007 report

According to the report, among the total populations of employed individuals in the town, some are engaged in civil service offices, NGO's, self employed private jobs and other activities. The contribution of the civil servants reaches up to 2,124 which accounts for 40.7% of the total employees found in the town (Mayer of Abomsa town report). According to Abomsa kebeles report, out of the total number of unemployed persons 483 individuals are college graduates in different field of study; and from the data in table 3.1 we can consider that the remaining un employees have only completed their education from grades of ten and twelve (Abomsa town kebeles' report).

Most graduated unemployed individuals have certificate and diploma in accounting, management and information technology disciplines having Amhara, Tigray and Guragie ethnic backgrounds. In the report, one hundred twenty five registered unemployed persons can understand the working language. From those, seventy four persons are minorities and fifty one are from Oromo ethnic group. Thus, in order to obtain accurate information, the study tries to interview and discuss with some unemployed individuals and thus more than twenty five unemployed individuals who cannot understand the language interviewed and twenty-one individuals participated in the focus group discussion. From working language speakers of unemployed individuals, fifteen persons in interview and thirteen in focus group discussions

involved. The study has also focuses on individuals who have been employed in civil service offices. In different offices of this sector varied minority individuals have found recruited. The study formulates interview with twenty employed individuals that belong to minorities worked in different civil service offices having different ethnic identities such as Tigrie, Kambata, Amhara, and Guragie.

Some informants from service recipients belonging to minorities had responded that, they are facing communication problem during tax payment due to the language difficulty. As per the respondents perspective this is happening because some officers in the town have difficulties to communicate with the service recipients in Amharic and some are not volunteer to communicate by this language; since they feel that in previous regimes their language has not given a proper recognition and it might be they want to develop their language only (Interview with higher official work at Merti Woreda administration office, Abomsa, January 2015). However, there are no officers in public sector offices that do not speak Oromiffa. Because of that there is no complain from the majority Oromiffa speakers.

This study conducted an interview and discussions with some unemployed individuals who understand and speak the working language of the region. Their ethnic backgrounds are from Guragie, Amhara, Tigre and also few individuals from Oromo nation participated. According to minorities' response, they become familiar with the Oromiffa by their efforts and properly learned the language in formal education. They are unemployed because of different reasons. Some informants respond that, they failed the COC and other exams given by respective offices to fit the required vacant positions. On the other, in discussions few individuals principally from non-Oromo ethnic account the issue of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. Respondents particularly from non-Oromo ethnic group state that, ethnic background is becoming one of the criteria's to get hired. However, the constitution as well as criteria that set by civil service institutions has no ethnic measure to recruit employers.

To be recruited in civil service there is no regard to one's ethnic identity apart from the working language of the region (interview with higher officials, at the Merti Woreda administration bureau, 3 February, 2015). Here, in the study area different minority individuals capable of speaking the working language found recruited and work in different civil service institutions.

In both interview and discussions held in the study, the non-Oromiffa speaker minority individuals respond that the major problem that they encountering is incapability of the region working language. In the discussion, unemployed individuals from management field of study stated that, they applied for the vacancy that set by the woreda administration office; but they cannot able to compete and recruit because of language difficulty. Likewise, some unemployed youngsters who have diploma in accounting and information technology said that, they could not able to compete for vacancy arranged by the woreda finance office. Different individuals also interviewed and responded that language problem takes the lion share in limiting them from participating in public sector vacancies; as a result they are encountering crucial problem on their personal as well as social life.

Some of the public sector officials also stated that every position in civil service institutions sets the working language as mandatory criteria; since majority residents considering the rural area communicate by Oromiffa (Interview with officials at Merti Woreda administration office, Abomsa 22 January, 2015).

The Oromia regional constitution also declares that all civil service as well as political activities in the region has to use Oromiffa as a medium of communication. Similarly my key informant from the woreda finance office confirms that, Oromiffa language is binding to work in this office and minorities should have to be familiar with Oromiffa. The following explanation is taken from interview;

*‘...we should consider majority service recipients settled in rural area around this woreda. This institution is not only serving the town residents, but rural settlers too. In addition, it is constitutional rights given for all regional states’ (Abomsa, 10 February, 2015).*

Some researchers argue that the Oromia constitution gives emphasis for voluntary assimilation. According to Tokuma Daba (2010:84), the Oromia regional state constitution, instead of providing due spaces for ethnic minorities it gives more emphasis to voluntary assimilation. According to him, it is because the dispersed nature of ethnic diversity in Oromia made it difficult to extend territorial based protection to non-Oromo ethnic minorities. Different higher officials state that, those minority individuals should have to be familiar with the working language.

To look at the political environment, Art.2 (2) of the Oromia constitution acknowledges that Oromia is not purely inhabited by Oromo peoples as it states “Oromia is populated by people of Oromo nation and other peoples”. Accordingly, the party regulation of Oromo People Democratic Organization Art.16 (1) states, to be admitted to any political positions and other responsibilities, loyalty to party program is enough. Accepting the political program of the ruling party is enough to be admitted to membership of the OPDO if a person can understand the working language of the region (party regulation Art.11). Therefore, Oromiffa speakers’ unemployed minority individuals explain that, there is no problem with regard to ethnic identity and participating in political activities. Since, they are familiar with the region working language.

Caffee Oromia is vested with the highest political power in the region. It comprises representatives of the people from electoral woredas. As per Art (48)(1-2) election of members to Caffee is conducted directly, popularly and secretly by the residents of the region on the basis of universal suffrage for a term of five years. Hence, implicitly it shows that minority individuals have given such right. Therefore, minorities can able to participate in any political activities as long as they can understand the working language of the region.

### **3.2. Challenges for becoming familiar with regional working language**

Language is the main tools of communication and it is the way for any interaction within the society. According to Michal and Abu (2010:741), it is not only a crucial tool for a nation, but also a legitimate and natural means of justifying its existence and an aesthetic affective realization of a community’s internal essence.

Based on the report from Abomsa town of two kebeles, most unemployed individuals particularly minorities are not familiar with Oromiffa language. However, in the formal education they have an access to learn the language. In practice, in Abomsa town medium of instruction in primary school is either Oromiffa or Amharic depending on the preferences of the students. Those who learn in Oromiffa started learning Amharic as a subject from grade five. Similarly those who are learning Amharic are also expected to learn Oromiffa as a subject starting from grade five. So, why do those minority individuals face difficulty in familiarizing themselves to the working language?

The following reasons are forwarded from participants of focus group discussion that most participants of the discussion are born and grownup in Abomsa town. Some others come from nearest Kebeles of the woreda and completed their education in Abomsa town. But all are speaking Amharic and said that, Amharic language is their mother tongue. Those respondents' claims that they complete their first cycle classes by their mother tongue and it is too late to start learning Oromiffa language starting from grade five and this creates problem on them in order not to be familiar with the language.

The other reason that pointed by the participants of the focus group discussion is related with community interaction. They stated that, in the town they are living with majority inhabitants peacefully and communicate by Amharic language. Majority of the residents also communicate by Amharic instead of using Oromiffa and this leads them to be more familiar with the Amharic rather than the working language. With this regard the study tries to interview some families of unemployed minorities about the usage of language at the community level. Some families said that, in Abomsa town though different minorities other than the Amhara ethnic group exists majority residents use Amharic for communication.

In Abomsa, different social activities, such as Ekub (traditional method of saving), Idir (traditional ways of implementing funeral ceremony) and the like activities are practiced by the Amharic language. According to participants of these activities, in these social activities there is no any segregation rather they integrated together. Both minorities and major residents play a part equally. Such kinds of social activity strengthen the bond between the majority and minority relations. Thus, some participants of these social programs stated that, '*we are participating equally for a common goal*'. Here, according to them, the main use of language is communication.

The study formulates an interview with different officials working at Merti Woreda administration office and other offices. According to some officials' response, those individuals have an opportunity to learn by Oromiffa and also it is important for them to select and learn by this language since at community level they can easily communicate through Amharic language. The second response is related with negligence. Some officers stated that, these individuals are not willing to know the working language of the region. Even in the formal education some Amharic learners

are not willing to attend the Oromiffa class properly or they do not even care about the language.

However, the new coming minorities will face problem, since they have not obtain this chance. In line with this issue higher official works at Merti-Woreda administration office asserted that, adult education is a suitable solution for individuals who come to the town later in life. If those minorities learn the region working language by this program, it is not only support them rather the former individuals who are not familiar with the language will get second opportunity.

In general, according to some officials response lack of attention in attending Oromiffa language class in formal education and negligent behavior can be considered as a great barrier that limiting minorities from improvement of the regional working language skill. On the other hand the curriculum currently on work that applied for formal education and the community level interactions accounted by some minorities as crucial obstacles to be familiar with the language.

### **3.3. Impacts of Collective Rights on Minority Individuals**

There are serious human right concerns arose in relation to minorities and persons belonging to exogenous groups in the federal constitution. Currently there is no law at the federal level that addresses the rights of exogenous or dispersed minorities nor are there laws at the regional level (Getachew, 2011:65). The Oromia regional state constitution also has not any provisions deals about minorities particularly related with job opportunity in public sector for these minority individuals.

The federal constitution protects different collective rights to the nation, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. In a country like Ethiopia, where many nations, nationalities and peoples live together, it becomes even more important to recognize the rights of national groups who under past regimes have been discouraged from developing their cultures and languages. Among these collective rights, the *right to speak, to write and to develop its own language* is protected under the constitution.

Each federation has given constitutional right to determine the working language which is collective in nature. In this section, the study tries to show the impacts of collective rights that given to the Oromo nation on dispersed minority individuals in relation with language. Principally, those minorities who do not understand the

working language have not a right to engage and work in most civil service jobs. In addition, they also cannot participate in political activities.

This study concerns on the civil service sector jobs. This is because, in the study area there being a lot of unemployed minority individuals who have different qualifications and looking for vacancy in this sector. From the total number of registered unemployed minorities, only 17 % are familiar with the language. Some participants of the focus group discussion stated that, as a citizen their families' pay tax to the region. Accordingly, they should obtain service by the language that they can understand. Since those service recipients who are not familiar with the working language encountering communication problem. In addition, those unemployed individuals tell the impact of unemployment on themselves particularly financial and psychological consequences.

The study tries to interview some service recipients from members of minorities regarding the problem. Most participants claim the problem that encountering in different civil service offices. For instance one of my key informants says the following; '*... I faces problem of communication with officers in time of tax payment this is because I have not familiar with the Oromiffa*'. However, no one claims a problem related with communication in the court. This is because everyone can get service from Merti Woreda court without any challenge as a result of language. Generally, it is possible to assume that, conflict is to be expected between individuals and collective rights.

The impacts of joblessness is difficult to measure, it has immeasurable crises. Thus, unemployment and poverty are irrefutable situations and have huge negative consequences on individuals as well as social life. Therefore, unemployed minority individuals in the study area encounter such kinds of consequences.

Different officials also consider the impacts of collective rights on minority individuals in line with language. They stated that, the problem is only manifest on minority individuals who do not understand the working language of the sector office. They also stated that it is not economical to serve all minorities by different languages and the majority residents also should be considered. Thus, some officials recommended that to solve this problem those minorities should make their efforts to learn and familiar with the language.

To conclude, unemployment has huge impacts on the life of individuals and as a whole on development of a country. In the study area as a result of language problem a lot of minority individuals' have not able to compete for job vacancies set by different civil service offices; and serve themselves as well as their families. From the total number of graduate unemployed individuals 74% are not familiar with the working language of the region. Only seventy four individuals that belong to minorities and fifty one individuals from majority ethnic group are familiar with the Oromiffa and they are jobless because of different reasons.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **4.1. Conclusion**

This study dealt with language policy and its impacts on individuals belonging to minorities particularly in line with job opportunities found in the areas of public sector offices under the current federal system. The case specifically focuses in Abomsa town of Merti Woreda in Oromia regional state. The study reveals that due to language policy, many unemployed minority individuals graduated in different field of study couldn't get a chance to get employed in civil service offices.

Federalism is a means to enhance unity in diversity. It is a suitable way of governance to accommodate diversity and enhance unity. For a country like Ethiopia that encompasses multicultural and multilingual society federalism is appropriate system of governance. Since, the system recognizes the culture, language and other differences of several ethnic groups in the country. More over federal arrangement is also one of the various measures designed to protect minorities in a multi ethnic societies.

To accommodate the linguistic diversity government creates a language policy which attempts equal protection to all languages. Unlike the previous regimes, the current language policy of Ethiopia affirms the equal protection that inclusive to all languages of the county and it manifests on article five of the federal constitution. Consequently, regional states have given the right to determine the working language. The Oromia regional state also uses Oromiffa as working language of the region. Thus, any civil service and political activities of the region practiced through this language.

The study shows that, different graduated individuals those belong to minorities living in Abomsa town who are not capable of speaking the working language of the region encountering problem to get job opportunities in public sector offices. Therefore, collective rights that given to the Oromo nation affects those minority individuals. However, the study observed that some minority individuals capable of speaking and understanding of the region working language who recruited and work in various civil service offices of Abomsa town.

This study also shows that, the medium of instruction in Abomsa is either Oromiffa or Amharic. This is a great opportunity for those minority residents to learn and be familiar with the regional language. Even if, among the total number of unemployed individuals most of them are not understand and familiar with the working language.

Though the federal constitution of Ethiopia in article 41 (1) recognizes the right to work in every part of the country for all; a lot of youngsters from member of the dispersed minority individuals encountering unemployment problem. Since, they are not capable of speaking and understanding the working language of the region.

#### **4.2. Recommendations**

The subsequent suggestions are forward as solutions to the problem.

- ❖ Minority individuals have a chance to learn Oromiffa in formal education. In primary school, they have an opportunity to select and educate by their mother tongue. Oromiffa subject is given as one subject starting from grade five and students at this level also should work hard to improve their skill. However, it is more important for those minorities to be familiar with the language if it starts in lower grades.
- ❖ On the other, adult education in Oromiffa has paramount importance for those unemployed individuals to participate and work in civil service offices. This is not only support unemployed individuals but also service recipients. Because some individuals claim communication difficulties particularly in the process of service delivery. Therefore, if those individuals can understand the working language and recruit in civil service offices they will serve service recipients who are not familiar with the working language which minimizes cost. Policy makers concerned in the education sector also should look at this issue.
- ❖ The writer perceived that the main function of language is communication. So that, these minority individuals should work hard to improve their skills of using working language. Because, beyond the work opportunity language has huge significance for social life interaction.
- ❖ In the study area there are different job opportunities beyond the civil service sector. So, until the problem gets solution unemployed minorities should look for other jobs in which language is not mandatory requirements.

- ❖ Finally, it should be clear that the findings of this study are not final. The writer recommends that further study should be conducted on these contested issues.

## **Bibliography**

- Aberra Dagafa. (2008). The scope of rights of national minorities under the constitution of the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa University press.
- African economic outlook- AEO, (2012), Ethiopia country profile.
- Adebabay Abay,(2011).promoting and strengthening professionalism in the civil service: the Ethiopian case. Ministry of civil service, Addis Ababa; Ethiopia.
- Assefa Fiseha. (2007). Federalism and the Accommodation of Diversity in Ethiopia: A Comparative Study. Nijmegen: Wolf Legal.
- Belay Shibeshi .(2010). Minority Rights Protection in the Amhara National Regional State: The Case of the Kemant People in North Gondar. Addis Ababa University; Ethiopia
- Beken, V.C.(2007). Ethiopia: Constitutional Protection of Ethnic Minorities at the Regional Level. Journal of African Focus, Vol. 20, No. 1-2, pp. 105-151.
- Beverley, H. (1998). Trent Focus for Research and Development in Primary Health Care: An introduction to Qualitative Research. Trent Focus.
- Chevrier Marc,(1996).Canadian federalism and the autonomy of Québec: A historical Viewpoint. Canada.
- Dube. S & Danescu. D,(2011). Supplemental guidance: public sector definition. The institute of internal auditors.
- Donnelly jack, (2003). Universal human rights: in theory and practice. Cornell University Press, New York.
- Elazar, D. (1987). Exploring Federalism. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- FDRE. (1995). The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Berhane Selam printing press, AA.
- Fiseha Haftetsion,(2010). Choosing a Working Language in Multiethnic Nations: Rethinking Ethiopia's working language policy. Ethiopia.

- Flick,U.(2002).An introduction to qualitative research, London: SAGE publication.
- Getachew Anteneh,(2006). Language Policy in Ethiopia: History and Current Trends. Journal, vol.2 No.
- Getachew Assefa.(2012). Federalism and legal pluralism in Ethiopia: preliminary observations impacts on the protection of human rights ,Addis Ababa university; Ethiopia
- Getachew H\Mariam, (2006). Civil service reform in Ethiopia; success in two ministries; University of Hull center for management, United Kingdom.
- Getahun kassa.(2007). Mechanisms of Constitutional Control: A Preliminary Observation of the Ethiopian System. Journal of African Focus, Vol. 20, No. 1-2, pp. 75-104.
- Grin.F (1998). Language Policy in Multilingual Switzerland: Overview and Recent Developments, Department of Economics, University of Geneva, Switzerland.
- Haileyesus Taye. (2012). Issues of minority rights in the Ethiopian federation: ECMI working paper, No.59, European center for minority issues.
- Henrand Kristin, (2010).Minorities, International Protection, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg and Oxford University Press.
- Hull Katy. (2009). Understanding the relationship between economic growth ,employment and poverty reduction; World Bank ,Washington DC.
- Islam Rizwanul, (2004). The nexus of economic growth, employment and poverty reduction: An empirical analysis; international labor office recovery and reconstruction department, Geneva.
- Jones, P.(1999). Human rights, group rights and peoples' rights: the Johns Hopkins university press.
- Kevin Kolben, (2010). Labor Rights as Human Rights? Virginia Journal of International Law Association.

- Kumera kanea,(2006). Decentralized governance and service delivery: A case of digelu and tijoworeda of Arsizone in Oromia region ; Addis Ababa university, Ethiopia
- Kymlicka, W.(2008). “The internationalization of minority rights”, International Journal of Constitutional Law.
- Marie-Eve Hudon, (2013). Official language in Canada Federal policy. Library of Parliament; Ottawa, Canada.
- Martin Howard, (2007). Language issues in Canada; multidisciplinary perspectives.Cambridge scholars publishing.
- Michal Tannenbaum & Netta Abugov ,(2010).The Legacy of the Linguistic Fence: Linguistic Patterns among ultra-Orthodox Jewish Girls. *Heritage Language Journal*, Tel Aviv University.
- Ministry Of Finance and Economic Development- MoFED ,(2010). Oromia Regional PEFA assessment report.
- Morning Ann. (2005). Ethnic classification in global perspective: across national survey of the2000 census round; New York University, New York.
- Morgan,D.(1997). Focus groups as qualitative research ,SAGE publication ltd.
- Nasic Halida, (2007).MIRICO: Human and Minority Rights in the Life Cycle of Ethnic Conflicts, Minority Rights Instruments and Mechanisms: Minority Protection along the Conflict Continuum. European academy.
- National Employment Policy and Strategy –NEPS, (2009). Addis Ababa.
- Patten. Alan.(2008). Survey Article: The Justification of Minority Language Rights, Politics, Princeton University.
- Patricia A. Duff& Duanduan Li.(2009). The Indigenous, Minority, and Heritage Language Education in Canada: Policies, Contexts, and Issues, Canadian Modern Language Review. press.

- Semahagn Gashu.(2012). The dilemma of adopting ethnic federal system in Africa in light of the perspectives from Ethiopian experience. *Journal of African Studies and Development* Vol. 4(7), pp. 168-175.
- Tesfaye Debela,(2010). *Civil service in Ethiopia: the marriage between profession and politics*; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Tokuma Daba. (2010). *The legal and practical protection of the rights of Minorities in self administering nations of Ethiopia: the case of Oromia* .Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.
- Toscano Manuel.(2012). *Language rights as collective rights: some conceptual considerations on language rights; the Spanish national research plan*.
- TsegayG\kidan & Nzinga,(2012). *Youth unemployment: Ethiopia country study*; London School of economics and political science, United Kingdom.
- Watts Ronald, (1999).*comparing federal system*. Montreal: Mc Grill-Quebec University
- Watts, R. (2013). *The Contemporary Relevance of Federalism: Ethiopian Journal Of Federal Studies*, Vol.1, No1.
- Weeks john,(2005). *Economic policies for growth employment and poverty reduction*. Art Grup Brivet, Moldova.
- West caroline, (2005). *Personal identity, individual autonomy and group rights*. The university of Sydeney.
- Virginia Mantouvalou (2012). *Are Labor Rights Human Rights?* *Labor Law Journal* UCL Labor Rights Institute On-Line Working Papers.

**APPENDIX**

**Table: 1 the number and educational backgrounds of unemployed individuals who participated in the study**

Ethnic Backgrounds	Educational Qualifications (in certificate and diploma)	Total Number
Guragie	Management	74
	Accounting	
	Information Technology	
Amhara	Accounting	
	Information Technology	
	survey	
Tigrie	Information Technology	
	Accounting	
	management	
Oromo	Accounting	
	survey	
	Information technology	

**Table: 2 the number and ethnic backgrounds of employed individuals work at different civil service offices who involved in the study**

Ethnic backgrounds	Total number
Amhara	
Tigrie	
Guragie	
Kambata	
	20

**Table: 3 the number and ethnic backgrounds of service recipients who participated in the study**

Ethnic backgrounds	Total number
Amhara	
Tigrie	
Guragie	
	23

**Table: 2 the number of interviewed officials and their position with their total number**

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Positions (Responsibilities ) In Office</b>	<b>Total number</b>
Abomsa town Mayer	Vice manager of Abomsa town administration	13
	Secretary of Mayer of Abomsa town	
Woreda finance office	Budget and planning officer	
	Personnel administration officer	
	Communication affairs officer	
Merti-woreda administration	Personal administration officer	
	vice administrator of the woreda	
Mertiworeda court center	lawyer	
Abomsa health center	Nurse	
	Personnel administration officer	
Commercial bank of Ethiopia	Customer service	
	Vice manager of the branch	
Abomsa junior school	Language teachers	
		13

### **Interview questions for employed, unemployed and service recipients' individuals**

1. How much years have been working in this office?
2. What is your profession and responsibility in this civil service institution?
3. What are the general criteria that used to employ civil servants?
4. How do you become familiar with the region working language?
5. How much years have you been in this town?
6. Did you have access to improve the regional working language?
7. What sorts of challenges hampering you not to become familiar with the working language of the region?
8. Is there any problem that you encountered in time of getting services from different public sector offices in the town?

### **Focus group discussions guide questions**

1. How long you have been in this town?
2. Where did you complete your education? In what fields of study are you graduated?
3. Why did you not recruit and work in different civil service offices found in this town?
4. What sorts of challenges you come across to be familiar with the regional working language?
5. Have you attended the Oromiffa class attentively that helps you to understand the language?

### **Interview Questions for Officials work at civil service institutions**

1. What are the major criteria that used to recruit civil servants in this institution?
2. Is there a clear standard that used to employ civil servants?
3. Do you believe on the impacts of collective rights given to Oromo nation up on minorities living in this area?
4. Are do minority individuals given opportunity to improve Oromiffa language?
5. What solutions should be taken in order to solve the problems facing these minorities?