

## Human rights Education in India: Role of Different Institutions

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### Abstract

Human rights are fundamental to the peace, stability, democracy and development of countries. Adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations on December 10, 1948 gave a global thrust to the Human Rights. The Human Rights in Indian constitution are fundamental rights i.e. Right to Life, Right to Liberty, Right to Freedom of Religion, Right to Equality, Protection against Torture, Right against Illegal Arrest, Right of Bail, Double Jeopardy, Benefit of Doubt, Right to Remedies, Right to Expression, Right to Assemble, Right to Vote, Cultural and Educational Rights, Right to Constitutional Remedies and Directive Principles of State Policies etc.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom." The present paper will discuss the role of different institutions in human rights education.

**Keywords:** *Education, Constitution, Human Rights, Human Right Education, Higher Education.*

### Introduction

Education is the gateway to enter the path of progress, success, justice and empowerment. It opens the inner eyes in the human being and that is knowledge, not mere information which is related with the system of education. According to Justice H. K. Sema, "It is education which is right weapon to cut the social slavery, economic betterment and political freedom".

Human rights are fundamental to the peace, stability and development of countries all around the world. Great emphasis has been placed on international conventions and their implementation in order to ensure adherence to a universal standard of acceptability. With the advent of globalization and the introduction of new technology, these principles gain importance not only to protect human beings from the ill-effects of change but also to ensure a share of the benefits.

However the efficiency of the mechanisms in place today has been questioned in the light of human rights violations and disregard for basic human dignity in nearly all countries in one or more forms. In many cases, those who are blamed cannot be booked because of unawareness, political considerations and power equations etc. When such violations are allowed to go

unchecked, they often increase in frequency and intensity usually because perpetrators feel that they enjoy immunity from punishment. Hence an awareness generation is need of the hour.

The Constituent Assembly drafted the Constitution of India in 1950. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, had already been adopted with the hope that ultimately all member States will adopt these rights in their constitutions. Consequently, the Constitution of India, 1950 set out a most elaborate declaration of Human Rights. These rights were broadly divided into two compartments (i) political and civil rights (Fundamental Rights) and (ii) social, economic and cultural rights (Directive Principles of State Policy).

### Human Rights in Indian Constitution

Following provisions exist in Indian Constitution to safeguard human rights: Equality before Law (Article 14);

Non-discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth (Article 15);

Equality of opportunity (Article 16);

Freedom of speech, expression, assembly, association, movement, residence, acquisition, and disposition of property, practising of any profession, carrying out any occupation, trade or business (Article 19);

Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour (Article 23);

Prohibition of labour in case of children below 14 years (Article 24);

Freedom of religion (Article 25);

No provision for religious instruction in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds (Article 28);

Conservation of language, script and culture (Article 29(1));

Right of minorities to administer educational institutions (Article 30);

State guarantee of a social order (Article 38(1) of Directive Principles of State Policy);

Adequate means of livelihood, equal pay for equal work for both men and women, non abuse of health of the worker, opportunity to children to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity (Article 39 of Directive Principles);

Right to work, to education and to public assistance in specific cases (Article 41 of Directive Principles);

Provision for free and compulsory education of children up to 14 years of age (Article 45 of Directive Principles);

Ensuring education and economic development of S.C., S.T. and other weaker sections of society (Article 46 of Directive Principles).

Right to Education

Articles 28 and 29 of the U.N. Convention deal with the rights of the child. These are as follows:

Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education and with a view to achieving the right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall in particular:

a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of dropout rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international co-operation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

a) The development of the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of The United Nations;

c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his/her own;

d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all people, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

### **Education for Human Rights**

The education for human rights is defined as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at building the universal culture of human rights through imparting the knowledge and skills and the moulding the attitudes.

### **Role of the Home**

The home plays most important role in human rights education. The mother is the first teacher of the child. Her attitude towards human rights plays vital role in building desirable attitudes towards human rights in children. Other members of the

family also play an important role. The way the family brings up the child shapes the attitude of the child. Generally, many parents punish the child. This goes against the Rights of the Child. The society has to be enlightened about such rights of the child. In ancient times, corporal punishment was rampant. Giving slap is a common scene. Modern child psychology forbids any kind of punishment. If punishment is to be taken out, the society has to be more patient in dealing with children. Generally it is seen that the mothers who are weak in body get easily irritated. The couple having no means of sustenance, if has more children also give various types of punishment. The present day society is consumer-oriented society. It has motivated, society for non-essential wants which have made families more starved of material possessions and resulting unhappiness. The essence of happiness needs to be cultured. The human rights violation is more seen in case of illiterate and poor families. Hence, adult education is a must.

#### **Ongoing Activities for Human Rights Education**

A large number of activities are going on in the education system to provide education system for human rights. Some of these are as follows

##### **Associated Schools Project**

The UNESCO launched Associated Schools Project in 1953. It is now being implemented in more than 114 countries and in 2,800 schools.

##### **Awards**

UNESCO has instituted awards for promoting Human Rights Education. In 1994, the UNESCO prize for the teaching of human rights was awarded to the Philippines Commission for Human Rights.

##### **UNESCO Chair for Human Rights Education**

UNESCO has instituted Chairs for human rights education. The UNESCO Chair at Comenius University at Bratislava (Czechoslovakia) had been formally established on October 26, 1992. The University provides a comprehensive two-semester course on theory and history of human rights. The title of the course is "The Origin and Significance of Human Rights." It is offered to students of all faculties. There are also a few semester long courses.

##### **Inter Cultural Education Programmes**

UNESCO and the Council of Europe have been encouraging intercultural education. There are many publications for training of teachers.

##### **Development of Awareness among Teachers and Teacher Educators**

Various nations have been taking steps for developing awareness of school teachers and teacher educators. In India, the National Council for Teacher Education has organised a number of programmes for teacher educators. Self-learning print materials have been developed. Video programme has also been developed.

##### **Human Rights Education outside Formal System**

Human rights education is being provided to general public through mass media such as television, internet, magazines and newspapers. Reports on violation of human rights are brought to the notice of the human rights commissions.

##### **Human Rights Education in Formal Institutions**

Human rights education is interdisciplinary in nature. It involves the subject areas of political science, civics, history philosophy, psychology, science, sociology, home science, commerce, geography and last but not the least Education. Some of the topics may be : Education for tolerance, Personal responsibility, Child as a teacher, Learning of a teacher from a student, Openness in education, Respect for the personality of the student, Education based on dialogue between teachers and students, Mutual out of school co-operation between the teachers and the students, Democracy and mutual understanding, Procedures for the protection of human rights, Violation of human rights and democratic freedom, Terrorism, Organised crime, Drug trafficking, Communalism, Religious tolerance, Spirituality, Non-violence, Economic rights, Civil rights, Cultural rights, Linguistic rights, Social rights, Critical thinking, Scientific temper, Intellectual honesty Justice and empathy, Legal awareness, Equality of educational opportunity, Equality of sexes, Feminist theory and practice, Political economy and humanism, Nationalism and minority rights, Local government and civic rights, Constitutionalism and legitimacy, History and philosophy of human rights, Human rights and human responsibilities, The ethics and morality Variety of religions and their common

challenge, Role of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human rights in the national and world history, National health care and human rights International understanding, Environmental pollution, Population explosion, Violation within school and families, etc.

Human rights education is very much relevant today when the nation finds communal and religious clashes. Human rights education in brief should focus attitude of tolerance, respect and solidarity and should develop individual awareness about the ways and means by which human rights can be translated into social and political reality.

### **Role of Higher Education Institutions**

The universities and colleges play a vital role in developing awareness of people on human rights and developing appropriate attitude to implement human rights concepts. Some of the products of the universities and colleges join the teaching profession. Hence their education for human rights shall be effectively utilised in the school system. This education shall also be of much help to them in performing their citizenship roles. Various aspects of human rights education at the higher education stage may be as follows:

1 Survey of awareness about human rights among college and university students, college and university teachers, parents, school teachers, school students, educational administrators, SC population, ST population, people remaining below poverty line, child labourers and their parents, politicians, panchayat raj representatives, etc.

2. Organising exhibitions on the different aspects of constitutional provision and their violation.

3. Carrying out evaluation of textbooks in the light of human rights violation.

4. Evaluating classroom activities of the teachers in the light of the rights of the child.

5. Studying newspaper reports on violation of human rights.

6. Studying the problems concerning non-enrolment of children in schools and developing plan of action to solve this problem.

7. Evaluating the state and national programmes of human rights education.

8. Organising activities such as one act plays, street plays, etc portraying various aspects of human rights.

9. Organising public meetings in the locality to develop awareness of public on human rights.

10. Studying different religious practices and activities of good men that violate human rights.

11. Studying the problems of girl students in co-educational institutions.

12. Studying the problems of women teachers in co-educational schools and colleges.

13. Studying the provision for equal opportunity in education.

14. Studying the conditions of work at home and at other work sites.

15. Studying the superstitions existing in the locality.

16. Providing courses on human rights education.

17. Studying the NPE programme with reference to the rights of the child to get basic education.

18. Studying the extent of punishment given in schools that discourage a child to attend schools.

### **Conclusion**

We all are living in age of social transformation. It is only an informed and educated civil society that can shape thoughts and perception and rejuvenate traditions to ensure that the forces of transformation work to promote and protect human rights. As teachers and leaders of thoughts, much is expected from us in the field of education for human rights.

The higher education institution has to revamp its system for ensuring development of awareness of its student's community on different aspects of the issue of human rights. It has to revise its courses of study to accommodate this issue. The universities need to change their strategies to give more power to the students to decide the course structure, evaluation strategy, teaching methodology, duration of study, etc. The courses have to be flexible to cater to the interests of varieties of students. The NPE 1986 had pointed out necessity of de-linking degrees from jobs. Serious efforts need to be made on this issue.

Education is a powerful tool for social transformation and justice. Through our programs we hope to develop values and attitudes that bring about peace, justice and equality. We have started the process of formation at the root of society by sowing the seed of humanism in the minds of our students, the future of India. The task ahead of us is daunting and challenging. We have many miles to go and promises to keep, in solidarity with like minded people, the distance become shorter and the target achievabl



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