



Human Rights-At A Glance

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ABSTRACT

Education in human rights is itself a fundamental human right and also a responsibility. The Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays down that "every individual and every organ of society" to "strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms". The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights declares that a government "may not stand in the way of people learning about their rights". Growing consensus around the world recognizes education for and about human rights as essential. It can contribute to the building of free, just, and peaceful societies. It also teaches the skills of negotiation, mediation, and consensus building.

The paper focus on human rights, historical foundations of human rights, human rights education, importance of human rights education, the Indian Constitution and human rights etc.,

KEYWORDS : Human rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Human rights education, Social order, racial injustice etc.,

Introduction:

The term 'human rights' denote all rights that are present in our society and without which one cannot live as human beings. Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, irrespective of their nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. All are equally entitled to human rights without any discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, guaranteed by law, in the forms of international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

Human rights are commonly understood as basic fundamental rights that a person cannot be denied by any individual or any government simply because he or she is a human being. They are universal and same for everyone. Human rights entail both rights and obligations. The basic ideology and norms of human rights existing now are adopted as Universal Declaration of Human Rights by United Nations General Assembly in 1948 has its root from Second World War. Every year 10th December is celebrated as Human Rights Day.

Historical Foundations of Human Rights:

Ever since the beginning of civilized life in a political society, the shortcomings and tyranny of the powers that be have led men to the quest of a superior order. Dissatisfaction with laws ordained by tyrants or even benevolent despots generated an appeal to a natural law which was to be an embodiment of reason, justice, immutability and universality, which were lacking in manmade laws.

The roots for the protection of the rights of man can be traced as far back as to the Babylonian laws. The Babylonian King Hammurabi issued a set of laws to his people called Hammurabi's Codes. It established fair wages, offered protection of property and required charges to be proved at trial. The Assyrian Laws, the Hittite laws and the Dharma of the Vedic period in India also devised different sets of standards by which the rights of one were respected by another. All the major religions of the world have a humanist perspective that supports human rights despite the differences in their content.

Human rights are also rooted in ancient thought and in the philosophical concepts of 'Natural Law' and 'Natural Rights'. Western scholars date the genesis of this ideal of natural law to Sophocles, more than 400 years before Christ. A few Greek and Roman philosophers recognized the idea of Natural Rights. Plato (427-348 BC) was one of the earliest thinkers to advocate a universal standard of eth-

ical conduct. According to the Roman jurist, Ulpian, natural law was that "which nature and the State assure to all human beings." This meant that foreigners must be treated in the same way as one deals with one's compatriots. It also implied conducting of wars in a civilized manner. Plato in his treatise, The Republic (400 B.C) proposed the idea of universal truths that should be recognized by all. Aristotle (384-322 B.C) wrote in Politics that justice, virtue and rights change in accordance with different kinds of institutions and circumstances. Cicero (106-43 B.C), a Roman statesman, laid down the foundations of "natural law" and "human rights" in his work, The Laws (52 B.C). Cicero believed that there should be universal human rights laws that transcend customary and civil laws.

Human Rights Education:

Human rights education is all learning that develops the knowledge, skills, and values of human rights. The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) has defined Human Rights Education as "training, dissemination, and information efforts aimed at building of a universal culture of human rights through imparting knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes which are directed to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, the promotion of understanding, respect, gender equality, and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society, the furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the Maintenance of Peace." During this Decade, the UN is urging and supporting all member states to make knowledge about human rights available to everyone through both the formal and informal education.\

Importance of Human Rights Education:

It is important to make each and every citizen literate just not in order to make them educated and capable of earning their livelihood but also recognize their rights towards themselves and each other. An educated person only can stand for its right. Human rights education is about empowering the individual to both recognize human rights abuses and to commit to their prevention. Thus, a core part of human rights education is the strengthening of respect for human rights. It is now a global responsibility of every citizen and the government to promote education and hence promote human rights.

Further HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION:-

- Declares a commitment to those human rights expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the UN Covenants, and the United States Bill of Rights. It asserts the respon-

- sibility to respect, protect, and promote the rights of all people.
- Promotes democratic principles. It examines human rights issues without bias and from diverse perspectives through a variety of educational practices.
- Helps to develop the communication skills and informed critical thinking essential to a democracy. It provides multicultural and historical perspectives on the universal struggle for justice and dignity.
- Engages the heart as well as the mind. It challenges students to ask what human rights mean to them personally and encourages them to translate caring into informed, nonviolent action.
- Affirms the interdependence of the human family. It promotes understanding of the complex global forces that create abuses, as well as the ways in which abuses can be abolished and avoided.

The Indian Constitution and Human Rights:

The provisions concerning human rights are enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, and Directive Principles of the State policy are concrete steps toward the realization of human rights. Whereas basic objectives have been defined in the Preamble, the protection of human freedom and liberties are emphasized in Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy. The rights of the child have been given the greatest priority. Since rights and duties are inseparable, Fundamental Duties (Article 51) are also imperative. These provisions epitomize the collective will and aspiration of all Indians.

The human rights found their place in the following provisions of the Indian Constitution:

- equality before the law (Article 14);
- nondiscrimination on ground 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, practice of any profession, carrying out any occupation, trade, or business (Article 19);
- prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labor (Article 23);
- prohibition of labor 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, scripts, and culture (Article 29 [1]);
- right of minorities to administer educational institutions (Article 30);
- State guarantee of social order (Article 38 [1], 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 for children to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity (Article 39, Directive Principles of State Policy);
- right to work, education, and public assistance in specific cases (Article 41, Directive Principles of State Policy);
- provision for free and compulsory education of children up to 14 years of age (Article 45, Directive Principles of State Policy); and
- ensuring education and economic development of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other weaker sections of society (Article 46, Directive Principles of State Policy).

Conclusion:

Over the last few decades, the concept of human rights has led to the movement "All human rights for all". In a diverse country such as India, violations of human rights necessitate human rights education at all levels of education. Hence, human rights education should find its rightful place in the school curriculum, teacher training courses (pre and in-service), textbooks, supplementary reading materials, educational policies, and school administration. Hence, greater commitment from all sectors and preparation of a sound, realistic plan of action can help to achieve human rights education for all and transform the human rights movement into a mass movement to achieve a

better social order and peaceful coexistence. Indeed, this is one of the greatest challenges of the present day.

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