

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION TODAY

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ABSTRACT

The author has thrown light on the importance of human rights and their education in the present context. In this article he has explained in detail the work to be done by media, NGOs and other functionaries in the field of education. The role of schools, colleges and judiciary has been emphasised in the field of human rights education.

INTRODUCTION

President Franklin Roosevelt of USA, in his famous message to the congress in 1941, for the first time used the term "Human Rights" and stressed that the world should be founded on four essential freedoms freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of want and freedom from fear. In 1948, the UN General assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which had been drafted by Rene Cassin, who was later on awarded Nobel Prize in 1968. This Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been the most outstanding and the most fundamental landmark in the history of the concept of Human Rights in the world. It was adopted on 10th December, 1948 and so this day is celebrated as the Human Rights Day all over the world every year.

The importance of this declaration in the context of realization of human rights can not be ignored as it provided an authentic expression of human rights as a common standard of achievement for all people and Nations. Article 1 of the declaration provides that all the human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights whereas Article 2 declares that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the declaration "without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, National or social origin, property, birth or status". Article 29 of the declaration announces that 'everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible' and the declaration did include the economic and social rights, such as right to work, health and education that had been won in several

industrial countries in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Now a days, it is increasing recognition of the 'Universal rights to learn about human rights' which is making Human Rights Education as a vital part of the Education throughout the world.

Human Rights are necessary to ensure the dignity of every person irrespective of one's race, religion, nationality, language, sex or any other factor. But all "claims" of the individual for example freedom to live as one wishes, or to do whatever one wants to do, cannot be treated as Human Rights. Only those claims which are essential for the development of one's human personality and are recognized as such by the "Society" constitute the rights. These are morally and universally accepted rights, but they are not legal rights as such. Human Rights are essentially the rights of the people, both as individuals and in groups. Human Rights invariably involve duties because human beings have to live together. The culture of human Rights cannot grow without balancing rights with duties.

Human Rights like as civil, political, economic, social, cultural, developmental, intellectual and environmental Rights are becoming more and more important for the International Community. UNESCO International Congress on Education for Human Rights and Democracy in montreal in March 1993 also adopted Human Rights as a precondition for sustainable development, civil society and democracy. Moreover, it is the increasing recognition of the Universal rights to learn about human rights which is making Human Rights Education a vital part of the international education activities throughout the world.

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The rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of individual are integral to the ethos of a civilized society. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), The International covenants on civil and political Rights (1966) and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) to each of which India is a signatory, constitutes landmarks in the evolution of the concept of Human Rights. Not that the ideas was new to us. It was there in the philosophy of Ram Rajya and inscribed in the edicts of Ashoka. Lately the founding fathers of the Republic saw it that the essence and spirit of the Universal Declaration was incorporated in our Constitution. The concept of Human Rights is thus indigenous to the soil and an essential part of our philosophy of life. In our country, human rights perspectives have been considered even while framing our educational policies. Human Rights Education clearly shines in the recommendations of various committees and commissions like University Education Commission (1949), Secondary Education Commission (1952) and Indian Education Commission (1964-66). Even the National Policy for the welfare of children adopted by Govt. of India (1974), NPE (1986) and the Programme of Action (1992) laid emphasis on human rights and values. The constitution makers in India emphasized fundamental Rights and duties consisting many provisions regarding Human Rights such as equality, fraternity, liberty of faith and worship and dignity of persons as the integral scheme without distinction any kind such as race, colour, sex, religion, language, national or social origin, birth or status, property, political or other opinion. Human Rights Education is an emerging area of study in our country and is described as sensitization through dissemination of information and other efforts aimed at building of a universal culture of Human Rights through the imparting of knowledge, skills and moulding attitudes. It is an interdisciplinary field of study and draws contents from a number of disciplines like History, Political Science, International law, Sociology, Philosophy, ethics, Economics, Geography, Demography, Law, Environmental Studies, social Work, Public Welfare, Social administration social anthropology etc.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, had strongly recommended again and again that the teachers should be well prepared to provide Human Rights Education to their students formally and informally. Formal Human Rights Education should be provided in Primary schools, Secondary schools, senior Secondary school, Colleges, Professional Colleges, Technical Institutions, ITI, Vocational training Institutes, Teacher's College etc. Informal Human Rights Education should be provided to Religious and cultural associations, Professional Unions, UNESCO Clubs, Rural people, Poor people, Journalists, Parents associations, Lawyers, Judges, Resident's welfare associations, Army, Police personnel, Security guards, Social workers etc. In this regard, teachers play a very genuine role in the organization of Human Rights Education. Hence, teachers have to be provided training about the contents and pedagogy of human Rights. It has been widely accepted that the only way to improve the quality and effectiveness of Human Rights Education is to approach teachers and Teacher Educators. They have the capacities to develop learning packages that can help to transform learners in developing favorable attitudes into active participation, conviction that human rights must be protected, respected and promoted.

In every institutions like Schools, Colleges, Professional Colleges etc. HRE should be incorporated and Human Rights Club/Human Rights Centre should be established. For teaching Human Rights, required books, journals, charts, pictures, photographs, video slides etc. can be procured from UNESCO, Institute of World Congress Human Rights, National Human Rights Commission and Central Social Welfare Board Offices in Delhi.

The teachers should educate parents and community about children's rights and to ensure that no child within their knowledge is ever ill treated, exploited, beaten, insulted and deprived of his or her rights. All parents must know and if not they should be informed by teachers, NGOs and media that they must be fair just and equally caring towards their children.

They should treat both their sons and daughter equally and provide them same facilities and opportunities.

NGOs and Media in our country should do widest possible publicity of the rights of all human beings through news, articles, exhibitions, stories, broadcasts etc. and promote the awareness of people about Human Rights Education.

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