

Human Rights and Education: A Hope for Peace

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Abstract

“Human Rights For everyone is the necessary foundation upon which all of us may build a world where everybody may live in peace and serenity and plenty” —Michael Douglas

Human Rights are those minimal rights that every individual must have by virtue of his being a member of human family. They are the basic or natural rights which are inalienable and essential for development of human personality and for the happiness and progress of the human society. The need to make people aware of their rights is of paramount importance at their juncture. So Human rights and its education help in every human being from any type of discrimination and help the people to live peaceful and prosperous life in the society. Education can play a vital role in removing the ignorance and exploitation of human rights. In India, due to illiteracy and poor education system, people are not able to exercise them properly. Human Rights Education (HRE) is the only hope which helps in fulfilling the dream of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” i.e. The whole world is a family. So the main function of HRE is to acquire and generate those values which encourage justice, freedom and peace. A Sincere effort has been made to focus on the need of human rights for peace so that we will be able to make the world a better place to live.

Human Rights are the rights a person has simply because he or she is a human being.

Human rights are held by all persons equally, universally and forever.

Human rights are issues both in theory and in practice. It is related with philosophy, ethic and history in theory. It is closely related with people's life and is becoming an increasingly sensitive issue in international relations. Human rights hold up the vision of a free and peaceful world and set minimum standards for how individuals and institutions everywhere should treat people.

What are Human Rights?

Human rights (HR) are those fundamental rights which every individual inhabitation in any part of the world should be entitled to merely by virtue of having been born a Human being. They are the basic

or natural rights which are inalienable and essential for development of human personality and for the happiness and progress of the human society.

Being fundamental rights, they cannot be taken away by any act of the government/legislature of the country. They are also common rights which are shared by all men and women in the world. With the help of these human rights, one can breathe and live freely in the society i.e. with them people can live in dignity and peace as human beings. In nut shell, facilities and laws which man has got from God, Society and State for his development are called “Human Rights”.

Characteristics of Human Rights

Human rights possess the following characteristics:

- (1) **Universality:** It means human rights are same for all humans regardless of sex, religion, race or place of origin.
- (2) **Inalienable:** They cannot be taken away, no one has the right to deprive another person of them for any person.
- (3) **Inherent:** They are inherent in all human beings by virtue of their humanity alone (they do not have e.g. to be purchased or to be granted)
- (4) **Indivisible:** To live peacefully, all human beings are entitled to freedom, security and decent standards of living.

Origin of Human Rights and Declaration of Human Rights Day

The origin of human rights may be found both in Greek philosophy and the various world religions. During the 6th century the Achaemenid Persian Empire of Ancient Iran established unprecedented principles of human rights. Cyrus the Great (590BC-530BC) issued the Cyrus cylinder which declared that citizens of the empire would be allowed to practice their religious beliefs freely and also abolished slavery. The next generation of human rights documents were the Magna Charta Libertatum of 1215, the Golden Bull of Hungary(1222), and the English Bills of Rights of 1689.

The ideas of Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) one of the fathers of modern International Law and John Locke (1632-1704) attracted much interest in Europe in the 18th century. Locke, developed a comprehensive concept of natural rights; his list of rights consisting of life, Liberty and property. Rousseau and Kant and Locke in the Magna Carta(1215) talk about the concept which is considered as a milestone in the history of human rights.

The need for International standards of human rights was first felt at the end of the 19th century, when the industrial countries began to introduce labour legislation. The signing of the charter of the United Nations (UN) on 26th June 1945 brought human rights within the sphere of international law. In particular, all UN members agreed to take measures to protect human rights. The charter contains a number of articles specifically referring to human rights. Less than two years later the UN commission

on human Rights (UNCHR), established early in 1946, submitted a draft Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to the UN General Assembly. The assembly adopted the Declaration in Paris on **10th December 1948**. This day was later designated **Human Rights Day**.

During the 1950s and 1960s, more and more countries joined the UN. Upon joining they formally accepted the obligations contained in the UN charter and in doing so subscribed to the principles and ideals laid down in the UDHR. This commitment was made explicit in the proclamation of Teheran (1968), which was adopted during the First World Conference on Human Rights, and repeated in the Vienna Declaration and programme of Action, which was adopted during the Second World Conference on Human Rights (1993). The conference confirmed that respect for Human Rights is an Indispensable element of a genuine democracy. It declared that all HR are universal, indivisible, interdependent, inherent, inalienable, interrelated and underlined that the international community must treat HR globally in a fair and equal manner on the same footing.

Classification of Human Rights

Karel Vasak, a Czech Jurist classified Human Rights into three categories in 1979 as:

1. Human Rights of First Generation: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
2. Human Rights of Second Generation: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
3. Human Rights of Third Generation: Collective Rights

These are also called **Three Generations of Human Rights**.

First Generation of Human Rights (Blue Rights)

- Also called Blue Rights
- Liberation and Participation in Political Life
- Fundamentally Civil and Political nature
- When Ist Generation is limited, this directly limits IInd Generation.
- Rights include: Freedom of Speech, Right to a fair trial, Freedom of religion and voting rights.

Second Generation of Human Rights

- Red Rights
- Economic, Social and Cultural in nature
- Right to Employment, Housing and Health Care, Social Security and Unemployment benefits

- US President Roosevelt - Second Bill of Rights
- In South Africa, it is not Right to housing per se but Right to adequate housing

Third Generation of Human Rights

- Largely unofficial rights
- Difficult to implement
- Group and collective rights
- Right to self-determination
- Right to economic and social development
- Right to a healthy environment
- Right to natural resources
- Right to communicate and communication rights
- Right to participation in cultural heritage
- Rights to intergenerational equity and sustainability

Need for Human Rights

Peace cannot be achieved without human dignity. Human dignity involves implementation of human rights. United Nations Organization is the global organization established for the maintenance of World Peace. Its main objective is to promote and encourage basic human rights and freedom from all people. Without any distinction of race, sex, religion, language etc. promotion of human rights will lead to the better, living for all mankind. Human rights protect unity and solidarity of mankind.

Like food, shelter, education and health preservation protection of human rights has become one of the most important features of the life of the people to lead a dignified, peaceful and happy life.

If we talk in general terms, there is neither protection for human rights nor awareness of them, in our country. Even the concept of human rights is limited to a few intellectuals and legal and constitutional experts. By comparison the awareness and protection of human rights is very limited in our country. Though the efforts of some of them to propagate human rights consciousness are to be lauded, it is like a drop of enlightenment in the sea of an ignorant ocean.

It ignorance is darkness, lack of knowledge is dangerous. Every human being should know that he is a human being and should live like a human being. In other words, they should have the knowledge of his rights and privileges and he should assert them.

But this should not be the absolute assertion leading to the encroachment of the neighbors’ rights and privileges. Consciousness and Common sense are the two things that enliven his natural rights, which are called ‘Education’ in a scientific manner. Hence education drives away darkness and aboriginals and protects the Human Rights. Education can be regarded as the shield for natural rights of man. Hence education is a means and end in itself. It is a process by which human being develops a meaning behind life and that meaning which makes the human globe a celestial dwelling and a utopian reality.

The need to make people aware of their rights is of paramount importance at this juncture. It is the imperative task of education to bring about a healthy, sustainable, harmonious growth-oriented society. Only education can play a vital role in removing the ignorance and exploitation of Human Rights.

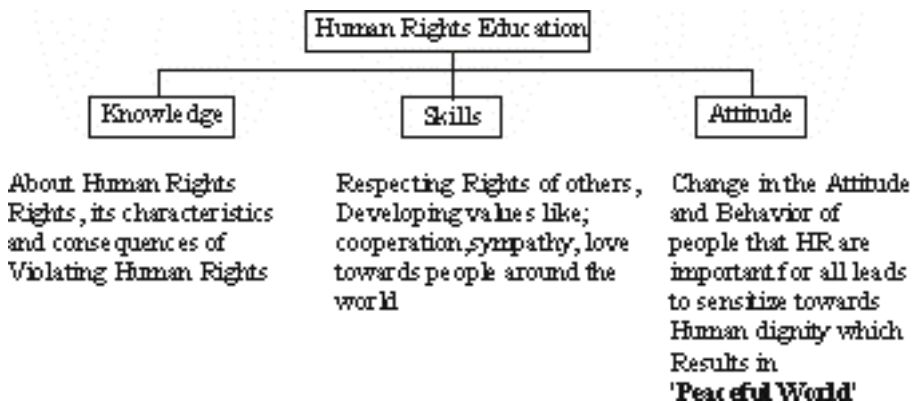
Human Rights Education (HRE) : What? And Why?

“Human rights education is much more than a lesson in schools or a theme for a day; it is a process to equip people with the tools they need to live lives of security and dignity. On this International Human Rights Day, let us continue to work together to develop and nurture in future generations a culture of human rights, to promote freedom, security and peace in all nations.” —[Kofi Annan](#)

Human rights education is all about helping people to develop to the point where they understand human rights and where they feel that they are important and should be respected and refunded.

According to Panta: “Education in human rights is described as sensitization through dissemination of information and other efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of Human Rights through imparting knowledge, skills and molding attitudes.”

Human Rights education is about acquiring not only knowledge of human rights, standards and mechanism but also skills and the ability to apply them; it is about developing values, attitudes and behavior that upholds human rights.



HRE promotes a balanced development of physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual aspects of the students in order to produce balanced citizens who strive to promote social welfare and peace in the world.

According to UNESCO the aims of Human Rights Education are following:

- To promote the access of education to all at every level of education.
- To improve the quality and relevance of education so that today's children and youth all prepared to live and work in a world of constant change and to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.
- To reinforce the international dimension of education only by teaching from early age-humanistic and ethical values such as respect and tolerance for others can societies expect to develop in ways that ensure democratic practices and

Integration of Human Right Education the Curriculum

Human Rights should be made a part of curriculum in educational planning, it can be taught in different way at lower level to higher level. When it is said that HRE is to be integrated with the existing school syllabus. It doesn't mean just incorporating a lesson or two in a broad curriculum but it should be the important component of core curriculum at different stages of education.

Now the two main questions arise:

1. When to teach students about Human Rights Education?
2. How to teach students about Human Rights Education?

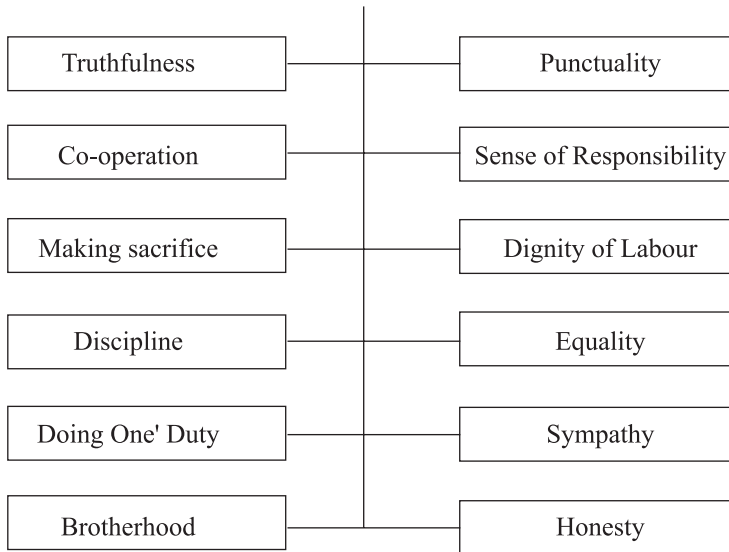
When to teach students about Human Rights Education

From the beginning we can teach children about the human rights education. Only the main point which we have to consider is about the interests and abilities of the child at different stage of development.

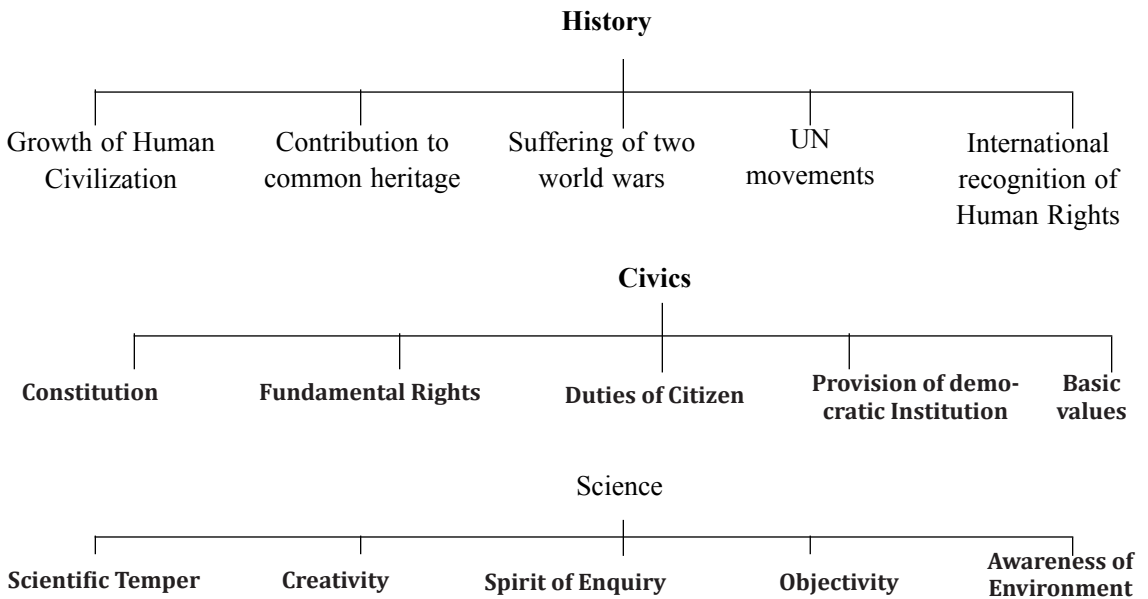
- (a) **At Elementary Level:** At elementary level, children learn social-studies as a component of environment studies. The main focus of the subject is to promote understanding of the physical social and cultural aspect of their immediate environment such as home, school and day to day events. With this type of understanding the mental horizon of the children gets widened.

The language taught at elementary level have a theme which is value oriented. It has value orientation relating to life, both in rural and urban, fairs and festivals, health and hygiene. The Human values component of the core curriculum of social studies at elementary stage promotes the following value.

Human values Components of core curriculum of social studies at primary and upper-primary stage promote.



(b) At Secondary Level: Social science at this stage includes History, Geography, Civics and Economics. They all promote an understanding of the various aspects and dimensions of human rights. All these subjects taught at secondary level promotes and stresses the values of co-operation, contribution made by people to common heritage of mankind, spirit of inquiry, scientific attitude, objectivity and promotes the awareness of possible uses of industry, energy, transport, health and environment. This is shown in the following diagram.



(c) At Higher Level

- Human Rights a sub topic at 3 year B.A. degree course as a part of curriculum of social science.
- In sociology, social work and psychology-passing reference of intergroup relations, societal relations, social problems, biases based on traditional social structure ,with some space to human rights as such.
- Special human rights course in the departments of law in some universities.
- In social studies we deal with elections/functions of President/Prime minister/Panchayat etc. and make our youth to mug them, but we never tell them properly as to what their rights are. Nobody even teaches that these so called government servants are public servants and that we are the public. It is at the school level the teachers have to work in this direction, they have to make children's conscious of their rights. Champions of human rights have to fight with the forces, which are creating fight between the more intelligent and less intelligent, more powerful and less powerful or in one word between haves and have not.

1. How to teach students about Human Rights Education: We have two ways

- A. Through different subjects of syllabus.
 - B. Through different learning activities in the schools.
- A. It is very important to remember that HRE is not an additional academic subject, we add to the existing subject text books and teacher discourses. For instance, it should be the part of curriculum that how much is the Human Rights important for us and to live a peaceful life they are very important for all the human being.
- B. Different types of learning activities in the schools. The most effective approach would be child-centered education. In this approach, teacher has to select appropriate learning activities; through these activities children discover knowledge for themselves. They follow the learning by doing or activity-based learning. Following activities are suggested:
- (a) **Debating:** Debate is a curiosity provoking activity that leads learners to find information on particular social, political or ethical issues. It promotes student's critical and logical thinking and helps to find solution on various issues related to HR.
 - (b) **Discussions:** As a part of lessons students participate in the discussion and discuss about the ways of incorporating awareness among the students.
 - (c) **Brain Storming:** it is method of encouraging students to come out with ideas, solutions or views about the issues related to Human Rights. It generates creative ideas and alternative solutions to problems.

- (d) **Puzzles:** The teachers give a puzzle related to Human Rights. The class has to think and find the solutions. They can work individually or in group.
- (e) **Co-operative Games:** There are activities designed to build up co-operation, group awareness and trust in working together. Everyone has to work together in the activities. It gives them the motivation to learn together in groups.
- (f) **Nurturing the Talents:** organizing competitions in cartoon drawing, essay writing, dramatizing plays and drams also helps a lot.

Role of Teacher: Teachers must be role models in transmitting and enriching the components of Human Rights. So it is necessary to train teachers about Human Rights. The challenge is a considerable one; it involves laying the foundations of tomorrow's society, a society which we hope will be democratic and imbued with respect for the dignity and inalienable rights of all people. Teachers should also initiate action may also take place in the wider community, such as organizing a celebration for International Human Rights Day or putting on an exhibiting of human rights related artwork.

Role of Mass-Media: Media is also a strong tool which helps in making awareness among the people about HR. when formal school Education and non-formal media education combine; it will be a more effective strategy in sensitizing people towards Human Rights.

Challenges for Human Rights

- The danger from proliferation of mass-destruction weapons, such as nuclear and biological weapons, still exists. They are threatening the world. Fear of nuclear bombs make the people think whether people in the 21st century can live peacefully while the international terrorism is so rampant.
- Drug trafficking and abuse is still rampant. During the past decade drug production and trafficking have been so rampant that it threatens people's life and social stability. The problem will go on threaten the mankind in the 21st century.

There are about 190 million people using drugs in the world and about 10 million of them lose work ability every year. It is very sad that the numbers of teenager, young and woman addicts is increasing. At a special meeting of the 52nd Un assembly held in June, Un Secretary-General Kuffi Annan pointed out that no country in the world would be luckily enough to escape the harm of drugs, and that no country could control on its own the drug trade within its territory. The international community should make concerted efforts to counter the globalization of drugs trade. He called the international community to make joint efforts to build the 21st century in to "a century without drugs".

- **Ecological Environment is deteriorating:** Statistics show that about 1.5 million people in the world die of environmental pollution every year. In the next century, about 15-20 percent of the plants and animals will become extinct. Promotion and protection of human rights needs to take

the relations between people and the nature in to considerations rather than the narrow scope of relations between people and people and individuals and state. A new mechanism should be established to confirm rights of the nature and human beings.

- Achievements in microsurgery, biological engineering outer space exploitation and the information industry make human rights issues more complicated.
- Poverty is still a challenge for the 21st century.
- In international affairs, power politics and anti-human rights activities under the cover of maintaining human rights still hinders the protection of human rights.

Since human rights will face more complicated challenges mentioned above, we hope that government and people in the world can renovate their values, conduct deeper research in theory and work harder to ensure further development of the human rights cause in the 21st century.

Conclusion

In present day, the education of Human Rights is the most important and basic needs of an individual's because without it no one imagine a peaceful and better life in the society. Due to some recent discrimination of social and political rights of man, awareness towards human rights is gaining momentum. Now a day's people are very much conscious about Human Rights and the credit goes only to education and school curriculum. Human Rights and its education help in every way to save and protect each and every human being from any type of discrimination and help the people to live peaceful life in the society.

“Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free.

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