

## **Need of Human Rights Education in Today's Curriculum**

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### **Abstract**

*The Present Paper is an attempt at understanding the Human Rights Education. For better international understanding, peace and humane society there is an urgent need to provide Human Rights Education (HRE) to our students at various levels of schooling and even at college and university levels and make them universally aware towards Human Rights. In this paper the author has presented a brief sketch of different dimensions of Human Rights Education, points to be included in curriculum and methods to be employed to provide HRE to the students at various levels.*

### **Introduction**

*'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'*

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

Human Rights are said to be those fundamental rights which every individual inhabiting in any part of the world should be entitled to merely by virtue of having been born as a human being. Human Rights are those basic standards without which people cannot live with dignity as 'Human Being'. The UN considers education as the key to development, as a fundamental right and as prime means in promotion of human rights. Education can play a vital role in removing the ignorance and exploitation of Human Rights. The universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 26 states "Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, friendship among all nations, religious groups and shall further the

activities of UN for the maintenance of Peace.” HRE should be made a special subject not an optional one. It should not be confined to the student of the arts, economics, and political science alone but also be made compulsory for science students also. Knowledge and awareness of Human Rights is very essential for students as they form the responsible citizens of the country. In every college Human Rights club and Human Rights Resource Room should be formed. The awareness and sincerity of the teachers and teacher educators and encouragement and financial support of educational administrations are essential prerequisite for success of Human Rights Education.

Human Rights Education (HRE) is found to be ingrained in our Indian Civilization which adumbrated the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* i.e., the whole world is a family. In order to educate the people about this concept, education seems to be a very effective medium. This medium can help us in creating an environment in which Human Rights violation can be minimized. Moreover, observance of the 10<sup>th</sup> December as 'Human Rights Day' in most of the educational institutions is another step in this direction.

The principle of HRE aims to promote dignity, tolerance and peace by educating individuals and groups to respect, defend and advocate for their rights. According to UN Resolution of November 2011, HRE means "a lifelong process by which people at all levels of development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies."

Education liberates the minds of the individual and provides him with capacity and motivation to act. Thus, education is not only an indispensable instrument of socio-economic welfare but also an effective force to sustain and create peace, cultivate growth of values and behaviour (Universal Convention of Human Rights). Education plays a crucial role in shaping the character and quality of people. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has made an effort to ensure that education at all levels does incorporate human rights issue, thereby inculcating and imbibing human rights values and setting-up a culture of respect towards Human rights in the society. So, there is a need to include HRE in regular university curriculum across the nation which is too far diversified in terms of language, population and geographical boundaries, efforts have been made by NHRC to bring about HRE model at various level of higher education for introduction at the universities and colleges. The 1993 Vienna conference- a landmark in HRE confirmed that human rights education, training and public information were essential for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace among communities. HRE implies that education enables an individual to understand his/her rights.

In 1947 the General Conference of UNESCO adopted the "Recommendations concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" that has gained very large acceptance and has inspired teachers, students, educational authorities as well as peace and human right activists, individuals and associations, all over the world in their work. In 1978 and 1987 UNESCO held international congresses on human rights teaching, information and documentation in Vienna and Malta resulting in long-term actions of the organization. In March 1993 the third Congress in

their series was organized in Montreal, Canada where a world plan of Action on Education of Human Rights and democracy was adopted as a common strategy of all those committed to these aims. The United Nations world Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, June 1993) commended as the basis for relevant actions in the future. In 1994 the United Nations Decade (1995-2004) was proclaimed. In April 2004, the commission on Human Rights adopted resolution 2004/71 in which it took note of the need to continue a global framework for human rights education beyond the decade.

## What is Human Rights Education?

In order to inculcate human rights and duties among citizens 'Human Rights Education' is a necessary instrument. Human Rights education is education about, but also for Human Rights. For example :-

Teaching people about human rights violations such as torture i.e. teaching about Human Rights

Teaching people how to respect and protect rights, i.e., teaching for human rights.

The 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 Behaviour that uploads Human Rights.

- Knowledge :- Knowledge about Human Rights documents, categories of Human Rights and their characteristics, consequences of violating Human Rights will help the learners to protect their own rights and rights of others.
- Skills :- Many skills such as listening to others, skill of cooperating, communicating, children will help the learners to analyze the world around them.
- Attitude :- Behavioural changes will make the learners to understand the importance of human rights and will help to develop morally and prepare them for positive participation in the society.

Thus, Human Rights Education touches the cognitive and affective domain of the personality of the individual. It is a process of imparting both values and knowledge.

## Three Dimensions of Human Rights Education

- To teach about Human Rights *i.e.*, to inform people of their rights
- To teach for Human Rights *i.e.*, to learn how to implement and to defend human rights.
- To teach in Human Rights *i.e.*, to learn within an environment and climate



Teach for Human Rights

Teach about  
their Rights

Teach in Human  
Rights

## Aims

- Providing knowledge about Human Rights. It includes attitudes of tolerance, respect, solidarity and responsibility
- Developing awareness of the ways and means by which Human Rights can be translated into social and political reality at both National and International levels.
- Inculcating Human Rights related values and norms in the total personality of human being
- Ensuring the human dignity of every person is appreciated and respected.
- Cultivating and promoting a living, vibrant and humanistic culture.
- Creating a peaceful society
- Promoting a suitable sustainable development
- Fostering the positive social and culture values
- Teaching common language humanity
- Developing awareness and attitude turn into social action

## Points to be Included in Curriculum for HRE

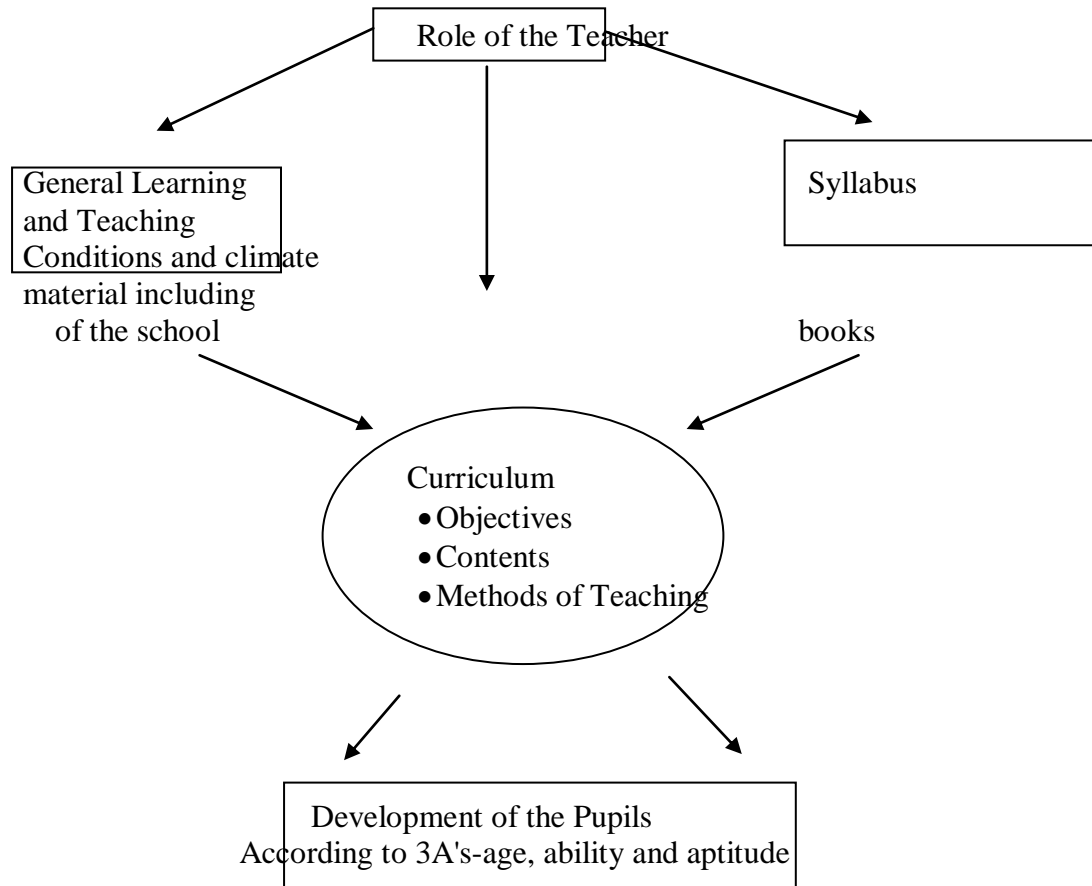
- Main concept associated with Human Rights- different categories of Human Rights
- Manifestations and phenomena
- Dimension of Human Rights- Discrimination, Violence, etc.
- Perspectives and Levels of Human Rights- Individual Rights
- Role of UNO and its Agencies in the promotion of Human Rights
- Mechanism for checking violation of Human Rights
- National Human Rights Commission
- Rights of Deprived sections and their Safeguards
- Constitutional provision relating to Human Rights

## Methods of teaching Human Rights

For teaching human rights these methods should be used.

- Frontal Teaching
- Discussion
- Drama and Role play

- Practical activities- Organization of Adult education centres', community services etc.
- Project
- Workshop
- Visit to orphanages, old age homes
- Celebrating Human Rights Day
- Displaying Human Rights materials on bulletin boards.
- Organizing debates
- Inviting guest lectures
- Social Survey



### Contents and Methodology of Teaching Human Rights

#### Importance of Human Rights Education

Human Rights are a symbol of hope, the need of the hour and the violation of Human Rights has become a day to day event in our 'Civilized Society'. Creating a safe, secure and harmonious environment for the neo-literate is the task of the family, the community, the society and the Government at large. The need of the hour is to give full support to the human society movement from the grass roots level. Ignorance is constant threat to Human Rights it breeds discrimination, intolerance and prejudice. If we are serious about Human Rights we must address ignorance in all its forms. The best way to do this is through education. Education is the natural enemy of

ignorance. It promotes understanding, compassion and tolerance. It changes attitudes. And it is the foundation upon which a genuine and lasting respect for Human Rights is founded. It is easy to sit back and condemn ignorance. But it is more important to promote Human Rights in a way that is practical and effective. We have to fight ignorance and we have to insure that the Human Rights we value so highly are put into practice in the real world. This is why Human Rights Education is so important. It is positive initiative that will harness the power of education to promote Human Rights. Human Rights are not an abstract concept. Human Rights are about the lives, the liberties and the dignity of all human beings. It is the duty of all of us to ensure that these rights are respected, preserved and promoted.

### **Need of Human Rights Education**

HRE has a crucial role in preventing human rights violations. HRE is necessary and essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relation among the communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. So, human rights should be made a part of curriculum in educational planning from the higher secondary level upwards. Knowledge and awareness of human rights is very essential for students as they have to become the responsible citizens of a country.

Section 12(h) of the protection of human rights Act (1993) requires the Human Rights Commission to spread human rights literacy among various sections of the society and promote awareness. It is observed that over the years some initiatives to introduce HRE in the formal education system were taken but so far it has not been paid due attention. There is need that the curriculum for higher education must have an element of practicability, besides the training leading to opening up of new vista of knowledge and job opportunities in the changing scenario of globalization of education in particular and in general at the national as well as international level.

### **Conclusion**

Human Rights are the fundamental rights of human beings anywhere on the earth to live and lead a dignified human existence. when we refer to Human Rights Education, it becomes important to determine the area to be focused upon. Human Rights Education is an integral part of the right to education and is increasingly gaining recognition as a human right itself. Human Rights Education includes values such as peace, non-discrimination, equality, justice, non-violence, tolerance and respect of human dignity. It promotes values ,beliefes and attitudes that encourages all individual to uphold their own rights and those of others. It develops an understanding of every one's common responsibility to make human rights a reality in each community.

Human Rights Education is the need of time and to be widely promoted making it an essential components of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education through different methodologies all

over the world. Education is a potent instrument for bringing about desired changes in the society and teachers are to play a crucial role in this noble venture, human rights can be achieved and sustained mostly through education.

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