

## Resolution of Rights and Responsibilities: Human Rights Education

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Accepted: 25.04.2025

Published: 02.05.2025

**Keywords:** Rights, Responsibilities, Human Rights Education.

### Abstract

*The concept of Human Rights makes one aware of one's rights and duties as a human being. It is a big challenge in a just society to maintain the balance between rights and duties. Creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 led to the foundation of the Human Rights Movement. It was humanity's strong need for peace after the vacuum created by World Wars. This landmark declaration was the first international legal attempt by the member countries to think and work in this direction. The articles of the declaration found a place in the Indian Constitution. Thirty articles and their corresponding rights have been mentioned there in. Instances of protection of rights along with violation are very common in our country. Various forms of violation exist in the form of encounter killing, torture, arbitrary detention, restriction on expression, starvation, inaccessible quality education. In such a scenario, there is an urgent need to make people know their rights and duties through Human Rights Education. Human Rights Education can be taught at all levels of formal education starting from pre primary to higher education. Re-orienting existing curriculum, synchronisation of curricular and co-curricular aspects, adaptation of teaching methodology, training teachers in human rights education can bring desired results. Teaching Human Rights in a non formal setting will target those people living in remote areas and extreme poverty, public officials, security personnel, children not attending schools, health professionals, persons with HIV AIDS, disabled, political prisoners etc. Therefore, joint efforts of all the organisations - public as well as private, will develop individual awareness about the ways and means by which human rights can be translated into social and political reality.*

## Paper Identification



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Rights signify duties and duties imply rights. This is the most challenging task to maintain balance between rights and duties. Demand of rights at the expense of obligations and duties leads to anarchy and chaos. On the other hand, deprivation of due rights and over emphasis on duties creates a society without life and vigour. People in the society will be living beings but not human beings. Therefore, the concept of Human Rights is the concept which makes one self aware of one's rights and duties as a human being. Equally important is to recognise that one's rights do not encroach on other people's rights. Human rights are generally defined as the rights which every human is entitled to enjoy and to have protected. Apparently, this definition seems to be very simple and straightforward. But if one reads between the lines, it unfolds a saga of conflicts and controversies regarding the overlapping of rights and duties. Elaborating the concept of human rights, Louis Henkin says:

*Human rights are rights of individuals in society. Every human being has legitimate, valid, justified claims upon his or her society to various 'goods' and benefits, they are defined, particular claims listed in international instruments deemed essential for individual well-being, dignity and fulfilment and that reflects common sense of justice, fairness and decency.*

Strengthening the sense of human dignity, safeguarding respect for human personality form the basis of Human Rights. Human Rights as a term entered only three centuries ago. It does not imply that the concept of Human Rights did not exist before then. In fact, in those times, people were more caring, close, cooperative thus more humane in their approach. But the term human rights was used by John Locke for the first time. Immediately after its coinage, it became one of the favourite subjects.

Creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 led to the foundation of the Human Rights movement. It erupted as a result of man's intense desire for peace after the void created by World Wars. India too just after throwing away the gallows of slavery and getting Independence from the clutches of Invaders was highly impressed by its noble spirit. This

landmark declaration was the first international legal attempt by the member nations to perform the sincere duty of making their citizens to avail their rights.

The list of Human Rights elaborated in UDHR provides a common standard of achievement for all people and all Nations. The articles of the declaration found a place in the making of the Indian Constitution. Given below is the list of articles and corresponding rights:

- Article 1 Right to liberty and equality
- Article 2 Freedom from discrimination
- Article 3 Right to life, liberty and security of person
- Article 4 Freedom from slavery
- Article 5 Freedom from torture and inhuman treatment
- Article 6 Right to recognition as a person before law
- Article 7 Right to Equality before law
- Article 8 Right to effective remedy by competent Tribunal
- Article 9 Freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention
- Article 10 Right to fair public hearing by impartial Tribunal
- Article 11 Right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law
- Article 12 Freedom from arbitrary interference with one's privacy, family, home or correspondence
- Article 13 Right to freedom of movement in and out of country
- Article 14 Right to Asylum in other countries for persecution
- Article 15 Right to nationality and change it
- Article 16 Right to marriage and family
- Article 17 Right to own property
- Article 18 Right to thought, conscience and religion
- Article 19 Right to freedom of opinion and expression
- Article 20 Right to freedom of peaceful assembly and Association
- Article 21 Right to take part in government of one's country and free election
- Article 22 Rights to social security
- Article 23 Right to work enjoy in trade union
- Article 24 Right to rest and leisure
- Article 25 Right to adequate standard of living for health and well being



- Article 26 Right to education
- Article 27 Right to participate in the cultural life of community
- Article 28 Right to social order assuring human rights
- Article 29 Community duty necessary to full development of one's personality
- Article 30 Duty to maintain sanctity and protection of rights and freedom set forth

Human rights are, therefore, classified as civil political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; and group rights.

Status of human rights in India is enigmatic. Instances of protection of rights along with violation are not unusual to observe. Our constitution makes ample provisions for both the cases. Ambiguities in the legal system, allowing people to flout norms in the name of democracy, an ever growing number of conflicts in society, malpractices present all over, ever increasing population of poor and deprived and many other factors present a dismal picture. Various forms of Human Rights violations are as follows:

- Encounter killing - Death of a suspect in an encounter is encounter killing. Generally carried out by the police and army this exercise many times proves to be and extremely brutal as innocent people fall upgrade and become victim of circumstances
- Torture - Custodial deaths, custodial rapes leading to murder, third degree treatment of detainees bring to the fore inhuman face of victimizers who are surprisingly known to be the guardian of public at large.
- Arbitrary detention - Arresting people without sufficient and sound grounds, denying them even the basic facilities and refusal to release them even after the expiry of their maximum term of detention shows callous attitude of so called responsible people.
- Restriction on expression - It is a common tendency among people to flare up emotionally very soon. It is in this context that the role of the press assumes a great significance. But it never implies that the government censors press, films and other modes of communication. Regional press is more vulnerable to sanctions and harassment in comparison to the national press.

- Starvation - Death due to starvation is one of the extreme forms of Human Rights violation. People dying for want of sufficient food, nutritious food, adulterated food and at the top of these edible foods must be an eye opener for doing worthwhile things urgently.
- Indifferent attitude towards health - India has low life expectancy and high infant mortality rate. Health facilities available to people, their own mental makeup, food fads and lower status of women in the family.
- Inaccessible quality education - In spite of implementation of the RTE Act thousands of cases concerning schools refusing to admit students from poor families are lying pending with courts. Countless children still are seen doing menial jobs. Those in school are not getting that quality which schools generally boast of. Dismal performance of students at global level depicts the sorry state of affairs in this sector.
- Lack of dignity of labour - Exploitation of labour can be in any form. Not giving due wages, not treating them properly, threatening them, forcing them to overwork without giving anything in return especially to women and children are more prevalent in small industries.

All these malpractices are just a tip of an Iceberg. Much more can be seen and observed everywhere around us. In order to protect Human Rights and in order to check their violation, there is an urgent need to make people know their rights and duties. Equally essential is that these are executed and exercised sincerely. Both of these go hand in hand. If a person is conscious of one's rights and responsibilities, he or she will also protect others rights and then help in building a just society which is generally thought of as *Utopian*.

But, since not all of us are aware of our duties and obligations, the role of education comes. Empowerment of each and every individual to act, interact and take part in all the domains of society with full responsibilities is the motto behind Education of Human Rights. The Third World Congress on Human Rights 1990 urges that human rights education must be comprehended as enclosing all the aspect of education - formal, non formal and informal education. It is used to reach all the stakeholders of society - policy makers, parents, children etc more significantly, let it not be a near cognitive exercise of transmitting knowledge within the four walls of the classroom alone. Rather let it cover

all the domains of an individual's behaviour thereby aiming to sensitize everyone to have an attitude of imbining respect for human rights of others too.

### **Teaching Human Rights at all levels of Formal Education :**

Different levels of formal education can be:

- Pre primary
- Primary
- Secondary
- Post Secondary
- Higher Education

Apart from students, teachers, administrators, parents and all other people directly or indirectly associated with this core of education are the targets to learn and use Human Rights education.

### **Curriculum for Human Rights Education:**

There is no need of introducing any new subject in the name of human rights, the existing curriculum may need a slight orientation and the things may need to be looked at from a new perspective. Following subjects are recommended:

- Environmental studies in the primary classes help the students know their surroundings and interdependence of man and nature. This bonding between the two, if understood, will make them a responsible citizen not only of a particular society but also of the entire world.
- In secondary classes, Social Studies courses will help them appreciate the contribution of our ancestors, freedom fighters, social activists and other great people who fought against evil practices without bothering for regional or national boundaries, for example, Mother Teresa.
- Geography, too, unfolds the concept of unity in diversity. Every country is divided into States which are further subdivided. This division may be physical, political, lingual etc. But in spite of so many differences and varieties, we are one.



This unique realisation will certainly help the students in building up an atmosphere of mutual trust and faith which is the base for human rights education.

- Primary education recognises the value of moral education values like honesty, hard work, punctuality, compassion etc can be inculcated in the formative years of elementary education.
- Languages like English, Hindi and other languages help students know their culture, other's culture and the things happening all around. Through stories, essays, poems and drama, one can keep in touch with the latest event. Many times we raise our voice against the victimizer even when we don't know the victim personally .It is possible only when one is able to listen, read, speak and understand a language.
- Science creates scientific temperament and an attitude of keen observation. Looking for something extraordinary from ordinary things results in innovation. Man's attempt to overcome natural or other types of calamities, growing number of facilities available to us along with growing number of complex problems and health problems will definitely motivate young minds to think out of the box.
- Music and fine arts have therapeutic functions. They relieve the mind and appeal to the soft, tender emotions and feelings. By bridging the barriers, by bringing nations closer and then forgetting their peripheries, becomes one of the most significant functions of these two

#### **Co - curricular activities:**

Synchronization of curricular and co-curricular aspects always produces the desired result. Celebration of UNO and Human Rights Day, national festivals, religious festivals, birth anniversaries of great personalities lead to the acquisition of values, beliefs and attitude necessary for human rights education.

#### **Methodology:**

One of the maxims of teaching is - *proceed from near to far*. Taking this maxim in mind, the teacher can always start with folktales and folk media as they have a natural appeal for

children. Gradually, use of Advanced technology will help the teacher in impressing upon his or her students to imbibe the necessary values. Use of discussion, simulation, case study, role play and many other techniques can be effectively used. To put it simply, a child centric approach will be of maximum use.

### **Role of a Teacher:**

Human Rights education requires teachers to have desired knowledge, attitude and skill. So, all teachers cannot be said to be fit for handling this challenging job of dissemination of required bent of mind in the students. Training on human rights education assumes a significant place in this situation. Of course, teachers' own human rights concerns must be paid attention to and addressed. Lack of a conducive environment in terms of working conditions and opportunities for the development, gender biasness and many other related problems of teachers need immediate attention and removal. Along with all these things, a teacher must be well informed about the rights of children in theory and practice. Most importantly, he needs to be empathetic and sensitive towards children's need for love and care.

### **Teaching Human Rights in Non-Formal setting:**

Inculcation of an attitude of self esteem and respect for ideas and beliefs of other people is the matter of prime importance at this level. The target group is a group of adult people and children not attending School. It also takes into account people in specific settings and groups including youth, people living in remote areas and extreme poverty, security personnel, public officials, health professionals, media personnel etc.

To prevent the abuse of women, children, refugees, disabled persons with HIV/AIDS, political prisoners, Human Rights Education expects everyone involved in these noble causes to be one with the underdog so as to feel their needs and requirements. Human Rights education, therefore, should focus on an attitude of respect, solidarity and should develop individual awareness about the ways and means by which Human Rights can be translated into social and political reality.

It can be done in the following ways:



- Organising street plays
- Holding public meetings
- Having exhibitions on types of human rights
- Organising awareness campaigns
- Felicitating HR workers
- Identifying and recognising the achievements of persons from special group
- Exhorting people to shun evil practices
- Help from media
- Organising legal literacy programme

Human Rights education cannot be left to the teachers or schools alone. Networking of formal and informal levels of school with parents, NGOs, community, business houses, teachers, union and other social agencies is a must. The success can only be achieved through joint ventures of all the organisations public as well as private. In this context, the opinions of Radhika Coomaraswamy are quite befitting: *Human rights are the quintessential values through which we affirm together that we are a single human Community.*

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