



# Role of Human Rights Education in Professional Development of Teachers

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## Abstract

Fundamental rights as laid down in the constitution of India is the modern name for what has been traditionally known as natural rights. Human Rights means the rights relating to life, liberty, quality and dignity of the individual. Education for the Human Rights is the most important means for studying the message of Human Rights. Human Rights Education is the logical assurance to the rights of man and child. Human Rights Education is found to be ingrained in our Indian civilization which gradually gained impetus with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) as an integral part of the right to education. The concept of Human Rights Education is that education is not only aimed at forming the trained professional workers but it also contributes to the development of the individual towards the skills through which they can interact in the society. It encompasses: knowledge and skills; values, attitudes and behaviour; and action. The objectives of Human Rights education (wings spread conference, 1978) are- empathy objectives, thinking objectives, transmittive objectives and awareness objectives. Several international bodies like UNESCO and ILO are working to promote the spread of Human Rights Education at various levels of education like Teacher training level.

## INTRODUCTION

In the Twenty first century, the world is on the cusp of educational revolution based on our expanded and revitalized concept of what education means and the ways in which learning can be enhanced. The commitment to education was founded on the rocks of debt and cultural adjustment during the 1980's has been renewed in the 1990's by the awareness that **human rights are key to human development**. Human Rights mean rights relating to life, liberty, quality and dignity of the individual (Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993).

Education for human rights is the most important means of spreading the message of human rights. Human Rights Education is a logical assurance to the rights of man and child. It is the knowledge of the rights and freedom of oneself as much as of the others and is considered as a fundamental tool to guarantee the respect of all rights for each and every person. Human Rights Education is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) as an integral part of the right to education.

The concept of human rights education is that education is not only aimed at forming trained professional workers but also contributes to the development of the individuals towards the skills through which they can interact in the society. It encompasses:

- (a) **Knowledge and Skills** : Learning about human rights and mechanisms for their protection as well as acquiring skills to protect them.
- (b) **Values, Attitudes and Behavior** : Developing values and reinforcing attitude and behavior which uphold human rights.
- (c) **Action:** Taking action to defend and promote human rights. Objectives of Human Rights Education Wingspread Conference (1978) has laid down the following objectives of human rights education:
- (1) Empathy Objective - To encourage / concern / empathy for those who have experienced violation of their rights.
  - (2) Thinking Objective - To think critically about the issues and their application in particular cases of the denial of human rights.
  - (3) Transmissive Objective - To transmit to students basic knowledge concerning international instruments to protect human rights and their associated institutions.
  - (4) Awareness Objective - To make students aware of the universal yearning for human rights as part of a secured human community.

#### Development of Human Rights Education **Indian context**

Human Rights Education is found to be ingrained in our Indian Civilization which adumbrated the concept of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** i.e., the whole world is one family. The concept gained the importance with the Universal Declaration of human rights. The Constituent Assembly entrusted with the responsibilities of drafting the Constitution of India was engaged in the stupendous task of developing the basic and vital document at a time when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948. The Constituent Assembly took note of the declaration and incorporated many human rights as Citizens' Fundamental Rights in the Constitution.

With the constitutional provisions, the Centre and State Governments have enacted many laws and regulations to preserve and safeguard the basic human rights. The Government of India has been continuously reviewing the status regarding the rights of the individual. The Associations and Institutions of Human Rights have been active in taking Human Rights Education as one of their important programmes. Various regional and national conferences have been organized in India. The National Conference on Human Rights and values at Mount Abu (Rajasthan) during January 22-25, 1995 is a landmark in this connection.

#### **International Level**

In order to trace the genesis of human rights education, the philosophers, social and political thinkers in different countries of the World can be referred. Both in oriental and occidental literature, the concepts of equality, fraternity, peace and harmony have been found. Especially, Rousseau, Ruskin, Plato, Socrates in the west have enunciated with principles of human rights in one form or the other. The rights got prominence at first in the Magna Carta in Britain in 1215 A.D., Petition of Rights in 1628 A.D., Habeas Corpus Act 1628 A.D., Bill of Rights in 1689, American Declaration of Independence in 1676 A.D., and Declaration of Rights of Men in France during 1789 A.D., and subsequently in the Declaration of Universal Human Rights by UN in 1948. The UN World Conference of Human

Rights in Vienna in 1993 drafted a Declaration ultimately inspiring the UN Decade for Human Rights Education 1995-2004.

#### Human Rights Education - A Global Need

The twenty-first century envisages that each and every country of the world should arrange its national and domestic jurisdictions so as to match literally with the global standard as set by UN and other regional bodies. Human Rights Education should be taught as Global Education. Global Education incorporates multicultural and peace education. The issue of Human Rights pertains to global education in more than one respect. The various examples such as (Universal Declaration, Art.1, Art. 13, Art.23, Art. 18, and Art.25) are congruent with the purpose of global education.

Action to Build a culture of human rights is also supported by United Nations special agencies, programmes and funds as the United Nations Educational ,Scientific and cultural Organization (UNESCO) , the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) the United Nations

Development Programmes (UNDP) the International Labor Organization (ILO),the World Health Organization (WHO), and by the relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).Other international , national and regional bodies, both governmental and non- governmental, are also working to promote human rights.

The important role of Human Rights Education is increasingly recognized by the international community which believes that the education for human rights should be an integral component of education of all people at all levels of development and in all strata of society. Various International frameworks have been adopted for action including the:

- (a) United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)
- (b) International Decade for a culture of peace and non- violence for the children of the World(2001-2010)
- (c) World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing)

#### **Curricular Framework for Human Rights Education At Teacher Training Level**

The teacher training programme (B.Ed.course ) must enable the teachers to set their own teaching goals in human rights for each class. In order to introduce human rights education in curricula at all levels of the school . It is important to educate the primary and secondary teachers so that they can efficiently educate their students. Some states in India have already included Human Rights Education in their B.Ed. course. But NCTE should ensure that it is a part of curriculum of B.Ed. and primary teacher training all over the country. For this, various seminars of teacher educators have been organised by NCTE.

In order to make teacher trainees aware of human rights and their significance in life they should be imparted education not only theoretically but also by organizing curricular activities. Besides giving the theoretical knowledge of the various declarations the students can be taken to the places where human rights are abused like bonded labor , child labor , tribal and deprived sections of society and allow them to communicate with them at their own level. Efforts in this regard have been made by National Council For Teacher Education ( NCTE) in 1996.

#### **Various Techniques appropriate for Human Rights Education**

There are various techniques by which teachers can engage students for empathy and moral imagination and challenge their assumptions and integrate concepts like human dignity and quality into their everyday experiences. The techniques are appropriate for human rights education because they encourage critical thinking, both cognitive and affective learning. The various techniques are :

- A. **Brainstorming** : This technique requires a problem to be analysed and then solutions to be developed. Brainstorming requires a high degree of participation and stimulates maximum creativity.
- B. **Case Studies** : Students in small groups work with real or fictional cases that require them to apply human rights standards. It encourages analysis , problem solving and planning skills.
- C. **Creative Expressions** : The art can help to make concepts more concrete , personalized abstractions and affect attitudes by involving emotional as well as intellectual responses to human rights. Techniques may include stories , poetry, graphic arts , sculpture, drama song and dance.
- D. **Discussion** : A meaningful discussion on a topic can be stimulated in pairs, small groups or whole class.
- E. **Field Trips / Community Visits** : Students benefit from the extension of school into the community, learning from places where human rights issues develop (e.g. courts , prisons and international borders ). Or where people work to defend rights or provide relief to victim (e.g. non-profit organizations and free clinics).
- F. **Interviews** : Interviews provide direct learning and personalized issues and history.
- G. **Research Projects** : Human Rights topics provide many opportunities for independent investigation. Whether individual or group , research projects develop skills for independent thinking and data analysis.
- H. **Role Plays / Simulations** : A role play is like a little drama played out before the class. Role plays work best when kept short.
- I. **Visual Aids** : Learning can be enhanced by the use of black boards , overhead transparencies , posters , slides , video and films.
- J. **Human Rights Education** acts as a catalyst in bringing about attitudinal and social change and is necessary pre-condition for a healthy democratic society especially at the time of crisis - locally , nationally and globally. The understanding and experience of human rights is an important ingredient of preparation of all young people for life in a multicultural society. Therefore, it is through education that knowledge about human rights can be imparted.

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