

# A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT AMONG STUDENTS

Dr. Grace Varghese, MA, MPhil, PhD

Pullannivelical House

Mylapra Town P.O

Pathanamthitta Dist

Kerala, India.

Email ID. [gracejohnsonsalu@yahoo.co.in](mailto:gracejohnsonsalu@yahoo.co.in)

Contact # 09539648588

## Abstract

Education is a dynamic and continuous process, by which human beings develop thinking and reasoning, problem solving and creativity, intelligence, positive sentiments, social commitment and attitudes. Over the past fifty years, global events and people's experiences have given the quest for ensuring peace through human rights awareness and education. India has adopted multipronged strategy for ensuring human rights for its citizens. It incorporated into its Constitution as fundamental Rights- the various human rights provided in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The National Curriculum Framework (2005) provides ample opportunities to promote respect for the child as an individual, social justice, equality, tolerance etc. It tries to shift the focus from traditional value –based approach for ensuring human rights to peace-based approach. Respect for human rights, justice, tolerance, cooperation, social responsibility, respect for cultural diversity, firm commitment to democracy and non-violent conflict resolution have been identified as “hall marks of education for peace”. Human Rights Education or Human Rights in Education, aims at providing people and students with the abilities to accompany and produce social changes.

Human Rights Awareness and Social Commitment are basis and fundamental for the development of human beings. Human Rights Awareness helps a citizen to develop respect for

self and others. Human Rights awareness of students is positively affected with the social commitment. Student social commitment is the commitment of every student for his/her actions. It is morally binding on everyone to act in such a way that the people immediately around them are not adversely affected. It is a commitment everyone has towards the society – contributing towards social, cultural and ecological causes.

**Keywords:** Human Rights, Fundamental Rights, Education, Students, Society.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment. It develops in the body and in the soul of the pupil all the beauty and all the perfection of which one is capable. Education is just like an artist who moulds the raw materials of child in to a better, pure and noble person. It makes our life progressive, cultured and civilized. Education is a vital element for individual self – fulfillment and development of society. It is also considered as an important instrument of social mobility, equality and empowerment both at the individual and collective levels. Student social commitment is based on an individual's ethics. Instead of giving importance only to those areas where one has material interests the individual supports issues for philanthropic reasons.

Education in human rights is itself a fundamental human right and also a responsibility: the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) exhorts "every individual and every organ of society" to "strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms." The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) declares that a government "may not stand in the way of people learning about [their rights]."

## PURPOSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS

Human Rights Awareness is the awareness of human beings about their fundamental rights or legal rights in national and international law. It also means the people ability to easily distinguish various aspects of human rights to life, security religion, expression; education etc. Its goal is to help people understand human rights, value human rights, and take responsibility for respecting, defending, and promoting human rights. An important outcome of human rights education is empowerment, a process through which people and communities increase their control of their own lives and the decisions that affect them. The ultimate goal of human rights education is people working together to bring about human rights, justice, and dignity for all.

Education **about** human rights provides people with **information** about human rights. It includes learning –about the inherent dignity of all people and their right to be treated with respect about human rights principles, such as the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights, about how human rights promote participation in decision making and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, about the history and continuing development of human rights, about international law, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Convention on the Rights of the Child, about regional, national, state, and local law that reinforces international human rights law, about using human rights law to protect human rights and to call violators to account for their actions, about human rights violations such as torture, genocide, or violence against women and the social, economic, political, ethnic, and gender forces which cause them and about the persons and

agencies that are responsible for promoting, protecting, and respecting human rights

## NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Education is seen as a way to empower people, improve their quality of life and increase their capacity to participate in the decision making process, leading to improved social, cultural, religious, political and economic policies and justice. Education is a means of organizing the individual self and social life into a disciplined, stable and a meaningful unity. This is not possible without positive social interaction. Social commitment and the ability to interact with others are considered fundamental to human development. Education equips man with all the skills required to confront the challenge presented to him by the environment. Good social commitment is critical to successful functioning in life. These skills enable the child to know what to say, how to make good choice and how to behave in diverse situations.

Student social responsibility is the responsibility of every student for his/her actions. It is morally binding on everyone to act in such a way that the people immediately around them are not adversely affected. It is a commitment everyone has towards the society – contributing towards social, cultural and ecological causes. SSR is based on an individual's ethics. Instead of giving importance only to those areas where one has material interests the individual supports issues for philanthropic reasons. It forms the base for CSR or Corporate Social Responsibility because if everyone in a business organization does his/her bit the bigger things automatically fall into place. The trends however show that big charitable organizations recorded high growth due to the SR efforts of individuals and not corporations or the government. ISR may be slightly impractical, especially in the modern competitive world, where everyone works for self-interest, but it will succeed if we take decisions based on what will benefit a large number of people and respect everyone's fundamental rights. As individuals we can make our small contributions to society by donating money to trustworthy NGO's, saving our resources by reducing our consumption, e.g. by switching off lights or computers when not in use. Human Rights

are most often violated than observed. Many of the people are ignorant of their rights and duties. There is an urgent need to educate people at the grass root and at all levels on the various aspects of human rights. The ultimate expectation of human rights is to establish a humanistic society by empowering each and every individual to develop a sense of responsibility as in the means of political, economical and social justice in life.

Once pupils and people grasp human rights concepts and are aware about human rights, they began to look for realization of their own lives. Through this, they have to develop social commitment and practice it in their own life for their and their fellow beings welfare and for betterment of the society. The need for human rights Education has been emphasized in the universal declaration of Human rights on other international documents and treaties. The Human Rights Education consists of efforts to build a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge skill and moulding attitudes. Social Commitment they attained pupils life they naturally develop a cordial atmosphere throughout their lives. This is a positive tool for their all round development. Social Commitment is important for children and adolescent and it can positively influence their academic performance, social and family relationship and behavior. Because, most of the pupils are selfish and they consider their own wealth and safety and security, no one brother about fellow ones concerns proper developmental activities and training should be given at each stage, if denial of any attention will effect negatively and it will affect the personality of the child. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. The fulfillment of the duty of each individual is prerequisite to the rights of all. Rights and duties are inter-related in every social and political activity of men. While rights exalt individual liberty, duties express the dignity of the liberty. If we have proper awareness on human rights and that is beneficial for our own development and the society as a whole. Education for Human rights should aim at imparting knowledge; inculcating right attitudes and values and developing certain skills like co-operating on shared tasks and be able to work co-operatively with other individuals and groups in order to

achieve a common goal, developing images of what better world might look like, able to developing an ability to influence and participate in decision-making and also communicate clearly and assertively with others. Indeed, the denial of Human Rights Awareness is not only an individual tragedy, but also a conditions of social unrest and political turmoil. It may sow seeds of conflict between societies and nations. For proper implementation of human rights, it is necessary for everyone to know about his or her own rights. Education focused for the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. In order to avoid harassment of human right, there is urgency to make the society aware of the same. This is possible through education. Guarantees and protection of human rights are today looked upon as essential part of justice and communication, but a grammar of civilized society and an essential condition of happy peaceful and prosperous future. Having good social commitment helps a child to behave according to social norms. The extent to which children and adolescents possess good social skills can influence their academic performance, behavior, social and family relationships. Without adequate development of social commitment the child cannot become useful members of the society. So to ensure optimum human resource development and to safe guard future social harmony, adequate social commitment should be developed in children. The schools should encourage pupils to recognize the rights of other people to express their personalities and to tolerate other people's ideas and concepts that is, to practice human rights. This study is primarily aimed at finding out the relationship between human rights awareness and social commitment of higher secondary school students. The study is expected to reveal many valuable findings about human rights awareness and social commitment of students. The expected findings of the study had immense value and significance as human rights awareness has an important role in developing social commitment in students. This study helps the concerned authorities to understand necessary changes that need to be implemented in educational fields for the betterment of the citizens of tomorrow.

## Human Rights in Indian Constitution

The constitution of India, the world's lengthiest written constitution (with 395 articles, 12 schedules and 24 chapters) was passed by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949. The constitution of our country reflects the aspiration, hopes, ideals and values of the people of India. The constitution is the fundamental law of a land, which includes the powers and functions of the government and duties and responsibilities of the citizens. The preamble of the constitution is described as an identity card of the constitution. The preamble provides an introduction to our constitution and parts of part III on Fundamental Rights and part 4 III on Directive Principles which together have been described as forming the core of the constitution, and which together reflect the basic principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the covenants on civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights.

## Fundamental Rights

Every Indian citizen enjoys the protection of some guarantees that ensures his freedom to believe and think and act as an individual. These guarantees are included in the constitution and are called Fundamental Rights. The fundamental Rights are incorporated in Part III of the Indian Constitution (Articles 12-35).

## Directive Principles

Directive Principles are directives to the government which emphasize that the ideas, which the constitution aims at, are that of a social welfare state. Directive principles of the state policy are incorporated in part IV of the Indian Constitution (Articles 35-51).

## Fundamental Duties

In part IV A of the Indian Constitution, certain value based principles are included as fundamental duties. They emphasize the fact that insistence on rights alone will not make a society, duties are equally important.

## Human Rights Education

The first sentence of the preamble of the universal declaration of Human Rights states that recognition and respect for human right is the foundation of freedom, peace and justice in the world. The denial of human rights is not only an

individual or personal tragedy, but also creates conditions of social unrest and political turmoil and sows seeds of conflict between societies and nations. However, for proper implementation of human right it is necessary for everyone to know about his or her own rights. There is always a close relation between legislation, implementation and education.

The general conference of the united nations Educational scientific and cultured organization (UNESCO) at its eighteenth session in Paris in 1974 recommended that "education should be directed for the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the united nations for the sake of peace". The document further stated that education should stress the inadmissibility of recourse to war for the purpose of representation and bring every person to understand or assume his or her responsibilities for the maintenance of peace.

## CONCLUSION

The history of human rights has roots in all great events of the world and it has sustained the struggle for freedom and equality everywhere. The international community has grown and changed enormously during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The critical and transformative role of education is to develop consciousness or awareness among the students towards positive value of the present era. Human rights awareness, being accepted as positive value of the present era needs to be nurtured among children and this is possible with the help of social commitment. Attaining social commitment in child's school career plays an important role in academic success, happiness in school as well as a more stable adulthood. Therefore, appropriate educational measure like debate, workshop, seminar, group discussion, value oriented programmes, conflict resolution, cooperative learning approach, display of human rights news on notice board, field trips, celebration of special days like Human Rights Day, World Health Day, Literacy Day, Population Day should be organised in educational institutions for

improving the sense of rights and generate social commitment among our future citizens.

The dramatic and literacy activities have the potential of motivating children to reflect on societal issues and solving them in right perspectives. Role playing is an important strategy for inculcating social commitment among children. Even the study of major literacy and artistic works provides a positive stimulus to children to grasp themes relating to human rights, international understanding and peace. The study proved that, for better human rights awareness certain social commitments are necessary. Student is the centre of the educational system. Therefore social commitment of students plays an important role. With the help of human rights awareness, these social commitments can be boosted in children because human rights awareness and social commitment are significantly related and are crucial factor in the child's life.

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