

# Context and Constructs of Human Rights Education, Academic and Spiritual

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## *ABSTRACT*

The human being is not just a rational animal endowed with physical strength and mental faculties. Education is concerned with three aspects or levels—the physical, the mental or intellectual and the spiritual. These three are not isolated compartments. Thus, human rights can be generally defined as those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings. Education in human rights is itself a fundamental human rights and also a responsibility: the preamble to the universal declaration of human rights. Multicultural education reflects the human rights principles of non-discrimination and participation in one's own language, culture and religion. Thus there is a necessity for creating an awareness of human rights and their protection measures. The education that does not take part in the struggle of the human beings in the street, that does not strengthen the will power in the face of trials.

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"The kind of knowledge what we possess today has weakened our sense of value for human abilities. Our intelligence as hardened our hearts. We think a lot but don't feel. What we need today more than machines Humanness."

Charlie Chaplin, great dictator stating that the concept of Human Rights is as old as man kind. The purpose is to create an awareness of human rights through human rights education to ensure that every human being leads a meaningful life with dignity.

Education is concerned with three aspects or levels—the physical, the mental or intellectual and the spiritual. These three are not isolated compartments. The physical dimension expresses itself in the development of a strong and well-built body. His well known statements are "The man who plays football can understand the gita better. We cannot preach the gita to a hungry man". At

the second level, education promotes the development of the world around us and respond to it in an intelligent and enlightened manner. The human being is not just a rational animal endowed with physical strength and mental faculties. He holds the divine spark within himself. A spark disturbs our cold' (Browning) It is his awareness of his divinity that prompts him to employ his other faculties purposefully and creatively. Swami Vivekananda emphasises "that if man grow only physically and mentally but not grow side by side spiritually also, he will actually use his strength to exploit others, to express himself in violence and war to harm and destroy others, to harm and destroy even himself. But when grows spiritually and manifests his divine dimension he becomes capable of radiating humanistic impulses". (Swami Vivekananda, Moscow University Lecture, 1977) He, further emphasises on the value and importance

of intimate, active, personal relationship between the teacher and taught. His idea of education is based on the system of Gurukula Vasa. He has spelt out the conditions which the pupils and the teachers should conform to the purity of thoughts, speech and actions passion for knowledge and perseverance are the essential, indispensable qualities a pupil should possess. Education is not primarily for livelihood but for life. Freedom from the desire for material equisition and sensual gratification is another condition.

The teacher for his part should be a man of character, capable of communicating something of his own personality, purity and loftiness to the students. He should be capable of wining the hearts of his students by love, compassion, unselfishness and love for truth. A teacher is a person who dispels ignorance; he is an acharya-one who leads, one who shows the way to truth, one who by example, shows the right way of conduct and speech. He teaches without disturbing the faith of those he teachers. The aim of university education is "Culture of knowledge for its own sake'. Residential system promotes fellowship and encourage corporate life. Students coming from different social and economic background, speaking different languages and holding different faiths learn to rise above differences and cultivate respect and tolerance. This 'informal' education goes a long way in knocking out their angularities and moulding their personality.

We experience our human rights everyday when we worship according to our beliefs or choose not to worship at all. Human rights violation also occur every day when a parent abuses a child, when a family is homeless, when a school provides inadequate education, when women are paid less than men or when one person steals from another.

Thus, human rights can be generally defined as those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings. Another definition of human rights is those basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity. To violate someone's human rights is to treat that person as though he is not a human being. To advocate human rights is to demand that a human dignity of all people be respected. In claiming these human rights, every one also accepts the responsibility not to infringe on the rights of others and to support those whose rights are abused or demine when we say that each person has human rights, we are also saying that each person has responsibilities too to respect the human rights of others.

Simply puts human rights education is all learning that develops the knowledge, skills and values of human rights, During this united Nation's Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), the UN is urging and supporting all members state to make knowledge about human rights available to everyone through both the formal school system and through informal abult education. It has defined Human Rights Education as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills, and the moulding of attitudes which are directed at:

- (a) the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- (b) the full development of human personality and the seuse of its dignity.
- (c) the promotion of dignity, understanding respect for gender equality and friendship among all nations.
- (d) the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society

(e) the furtherance of the activities of the united Nations for the maintenance of peace. Human rights should be part of everyone's education. However, certain groups have a particular need for human rights education. Some because they are especially vulnerable to human rights abuses, others because they hold official positions and upholding human rights is their responsibility and still others because of their ability to influence and educate. Few of us had any opportunity to study about human rights during our formal schooling. This is part of the problem. The foundation of all learning is inspiring interest, curiosity and personal connection to the subject matter. Research shows people of all ages remember and integrate best when they participate in their learning. 'Experts' can evoke passivity or a sense of incompetence specially if they present human rights from a strictly legal perspective. Need not to be an expert of legal background, rather to be willing the part of learning process.

### **Characteristics of Human Rights Education**

The main characteristics of human rights education (HRE) are :

- HRE declares a commitment to those human rights expressed in the universal declaration of human rights of 1948, the united state Bill of Rights. It asserts the responsibility to respect, protect and promote the rights of all people.
- HRE Promotes democratic Principles. It examines human rights issues without bias and from diversified perspective through a variety of educational practices.
- HRE engages the heart as well as mind. It challenges students to ask what human rights mean to them personally and encourages them to translate caring into informed nonviolent action.

- HRE affirm the interdependence of the human family. It promotes understanding of the complex global forces that create abuses, as wells the ways in which abuses abuses can be abolished and avoided.

Education in human rights is itself a fundamental human rights 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). The students of law and international relations or political science may study human rights in a university settings but most people receive no education, formally or informally, about human rights. Growing consens around the world recognizes education for and about human rights as essential. It can contribute to the building of free just and peaceful societies. Human rights education is also increasingly recognised an en effective strategy to prevent human rights abuses.

- HRE means being aware of one's rights, Responsibilities and Actions. Integrate to learning about one's human rights is learning about the responsibilities and accompany all rights. Just as human rights belong to both individuals and society as a whole, the responsibility to respect, defend and promote human rights is both individual and collective. The preamble of universal declaration of human rights but also call on "every individual and every organ of society". Human rights education provides the knowledge and awareness needed to meet the responsibility. The responsibilities of all citizens in a democratic society are inseparable from the responsibility to promote human rights. To

flourish, both democracy and human rights require people's active participation. Human Rights Education includes the learning the skills of advocacy to speak and act every day in the name of human rights.

HRE also provides a basis for conflict resolution and the promotion of social order. Rights often themselves clash, such as when one person's commitment to public safety conflicts with another's freedom of expressions. As a value system based on respect and the equality and dignity of all people, human rights can create a framework for analysing and resolving such differences. Human rights education also teaches the skills of negotiation, mediation and consensus building. As human rights educators, we must ask our students and ourselves, "How does these all relate to the way we live our lives?" the answers to this question will tell us much about how effectively we have taught our students.

### **Factors in Human Rights Education Activity**

**Skills:** such as listening to others, making moral analysis, cooperating, communicating, problem solving and questioning the status quo. These skills helps children to analyse the world around them, understand that human rights are a way to improve their lives and the lives of the others and action to protect human rights.

### **Knowledge :**

Such as knowing that human rights documents exist and when rights they contain, and that these rights are universally applicable to all human beings and inalienable. Also knowing the consequences of violating human rights. This knowledge helps children to protect their own rights and the rights of others.

### **Attitudes :**

Such as that human rights are important that human dignity is inherent in all people, that right should be respected, that cooperation is better than conflict, that we are responsible for our actions, and what we improve our world if we try. These attitudes help children to develop morally and prepare them for positive participation in society.

### **Methodology:-**

Participative, interactive methodology involves children fully in learning. This methodology is particularly appropriate when dealing with human rights issues, where there are often many different points of view on an issue, rather than one 'correct' answer. Teaching of human rights must not be to impart knowledge about the rights only. It should aim at arousing the consciousness of the learner and raise his level of thinking from submission of critical advocacy. Hence a human rights educator has to use a lot of activity oriented methods.

Human Rights, Education and moral education, peace education, development education, multicultural education global studies, citizenship education and conflict resolution where does human rights education fit in? These different forms of education share many common features; all include acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes, Human Rights Education, however, provides a shared value system where all intersect. For example peace education incorporates human dignity and the right to peace and security. Multicultural education reflects the human rights principles of non-discrimination and participation in one's own language, culture and religion. Thus there is a necessity for creating an awareness of human rights and their protection measures.

### **Conclusion:**

In the words of Swami Vivekananda, " What we need is an education for life, education to form human beings to foster good manners, to educate others with his learning. The education that does not take part in the struggle of the human beings in the street, that does not strengthen the will power in the face of trials that does not spur the students to work for the welfare of mankind, is not education at all."

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