

Emerging human rights curriculum for primary, secondary and tertiary level of education

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INTRODUCTION

“With out education, we can not see beyond ourselves and our narrow surroundings to the reality of global interdependence. Without education, we can not realize how people of other races and religions share the same dreams, the same hopes. Without education, we can not recognize the University Human Aims and aspirations” -Former UN Secreatary General Mr. Kofi Annan

Human rights and fundamental freedoms allow us to develop fully and use of our human qualities. Our intelligence, our talents and our conscience and to satisfy our spiritual and other needs it could be generally defined as those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we can not live as human beings.

The genesis of the concept of human rights can be traced into the emergence of classical-liberalism. Classical liberalism made a passionate defense of the principles like competitive individualism, private property and market ethics etc. It cherished the realization of individual's liberty, his development and human progress.

The human rights signify both rights and duties which are inter-linked-in real practice. Thus human rights is the sum of all rights necessary to ensure our rights to be human and it is the duty of all people and governments to create the condition headed to exercise our right to be human.

Few basic essentials to qualify a particular right to be human rights are as follows. It is the right of individual of group of individuals. It can only be executed in a society for and against state by individual or groups.

These rights are inalienable and human beings are entitled to them by birth.

- It is a permanent universal and legal concept in all spheres of life.
- These rights are meant to uphold human dignity and equality to setforth liberty and fraternity to all without any kind of discrimination to all needy.
- These rights arte minimum requirements for survival of mankind or human beings in societies.
- There rights are protected and enforced by the authority of society or state at all levels.

Human right and education:

Through ages education is regarded as means of equality and potential instrument of social change. In the ‘Hitopadesha’ it has been said “Education imparts humanity: humanity gives stability; stability enables us to secure wealth and wealth enables us o perform Dharma which in turn leads to

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happiness.”

The need for human rights education has been emphasized in the universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents and treaties. Such education should be directed towards.

- Strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Fully developing the human personality and its sense of dignity.
- Promoting understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups;
- Furthering United Nations activities for maintaining peace.

Educational objectives and human rights :

The objectives of the United Nations in its human rights educational efforts are to teach the “Common language of Humanity” to people everywhere *i.e.* to build a universal culture of human rights. It proposes to promote and encourage respect for human rights. Fundamental freedoms, facilitating international dialogue and cooperation.

There are three dimensions to the promotion of human rights through education.

- **Knowledge** – Providing information about human rights and the mechanisms that exist to protect these rights.
- **Values, beliefs and Attitudes-** Promoting human rights culture through the development of these processes.
- **Action** – Encouraging people to defend human rights and prevent human rights abuses.

The United Nations Decade for Human Rights education in response to another world conference recommendation, the UN General Assembly in December 1994 proclaimed the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). The Assembly proposed global plan of Action and called upon non governmental organizations (NGOs) to increase their involvement in human rights education. The plan has five objectives:

- Assess needs and formulate strategies for the furtherance of human rights education;
- Build and strengthen programmes and capacities for human rights education at international, regional, national and local levels;
- Coordinate the development of effective human rights education materials;

Strengthen the role and capacity of mass media in the furtherance of human rights education.

Thus Human rights education aims to do the following:

- Enhance the knowledge and understanding of human rights.
- Foster attitudes of tolerance, respect, solidarity, and responsibility.
- Develop awareness of how human rights can be translated into social and political reality.
- Develop skills for protecting human rights.
- The design of the curriculum needs to be built on the philosophical, psychological, and sociological bases of curriculum planning and development. The school curriculum should work toward the holistic development of the individual.

Curriculum for the pre school and lower primary level:

In Pre School and lower primary education, teaching for human rights is aimed to foster feelings of confidence and social tolerance. These are the basis for the whole culture of human rights. This makes the teacher’s “teaching personality” highly critical:

- At the Pre School and lower primary levels, students are learned to express themselves, to communicate and to care.
- Stories can be prepared or obtained from published literature on childrens’ tales, parents and grand parents or even by using one’s imagination.

- A class room library having picture books that feature both males and females as multi cultural, active and non stereo typed characters.
- Where the resource exists, students can participate in cooking, a wood work bench, potting plant and needle point. These can be done as imagination games.
- Try to facilitate friendships between students as well as awareness that differences are acceptable and natural.
- Encourage the children to think of the physical and emotional consequences and recall past experiences.

Curriculum for upper primary level:

In Primary schools what is most important is to develop attitudes of respect for human dignity and diversity. Human rights education is geared to three interdependent areas of emphasis:

- Learning, Knowledge and concepts.
- Educational practice and interdisciplinary projects.
- Debates about values

This pedagogical triptych avoids widening the gap that all too often exists between knowledge and action.

One of the vital methods is to establish genuine communication. There are several forms of interpersonal communication; non verbal communication help pupils to develop their skills for independent thinking and the ability to express themselves.

'*Question and answer*' Exercise form part of communication, Discussions, *stories, drawings, game, songs, poster, and written texts* can be used to help children learn about human rights *knowledge of the natural world* is linked at one and the same time to science, social science literature and the arts. Lesson in these subjects can directly highlight the complexity of the *ecology of the earth* and of its different regions and localities. Children can be taught about the ecosystems and the specific *geographical features* of their own town or village. Lessons on *human diversity* can be introduced in the earliest grades of education. Teacher can also explain the differences exist between human groups originating from different countries of the world. Human beings have different customs and different languages, because their geographical and historical environment is different. This variety in human identity and experience is an immense asset for humanity as a whole. Teachers can encourage pupils to explore the various ways chosen by human beings to meet the same needs, by using *stories, illustrations, history and geography lessons*.

Curriculum for secondary schools :

In secondary schools, there can be many opportunities for debates and the give and take of well argued discussion. History, geography and civics lesson provide a number of opportunities for organizing interdisciplinary explanations and for promoting discussion. Human rights teaching can be introduced into most school subject *viz.*,

Mathematics:

Mathematics is an especially appropriate subject for dealing with the economic and social rights, certain cultural rights and specific rights.

In connection with cultural rights, use can be made of statistics on literacy, enrolment ratios and (access to higher education) by means of tables or graphs.

Statistics can also be used to estimate the percentage of citizen by country and by region who have access to data. Teacher can then show how cultural rights are bound up with economic and political rights.

Economics:

Rights such as the right to work and the right to a fair wage can provide an opportunity for comparing and analyzing graphs on employment and unemployment. Comparisons and diagrams can be used to show the percentage difference between one population category and another.

Computer Science:

In this context, the teacher can choose a concept related to a human right and run an internet search for information. When this first research stage is completed, reports can be made to the class as a whole. Through discussion, the class can provide full or partial answers which they transmit to the internet. A class can select a human rights topic and set up its own site to communicate with other students on the World Wide Web.

Literature:

Literature is especially useful in presenting the origins of concepts and principles of human rights and present day societies.

Short stories and novels have frequently contributed to collective awareness of instances of injustices, such as slavery, child labour and discrimination against women that have been perpetrated against specific groups of people.

Teachers can encourage students to read a variety of works either as a whole or selection from them. Works can be selected from the literature of each country and some universal literary classics.

History and social studies:

It is essential for history teaching to be presented in the light of evolving human rights. There are several possible approaches to teach the various periods of modern world history by introducing issues related to human rights and instance of their violation.

Major Revolutions that left their mark on the world between 1776 and 1917 and history of the industrial revolution, social movements can be introduced by a review of the issues linked to economic, social and cultural rights.

The Second World War can be introduced, along with the universal Declaration of Human Rights, to "Illustrate the relationship between human rights and peace." The teacher can point out these rights are violated by war reciprocally. How such violations frequently engender war.

The study of the fight for national independence and the rejection of colonialism can be used to discuss the right of peoples to self determination. Lessons on contemporary issues such as development, ethnic conflicts, balanced environments and cultural recognition can be based on the history how different declarations and instruments for the defense of human rights have come into being.

Civics education :

Civics is an especially suitable subject for the introduction of discussion on human rights and can provide a context for a detailed study of international instruments. It can lay special emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of citizen as listed in international instruments.

Music:

Artistic education in all its forms and at all levels is a highly appropriate subject for human rights education. *Folk dance, Folk music, songs*, correspond to popular social movements can be used to arouse awareness of the *history of local struggles* to achieve respect for human rights.

Visual arts:

Classical or contemporary works of art that raise human rights issues can be chosen for study and comment. Student can be invited to imagine the artist's point of view and study the techniques used to match the ideas or feelings reflected in the work of art. Naturally, students can also themselves represent human rights by drawings, paintings, sculptures and exhibitions.

Natural science :

When studying the composition and properties of water, teachers can point out that access to drinking water such a fundamental need that one might even recognize a 'right to water'. Ways of meeting water requirements can illustrate the differences in the achievements of economic and social rights

Several other topics concerning humanities like *environmental pollution, genetic engineering, plant breeding, transgenic plants, terminator gene, biotechnology* etc. should be introduced and also several form of vocational and technical education.

Curriculum for tertiary level of education:

In planning the life of our colleges and universities in organising the programmes and practices thereof, the aims of education must be given due consideration. The individuals and social aspects of personality should be integrated and coordinated. The association of education in citizenship (1947) has said that each pupil.

- Should be given full chance to develop himself as a individual personality.
- Should know how to play his part as an active member of his community both socially and politically.
- Should be equipped to make a contribution in the occupation sphere suited to his interest and aptitudes.
- Should know how to be in effective communication with his fellow men and his culture by his own articulation and creative capacity.

For objectives for Higher Education are:

- (a) Self realization
- (b) Civil responsibility
- (d) Economic efficiency
- (e) Human Relationship
- (i) First and foremost requirement to fulfill above objectives is democratic education in our colleges and university to eliminate narrow academic approach and broaden out into a process of education for living, *i.e.* education to initiate the students into many sided art of living in a community.
- (ii) It should learn to live with others and to appreciate the value of cooperation through partial experience and free interplay with other personalities.
- (iii) It should develop not merely the knowledge but also deep understanding, skills, attitudes and interests.
- (iv) It should induce intellectual activity.
- (v) It should develop moral conduct.
- (vi) It should be able to orient the public or community.

Curriculum for Tertiary Level includes providing *knowledge of philosophy, organization, methodology, administration, management, psychology etc.* Subject matter must be individualized, to extend widely the field of choice and enable the people to follow the principles of life long education. Authoritaion forms of teaching must be given way to relationship marked by independence, mutual responsibility and dialogue, pedagogical training must be geared to know the multiple aspects of human personality.

METHODOLOGY

As discussed earlier, human rights teaching should permeate not only all school subjects but also every aspect of school life. There is no denying the fact that human rights can be taught more effectively through various cocurricular activities. The methodological issues are relatively more important than the content as far as human rights education is concerned. Teaching methods are crucial in sensitizing and changing attitudes and creating a human rights culture. As the current teaching methodology may reduce human rights education to a mere academic exercise, it is important to bring field experiences into the classroom and take students to communities.

Teacher attitudes and assessment methods are important in conveying key messages to students. It is also important that the practices adopted in schools and the classroom reflects a climate and culture of human rights. The flesh and blood of schooling—the relationship among students, teachers, and school administrators, and teaching strategies—need to be rebuilt on the basic philosophy of human rights.

Teacher as a messenger of human rights :

School is the starting point where teacher have to set their own teaching goals. The teacher will always be the key person for communication of human right message. It has been found that upper primary and secondary school students some times suffer from a lack of confidence and they find it hard to socialize with others. For this they can be repeated (with suitable variations) to settle students into activities that require groups participation. Role play is considered a most effective way of transmitting the meaning of the human rights message.

Conclusion:

The phenomenal expansion at all stages of education especially primary education with the increase in the number of schools teacher pupils and expenditure there in, can undoubtedly be treated as clear indications if the universalisation of education as human right. For this following should be emphasized.

- Provision of free and compulsory education upto a give age group.
- Increasing this age group progressively in accordance with the ‘means’ and will of the country.
- Providing common curriculum and if possible, a common school system.
- Provision of additional facilities of education on the basis of talents and individual merit.
- Location of other factors of differentiation and their removal.

Thus the concept of human rights education has assumed importance globally during the past few decades. They are indispensable for physical and mental upliftment of the human race. There rights are expansion of what is a life minimally worth living and are based upon primary material and immaterial necessities of life.

The utility of the present paper lies in the implementation of human right curriculum and its principles underlying positive laws and precise text with legal implication. It is though dialogue that pupils can genuinely make the values their own and weave them into their present and future actions.

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