

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

SHAIK JOHN ABRAHAM JOSEPH

Abstract:The term human rights denote all rights that are present in our society and without which one cannot live as human beings. Education has a very important role to play for promotion and protection of human rights. Education makes us aware about our civil and political right often called as the first generation rights and the social, economic and cultural rights as the second generation rights. Without proper education one cannot be introduced with these essential philosophic and there basic rights and obligations. The concept of expanding human rights through education is now popularly present and traveled to encompass as the third generation rights itself. So it is very important that we know what is the role of education in promotion and protection of human rights.Human rights are the basic rights that a person irrespective of race, gender or any other background cannot be denied anywhere or at any condition. This article enhances the importance of human rights in day to day life and the role of education in protecting and promoting them.

Key words:Human Rights, Rights,Responsibilities

Introduction:Human rights are often expressed and guaranteed Universal by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings. Whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

Human Rights Principles: Human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. They are universal because everyone is born with and possess the same rights, regardless of where they live, their gender or race, or their religious, cultural or ethnic background .Inalienable because all rights-political, civil, social, cultural and economic – are equal in importance and none can be fully enjoyed without the others. They are upheld by the rule of law and strengthened through legitimate claims for duty-bearers to be accountable to international standard.

Universality and Inalienability:

i. Human rights are **universal and inalienable**. All the people everywhere in the world are entitled to them.

ii. The universality of human rights is encompassed in the words of Article -1 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Right**

iii. “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Indivisibility:

i. Human rights are indivisible. Whether they relate to civil, cultural, economic, political or social issues.

ii. Human rights are inherent to the dignity of every human person.

iii. Consequently, all human rights have equal status, and cannot be positioned in a hierarchical order.

Independence and Interrelatedness:

i. Human rights are interdependent and interrelated.

ii. Each one contributes to the realization of a person’s human dignity through the satisfaction of his or her developmental, physical, psychological and spiritual needs.

Equality and Non –Discrimination:

i. All individuals are equal as human beings and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each human person.

ii. No one, therefore, should suffer discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender, age, language, sexual orientation, religion, political or other opinion, national, social or geographical origin, disability, property, birth or other status as established by human rights standards.

Participation and Inclusion:

- i. All people have the right to participate in and access information relating to the decision making processes that effect their lives and well-being.
- ii. Rights-based approaches require a high degree of participation by communities, civil society, minorities, women, young people, indigenous peoples and other identified groups.

Accountability and rule of law:

- i. States and other duty-bears are answerable for the observance of human rights.
- ii. In this regard, they have to comply with the legal norms and standards enshrined in international human rights instruments.
- iii. Where they fail to do so aggrieved rights-holders are entitled to institute proceeding for appropriate redress before a competently court or other adjudicator in accordance with rules and procedures provided by law.

Human Rights in Education: Human rights education should aim at providing practical experience as such it is essential that social field work in neigh boring areas as well as in remote villages should be made a part of adult education programme. A Programme for the teaching of human rights, at all levels and in all forms of education, should bear in mind the recommendations made by the international congress on the Teaching of Human Rights (Vienna,1978) and documentation Malta(1987) These principles and considerations that should guide the teaching of human rights include:

- i. Human rights education and teaching should be based on the principle which underlies the charter of the United Nations; Universal Declaration of Human rights the international convents on Human Rights and other International Human Rights Instruments. As such, the emphasis should be places on indivisibility of all human rights civil and political rights economic, social cultural rights, as well as individual and collective rights:
- ii. The concept of human rights should not only be formulated in traditional or classical terms, but should include the historical experience and contribution of all peoples, particularly in relation to major contemporary problems, such as self-determination and elimination of all forms of discrimination and exploitation
- iii. Human rights education and teaching must aim at

- Fostering the attitude of tolerance, respect and solidarity inherent in human rights;
 - Providing knowledge about human rights, in both national and international dimensions and the Institutions established for their implementation:
 - Developing the individuals awareness of the ways and means by which human rights can be translated into soiciland political reality at both the national and international levels
- iv. While education should make the individual aware of his or her own rights, it should at the same time instill respect for the rights of others;
 - v. Human right education and teaching should stress that a just International economic order is essential to enable all people to enjoy their human rights and to promote and facilitate education on human rights at all levels and in all countries:
 - vi. Human rights must be taught a all levels of the educational system, as well as in out – of- school settings, including the family and in continuing education programmes, including literacy and post literacy programmes;
 - vii. In order for the teacher of human rights to be able to carry out his or her task properly it is particularly important his or her personal integrity and freedom of expression be guaranteed.

Human Rights Education at School level: Several schools offer human rights education as part of their curriculum, for example linked subjects like History, politics and Citizenship, but there are also specialized courses, such as Human rights offered as part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme for high school students.

According to IB human rights is an academic subject containing units on

1. The theory of human rights
2. The practice of human rights
3. Contemporary human rights issues

In order to pass the course students are required to study for two years, take a final examination and produce a course work.

Problems for promoting Human Rights Education:

Situation of teachers- it has that always been mentioned any human rights education program has to seriously look at the heavy load that teachers carry

in terms of responsibility and number of activities in the school. Such a situation precludes initiative much less innovation in teaching. Thus, the introduction of human rights as another matter in the subjects to be taught should not be seen as an additional burden. Instead, it should trigger enthusiasm and creativity in teaching the curriculum with a human rights perspective.

Teacher training - there is near unanimous view that teachers need to be trained on teaching human rights. Such training not only relates to knowing the meaning of human rights but also in having the skill of using appropriate teaching methods. Teacher training involves the setting up of continuing programs in teaching training institutes to respond to the increasing need for improving ideas, methodologies and materials in teaching human rights. The role of existing teaching training programs and institutions comes out very significantly in this area.

Curriculum reformation and additional extra-curricular activities - there are generally two types of teaching human rights in schools - those that work within the existing school curriculum and those that add activities outside of the formal curriculum. The first type uses the integration method of finding spaces within existing curriculum where human rights can be inserted as integral part of the subjects. The second type generally uses field activities that allow the students to interact with the communities and create an impact on people outside the school. In the process, the students learn human rights in a more concrete manner.

School-community relationship - the community has always been seen as an essential element of the learning process in human rights education. The community is important as a way of relating to the concrete realities faced by the students outside the schools (which are actually reflected in the situation inside the schools). The meaning of human rights become clearer by looking at the very context of the students and not just knowing the information provided by the textbooks.

Participatory approach: human rights education becomes an avenue for the government, the schools and the NGOs to put into actual use the principles of participatory methods of teaching. Most of the papers mention the value of promoting group work which allows students to interact more with each other; field/community visits which provides actual

exposure to issues that have human rights implications; stress on analytical skills that enable students to understand not just the violations that occurred but the deeper causes of the violations and the possible steps to remedy the problems and prevent them from occurring again; action-oriented perspective which requires the students to practice the human rights concepts learned through various school and field/community activities.

Experimentations on HRE: in view of the developing concept of human rights and human rights education, a lot of efforts are being devoted to devising concepts of teaching that take into consideration gender, cultural, ethnic, and religious sensitivities.

HRE as evolving an education system - the teaching of human rights offers an opportunity to reexamine the existing practices in schools. It sometimes questions the very sensitive area of the role of the teachers in relation to the students. The teacher-student dichotomy for example is seen as incorrect since both are sources and recipients of knowledge. No one is an expert in human rights. Human rights are learned by looking at each person's experiences.

Viable solutions Promoting Human rights educations:

Seminar-cum-orientation Programmes: The Programme was a full day event with showing of videos, open house discussions and teaching demonstration.

Teacher training programmes: The training dealt with the development of capacity to use innovative and best methodologies in imparting the human rights education module to students. The training helped motivate and train the teachers in skills of teaching.

Human rights classes: To conduct Human rights classes in primary, secondary and higher secondary schools and also received the feedback from them.

Review and planning meetings: The review gave an insight on all the good work done in all the primary, secondary and higher secondary Schools, their challenges and constraints. The meeting included discussion of the problems encountered and finding solutions through the experiences in schools whose programs have been proceeding in great momentum

Programme implementation results: The students were happy with the content and showed a great progress. Changes in their lives were visible in their

attendance of human rights classes. The inclusion of government schools led to the initiation of a value education class for human rights in the school curriculum. This is one step towards more consultations and meetings for development of school curriculum that make children face the real world.

Constraints and challenges:The implementation of the program faces a number of constraints and challenges. One of the major challenges refers to the school curriculum. The human rights classes are

being done in the General Knowledge (GK) period or the Moral science period

Conclusion: Education should be imparted to each and every one so that they understand the importance of human rights. There is no doubt that education has a major role to play for protection and promotion of human rights. HRE is considered as one of the major tools to stop the violations against human rights. From the above discussion we saw the importance and how education can play a vital role in this regard.

References:

1. Arjun, D., &Supta, D. (1996). Human rights – a source book. New Delhi: NCERT.
2. Bajwa, G. S. (1995). Human rights in India- implementations and violations. New Delhi: Anmol Publications.
3. Flowers, N. (1998). Human rights education handbook: Effective practices for learning, action and change. Minneapolis: Human rights education network, Amnesty International, USA.
4. Ishay, M.R. (2000). The history of human rights. from ancient times to the Globalization era. California: University of California Press.
5. Magandzo, Abraham , K. (1994). Human rights teaching at all levels of school. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House
6. Patil, V.T., &Sastry, D. (2000). Studies in human rights. New Delhi: P.R. Books.
7. Tarrow,N. B. (1987). Human rights and education. London: Pergamon Press.

Shaik John Abraham Joseph/Research Scholar/Department of Education/Acharya Nagarjuna University/
Guntur/9440889074/shaikjoseph@yahoo.com