
**A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN PEOPLE
THROUGH EDUCATION, MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT**

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ABSTRACT

Citizens of any nation cannot be expected to stand up for their own rights or to respect the rights of others, if they are not aware about their rights. Without a widespread culture of human rights and proper awareness, democracy is not by itself a guarantee of respect of human rights. It is believed that the creation of a human rights culture through education and information is the ultimate to achieve long-term and permanent solution against human rights abuses and establishing peace all over the world.

A civilized society can only exist when the citizens of the state know their rights, respect their rights and fulfill their own obligation to society. It therefore, follows that knowledge of human rights and dignity are the very basic factors of a civilized and democratic countries.

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INTRODUCTION

Citizens of any nation cannot be expected to stand up for their own rights or to respect the rights of others, if they are not aware about their rights. Without a widespread culture of human rights and proper awareness, democracy is not by itself a guarantee of respect of human rights. It is believed that the creation of a human rights culture through education and information is the ultimate to achieve long-term and permanent solution against human rights abuses and establishing peace all over the world.

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Intense Forms of Torture by Indian Forces

The international human rights organizations know that the Indian forces in occupied Kashmir are using intense forms of torture to suppress the indefatigable spirit of the people of Kashmir for freedom. The degree and severity of inhuman torture is nowhere so barbarous as one observes in Kashmir. Setting hoses or fire, looting and indiscriminate killings of the unarmed and innocent Kashmiri and other forms of heinous crimes such as rape and molestation by the Indian Armed Forces, is unparalleled in the modern history of human rights abuse.

Human Rights Awareness, a multi-faceted human rights campaign

In response to this lack of human rights awareness and its alarming consequences in many parts of the world, the Church of Scientology in 1998 launched a multi-faceted human rights campaign.

A civilization without insanity, without criminals and without war, where the able can prosper and honest beings can have rights, and where man is free to rise to great heights. This is the aim of Scientology, which is developed by L. Ron Hubbar a wellknown human rights activist.

Annual Human Rights Marathon

Its first phase was the launch of an annual human rights marathon that would lead through a variety of countries.

Meeting thousands of people — from government officials, human rights leaders and church leaders to the public-at-large — the marathoners acquainted most of them for the first time with the details of this fundamental human rights charter and what these rights mean. Taking into

account the volumes of literature they distributed and the numerous television and radio programs they appeared in along the way, the marathon team brought the Declaration of Human Rights to an estimated 30 million people.

The Church stepped up its actions to promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Agreeing wholeheartedly with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who said “Large-scale human rights violations are not merely the product of civil and ethnic conflict, they are also a major cause of such conflicts”.

Initiative by CHRI (Commonwealth)

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) believes that the process of law making must be participatory and informed by community needs. This participation is particularly important when constitutions are being revised and CHRI has therefore developed guiding principles on participatory constitution making. CHRI also disseminates information and creates public awareness of constitutional principles, especially those that protect human rights.

Police reform is urgently needed in many Commonwealth countries. Governments are resistant to reform, although this is vital to ensure access to justice and an effective criminal justice system. The colonial legacy and slow reforms mean that police often act as oppressive instruments in the hands of the rulers, rather than as protectors committed to the rule of law. CHRI works in India and East Africa to catalyze reform and ensure accountability within a modernized police organisation.

Prison Reforms – Scrutiny Required

Being closed institutions, prisons are not open to public scrutiny and hence are largely unaccountable. CHRI is actively trying to reinvigorate a relatively independent system of prison visitors mandated to scrutinize prison conditions and protect prisoners from torture and ill treatment.

Fact Finding Missions

CHRI's fact finding missions advocate greater adherence to the Harare principles. They highlight violations of human rights in specific Commonwealth countries and contribute to repairing the situation and restoring peace, the rule of law and human rights. Fact finding mission can also study countries seeking entry into the Commonwealth.

India is a longstanding multiparty, federal, parliamentary democracy with a bicameral parliament and a population of approximately 1.1 billion. Manmohan Singh was named prime minister

following his Congress party-led coalition's victory in the April-May 2004 general elections in which 675 million citizens participated. The 2004 general elections, the various 2004 state assembly elections, as well as the February state elections in Arunachal Pradesh Jharkhand, Bihar and repoll in October/November, and Haryana, were considered free and fair, despite scattered episodes of violence. While the civilian authorities generally maintained effective control of the security forces there were frequent instances in which elements of the security forces acted independently.

Misuse of Antiterrorism Legislation

The Indian government generally respected the rights of its citizens; however, numerous serious problems remained. Government officials used special antiterrorism legislation to justify the excessive use of force while combating active insurgencies in Jammu and Kashmir and several northeastern states. Security force officials who committed human rights abuses generally enjoyed de facto impunity, although there were reports of investigations into individual abuse cases as well as punishment of some perpetrators by the court system.

Corruption was endemic in the government and police forces, and the government made little attempt to combat the problem, except for a few instances highlighted by the media. The lack of firm accountability permeated the government and security forces, creating an atmosphere in which human rights violations often went unpunished. Although the country has numerous laws protecting human rights, enforcement was lax and convictions were rare. Social acceptance of caste-based discrimination remained omnipresent, and for many, validated human rights violations against persons belonging to lower castes. The additional following human rights problems were reported:

- Extrajudicial killings and killings of persons in custody.
- Torture and rape by police and security forces.
- Poor prison conditions, lengthy pretrial detention without charge, and prolonged detention while undergoing trial.
- Occasional limits on press freedom and freedom of movement.
- Harassment and arrest of human rights monitors.
- Corruption at all levels of government.
- Legal and societal discrimination against women.
- Forced prostitution, child prostitution, and female infanticide and feticide.

- Trafficking in women and children.
- Discrimination against persons and disabilities.
- Discrimination and violence against indigenous people and scheduled castes and tribes.
- Violence based on caste on religion.
- Exploitation of indentured, bonded and child labor.

Looking to the present poor awareness of people in India as well as in many other developing countries, the researcher conducted a survey of certain groups of professionals.

Special Efforts to increase awareness

The above level of awareness makes this researcher to believe that over and above mass media news stories and articles on human rights issues, it also requires a systematic approach to develop awareness by way of some special efforts to increase knowledge and understanding of the subject. A special column or some special episodes or a teleplay on the television on a human rights story would help in creating awareness among readers and viewers.

The government should include human rights subjects, right from the primary school to university level. Participation from Non-Governmental Organizations by arranging some training classes for adults would create a better impact among citizens of India. Importantly, training for every legislator and parliamentarian is of utmost importance. Awareness training program for government officials and particularly the police department and other military security forces will make them aware of human rights and how they have been misusing their powers to detainees and arrestees.

In nutshell, he was of the opinion that we need to have knowledge of human rights, training to government officials is required and more awareness among people would definitely lead to less violations of human rights.

Indian and Asian NGOs publications also have been taken into consideration supported by facts in creating awareness. International NGOs publications were also found very useful and important, where India has been criticized internationally on violations of human rights and this criticism might affect the appointment of India in United Nations Organization Security Council as permanent member with 'Veto' power. The issue of enforcing human rights in the nation is a global issue and a nation cannot ignore this reality.

There was a time when neighbouring countries were not interfering in other countries affairs with an idea of their personal matter and viewing that as indecency, but now the concept has

been changed. As and when there is violation in a particular country, the neighbours would protest and voice against injustice.

CONCLUSION

More awareness among people and more knowledge of their rights and duties will form a new world with people living a much better quality of life, better relationship, mutual understanding between each other and positively a life with higher standards and dignity. These would eradicate vast corruption practices in every sphere of our country and would make a society with humans having improved standards in discipline, work ethics and honesty.

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