

# Examining the Awareness and Implementation of Human Rights Education in India

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## ABSTRACT

Despite being the biggest democracy on the planet, India is a massive nation that faces many human rights issues. India, the world's biggest democracy, is vulnerable to human rights violations. Because being educated about human rights is the greatest way to protect yourself against their infringement, human rights education in India is crucial for the country's democracy and long-term prosperity. A culture of justice, equality, and dignity can only be nurtured via Human Rights Education (HRE). Constitutional requirements, international commitments, and initiatives by civil society have all contributed to India's slow but steady adoption of HRE in the classroom. The importance, knowledge, and obstacles of human rights education promotion in India are discussed in this article. In this setting, human rights education seems to be an effective means of influencing people to act in accordance with universally recognized principles.

**Keywords:** Education, Awareness, Training, Social, Knowledge

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## INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, human rights rhetoric became prominent in the academic fields of the social sciences. All contemporary nation-states have a basic obligation to provide space for and preserve human rights. Governments cannot guarantee human rights in the modern day due to the growing societal tensions brought about by extremism and other types of exploitation. While education is primarily responsible for teaching people to respect the rights of others, other fundamental social institutions must also play a role in this process. Inculcating an understanding of human rights is an essential function of education. In this light, several efforts have been undertaken by Indian government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to develop educational policies and programs that promote human rights awareness and protection.

In addition to imparting factual information, students should be helped in cultivating a good character via education. In particular, the educational system raises people's consciousness of human rights, stresses their significance, and teaches them how to respect these rights. 'School is a model of decent society,' John Dewey has said. Respect, inculcation, support, and protection of human rights might therefore begin in educational institutions. By fostering an understanding of and adherence to basic freedoms and human rights, as well as encouraging each individual's unique growth and development in accordance with their inherent worth, human rights education seeks to create a global culture that upholds and defends these principles.

A major step in integrating Human Rights Education into curricula around the globe, the United Nations designated the years 1995–2004 as the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education to highlight the significance of Human Rights Education. The United Nations advocated for human and other rights' interconnectedness and universality in this proclamation.

In 2004, the UN created the World Programme for Human Rights Education to continue its previous efforts to integrate human rights education into standard curricula. In addition to developing a shared framework for educating all member nations on the importance of human rights, this worldwide initiative sought to disseminate a human rights culture.

### Significance of Human Rights Education

The goal of human rights education is to promote a global understanding and respect for human rights via the dissemination of relevant knowledge, skills, and information. Knowledge exchange, skill development, and attitude molding all contribute to this end, with the overarching goal of bolstering basic freedoms and human rights. Ultimately, we want to see more tolerance, gender equality, international friendship, and respect for diverse social, national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups, as well as more personal growth and dignity for all people. Encouraging active participation in a free and democratic society ruled by the rule of law and helping to the development and preservation

of peace are two further goals of human rights education. With an emphasis on people's happiness and agency, it also aspires to advance social justice and sustainable development.

A worldwide culture of human rights may be fostered via human rights education by means of the information, abilities, and attitudes that are imparted. Although the impact of human rights education is most seen at the regional and national levels, it is not limited to only those places. One way that international human rights law's tenets might permeate national and personal practices is via human rights education. The 1993 Vienna Conference— Human rights education, training, and public awareness play an essential role in promoting peace, tolerance, and understanding among groups, according to a renowned institution in the subject. In order to promote equality and sustainable development, avoid conflicts and violations of human rights, and encourage people to take part in democratic processes, human rights education is essential. Its goal is to encourage the establishment of communities that value and protect the inherent rights of all individuals.

According to Article 51 of the Indian constitution, the Indian state is necessary. India is a signatory to the UNDHR and a ratifier of the conventions protecting economic, social, and cultural rights in addition to civil and political rights. As a result, human rights education is now a mandatory part of India's democratic system. The UGC appointed Justice S.M. Sikri to head a commission that looked at ways to improve human rights education in India in 1980. In its report, "Human Rights Education at all levels," the group laid forward a number of recommendations tailored to various educational levels. As a whole, the committee felt that graduate students in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and medicine) should know more about human rights. A number of goals fundamental to HRE were also highlighted in the 1986 National Policy on Education.

Justice Rao noted in his 2007 comments on the Human Rights Education classes that both existing and future teachers lacked familiarity with the field's pedagogical approach and theoretical framework. Therefore, the present Human Rights Education course is mainly designed to educate professionals in the field of education the fundamentals of human rights and to instill in them the right frame of mind. The absence of an appropriate module in teacher training, he argues, means that many people who teach human rights may not have gotten official training, and thus human rights education is woefully inadequate in social science courses. The committee's efforts to draft a curriculum covering the subject led to the development of Human Rights Education-focused training modules for educators.

### **Awareness About Human Rights Education**

Human rights education is more important than ever in light of the rising tide of international disputes and tensions. As a foundation for our relationships with others, it advocates for human rights. It encourages thinking critically, building arguments, deciding, working together, evaluating, sharing, and staying true to ideals. In order to foster respect for the rights of all persons, human rights education encourages us to critically examine our beliefs and behaviors.

Human Rights Education helps bring about a more equitable and peaceful society by reducing occurrences of human rights breaches. The formation of a democratic society is greatly aided by it, and it also plays an important part in the long-term prevention of human rights breaches. During their formative years, children are constantly impacted by their environment, which shapes their attitudes, ideas, and personality traits. Human rights education that is part of the school curriculum is an effective way to encourage students to embrace and live by human rights principles. Promoting and protecting human rights is essential to ensuring their full and equal enjoyment, which in turn depends on increasing understanding of and compassion for human rights issues. Individuals must understand and embrace the ideas of human rights in order for widespread peace and prosperity to be achieved. Such robust and proactive engagement is only attainable by human rights education.

An important measure of progress in human growth is level of education. In every facet of existence, it is crucial. As it cultivates each person's unique personality traits, it helps them rise beyond a condition of ignorance, poverty, and misery and leads them on a path to enlightenment, success, and joy. The establishment and advancement of human rights are greatly aided by education. In human rights education, students get a deeper comprehension of topics including gender inequality, anti-discrimination policies, slavery, and women's exploitation. In order to keep from being disheartened when confronted with human rights breaches, it is important to showcase successes in protecting human rights. One of the primary goals of education is to help students become more self-aware so that they may make the most of their innate cognitive and physical talents for the benefit of their community.

In order to equip people with the foundational knowledge, attitudes, values, and talents they need to forge their own unique route through life, education plays a pivotal role in encouraging receptivity, boldness, and persistence in pursuing answers. For children to grow up with a firm grasp of human rights ideas, it is essential that they get human rights education throughout their formative years. Education is a vital instrument for mankind to inculcate the ideas of social justice, freedom, and peace, and the development of human values should start at a young age. Education has always been seen as a means to an end—a means by which society might evolve and improve. Human rights education focuses on the ways in which different civilizations' religious and cultural norms shape their core values and ideals. Unlike other types of education, human rights education has a specific goal. Rather of dwelling on the past, it looks to

the future. Facilitating social change is its purpose. As a concept, human rights are making strides in a society that understands the need of universal values for peaceful coexistence and the assurance of justice and fairness for oppressed people, especially those who endure persecution. A civilization's complex web of religious and cultural practices shapes its different values and beliefs, which in turn inform human rights education. It is an ever-evolving discipline that seeks to promote a common understanding of basic human rights and freedoms, going beyond simple cultural relativism. Human Rights Education takes a proactive stance, aiming to promote social change, as opposed to more retrospective historical viewpoints.

Cultivating a communal awareness that transcends cultural and religious divides is at the heart of Human Rights Education. It aspires to provide a universal comprehension of human rights that may facilitate the peaceful coexistence of various populations. This education is not limited to a small, insular perspective; rather, it seeks to foster connections of compassion and understanding across different cultures. Human Rights Education is fundamentally an ambitious and future-oriented project. Specifically for oppressed or disadvantaged people, it seeks to build a society that values justice and fairness and acknowledges the importance of universal ideals for peaceful coexistence. Through a focus on the future, this educational approach inspires students to imagine and work for a society that values human dignity above all else.

## CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

### 1. Lack of Institutionalization

Human Rights Education (HRE) advocates in India face formidable obstacles due to the lack of a concerted effort to include HRE into the country's official curricula. Human rights are discussed in classes like Social Science and Civics, but there isn't a policy in place to make sure it's taught thoroughly in every grade. HRE is still very much in its infancy, and it pays little attention to more general ideas of international human rights. Some schools may make human rights a primary priority while others completely ignore them due to the lack of institutionalization in these areas. Human rights education is also often seen as an elective rather than a required course of study due to the lack of a national mandate. In order to tackle this, it is crucial to establish a well-defined national strategy and implement curriculum changes that prioritize human rights education (HRE) as an integral component of the educational process. This will guarantee that students from all regions acquire a strong grounding in human rights.

### 2. Inadequate Training for Educators

The dearth of teachers with the necessary expertise to impart knowledge about human rights is another major obstacle to the expansion of human rights education. It is a common problem that many Indian educators either do not understand human rights beyond its most fundamental legal frameworks or do not have the necessary pedagogical resources to facilitate meaningful and applicable student debates about human rights. The lack of sufficient coverage of human rights education in teacher preparation programs only makes matters worse. Human rights cannot be adequately addressed in the classroom unless teachers possess the necessary knowledge and self-assurance. Improving the quality and reach of HRE requires the implementation of specific training programs for educators and continuous professional development activities centered on human rights.

### 3. Social and Cultural Barriers

Human rights education is already faced with significant challenges in India due to the country's long-standing social and cultural norms. Discrimination based on caste, gender, and religious intolerance are widespread problems that impact people's lives and make it harder for communities and schools to embrace a human rights culture. Conventional wisdom runs counter to the anti-discrimination and pro-equality human rights tenets in many parts of the world, especially rural places. When ideas like human rights threaten long-established cultural norms and power structures, these social obstacles make it harder to educate about them. In order to break down these obstacles, we must actively include communities in discussions about human rights, promote an inclusive culture, and raise understanding about how human rights are universal and non-negotiable.

### 4. Regional Disparities

Inequalities across regions also have a significant impact on human rights education in India, both in terms of availability and quality. The chances of pupils being introduced to human rights ideas are higher in metropolitan regions, where schools tend to have more resources and are more linked to global trends. Contrarily, schools in economically depressed and rural areas typically lack enough facilities and instructional materials, making it difficult to include supplementary topics like human rights. Variations in curriculum design and goals between regions contribute to this difference, since some states have made more progress in fostering HRE than others. There has to be government action, training, and resources directed toward ensuring that underserved and rural areas have equitable access to human rights education in order to close this gap.

### 5. Limited Awareness among the General Public

The public's low level of human rights knowledge is a big barrier to human rights education, especially in places with low literacy rates and limited access to information. As guiding concepts that affect people's day-to-day lives, human

rights are often misinterpreted or linked exclusively with political and legal debates in many places. Because of this ignorance, human rights education is often neglected because teachers and parents fail to see its practical benefits. Furthermore, the progressive ideals included in human rights education are often met with opposition in regions where social injustices such as inequality and discrimination are institutionalized. In order to raise awareness of human rights and encourage its incorporation into school curricula, it is essential to launch comprehensive public awareness campaigns, launch community outreach activities, and form relationships with local groups.

### CONCLUSION

Human Rights Education (HRE) is an important but complicated movement in India, with many successes and many setbacks along the way. There has been progress in incorporating human rights education (HRE) into public discourse and school curriculum, and the relevance of HRE is becoming more acknowledged, but there are still significant gaps. Challenges to HRE's efficacy persist due to its uneven implementation across areas, insufficient teacher preparation, and entrenched social and cultural obstacles. The lack of access to comprehensive human rights education for underprivileged people is compounded by geographical differences and low public awareness, which only serve to worsen these problems. Educators require better training, public awareness campaigns should be more focused, and a clear national strategy on HRE should be established if these problems are to be adequately addressed.

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