ABSTRACT

Human rights are inherent to our nature and are essential as they provide dignity, freedom and protection. Human rights awareness is an ability of individual to have consciousness on their basic rights. It is fundamental for addressing the underlying causes of human rights violations, preventing human rights abuses, combating discrimination, promoting equality and enhancing people’s participation in democratic decision-making processes. Transformational human rights learning imbue people with knowledge that the world should be and can be different. An essential part of human rights learning is action, opportunities to put new lessons and skills into practice. Active participation of youth in the process of inculcating human rights skills and values for combat violations of rights and create a society with justice and peace. They can disseminate information on human rights and it can make youth as advocates of human rights.

The present study focused to find the role of youth to protect human rights and their involvement in the activities of welfare programmes as National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK). The study revealed that NSS provide various opportunities to its volunteers to protect human rights through its activities. NSS had collaboration with Kerala Legal Aid Service Society, District Legal Aid Service Society and NGOs. These collaborative efforts helped to involve the NSS volunteers on legal as well as civil rights issues. The study further revealed that NYK also organized activities of national and international relevance. Being the national agency for youth development, the NYK initiated a number of programmes to promote social integration and co-existence of the people in the society.

Human rights violations in Kerala have been depicted with the support of the data evidence from the reports of National Crime Record Bureau. The
analysis of violent crimes, atrocities against women and children recorded that the rate has increased tremendously during 2009-2013. The statistics of atrocities against SCs and STs, has shown mixed trend in the incidence of violence. Protection of human rights is the responsibility of the State as well as NGOs. The study profiles the activities of KELSA, KSHRC and Jananeethi Thrissur.

The youth had a potential role to protect and promote human rights. Human rights awareness among youth and their advocacy effort were analyzed in the study. Majority of the youth (72.8 percent) have only medium level of awareness. The concept of human rights is clear but cannot be able to find out the exact form of human rights. The awareness level of female NSS volunteers and the male NYK members was found to be high as compared to others. Advocacy effort of youth promoting human rights was analyzed with scale on the perspectives of anti-oppressive practice on human rights violations, strengthening and restoring of human rights mechanisms and empowerment through human rights education. The result revealed that 59.4 percent of youth were taking moderate effort and 28.6 percent were taking high effort for promoting human rights. The study revealed that NSS volunteers took higher effort than NYK club members. The study revealed that human rights awareness of youth and their effort for rights protection are positively interrelated as awareness can lead to advocacy effort and this can be achieved through NSS and NYK programmes. An human rights advocacy model for youth has been evolved on the basis of the activities on youth welfare policies and programmes in India, especially the programmes because the activities of NSS and NYK is for the well-being of youth with their involvement in the process of community development.