CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

105 children were “buried” alive for “just one minute” in Perayur village, 46 kms from Madurai, to propitiate two female deities. It was alleged that the children – who were first rendered unconscious - were placed in makeshift graves, covered completely, kept there for 60 seconds and, then, pulled out. The entire episode took place in the presence of the Minister for Housing and Urban Development of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

(Violation of the rights of children arising out of the practice of rituals: Tamil Nadu (NHRC, Case No.558/22/2002/2003))

8 child labourers, between the ages of 8 to 11 years, were made to work in an embroidery factory at Garhi, Lajpat Nagar, for 12 hours a day and, in return were paid only Rs. 5/- per week. Coupled with this, they were forced to work under humiliating circumstances and they were terrorized and assaulted.

(Kids Slogged 12 hours a Day Paid @ Rs. 5/- a Week: Delhi, NHRC, Case No.1868/30/2001-2002)

Background of the Study

How can we foster the value of peace for all people and the use of non-violent ways of solving problems? Human rights education is predicated on the assumption that we can build a humane and responsible society through education (Sime 1994).

Human rights Education has received increasing attention, due to the demands made upon public consciousness for social justice (Misgeld, 1994). As we already know, school education and societal needs are closely connected. For example, during war time, education has been used to control citizens’ attitudes and behaviour, teaching them to hate and fight against other groups of people. But, many people in society would like to make a positive change in the system. They want to create an egalitarian society for all people and develop a community, where people feel safe and secure. Everywhere, there is a cry for positive change in society and education must respond to this, by providing a framework that people can use for such a change.
The human rights perspective can play an important role in providing such a framework for action. The first and most important component of human rights education, the researcher believes, begins with people who want change in society from a human rights perspective, and who, actually, will take action, as a result of a developed human rights perspective (White, P.1988). Also, one of the important goals of a human rights perspective, (which will be introduced later in this chapter) is to take actions for human rights, based on acquired knowledge. It is safe to say that students, who go through a human rights perspective based education, are likely to take some action for human rights. That is, it leads people from acquiring knowledge about human rights to actually taking action, based on what they have learned.

The second important aspect of a human rights perspective is that it can exist only in a social and cultural context. Sparks (1994) believes that people’s ethical development can only take place within a social context. This means that ethical frameworks and cultural and social “beliefs are acquired through social experience, and values are learned through human interactions” (p. 316). If a society does not believe in people’s rights and accepts people being disrespectful to each other, people in the society will behave and act accordingly. When people realize the importance of creating a respectful environment for all, a human rights perspective can provide them with a great framework.

If people are to freely exercise their rights and work responsibly towards the betterment of society, there will be a strong need to change the environment. Misgeld (1994) states that human rights education constitutes an action leading toward cultural transformation and the achievement of a just society. A human rights perspective based education will equip students to work toward such a society, so that they can participate in the democratic process and organize a democratic climate with others. Even after the fundamental rights based constitution, having various laws regarding human rights, a struggle still exists to create an ideal environment for human beings, especially for children, to acquire humanness. If people want to transform societal values, schools need to implement a human rights perspective, as potentially effective, for students in school. The reasons, the researcher believe are, (1) the school provides a good scope for interaction among students from a different socio-cultural background, (2) the school has many different kinds of stakeholders, such as students, their parents, teachers, school staff members, administrators, and community.
As far as the question of human rights is concerned, we can see human rights as, “the rights that people are entitled to simply because they are human beings, irrespective of their citizenship, nationality, race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality or abilities” (The Human Rights Educators’ Network of Amnesty International USA, 1998, p. 134). The definition of human rights includes five categories: civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Despite having the same definition, these five categories of rights (and their interpretations) vary, depending on several factors. Some scholars say that the interpretations are different, based on historical experience, value system, ideology, jurisdiction and political and economic situation (Garcia, 1992; McNeilly, 1993; Ray & Tarrow, 1987). For example, societies that place greater importance on individuality, than on the collective culture, emphasize civil and political rights, rather than economic, social and cultural rights; whereas, societies more focused on the collective culture emphasize economic, social and cultural rights over civil and political rights. In addition, in many cases, regardless of which rights are valued in which society, society favoured some groups and/or people instead of all groups and/or all people. It means that human rights are not enjoyed by all people, because society works discriminately.

While the interpretations of human rights, typically, fall into one of these scenarios, it is imperative in human rights education that all five categories of human rights are emphasized (Lister, 1984). In order to recognize the social and cultural rights of people of various backgrounds, we need to respect some basic, common values as human beings, such as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, hereafter). Such common human values must be reflected in “the government of the people, for the people, by the people” as stated by Abraham Lincoln.

In India, it is, especially, important to include social and cultural rights, as India evolves into a more multicultural society. The idea of social responsibility is inherent to human rights. This means that when we talk about human rights, we are not only talking about our own individual rights, but, also, about other people’s rights, even when they come from a different cultural, ethnical, and societal backgrounds. India is moving towards an individualistic culture (Baxi, 1989) and, consequently, it is easier for people to think about what their own rights are, than what all people’s rights are. Until we can practice rights for ourselves and others, the purpose of a human rights perspective based education cannot be accomplished.
The struggle of human rights, for a fairer and freer social order, is never ending. While some people believe that the concept is a utopian idea (Salvat cited in Magendzo 1994), nonetheless, a human rights perspective must be used as a paradigm from which we can read our history and future as a people (Magendzo, 1994, p. 252). When human rights are fostered at all levels of society, social practices, including legal, economic, educational and so on, can be challenged and modified.

In this regard, the purpose of a human rights perspective based education is to create a peaceful and humane society based on equity, mutuality, and the inherent worth of all persons’ strengths, to be interpreted as the manifestation of global justice (Reardon, 1995). When we put the value of human life first, it creates the most powerful and dynamic current toward peace. A human rights perspective based education is “all learning that develops the knowledge, skills, and values of human rights” (Human Rights Educator’s Network, 1998, p. 21).

One of the objectives of a human rights perspective based education is to make people aware of their basic rights, which would help them to know how others redress violations of their rights, as well as of how perpetrators are held accountable for rights violation (Reardon, 1995).

It is a very serious concern in our education system on how can we give students tools to examine situations and empower themselves. There are many guidelines for teaching, based on a human rights perspective and these can be inferred from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, hereafter) (1980) guidelines, which suggests:

(i) Fostering the attitudes of tolerance, respect and solidarity inherent in human rights;
(ii) Providing knowledge about human rights, in both their national and international dimensions, and the institutions established for their implementation;
(iii) Developing the individual’s awareness of the ways and means, by which human rights can be translated into social and political reality, at both the national and the international levels.

While education should make the individual aware of his or her own rights, it must, at the same time, promote respect for others’ rights. It is important to take care, that an ongoing awareness is being acknowledged about the relationship between human
rights on one hand and development, peace and equality, on the other. Education
should make it a priority to promote the analysis and understanding of this
relationship… and teaching should stress that an equality based (democratic)
economic, social and cultural order is necessary to enable all people to celebrate their
human rights and to promote and facilitate education on human rights at all levels and
in all societies… a human rights perspective based teaching and education in the spirit
of respect for human rights; human rights should, also, be taught as a subject,
integrated in the appropriate disciplines, and, in particular, in such fields as
philosophy, political science, law and theology, and as an independent course. In
order that the teacher of human rights be able to carry out his or her task properly, it
is, particularly, important that his or her personal integrity and freedom of expression
be guaranteed. (UNESCO, 1980, pp. 2-3)

The list is thorough and holistic, laying out the purpose of a human rights education,
showing how a human rights perspective can be included.

Donnelly (2003) points out that, in order to achieve an education which accepts and
respects human rights, there must exist a culture that embraces racial, gender and
other identities without rejecting and excluding others. Brems(2009) says that the
social movement does not emerge from outside. It is fundamental for people to have
knowledge about their rights and work proactively towards developing rights and
respect. With people’s courage and knowledge, any situation can be changed in a
positive way.

Beitz, C. (2009) believes that the knowledge of human rights is the knowledge and
understanding, which helps people develop and maintain a non-violent, egalitarian
society. Such a society will provide opportunities to its citizens to create an
environment for peaceful and open interaction and association, which will make
people feel confident and secure about their fundamental rights and, for this, a human
rights perspective based education is essential.

How can the knowledge that students learn in class be helpful and useful for them in
day-to-day activities, especially when the concepts go beyond their community, their
country and their time? Meintjes (1997) points to the importance of people’s concrete
and practical experiences in seeing the relevance and value of human rights.
Knowledge becomes useful, when it is applied to real life. The question which arises
is whether the purpose of education is to provide real life knowledge or to maintain status qua?

All the knowledge we acquire through education must be used in our lives, although that does not always happen. Dershowitz, A. (2004) raises questions regarding how practical knowledge or wisdom has been learned throughout history and how experiences of the human race can be integrated with the knowledge of how societies work (or do not work), how politics function and how schools and other educational institutions function in reality. Tarrow (1992) states that human rights education can serve as a unifying structure, that would bridge knowledge learned at school and through human experiences. A human rights perspective based education gives people a tool to, critically, examine the information and knowledge learned and experienced, and to apply these to their lives.

The implementation of a human rights perspective based education, therefore, requires not just learning about human rights by the government and system, but, also, by every individual (Griffin, J., 2008). It means, if all the time people fight for their rights and do not think about their responsibilities, a human rights perspective, actually, cannot be developed. Human rights educators should set examples of using learned knowledge, practically. The educators need to talk to people who resist such education. It means that a human rights perspective based education, in order to be effective, requires a horizontal relationship and dialogue. Through this education, students would be able to think critically, examine and make decisions based on the information, or alternatively, they could transform informed action into useful knowledge. A human rights perspective based education that we are talking about here, is not only education about human rights, but also education for human rights, which would help to develop a humane attitude. Hodgson, D. (1998) calls for education, which tries to solve problems, through participation in social activities. He has also favoured using knowledge, acquired through education, into students’ action in society.

Students must acquire an attitude of appreciation for principles such as equality, dignity of life, freedom, tolerance, fairness and respect for truth and for the non-violent resolution of social and political problems and challenges (Lister, 1984). If our knowledge does not develop our attitudes, wisdom, and ability to critically examine the context in which we are living, our knowledge loses its purpose. We must remember why we study and learn.
People must, also, have a sense of justice and a belief in humanity for a non-violent society to prevail. Otherwise, the skills learned in education can be used to discriminate against and to oppress people, as is very much visible in our system. For example, in the name of freedom of speech, so many people are hurt by others, and some people abuse freedom of opinion and information to violate others’ rights. The sense of justice and equality creates an atmosphere, which will not tolerate any form of human rights violation and inhumanity.

Using learned knowledge includes information processing, analysis/organization and action/advocacy. In fact, these skills and functional knowledge are very important for students and for society, to transform our knowledge into critical thinking and, then, into actions. Education is not only for self-development and gaining or learning for learning’s sake, but, also, for doing good to others, to have a better respected society by, actually, practicing (converting) knowledge into action.

In this alarming scenario, the need of the hour is a critical analysis of the situation, through which we can consider building a firm foundation of a human rights perspective in students’ lives, at an age when they have the ability to learn, grow and, most importantly, act. A humanitarian attitude can be developed in the students towards the problems which plague our society and the world.

According to Wade, R.C. (1994) in human rights education, action knowledge and skills are the most important part of education. Without action based knowledge, society would not change and improve. Hence, awareness and consciousness about one’s role in society for protection or promotion of these rights is critical and crucial. A human rights perspective helps students to explore ways to examine situations and take action, accordingly. It encourages them to use non-violent resolutions to social and political problems. We must learn how to solve conflict without violence.

Several suggestions can be given for developing action based knowledge and skills. They are: a) changing attitudes towards other people and situations, b) using dialogue and reflection exercises aimed at value clarification, c) promoting solidarity, d) using programme and techniques directed toward the empowerment of students and e), foremost, use of learned knowledge and practicality.

The knowledge, which students gain through a human rights perspective, will be their tool for empowerment. How students use them in real life, will show the real effect of education. Thus, this education’s success is totally up to the people, who have gone
through it, determining the extent to which they will practice their skills outside the educational setting, as well as whether they will feel empowered. In the end, what makes education work, is the person. Without action, people’s good ideas, thoughts and theories have little meaning.

**Approaches to Human Rights Education**

**The Holistic Value Approach**

Reardon (1995), introduces the concept of a holistic values approach for human rights education. She defines this approach as education for the dignity of humans. She looks at human dignity and integrity as, “the symbiotic concepts at the center of the ethical system comprising the social values that are the essence of human rights” (p. 5). Reardon defines dignity as the internal or intrinsic worth of a human. Integrity refers to a person as a whole being with physical, mental, aesthetic, and spiritual facets. McNeilly (1993), on the other hand, defines human rights education as education for “human dignity, a sense of personal meaning and a recognition of the value of human responsibility from which one cannot be immune” (p. 108).

Both Reardon and McNeilly emphasize each person’s humaneness towards the self and others. When society, “honors the dignity of all persons and expects all its members to respect the dignity of others,” (p. 5) society will become good. Such society, “provides for the expression and development of the multiple facets of the person and holds them to be inviolable” (p. 5).

This approach can be called education to become a whole person, through holistic education. To implement this approach, Tarrow (1992) states that human rights education cannot be an add-on subject to the already existing curriculum. Rather, it should be integrated into the current curriculum throughout the subjects. In order to develop such students, who can respect their own and others’ human dignity and integrity, it is natural for human rights education to be included in every aspect of education, including the school climate, classroom, and subject areas. This type of education enables students to be themselves and to give the same inner strength to others.

**Historical Approach**

According to Reardon (1995), the historical approach is the most widely used and effective approach in school, to introduce the human rights concepts. Since Social
Studies is already a main subject area that teachers need to teach, the historical approach will be the most efficient method for teachers.

Additionally, the students can understand, “the human rights movement as a dynamic, living human endeavour” (Reardon, 1995, p. 7). Most importantly, the history of the human rights movement has not been completed. Therefore, they learn why their current society is what it is. Reardon, also, says that the students can take an active role in advancing human rights history for our time. The knowledge of human rights history gives them a frame of reference, through which to look at the events that have happened throughout history and to create a better society in future. Consequently, this particular approach focuses on developing a critical attitude, though a historical perspective and approach.

**International Standards Approach**

Reardon (1995), says that one of the most effective, conceptual approaches to human rights education is based on the UDHR, which is the foundation of the international human rights law, as declared by the United Nations. Human rights standards provide criteria which define, assess, and determine the severity of the problems.

Lister (1991), states that the main reason for using the UDHR is to set ideals and “to acquaint young people with their rights” (p. 8). At the same time, being realistic and practical is also important, to protect human rights idealism against cynicism. Lister believes that, “the ideal exists both as an aspiration and as a measure against which the actual can be viewed” (1984, p.8). Without idealism or hope, education cannot achieve its goal. It is crucial to have an ideal in our heart, as well as to know the reality.

Meintjes (1997), states that one approach is to adopt a general and abstract focus on 1948’s UDHR, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, as a common standard of achievement, for all peoples and all nations. The UDHR indicates that through teaching and education, all people promote respect for the rights and freedom for everyone nationally and internationally. The international standards of human rights allow students to see how we are interconnected to each other in the world and how we are affected by the standards. It is critical for teachers to make connections between international and national human rights and the students’ lives, especially when students are at a young age. Most of their knowledge and experiences are around their own environment and, therefore it is difficult for them to make a
connection between things around them and national and international issues. In this way, students can utilize the knowledge they have learned through their education, so that knowledge does not remain as only knowledge.

The other reason why this approach is one of the most effective conceptual approaches to human rights education, according to Dershowitz, A.( 2004), is that the UDHR includes, not only the rights of individuals but, also, the rights of groups and humankind (such rights are called the third and the fourth generation). It reflects, “the growth of an emerging sense of universality and provides norms that strengthen the potential for a system of shared global values, an essential requisite to an authentic world community” (Reardon, 1995, p. 10). In other words, she states that this approach gives us a framework to think and, “assess trends toward and away from world community and global social integration” (p. 10). The UDHR leads us to look at our responsibilities, as well as our rights, in order to create a humane society, rather than a self-centered one.

Reconstructionist Approach

This approach is, basically, process-oriented and demonstrates, “how societies learns to identify social wrongs, acknowledge how they violate human dignity and define and apply human rights standards to overcome them” (Reardon, 1995, p. 11). It demonstrates, “how human rights movements emerge, gain social support, and produce both attitudinal and legal-structural changes in society” (p. 11).

The Role of the School in Promoting a Human Rights Perspective

The UNESCO recommendations states that, “human rights must be taught at all levels of the educational system, as well as in out-of-school settings, including the family and in continuing education programs, including literacy and post-literacy programs. States shall strive to improve and broaden human rights education and teaching and co-operate to this end” (UNESCO, 1980, p. 3). To operate at the elementary school level successfully, with human rights principles, it is essential that staff, pupils and parents recognize, agree to, and promote human rights (Lyseight-Jones, 1991).

In the case of the school, the concept of human rights can be included in its main aims. It means that the staff, the parents, and the students will be aware that the school values human rights for all people, and it will be included in the students’
learning experiences. This demonstrates the fact that the, primary, role of a human rights perspective is to help the school to, “define the values which it shares, the unbreakable tenets of that value system, the negotiable elements of it, the operationalizing of it and the publicity which should surround its development, implementation and variation” (Lyseight-Jones, 1991, pp. 77-78). Beyond that, it must be incorporated in education policies.

Why is a human rights perspective needed at the school level? For most children, a school is the first societal unit, where they are introduced to people outside their family (If education is accessible). They learn social values, through interaction with their peers, teachers and administrators. Hence, the school will be the ideal place to reach out to fresh, young minds, to people who will be developing the future society. Of course, this is only if we believe in our children and their potential and also work towards developing this potential. Lyseight-Jones (1991), sees a child as a whole being instructed by “academic, social, moral/spiritual and physical/creative factors” (p. 84). Thus, he states that school education must use all these aspects in a human rights perspective.

Tarrow (1992), points out the importance of starting from preschool and continuing through secondary and adult education. Peters Humphrey, John (1984), urges we get the human rights message to students when they are young and before they have absorbed prejudices. It is important to note that, the earlier an experience takes place in a child’s life, the more formative it is likely to be. Tarrow (1992), points out that opponent of this principle subscribe to the principle of postponing instruction in the field until students are able to see direct links to voting, election campaigns, and so on.

The school provides a great opportunity to create a cooperative and supportive climate between the school and society (Lyseight-Jones, 1991). But, the desired result cannot be achieved from schools, as they are bound by government policies and regulations which, often, are not based on a human rights perspective.

The school is a crucial place in a person’s life, where they can develop their characters through exploration and experience (Osler, A. & Starkey, H. 1996) Osler comes from a Moral Education perspective, which shares the same goals as a human rights perspective, i.e., education to develop children who know, respect, and protect human rights. Education, itself, must reflect a human rights perspective in policy,
The big question is how can we provide such perspective based education?

First, we must provide students with the knowledge of their rights, their responsibilities towards others and the boundaries of state power set in the various human rights agreements (Agosín, 2001). Without any knowledge and information, students cannot develop a frame of reference about human rights issues. Sparks (1994), says that education, which develops the youth mentally, emotionally, and cognitively should not overlook systemic violence and human rights violations. It is important to take a look at the existing socially structured violence, in a specific context. Such education can develop capabilities in students to recognize human rights violations, in their daily life, and to see the relationship between their own lives and human rights issues.

Second, the teachers need to understand the importance of creating an environment, where students’ human rights will be respected and protected, as well as to understand the environment from which they are coming. If the school environment does not reflect what students are learning about, it only becomes hypocrisy. The nature of a school must reflect and encourage a concern for human rights. Osler, A. & Starkey, H. (1996), emphasize developing a human rights school, in order to accomplish the ideal of human rights education.

Third, it is important for teachers to know the contextual background of the learner. With such information, teachers can help students take the initiative to change their environment, to move it away from one which does not respect or protect their human rights. Through such educational processes, students’ beliefs and attitudes will change, not only toward violence but, also, toward their sense of responsibility (Hodgson, 1998).

The human rights perspective school is in a state of becoming, not in a state of being. The characteristics of a human rights perspective based school may include the following:

- Its general structure and practices will reflect a concern for the human rights values which underpin human rights perspective---freedom, toleration, fairness, and respect for truth and of reasoning.
• It will respect the rights and fundamental freedoms of all its members, including the students, acknowledging that the members have these rights and fundamental freedoms by virtue of being human.

• All are entitled to rights and freedoms because of their common humanity, and no discrimination will exist on the basis of caste, class, religion, gender etc.

• No one in the school should be subjected to humiliation, torture or to inhuman or degrading behavior and punishment.

• Everyone will have the right of freedom of opinion and expression and of peaceful assembly and association. Students will be able to form, and belong to issue-related groups, which respect the ideals and procedure of human rights.

• The education practiced by the school will be directed to the full development of the human personality and will show a concern for brain and hand and for intellect and emotions.

• Through its structures and its curriculum, the human rights perspective based school will promote understanding, tolerance and friendship between people of different regions, ethnic or religious groups and a concern for the maintenance of peace. It will help its students to acquire the attitudes and skills necessary to facilitate peaceful, social change, towards positive development.

• It will recognize that everyone is entitled to some rights, as well as duties, to develop an egalitarian society, where, while enjoying rights, one must be aware about the responsibilities towards others’ rights.

• The human rights perspective based school will not be without - or seek to be without - conflicts and issues, for they are an essential element in political and social change. However, the human rights school will have the procedures to enable conflicts and issues to make a productive and positive contribution to its reformation and dialectic to facilitate its own development.
Rationale and Significance of the Study

The rationale of the present study can be understood broadly from two points of view which establishes the need of a human rights perspective based education. First, optimistic and, second, pessimistic.

The optimistic approach talks about faith in the system and feels that a human rights perspective will improve the system. It starts with a positive note to include a human rights perspective in school to create a better society, through education, whereas the second approach originates from the atrocities, violence, exploitation, and so on, taking place in society. The human rights perspective based education is seen as a way out or empowering people to fight these problems. Both develop the rationale for the present work.

The entire discussion in the introduction shows that a lot of work has been done in human rights education and a human rights perspective, but very little work in reality is available, which extensively explores the field. However, until now, most human rights education literature has been, primarily, theoretical. More exploration to study and analyze how a human rights perspective can be implemented in the school and classrooms, justifies the need for this study.

Children’s attitudes, ideas and characters are formed at a young age and these are heavily influenced by their environment, including their school education. A Human rights perspective based education, in school, is an effective means to assist children to incorporate a human rights perspective into their attitudes and behaviors. (K Frantzi, 2004).

Assisting young people to incorporate these values, into their daily lives, is a concrete way to prevent bullying, discrimination and promote inclusion and respect for diversity. A human rights perspective provides a valuable framework for good interpersonal relations and for making informed and proportionate decisions, at all levels of education, from policy to practice -- it should starts with a human rights perspective in schools.

Researches carried out in the field of human rights education, worldwide, in schools, show that, where education around values is embedded in the content and pedagogy of the classroom, there is evidence of improved student engagement with schooling, better learning outcomes, and enhanced social and emotional wellbeing.
As a result of value education, schools have reported increased empathy, tolerance and respect, and increased student confidence to address social issues and conflicts. Schools have also reported a reduction in disciplinary measures, an increase in school attendance, and positive shifts in classroom and playground relationships, as well as relationships at home. [Pyne, C, What government should do to advance a human rights culture, speech delivered at the University of Western Sydney International Human Rights Education Conference, 5 November 2010].

It is a strong belief of many human rights theorists and scholars, that creating a society, where all human rights are respected and promoted, must start with human rights education in school. A ‘human rights respecting culture’ seeks to respect and be responsible for the realization of rights, through all levels of society. A human rights perspective is about fostering a right, respecting culture – where human rights become integrated in society, at all levels, both personal and institutional. It is, also, about embedding an understanding of human rights and values, as a cornerstone of our social fabric and national ethos, that will form all aspects of our nation, as well as our attitudes and behaviors.

A human rights perspective in schools would also fulfill India’s international and domestic human rights commitments. At the international level, these commitments are detailed in Article 26, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 29, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 13, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and, at the national level, it will try to achieve the constitutional values for all citizens.

At the national level, the Framework should affirm the government’s commitment to deliver a human rights perspective in school education – “developing an understanding of rights and responsibilities, including human rights, will be an integral part of curriculum development” (Briskman and Fiske, 2008). The integration of human rights education in the curriculum, is identified in the Framework, as a critical opportunity, through which this commitment can be achieved.

This study can be beneficial in several ways. First, school students will gain a sense of ownership and pride in their schools, because of a human rights perspective based
education, because crucial concerns will be identified, with reference to classroom practices. Second, it will benefit teachers to be more humane in class and use a human rights perspective, as a way of teaching and learning. It would, also, help to develop humane Co-curricular Activities in practice. Third, it will, undoubtedly, develop a theoretical discourse to examine policies and curriculum frameworks. Over all, it will help to examine the existing school education, with reference to a human rights perspective, while providing possibilities to, actually, practice this perspective in school education.

There is no doubt that there is a great relationship between education and society. They both influence each other and, to some extent, determine each other. The entire discourse of education, which includes policies, curriculum, text books, pedagogy and school practices, plays a major role in how a person, in the future, will facilitate society. The kind of experiences one has, in his/her schooling, influences their perspective towards different societal issues and concerns. This relationship creates the need to examine school education a from human rights perspective, to develop a better human being. Such human beings cannot be developed by just adding some human rights content in school text books. There is a need to have a change in attitude, rather than just knowing about rights (Chakraborty, P. S. 2000).

Hodgson (1998) argued that knowing is not enough; a way of thinking is needed to, actually, develop a positive attitude towards social issues. Fallon and Orend, B. (2002) said that a perspective based education is more important than just content. Although this perspective will be developed through content, yet only content cannot develop a perspective. To develop a human rights attitude, there is need for education to be based on a human rights perspective.

Human rights are something we all share. They are about recognizing the value and dignity of all people. In learning about human rights, we learn about ideas of respect, fairness, justice and equality. We learn about standing up for our own rights and about our responsibility to respect the rights of others. Understanding human rights shapes our thinking and our actions – because human rights are about real-life issues.

Thus, it becomes important to study a human rights perspective in school education, so that the present status, gaps, unaddressed issues, potential and possibilities can be identified.
But, this work is not simple, as various dimensions in school work together. Here, dimensions means different agencies and organizations that facilitate and determine school education such as education policies, national curriculum frameworks, school text books, classroom practices and co-curricular activities. All these aspects comprise school education and thus, becomes essential to explore and analyze these different aspects, individually and collectively, to understand the present status, gaps, unaddressed issues, potential and possibilities, with reference to a human rights perspective. This process begins with certain questions in this regard.

**Research Questions**

The above framework creates a rationale for research and develops a wide range of fields to explore a human rights perspective, in school education. These fields comprise of various aspects of school education, which includes policies, national curriculum frameworks, text books, classroom practices and co-curricular activities. These different (but associated fields) need to be explored, with reference to a human rights perspective and raise some very crucial and fundamental questions for a researcher. Here, I am presenting these research questions, under various fields of investigation.

**Policies:**

How can human rights and a human rights perspective be perceived in the polices of education? How far are the policies concerned with a human rights perspective based education? What are the recommendations of the different policies that give them a human rights perspective? Are there any ambiguities in these policies? If yes, what are these and how do we deal with them? Do these ambiguities hinder the process of a human rights perspective based education? What kind of gaps exists, regarding policies and their practicality? How can these gaps be filled? How do policies perceive educational issues, with reference to a human rights perspective?

**National Curriculum Frameworks:**

How is school curriculum developed? What are the basic assumptions of the National Curriculum Frameworks? How far are these assumptions based on humane understanding? How do these frameworks perceive education and its transition processes? To what extent do the suggested frameworks include the Constitutional
values, and norms? How biased or unbiased are these frameworks, from the existing social and political structure and values? What are the recommendations of these frameworks, with reference to what should or should not be included in the school curriculum and why? Are these recommendations based on a human rights perspective? If yes, how, and if not, why? What kind of curriculum issues are raised by these frameworks? What is the relevance of these issues to a human rights perspective?

Text Books:

How are the present social science text books written? Which concepts are emphasized in these social science books? Are these books considered biased or neutral, by different social and political groups? How far do the content and the way of writing incorporate a human rights perspective? How are the issues presented and discussed in the books? How have the democratic values such as equality, justice, freedom and so on, been perceived and presented? What are the teachers’ views about the social science text book? What issues have they raised in this regard? Do they have some suggestions regarding social science books, with reference to a human rights perspective? How do they perceive and conceptualize social science? What can be edited and added in the books, with reference to a human rights perspective? Why?

Classroom Practices:

How are these text books being used, in the social science classes, at various levels? In what way are the assumptions of these books being reflected in class room practices? What are the kinds of pedagogies being used by the teachers in social science classes? How far are these based on a human rights perspective? What is the status of students in class? Does student participation exist in social science classes? if yes, how? And if not, why? What is the student’s contribution in the teaching-learning processes? Is the teacher’s behaviour, towards the classes and students, humane and does it have a human rights perspective? How? Does interaction take place in classes to incorporate a human rights perspective? How? What kinds of opportunities are being given to learners in the social science classes? Are these opportunities based on a human rights perspective? How are students respected in class? How do teachers perceive their own teaching in classes and how do they
justify it? Are they aware that their pedagogy may include a human rights perspective? If yes, how?

Co-curricular Activities:

What are the teachers’ understanding of Co-curricular Activities? How do they justify their understanding? Do they co-relate class room practices and Co-curricular Activities? Yes or no? How? What and how are these activities conducted by the school? What are the assumptions behind those activities? What kind of a Co-curricular Activities system exists in school and how does it function? Does it carry a human rights perspective?

Research Objectives:

The present study aims to understand school education comprehensively, with reference to a human rights perspective. The objectives listed below are studied with special reference to a human rights perspective. The objectives of the study are:

- To analyze the education polices, with reference to their understanding, acceptability and applicability of a human rights perspective.
- To deconstruct the underlying assumptions of the National Curriculum Frameworks.
- To review the content of NCERT social science text books.
- To identify the pedagogical concerns of classroom practices in social science.
- To know and analyze the nature of co-curricular activities and their practices in school.

Chapterisation:

This last segment discusses the chapters of the present work. Chapter one (present chapter) develops an introduction to the research work, which includes the background of the work, along with the research questions and objectives of the research. Chapter two develops a conceptual framework for the research for a human rights perspective, with reference to different aspects of research. Chapter three presents the detailed methodology of the present work with a detailed plan of the present research. Chapters four, five, and six present the analysis, where chapter four
discusses the analysis of policies and the national curriculum framework, chapter five presents the analysis of text books, and the analysis of classroom practices and co-curricular activities is presented in chapter six. The last chapter presents the discussion on the entire analysis with contribution of the research, to the discourse of human rights education.