ROLE OF
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
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Human rights and duties have assumed a global dimension since it concerns the world community at large. An educated society aware of basic rights can guard zealously one’s rights and defend them. Since the task of promotion and protection of human rights is complex this needs to be observed by one and all, and in maintaining inherent dignity, the role of human rights education is vital. Human rights education helps prevent its violation and campaigns create a space for dialogue and change, encourage respect and tolerance, integrating the principals of human rights into the everyday life.¹ It is important to think of human rights education as a partnership between government, civil society and other stakeholders. People need to be more effective in influencing their societies and human rights education can produce better citizen suited for the purpose, therefore it should be included in curriculum of educational institutions.

Education for human rights and democracy in the non-formal setting, in school, in out-of school and young people, education through their families, their professional associations, work places, institutional groupings, etc. programmes does aim at increasing the awareness of individuals in both formal and informal groups of their rights and to their responsibilities and to their full participation throughout society. Special attention can be given to reach all women whatever their current level of participation in public life.

¹ Sama Chelladurai, The READ Experience, HURIGHTS OSAKA, Human Rights Education in India, 2003 p 52
To achieve these aims, education for human rights and democracy need to take place in specific setting and focus on certain groups including:

(i) work place (unions, employers);²
(ii) professional association;
(iii) religious and cultural organizations;
(iv) youth, including through leisure and sports clubs;
(v) UNESCO Clubs, centers and associations;
(vii) groups, which are less exposed to public life (for example, people living in rural or remote areas);
(vii) groups working specifically on literacy, advocacy and assisting those living in extreme poverty;
(viii) security, army, police and prison personnel, etc.;
(ix) public officials and decision-makers;
(x) judges and lawyers and others working in the administration of justice;
(xi) media personnel;
(xii) medical doctors, health professional and scientists including those engaged in biological research.

A list of activities is listed below which should help the student at the elementary level to have a greater understanding of human rights.³ This is being documented here since the non governmental organizations do involve themselves in the sphere of human rights education and they need to broadly follow them for policy formulation and implementation.

a) The children should be asked to draw pictures or make charts that would show how they would help their mother, father and other members or the family at home.

² Annexure.
³ Supra n. 2
b) At school they could make charts (painting or collect work) and display them. These charts would show how they could help their classmates in school or even people outside. One example could be a little elder child helping a younger child in boarding a school bus.

c) Make a list very simple rule for comfort in the classroom.

d) Make a list of safely rules of fire drills and crossing streets and tell them why they are made and that it is important to follow them.

e) Show how quarrels on the playground can be settled through friendly discussion.

Undoubtedly the task cannot be left to formal educators alone since a large majority of people is outside the reach of formal education. Herein lies the significance and vital importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in making human rights education accessible to these segments. NGOs have an effective role to perform in generating awareness and undertaking development activities. The role of NGOs in human rights education is considered crucial in bringing about transformation in the society.

In view of the above situation, the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies have recognized the role of NGOs in promoting human rights education through the international instruments, the regional human rights instruments as well as the domestic instruments. United Nations and its subsidiary agencies through its various instrument have recognized that education is essential for the promotion and protection of human rights. The United Nation's message is: “know your human rights”. People who know their rights stand the best change of realizing them. Knowledge of human rights is the best defense against their violation. Learning about one's rights builds respect for the rights of others and points way to more tolerant and peaceful societies.

It is though education alone one can promote understanding, tolerance, friendship, amity and mutual respect. The various provisions of the Universal
Declaration of Human Rights find specific mention in other international instruments. Furthermore, the role the civil society and members of the public can play in promoting human rights needs emphasis as well. The imperative of human rights education in promoting our dignified existence cannot be undermined. It is only though proper education can one hope to effect changes in the perception of men and move the world towards lasting peace and continued development.

Non-governmental organizations pervade and constitute a vital part of the overall human rights regime. They contribute to standard setting as well as to the promotion, implementation and enforcement of human rights. They spread the message of human rights and mobilise people to realize that message.

NGOs operate on the basis of differing mandates. It responds to its own priorities and methods of action, bringing a range of viewpoints to the human rights movements. Human rights NGOs are only a part of a much broader range of non-governmental actors whose activities are part of what one now commonly refers to by such terms as "civil society", "transnationality advocacy network" and "social movement".

A great many acronyms have been coined to describe different categories or groups, like – INGOS, (international NGOs, QUANGOS (quasi NGOs), GoNGOs (government organized NGOs), BINGOS (business and industry NGOs) DONGOS (doner organized NGOs) and DNGDOs (domestic
non-governmental development organization). All of these through its various programmes do involve themselves in the spread of human rights education.

At the domestic level NGOs call governments to account and compel reconciliation of policies and programmes that have been designed in this regard or for violation of human rights norms. NGOs do strive though education to create awareness among the learners about their rights, duties and societal obligations and also inculcate a culture of respect for others and recognition of each individual's rightful place in the society. The NGOs have an important role to perform in satisfying the thirst for knowledge to make men worthy human beings, capable of performing their responsibilities as citizen and members of the society. The NGOs have been successful to a large extent in empowering citizen though a human rights culture. The NGOs realise that human rights education permeate beyond boundaries of academic institutions and every unit of society, -the family, government, political, social and cultural organizations-should also be tactfully involved in providing indirect components for human rights education Similarly NGOs have to shoulder the burden of educating the children still working in farms, factories and industrial establishments. According to latest statistics made public on 12th of June 2005 there are 246 million child labourers throughout the world. This requires co-coordinated effort on the part of NGOs to wean away the child labourers from their avocation to educational institution, whether formal or non-formal.

Education is undoubtedly an important function of NGOs. If it is at an informal level it can involve workshop, seminars and consultation, training the

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trade unionist, farmers and even religious institution. The NGOs try to raise consciousness of the society at large by publishing special bulletins and audiovisuals.

The NGOs can render services in the area of social rights. Many believe that they are in a better position to render service than government authorities. In doing so they build up a dedicated cadre though education, awareness and capacity building. NGOs in the third world countries have an added responsibility in spreading human rights education; else the vacuum could remain for want of special support. Through human rights education NGOs can enable people to isolate the instances of human rights abuse. They have gone beyond by carrying out research on various aspects of human rights. NGOs impart skills and knowledge so that people can be empowered. They can create space for dialogue in societies, which are less open to human rights and can help to build an environment more conducive to change. While developing educational programmes NGOs have to recognise the responses of their target group so as to be meaningful and productive in their works. It is needless to mention that their time and educational effort will go in vain if the required inputs are found lacking. Therefore, while tailoring courses they should keep in mind the ultimate aims to be achieved, though proper process of communication and appropriate technology.

Based on universal value system that affirms human dignity and equality, human rights education is necessary for democracy. As Betty Reardon says,5 “the ultimate goal of this kind of education is the formation of

5 Educating for Dignity, University of Pennsylvania, 1995
responsible, committed and caring planetary citizen’s who have integrated these values into everyday life and acquired the skills to advocate for them.”

Human rights education must not be limited to formal schooling. Many people never attend school. Many live far from any administrative centres. Yet they, as well as refugees, minorities, migrant worker, indigenous peoples, the disabled and the poor, are often among the most powerless and vulnerable to abuse. Such people have no less right- and far greater need-to know their rights.

Only by working in collaboration with these vulnerable groups can human rights educators develop programmes that accommodate their needs and situations. The techniques of popular education—music, street theatre, comic books, alternative media and itinerant storytellers—can help to connect human rights to people’s lived experience.

Among the leading international NGOs, Amnesty International focuses mainly on prisoners of conscience. Nonetheless it has been devoting considerable attention on human rights education as well since it is extremely important for people to be aware of the rights and the various obligation of State machineries. Human Rights Watch has maintained special initiatives on academic freedoms among others. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights focuses on building the legal institutions and structure that will guarantee human rights in the long term. The Commonwealth Legal Education Association works for the promotion of legal education, which also include human rights education. Similarly Human Rights Education Association as the name indicates, is devoted towards spreading human rights education. Dignity International has a number of programmes for the furtherance of human rights
education. Further, there are several organisations spread across the globe that provide for human rights education through formal and non-formal activities.\(^6\)

Though many activities of NGOs are educative in nature, there are lesser number of NGOs both at the international as well as the national level that devote to human rights education as their specific mandate or consider it to be their area of priority. It is interesting to observe that some of the NGOs are devoting themselves to human rights education without being aware of such activities. The lack of realisation stems from the fact that they are having other social mandates and commitment to perform and human rights education has been ancillary to it.

It is needless to observe that the concern for human rights needs positive and practical measures. NGOs have been taking the initiative in a number of ways to be practical shop to the measures uninitiated for various reasons. NGOs have been instrumental in aiming at consensus and agreement among them in this regard. This finds reflection in regional and preparatory conferences being held in various countries. The role of the NGOs in promoting human rights education has received recognition from the people in general.

The Right to Education Action Programme (REAP) is an Amnesty International human rights education programme that is being implemented over a ten-year period. Beginning in the year 2000, it followed on from the 1991 Teaching for Freedom (TFF) programme. REAP is administered by Amnesty International, Norway with funds from the Norwegian 1999 National

\(^6\) supra n 2, p 940.
Broadcasting Telethon (NRK). The TFF evaluation identified that the project played a major role in promoting and supporting human right education within Amnesty International sections and structures. It was also a learning experience in human rights education programme administration; the lessons provided the basis for developing the procedures for implementing the right to education action programme.

The program aims to contribute to the fulfillment of Amnesty International's long-term human rights education strategy. The programme clearly addresses defined local needs and human rights issue at the country levels; work with multiplier specific target groups for example- teacher who can work with children.

The first few years of the programme have supported project in Amnesty International's former high priority countries for development but this is envisaged to change in the second half of the project. Sections and structures are encouraged to plan the project strategically and ensure that it is integrated into their general strategy, develop a national human rights education strategy or identify the potential for human rights work and include human rights education capacity building.

Human rights education is an important part of the work of Amnesty International, France with many groups and individual members throughout the country involved in human rights education in their local communities. Most of these activities carried out by the section are within the formal education system but some activist also works in leisure centre, with rural families, and popular education association. The future challenge is to expand work with young people.
The activities have been facilitated by the policy of the French government. The national educational system gives certain NGOs right to participate at the school level to complement the work of teachers. Amnesty International, France obtained this status in 1996 and in 2001 it was renewed for a further five years that gave Amnesty International official authorization to work in schools. They still have to get the permission of the school principal.

Civic education programmes have been included in schools, from nursery to pre-university level, since 1999 and became compulsory in 2001, when civic, legal and social education was introduced to the pre-university programme. At university level; however the study of human rights is optional. Teachers, university human rights specialists and educators from all levels of the system draft civic education manuals. Human rights education is usually taught within history and philosophy subjects but is often not given priority.

In co-operation with teachers Amnesty International works directly with children on different subjects, but usually related to the civic education program. Their activists provide information, organize activities and demonstrate their commitment to defending human rights. Access to the teacher training institutes is sometimes difficult to obtain but when successful, human rights education activists propose modules to fit into the course units that lead to teacher training diplomas.

Irene Khan secretary-general of Amnesty International in a visionary and inspirational keynote address delivered in Ireland examined the vital role by emphasizing the role that human rights education can play in the complex and difficult human rights context of today and the importance of preventive

7 Human Rights Education Newsletter, Issue 8, January 2002 p 28
strategies. She said "human rights education" builds values based on the universality and individuality of human right, values to shape moral choices and the choices of the larger society.

Nine 90-minute workshops were facilitated by forum participants from different countries and region with the theme of integrating human rights education with the work of Amnesty International. The themes were-

Teaching children about torture, racisim as a topic in human rights education programmes, educating about women rights, what is popular education in the informal sector, how to incorporate LGBT issues in to workshop, activities to use in school curriculum, a practical workshop on using art in human rights education.

The most popular part of the forum was the "bazaar of ideas" an amazing grouping of innovative and exciting human rights education activities and programmes being implemented around the world by Amnesty International section and structures.

The use of fantasy to explore human rights issues allows children to gain a better understanding of their rights and though this approach they discover that although in fairy stories witches and magicians may solve problems, in the real world parents and other can perform this role. The main characters are animals and witches and the children are innocent victims of human rights violations.

Amnesty International, Ireland and Amnesty International, United Kingdom decided to work together to co-ordinate a human rights education peace initiative. This aims to bring children together from the different

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8 HRETexam@amnesty.org
communities to share experiences and their understanding of human rights in a variety of contexts and to build a relationship of mutual respect and tolerance. Its end goal is to develop a shared human rights culture among young people in both the republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Integrating human rights into the formal education system is a major component of most Amnesty International human rights education programme.

According to Barbara Weber it is interesting to reflect on the type of school where the human rights principles of equality, justice, solidarity, human dignity and responsibility are truly implemented. What the world look like—How one would describe the building and the people who teach, learn and work there?

This vision of school dedicated to human rights principles is an inspiring starting point for developing a human rights education programme. It provides the opportunity to ask and identify exactly where there is a possibility to influence the school system to bring human rights not just into the curriculum but also into the daily agenda of the school.

The Philippine experience in human rights education has been the object of curiosity and a source of fascination for other countries that have been looking for a way to impart human rights values and principles to the most vulnerable groups. The approach that it has developed, in particular, its human rights seminars for the police and military, has won international recognition from the UNESCO which gave it the prize for human rights education in 1994.

President Carazon C. Aquino issued executive order 27 in 1987 directing the Commission on Human Rights to initiate rights education for all
sectors of society and in the formal school system. The Commission on Human Rights worked with the department of education, culture and sports\(^9\) (DUCS) to develop the curriculum for human rights, but it was in the military and the police establishment, that the Commission worked directly in training and information dissemination.

It adopted a two pronged approach first, the immediate, emergency education and training for the sectors most vulnerable to committing human rights violation- the military and police, and second, the longer term investment of integrating human rights education in the school curriculum so that the next generation of Filipinos, including military and police personal, are thoroughly oriented in human rights by the time they are grown. While Commission on Human Rights worked with the department of education, culture and sports on integration of human rights education into the school curriculum, it also pursued a holistic approach to human rights education for the uniformed personnel. Through in-house seminars on curriculum development, module writing and workshop and conference facilitation, the Commission on Human Rights built up its capabilities in human rights education. Process became as important as content, values education permeated the entire process. Case studies and structural learning exercises were developed. NGO workers were invited to attend the entire seminar with the police and military, as equal participants. All of these activities were integrated into the learning modules.

Apart from NGOs involvement in schools they have also collaborated with the government in providing human rights education to the police and

\(^9\) The Ulary OPM (online Papua mouthpiece) April 2002 p 35
military. According to Rich and Pierre Claude the eminent human rights educator from the university of Maryland human rights education is probably the best export product developed by Filipinos.\textsuperscript{10}

The right of education project at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Lund, Sweden\textsuperscript{11} is another important institution involved with human rights education. It has a very compact site providing public access to their human rights resource, the only such site in the world. The right of education project at the Raoul Wallenberg institute develops solely to the right to education.

It defends and promotes-

The right to education

Human rights education and

Human rights through education.\textsuperscript{12}

In the United Kingdom, human rights education forms part of the new core citizenship curriculum for schools. There are courses for all ages ranging from primary school to secondary schools, which set out both rights of citizens and duties to the wider community. It has a strong tradition of university education in human rights, with 133 courses available at 45 different institutions, including internationally renowned centers of human rights education at, for example, the University of Essex, Queen's University Belfast and the London School of Economics. The British Broadcasting Corporation World Service, which has produced an education series on the human rights, has created much impact. It has now been broadcast in 12 different languages, reaching out to the potential audience of over 100 million. High

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{11} Amnesty International ,Human Rights Education News Issue-9 September, 2002, p 48
\textsuperscript{12} ibid
\end{footnotesize}
quality university education is essential for providing the skills and intellectual framework of the human rights defenders of tomorrow.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) during the decade for Human rights education closely coordinated with all in the following areas-

Using UN framework to ensure that countries develop and impart human rights education plans,
Working with the OHCHR in technical co-operation and having input to regional and national projects,
Using the OHCHR for support and sponsorship,
Making good use of OHCHR publication and training materials,
Applying for micro-grants as part of the decades project, “assisting communities together”,

Helping to disseminate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, providing feedback on the OHCHR date base for human rights education and sending in materials to the collection, human rights NGOs and their individual and organisation support is key to more effective functioning of the international human rights regime.

NGOs must collaborate with regional organisation and the UN in advocating and promoting good human rights practices, and in monitoring human rights improvement.

Supporting the work of the treaty bodies by monitoring country report on human rights education is also very much essential. The report of the High Commissioner, (E/CN. 4/2004/93), highlight achievements in a number of countries including the establishment of national focal points and action plans, step undertaken within school systems, public awareness campaigns and development of human rights education of officials and of the police and the military.
However bearing in mind the conclusions of the mid-term evaluation report in 2000 (A1551360) and of the report on the follow up to the decade in 2003 (E/CN.4/2003/101), it believes that a global framework such as a second decade with a new action plan is necessary to fulfill the shortcomings for those nations that have not had the opportunity to implement the plan of action of the first decade. This view is shared by the experts of the sub-commission on human rights who unanimously adopted resolution 1003/5 recommending the proclamation of a second UN decade for human rights education to begin in 2005.

United Nations Resolution 2004-71, (Follow-up to the UN Decade for Human Rights, Education), was adopted on April 24, 2004. The resolution recommended that a world programme for human rights education take place, beginning in 2005. This programme is set to focus on human rights education in primary and secondary schools in 2004-2005.

In tune with the developments towards the end of the decade, the global human rights education network forwarded the following resolution to the Commission on human rights.

1. Appointment of the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Education with the mandate to report among others on the States throughout the world, of the realization of the rights to human rights education and the difficulties encountered in the implementation of this right, as well as to promote, as appropriate assistance to governments in working out and adopting urgent plans of action, wherever they do not exist.

To develop a regular dialogue and discuss possible areas of collaboration with relevant United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and international organization in the field of human rights education, inter alia the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children Fund..., the United Nations Development Programme, and with international financial institutions, such as the world bank.

2. The creation of the voluntary fund for human rights education to be administered by the office of the high commissioner for human rights.

3. The convening of inter-sessional workshop aimed at better defining priorities and setting the agenda and action plan for remaining years of the decade and in particular,

4. It also urged that the commission on human rights should request that the human rights treaty bodies formulate recommendations with regards to human rights education.

To achieve the above goal, education in general, and human rights education in particular should be made to serve as appropriate tools. It is true that education is aimed at the full development of the human personality. It is also necessary that it should strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of human beings. The government cannot be expected to shoulder their responsibility alone and there have been differences of opinion of the universalisation vis-a-vis cultural specificity. Therefore national realities should be kept in mind for meaningful human rights education.

Rights Consortium is a team of NGOs dedicated to promotion of the rule of law and human rights worldwide. Combining the unique strength, experience and outreach of its partner organization, the consortium provides both rapid response developing democracies and countries in transition.

Dignity International has so far held seven annual global education week at the initiative of the global north-south center of the Council of Europe. The theme for the year 2005 is "learning for all, everybody, now". This programme supports teachers, youth leaders and young people to engage in education for global citizenship. This programme also includes components of human rights education.

Human Rights Monitor, a Geneva based organization includes within its mandate compilation of reports on human rights education.

NGOs in India have an important responsibility in spreading the knowledge of education in general and human rights education in particular. Activities are being undertaken by NGOs in various ways including non-formal education. Other spheres of involvement include creation of awareness, advocacy, capacity building, and sensitisation programme, to mention but a few. Only through the human rights education people can be made aware of their rights and responsibility. They can be sensitised to defend their rights and claim adequate compensation and other remedial measure in case of violation of their rights. NGO also play an important part in the formulation of government policy and in the enactment and adoption of various laws, rules or regulation.

The various measures being adopted by NGOs in the field of human rights education include both formal awareness camps, demonstration, meeting, seminar interactive session distribution of pamphlet, art exhibition, drama, Bhuna, Natak, group meetings, street plays, placard display as well as though effective means of communication like – television, radio, newspaper, and the internet, apart from helping creation of awareness resulting in reducing social tension, crime and offences. Educators across the world have grappled with difficulties of addressing various issues like targeting of civilians, racism and discrimination. Educational material should include articles, information pieces, activities and discussion question to guide the user through a specific issue.
NGOs should emphasize on education of women and children since this segment, which constitutes a large section of the world population urgently, require education in human rights. It is believed that human rights education contributes skill development. As one introduces children to human rights education they learn about leadership, conflict prevention and resolution, negotiation, investigation, creative problem solving, and teamwork. Therefore children who possess these skills contribute to the development of their communities and societies. Human rights education in schools has the potential to influence whole nations. People need to document the changes that are produced by or through human rights education work. Wherever they have been documented significant changes have been noticed, in terms of the students' cognitive and attitudinal learning.

Human rights education means teaching people skills of resistance and change. Protest skills include boycotting, sit-ins and teach-ins as tools for change. One needs to teach people how they can resist systems they feel are unjust. One also needs to teach the history of protest so that they can learn from people who have successfully used protest to make positive social changes. It is important to be aware of the context people are working in when using tools of protest. If protest means exercising one’s rights to freedom of expression and freedom of conscience then protest is a way of exercising fundamental rights.

One of the goals of human rights education is teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Equipped with these skills, individuals then have to decide for themselves whether to use skills of tolerance or skills of protest. Often the formal education system is resistant to human rights or social justice
education. In their day-to-day practice many teachers commit violation on their student's human rights, including discrimination against girl children or discrimination against disabled children. Often teachers are not aware that they are doing this. One way to change this is to give teachers the opportunity to critically analyse their practice.

Similarly, various domestic laws on women rights and gender specific United Nation instruments need to be explained to women. The legal and social education imparity for reducing the injustices and human rights violations suffered by women folk need to be addressed. Rather like the different clubs in a golf bag, human rights education must be used as one of several tools in a multi-faceted strategy, protecting those who have been abused; should not be isolated from education. If one understands the rights, one can claim them in the future. One should think of how it can be integrated better into the human rights education work so that it becomes an effective tool of the overall goal to strengthen respect for human rights.

Rehabilitation Education and Development Center (READ) center is a grass-roots non-governmental organization (NGO) promoting participatory development since 1984. READ has been training grass-roots organization teachers, trainers, and students from primary school to universities. It caters to the need of university from overseas through its participatory real appraisal and social education Japan sends 10-25 students per year.

In 1999, READ conducted a preliminary survey with the help of department of education, Karnataka on the feasibility of teaching human rights in schools. The survey was done in 30 village (Huliyar and handankere...
blocks) covering 12 schools (10 primary and 2 high schools) where READ works.

The survey found that the general public was not aware of human rights education. Government legal experts have not asked people in rural areas about human rights related issues. Parents do not know what facilities are available within the constitutional framework to address human rights issues. Many people have issues related directly to human rights, such as land disputes, wage disputes, illegal-occupation of land and property by the rich and powerful, caste discrimination, gender discrimination and human rights related educational issues.

With permission of the department of education, READ started to teach human rights to middle and high school student in government run schools in Mathigatta, Cholukatte, Huliyar, Soralmauvce, Tharmmadihalli and Yelanadu village in Karnataka.

Almost half of the Indian population is poor and illiterate and quarter of them are officially recognized as being in need of special protection. Such is the state of affairs due to lack of human rights education. The existence of 120 millions of child labour in India, the persistence of bonded labour system, atrocities against women and social and economically backward section of the society are but a few examples of human rights violation in India.

NGOs in India have been playing a very important role in promoting knowledge of human rights, identifying problems in the protection and enjoyment of human rights and seeking changes in legislation and practice that further their protection and enjoyment. Indian Institute of Peace,
Disarmament and Environmental Protection\textsuperscript{16}(IIPDEP) and many other NGOs work to make school authorities and the general public aware of civic education. They focus on developing knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to apply fundamental human rights and freedom and consequently, the nonviolent resolution of conflict. These organizations are drawing public attention to the role schools should play.

Civil education aims to promote human rights, particularly nonviolent resolution of conflict, and equality and justice. A human rights education mission is to encourage growth and acceptance of other viewpoints and to foster cooperation and peace among individuals and countries. To achieve this, a wide variety of activities in schools and collaboration with teachers and students are essential.

The IIPDEP recently organized seminar for teacher from the primary level to university level, who, strangely, were not aware of human rights. However, after the discussion and debates on human rights education, the participants concluded that respect for human rights is essential for the individual, society and country. The trainee teachers promised to teach their students about the importance of human rights. They suggested that human rights education be included in secondary-school subjects, such as history, geography, social studies, moral and religious education, language and literature, current affairs, economic and civics.

The teachers were unanimous on the following: -

Human rights should be taught as a special subject or a part of a special subject in civic education, or

Human rights should be included in all subjects.

\textsuperscript{16} www.iipdep.org
Extracurricular activities and clubs such as an Amnesty International Groups should be formed in schools. Schools should adopt the following goals: 
Teacher should apply human rights to school life and the curriculum. 
Human rights should be the basis of relationships in the classroom. 
Human rights concepts should be taught systematically. 
Schools rules and disciplinary procedures should be based on fair treatment and due process. 
Schools should promote equality and avoid discrimination on the basis of gender, race or disability. 
Teacher should be encouraged to develop a global perspective. 

Activities in school should include the following: 

Pre-school. The idea of human rights can and should be acquired at an early stage. For example the nonviolent resolution of conflict and respect for other people can be demonstrated in class.

Primary and high schools. Human rights provide the values guiding the school community. The teacher should be a role model in teaching children to be receptive to others and to diversity in society. Stories, games, poems, songs, (from several cultures); shared meals and food; celebrations and festivals; visits to markets, museums, temples, churches, mosques and other cultural places; and inviting parents to school should be employed in teaching human rights. Making knowledge of human rights a requirement for the licensing of new teacher and the re-certification and promotion of experienced teachers and all who work in the education system should be considered.

Human rights education strategies can be targeted at the formal or informal level. Formal approaches are through the curriculum, textbooks and teacher training, informal ways are supplying teachers with manuals, conducting workshops for teachers or pupils and supporting teacher’s activities. A combination of both ways can develop a sustainable human right

17 ibid
education strategy for schools. The way in which human rights education is formally implemented has an important impact on the quality of human rights education at school. A growing number of NGOs are now developing human rights education materials. They can be used as a supplement to official schoolbooks because they are not so restricted in the content that they select.

Human rights education is a sustainable approach for preventing climates of mutual aggression as well as misconceptions leading to social exclude. In India there are now a large number of NGOs, which have been trying to protect human rights. The prominent of them include the Peoples Union for Democratic Rights and Peoples Union of Civil Rights. Apart from these organizations, there are others that try to struggle for protecting human rights by propagating, advocating, campaigning and creating awareness among people about human rights in different states of India. For example, there are now a number of human rights organisations that continuously monitor and create awareness about human rights situation. In present day India almost half of the children in the age group 5-14 years are out of school. Either they are working in fields, restaurants and the like, practice other avocations, or simply wasting their time, increasing the illiterate population. Moreover, women and men in various parts of the country are yet to obtain literacy. The participation of women, though provided under the panchyati raj system, has not been effective. In managerial and other occupation their participation or presence is insignificant. Moreover, one often hears about
harassment in the family as well as in the society. Many of the ills if not entirely removed could be largely reduced through human rights education.\(^\text{18}\)

The Commonwealth human rights curriculum model is being offered at three levels. The basic level is a five-day orientation course that creates awareness of the international and national mechanisms for the promotion, protection and fulfillment of human rights. The certificate course is a four-month programme targeted at those who can deliver and implement government decisions, which impact on people rights. The diploma course is one-year programme, which focuses on a more in depth study of human rights. The Commonwealth Legal Education Association under a commission from the Commonwealth Secretariat has designed this course.

According to Florence Megasha\(^\text{19}\) Commonwealth deputy secretary-general, "in an increasingly divided and insecure world, the protection of and respect for human rights can only be achieved if people are aware of what human rights are and how they can be protected, without that awareness, nothing much can be done'. She said that the model curriculum "takes into account cultural and traditional beliefs without losing the core fundamental human rights principles that it seeks to promote. The approach gives us the latitude and flexibility to replicate the project in other parts of the Commonwealth". \(^\text{20}\)

Dr. Rupa Shah, vice-chancellor of the SNDT women's university, said\(^\text{21}\), "this project takes human rights out of the legal framework because for a long time, human rights education has been attached to legal education, with this project any one can easily learn about human rights without necessarily having to be a law student."

Through the human rights education programme ENSAAF develops teaching modules and materials on specific human rights issues in India and

\(^{18}\) Commonwealth Human Rights curriculum Model for India, CNIS, The Commonwealth News and Information Service Issue 236, 25th May, 2005

\(^{19}\) Ensaaf Fighting Impunity in India

\(^{20}\) ibid

\(^{21}\) ibid
organises and participates in public forums, teach and hold seminars and demonstrate the use of these before their peers. Education in human rights have enabled the target groups to zealously defend the suppression of their basic rights or taken recourse to by the government.

People's Watch a Tamilnadu based NGO has been conducting a series of human rights education activities in southern India. It has organized training of trainers for various cross-section of the public including the dalits. It has also focused on spreading human rights awareness to colleges, besides a series of training programmes to prepare human rights education syllabus.

The significance of the role NGOs play in imparting education in general and human rights education in particular can be gauged from the separate scheme of the Ministry of Human Development.22

In addition to the above, women and children need to be made aware of their rights though education not only of their health related rights but also various other human rights by the NGOs. NGOs too can provide better understanding though co-ordination with law enforcement officials and between police and the people.

The people's decade of human rights education (PDHRE) works as a comprehensive human rights "extension service" to stimulate, develop, and service a variety of grassroots human rights education programs and projects in diverse communities around the world. PDHRE's strategy is to have as many diverse non-governmental and community-based groups as possible integrate human rights into their work in ways that resonate in their own communities and among their own constituencies. Human rights education

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22 Nabhi Kumar Jain, Handbook for NGOs, A. Nabhi, pp 433,485
must suggest the normative and positive power (and limit) of human rights as tool in individual and collective efforts to address inequalities, injustices, and abuse at home, at work, in the streets, in the prisons, in the courts, and so forth. A limited definition and vision of what human rights education is and of its potential to bring about meaningful change in people lives.

YUVA PDHRE has undertaken an extensive effort to develop human rights education projects with YUVA, youth for unity and voluntary action, in Mumbai. These resulted in several human rights reports about youth and human rights issues. These include training of trainers' workshop for youth leaders as human right educators.

PDHRE had started years of international research, compiling a world report on human rights education for social transformation "Making the Connection". Scholars' activities, educators, and community groups from every continent have been called upon “to make the case of human rights education for social transformation”. Narratives and case studies, historic and current, are being collected to be compiled in this report to empower people to integrate human rights education in their activities. The report will also give a comprehensive view of groups and activities being taken in every region promoting formal, informal and non-formal education in human rights.

Rights consortium is a team of NGOs dedicated to promotion of the rule of law and human rights worldwide. Combining the unique strength, experience and outreach of its partner organization, the consortium provides both rapid response in developing democracies and countries in transition.

Section 12(i) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 requires the National Human Rights Commission to encourage the efforts of non-
governmental organization (NGOs) and institutions working in the field of human rights. The Commission considers this to be a most important responsibility and the experience of the Commission over the past years indicate that a close working relationship with credible NGOs is absolutely essential to the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. The Commission accordingly has been holding a series of structural consultation with NGOs that have an outstanding record and respect for human rights issues, associating them with diverse aspects of the work of the Commission that NGOs can be an effective vehicle in the spread of human rights education and awareness.

Human rights education according to professor Mahbub-ul-Haq\textsuperscript{23} can lead to human governance since it can contribute most constructively to deepening and widening of understanding of human rights leading to proper respect for such rights\textsuperscript{24}. In fact developing human rights plan of action through participation of government agencies, NGOs, academic institution has been considered desirable at various level though not much has been heard about the national plan of action for human rights in India. The role NGOs can play need no emphasis. An integrated plan for the whole country can be effective in reaching out to the people though the NGOs. As in case of the National Human Rights Commission, all State Human Rights Commissions that are in existence should also promote human rights education in close coordination with human rights NGOs. In view of the mandate of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 the State Human Right Commissions can embark upon such an initiative. This is all the more essential since the

\textsuperscript{23} supra n15, p 122
\textsuperscript{24} Dr S. Mehartaj Begum,(ed) Human Rights In India, Issues and Perspectives p 184
NGOs devoted to human rights education have been working independently without much co-ordination, co-operation and networking. Consequently there has been replication of activities in the education front in certain areas, while certain issues remain ignored.

The Assam Human Rights Commission in co-ordination with NGOs, particularly the Human Rights Literacy Forum has successfully conducted a number of sensitisation and orientation programmes in different schools, among college students, government officials as well as in the society. Reportedly, this programme has been able to create a lot of impact among the students community, whether in schools or colleges. Even in case of out of school programmes the young children and citizens in general have not only gained an insight on human rights, but have been able to express their grievances as well. The additional benefit of such programme has been increase in the number of complaints to the Commission for violation of human rights.

Another advantage that such activity have is that they lead to proper networking, thereby not only reducing the duplication of such effort but also in planning programmes for the future, wherein issues not being covered by other organisations can be taken up. Yet another advantage is that all human right issues can be discussed. The present limitation observed has been the emphasis on civil rights at the expanse of economic, social and cultural rights as well as third generation rights including rights to environment and sustainable development. Even among the civil and political rights the rights of women, children the differently abled as well as the aged have not received the due attention. Although in the State of Assam the Economic, Social and
Cultural Rights Forum has been endeavouring to look into the educational aspects of economic, social and cultural rights, due to its weak infrastructure, much remains to be achieved. Similarly health education is an area where NGOs have a challenging task to perform particularly in a country like India where people and organization shy aware from discussing many health related issues and disease.

Though much remains to be done a lot has been achieved, but for proper documentation the results are not discernable. There has to be proper documentation, follow up cooperation and coordination at the local, national, regional and international levels for the efforts to bear fruit. For instance, at the national level the human rights commission has been collaborating with a number of NGOs in the spread of human rights literacy. A number of important and active ones are yet to be included. It is a healthy sign that NGOs are now a days much active in the spread of human rights education and in this regard they have not only taken up programmes on their own but have been closely coordinating their activities with a number of international NGOs. In the process they have gained from the rich and varied experience of the international organizations. These organizations have also been able in incorporating the provisions of the Tehran conference, the Vienna conference, the UN decade for human rights education as well as those of the UNESCO to a considerable extent. The need of these organizations has been to enhance their collaborative efforts with the educational institutions .In this regard, the government should also come forward to work in close collaboration with the non-governmental sector considering them as partners and not competitors. The future of human rights education is in capacity
building, the transfer of skills and attitudes to the institution that needs them. Human rights education is not just about teaching rights, but about living them. It is about acquisition of habit and attitudes respectful of human rights. NGOs have important functions to perform in the realisation of these goals. Among them human rights education is considered a prelude towards achieving the ultimate goal.