Conclusion
CONCLUSION

Human beings are born equal in dignity and rights. These are moral claims which are inalienable and inherent in all human individuals by virtue of their humanity alone. These claims are articulated and formulated in what we today call Human Rights, and have been translated into legal rights, established according to the law creating processes of societies, both national and international. The basis of these legal rights is the consent of the governed that is the consent of the subjects of rights.

The values of dignity and equality of all members of the human race, like many other basic principles which underlie what we today call human rights can be found in virtually every culture and civilization, religion and philosophical tradition. The principle of equality in rights recognized in natural law was long accepted in many societies. Yet discrimination continues to exist due to ignorance, prejudice and fallacious doctrines which try to justify inequality. Such doctrines have been used to defend slavery and discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin or religious belief, or on the basis of class or caste systems, throughout history and unfortunately in modern times.

The ideas of elaboration and protection of rights of human beings have been gradually transformed into written norms. Many important landmarks may be mentioned in this way such as, in England, Magna Carta (1215), Petition of Rights (1628) and the Bill of Rights (1689). During the eighteenth century, the early ideas of natural law developed
into an acceptance of natural rights as legal rights and these rights for the first time were written into national constitutions, thus reflecting an almost contractual relationship between the state and the individual which emphasized that the power of the state derived from the assent of the free individual.

The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789 and the American Bill of Rights of 1791 were based on this premise. During the nineteenth century this principle was adopted by a number of independent states and social and economic rights also began to be recognized. Vienna Treaty of 1815, The Geneva Convention of 1864 and the creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1864 contributed greatly to these developments.

Since the end of the First World War, there has been a growing belief that governments alone cannot safeguard Human Rights, which require international guarantees. Though the mandate of the League of Nations, the first universal intergovernmental organization created after the First World War, the League tried to undertake the protection of Human Rights through international means. The totalitarian regimes established in the 1920s and 1930s grossly violated Human Rights in their own territories. The Second World War brought about massive abuse of human life and dignity, and attempts to eliminate entire groups of people because of their race, religion or nationality. Thus it became clear that international instruments were needed to codify and protect Human Rights, because respect for them was one of the essential conditions for world peace and progress. The war came to its end and the United
Nations Organization was established for the protection of peace, it started working to find out the means to promote Human Rights.

The task of drawing up an International Bill of Human Rights defining the Human Rights and freedoms referred to in the United Nations Charter, was charged upon the Commission on Human Rights established in 1945, which is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the United Nations principal organs. A major step in drafting the International Bill of Human Rights was realized on 10\textsuperscript{th} December 1948, when the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations. Further United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in December 1966, both covenants entered into force in 1976.

The Constitution of India, drafted around the same time as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), is one of the most rights-based Constitutions in the world. It captures the essence of Human Rights in its Preamble and in the sections on Fundamental rights and Directive Principles of State Policy. The Indian Constitution promises to help the people to enjoy Human Rights.

The need for devising special mechanisms and enactments to protect and further Human Rights in India received a definite boost with the enactment of the protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. Following this, the National Human Rights Commission was constituted under this
act. In addition to the above, the country has the following Institutional mechanisms to deal with protection and promotion of Human Rights of civil society. They include the National Commission for Women, the National Commission for Minorities, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. At the State level there are the State Human Rights Commission, State Commission for Women, State Commission for Minorities, etc. India has a comprehensive institutional network of National and State Human Rights institutions working for the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The human society is more or less violent striven hence human rights violations are quite common. Under these circumstances the United Nations Organization and the governments alone cannot achieve complete success in the implementation of human declarations and conventions. Non Governmental Organizations (NGO’s) play an important role in the protection and promotion of Human Rights all over the world.

The World Conference on Human Rights (1993) recognized the important role of Non Governmental Organizations in the promotion of all Human Rights and humanitarian activities at the national, regional and international levels. The Conference appreciated their contribution to increasing public awareness of human rights issues, to the conduct of education, training and research in this field, and to the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. After that there are large number of Non Governmental Organizations which emerged at
the national, regional and local level. In Tamil Nadu there are several Non Governmental Human Rights Organizations working for the protection and promotion of Human Rights. Among them People’s Watch is the prominent Non Governmental Human Rights Organization based in Tamil Nadu, it plays the lead role and it takes the vanguard position in the protection and promotion of Human Rights. People’s Watch started its journey on 10th December, 1995 initially concentrating its activities on human rights monitoring which gradually led to actions in the field of human rights intervention, human rights campaigns etc. Today, it pursues a holistic approach to championing human rights through everything from pursuing legal remedies on behalf of victims to sheltering victims in a rehabilitation centre, to teaching future generations a human rights curriculum and building a citizen’s movement for Human Rights of ‘All Rights of All Peoples’.

The follow-up of each case and the support extended towards victims are commendable. ‘Victim Centeredness’ one of the core concerns at People’s Watch, giving physical, psychological, social and economic rehabilitation to them and bringing them to a state where they get their rights. As many as 50 persons who were victims of Special Task Force atrocities meet National Human Rights Commission Chairman Justice Shivaraj Patil at Bangalore on the 14th of March 2007, thanking him for giving them relief. People’s Watch along with other organizations fought for the human rights of these people. Few Special Task Force affected victims who received compensations contributed Rs. 40,000 as welfare fund for other victims. The affected people and victims have found People’s Watch easily accessible and reliable. People’s Watch works for
victims to enable them develop as people with a Human Rights outlook, which is reflected in their lives, families and environment.

The Human Rights campaigning and networking unit of People’s Watch works for the protection and promotion of Human Rights in the society, making it to reach people of all walks of life. People’s Watch has a range of contacts, networks and relationships in pursuing its objectives. The range of contacts vary from people’s organization/movements, political parties, trade unions, lawyers, medical professionals, academicians, NGOs, government officials etc. The campaign and networking have been aimed at strengthening and reinforcing monitoring, interventions and rehabilitation. It has also been aiming at various measures and policy changes to ensure human rights. The campaigns in which People’s Watch has played significant roles have been Campaign against Death Penalty, Campaign against forcible Conversion Act, Campaign against Child Labour, Campaign against Sex Selective Abortion, Campaign for Right to Education for all Children, Campaign against Shrimp Industries and Campaign against Torture are worth mentioning here. The networks and alliance have been helpful in organizing public meetings, protests, mobilize pressure on commissions and law enforcing agencies, spreading of awareness influencing public opinion and highlighting the violation of Human Rights.

Realizing the need for a right based approach to disasters, and in order that a system of legal intervention has to be established in Tsunami affected areas, the Tsunami Legal Action Committee (TLAC) was established in March 2005. People’s Watch Creating awareness about legal
aid in the tsunami affected communities through its legal camps. TLAC in coordination with many NGOs working in the field organized several legal aid camps for the purpose of collecting complaints from the affected people. Collection of a large volume of complaints, appropriately classified them, making copies and forwarding them to Legal services authorities. As a result approximately 60,000 cases redressed by the Tsunami Legal Action Committee.

Strengthened Access to Justice in India (SAJI), this project has a very specific objective of strengthening access to justice information by creating an interactive website that provides enhanced access to information about various formal justice delivery institutions like the Courts, Prisons, Police institutions, National / State / District / Taluk legal aid services authority, Bar council and Bar associations, Hospitals, Blood banks, Eye banks, Rehabilitation homes, Official sites of the States, Nongovernmental organizations offering human rights services etc. The purpose of this project has to ease and speed up access to justice for the common public by creating and providing effective and reliable information through a dynamic single window system on the formal institutions for justice in India. Through this project the website www.saji.net.in has been successfully launched, this website has also been accommodated within the official website of the Home Ministry.

In 2007 People’s Watch has initiated the ‘Citizens for Human Rights Movement’ (CHRM), a human rights Movement at the grassroots level, based on the belief that Human Rights promotion and protection must be a public, and not merely institutional agenda. The Structure of
Citizens for Human Rights Movement is created by People’s Watch which is easier for people’s participation like unit level, taluk level, district level and state level. Several taluks and several villages have grassroots units of the CHRM. These units enable a growing number of individuals to become actively engaged in human rights monitoring. Gradually, these units across the state will emerge as a movement, protecting and promoting human rights with limited institutional support. The CHRM have their own advisory councils, these advisory councils give advice to run the Citizens for Human Rights Movement, and to conduct mass agitations, rally against Human Rights violations within the rule of law. These advisory councils assist the Citizens for Human Rights Movement to function on a Democratic basis. Through these nearly 12,615 members had joined in the movement as human rights defenders. People’s Watch provides appropriate leadership training, organizes workshops and refresher courses for human rights defenders, and supports these Citizens for Human Rights Movement; it will help to create a Human Rights culture in Tamil Nadu.

People’s Watch began the National Project on Preventing Torture in India (NPPTI) in 2006. This National Program on Preventing Torture in India is a unique project intended to demonstrate and combat the widespread use of torture in India, with a deliberate focus on torture practices routinely employed by the police. This project covers the following 10 States in India: Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar. The project has launched a national awareness campaign, citing the extensive monitoring data, to a) generate public and professional
condemnation of torture practices within a wider culture of rights. b) improve enforcement of and adherence to existing constitutional guarantees, and c) lobby for ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and stricter domestic laws in India’s Parliament and the individual state legislative assemblies. In all participating states where the NPPTI operates, project staff have solicited intimations of police torture. As a result, 6063 cases of torture were monitored and documented, in this 1043 fact findings conducted from Tamilnadu. The project lawyers pursued cases through a variety of legal means; the result was 5657 legal interventions carried, in this 982 from Tamilnadu which targeted governmental authorities and statutory human rights institutions. People’s Watch works against torture and conducted National campaign against Torture. A series of state-level awareness conferences targeting the various professions implicated in the elimination of torture: lawyers, social activists, doctors, psychiatrists, journalists and teachers. Police themselves, as well as members of the judiciary, are also to be treated as intermediaries, receiving awareness training that addresses them as constructive partners rather than adversaries in this project.

The Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE) of People’s Watch was set up with the vision of building a human rights culture in society through education. An experiment started in 1997 in a few schools in Tamilnadu during the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004); the IHRE has expanded to a national program of significance. The program was confined to Tamilnadu from 1997 offered in about 300 SC/ST schools of the government of Tamilnadu and also variety of schools with different backgrounds. In the past ten years about
2, 21,717 children from 2635 schools have been reached and about 4077 teachers have been trained for this purpose in Tamilnadu. Since 2005, it has expanded to the states of Orissa, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Tripura, Bihar, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. Today Human Rights Education has reached 3, 25,597 children through 5045 teachers in 3786 schools across 11 states in India including Tamil Nadu. The curriculum is available in Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Gujarati and Bengali in addition to Tamil and English. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and National Human Rights Commission has commended the work and appreciated IHRE of People’s Watch for introducing such a program.

We have in India a national and several state level commissions and NGOs but how far these have succeeded in ensuring human rights to our citizens. Given the fact that Indian Society is witness to numerous violations and abuses of power and that the ability of the people to fight these injustices is limited, human rights education in India is extremely important. Awareness should be created among the people, it is important to promote a culture of human rights through Education. From the lowest class onwards children should study human rights, values democracy and practice them. This will naturally lead to the establishment of a society, state and world order dedicated to peace progress and prosperity.

One of the contributions of People’s watch besides other things has been to create awareness regarding Human Rights among the people at large, introducing human rights education in the schools in various states
in India to create a just society and enlighten the young minds about their rights and duties is indeed an immense service to the society.

People’s Watch has completed 13 years of its existence on 10\textsuperscript{th} December, 2008; over the past 13 years the organization has been trying its best to give a positive meaning to the objectives of the protection of Human Rights Act for better protection and promotion of Human Rights. Its work occupies a significant place in the contemporary history of Human Rights.