ABSTRACT

Human being and humanity are indispensable part of each other. Human Rights idea is a universal concept for all mankind. It has evolved gradually through ages in different parts and religions of the world. It is based on doctrine of natural rights. ‘The Magna Carta’ provided jury trial protection against arbitrary action by the King. It formed base for Petition of Rights (1628) and the Bill of Rights (1689), Charter of New Plymouth (1620), State of Virginia declaration of rights (1776), French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in 1789, and the Bill of Rights in America in 1791. Babylonian laws, Hittite laws, Dharma of the Vedic period in India and Sangam literature etc. have roots for the protection of rights of man.

UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) are international instruments in this direction. India is party to these instruments and other related treaties. National Human Right Commission was created by Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and it act as sui generis.

For maintaining law and order and preservation of peace, criminal justice system operates through police, courts and prison and correctional system. Custodial violence, lock up deaths and Human Right violation cases are matters of concern. Provisions in the Constitution, CrPC, IPC, Indian Evidence Act and the Police Act etc., tends to protect the people from the excess use of power by the police. Mallimath committee recommendations and Soli Sorabjee committee’s Model Police Act, 2006 are a ray of hope. Probation of Offender Act, Juvenile Act and Plea Bargaining provide protection to the human rights. Correctional attempts are made to reform criminals. Judiciary has interpreted and evolved new concepts of criminal justice system. A fair criminal trial protects accused's rights along with social security, human dignity and personal liberty.

Wide publicity should be made through vernacular languages, print and electronic media, NGOs, political parties, activists, human rights organizations etc. to increase awareness of the human rights. Human Rights granted form the very essence of civilized life and we have to be ever vigilant to protect our freedoms and our basic human rights.