

# OPINION OF THE POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS OF DIBRUGAH UNIVERSITY REGARDING RELEVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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**ABSTRACT:** *Human rights are the basic rights of individual being which are essential to give them identity and dignity. But, in reality, it has been observed that majority of the people are unaware of their rights. Due to the absence of proper awareness amongst people about the mechanisms available to them by law for the protection and enforcement of their human rights thousands and thousands of people are losing their lives everywhere and every year. Human rights education is increasingly recognized as an effective strategy to aware people about human rights and prevent human rights abuses. Post-Graduate students are at the highest level of formal educational ladder and put up with the responsibilities for taking indispensable dealings towards protection of human rights. Post-Graduate students are the future architect of our nation and will be able to take initial step in coming days in this respect through teaching and performing different activities under some extension programmes, social service programmes and N.S.S. camp etc. Therefore, it is necessary to study their level of opinion regarding relevance of human rights education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this background, the present study was conducted to study the level of opinion of the post-graduate students of Dibrugarh University regarding relevance of human rights education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Key Words:** *Human Rights, Human Rights Education, Post-Graduate Students*

## Introduction:

Human rights are rights innate to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of dwelling, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other category. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without bias. These rights are all interconnected, interdependent and indivisible. These are the basic rights of individual being which are essential to give them identity and dignity. It implies an aspect of conduct within which everyman can choose his own course of action and is protected from any kind of compulsion or restraint. It refers to those conditions of life and freedoms which should be available to all persons irrespective of their nationality, place of dwelling, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other category. Actually, Human rights are governed by the basic principle that all human beings are equal and have to be treated alike irrespective of their differences.

In Another definition for human rights, it is those basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity. It implies that to violate someone's human rights is to treat that person as though she or he were not a human being as well as to advocate human rights is to demand that the human dignity of all people be respected. Human rights are both encouraging and practical. Human rights principles hold up the vision of a free and peaceful earth and determine minimum standards and norms for how individuals and institutions everywhere should treat people. Human rights also allow people with a framework for action when those minimum standards are not met, for people still have human rights even if the laws or those in power do not recognize or protect them.

21<sup>st</sup> century is characterised by liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. In our day to day living in 21<sup>st</sup> century, we experience human rights violations occur everyday in our country or North East India, when a parent abuses a child, when a family is homeless, when a school provides inadequate education, when women are paid less than men, when one person steals from another, when ethnic conflict disturbs normal life and so on.

## Significance of the study:

The most important point that keeps into mind here is that, in claiming these human rights, everyone also accepts the responsibility not to infringe on the rights of others and to support those whose rights are abused or denied. But, in reality, it has been observed that majority of the people are unaware of

their rights. Although the law and institutions are there to protect them yet they must first know where they may turn for help. Due to the absence of proper awareness amongst people about the mechanisms available to them by law for the protection and enforcement of their human rights thousands and thousands of people are losing their lives everywhere and every year.

Therefore, it is now realised that respect for human rights makes fundamental freedom meaningful and effective and only education can make it fruitful by making people conscious about it. In this background, the concern for human rights education has emerged as a central issue. Most of the intellectuals argued that violent situations can be reduced if only human rights education is provided. People who know their rights carry the best chance for realising it. Learning about one's rights builds respect for the rights of others and points the way for strong and peaceful societies.

People who do not aware about their rights are more exposed to having them abused and often lack the language and conceptual framework to effectively advocate for them. Growing harmony around the globe recognizes education for and about human rights as essential. It can contribute to the building of free and peaceful societies. Human rights education is an integral part of the right to education and is increasingly gaining recognition as a human right in itself. Education should encompass values such as peace, non-discrimination, equality, justice, non-violence, tolerance and respect for human dignity. Quality education based on a human rights approach means that rights are implemented throughout the whole education system and in all learning environments. Human rights education is also increasingly recognized as an effective strategy to prevent human rights abuses. Knowledge of rights and freedoms is considered a fundamental tool to guarantee respect for the rights of all.

In this background, bringing awareness among the people regarding human rights is necessary. In this context, each and every individual can play an active role. Post-Graduate students are at the highest level of formal educational ladder and put up with the responsibilities for taking indispensable dealings towards protection of human rights. Post-Graduate students are the future architect of our nation and will be able to take initial step in coming days in this respect through teaching and performing different activities under some extension programmes, social service programmes and N.S.S. camp etc. Therefore, it is necessary to study their level of opinion regarding relevance of human rights education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this background, the present study was conducted to study the level of opinion of the post-graduate students of Dibrugarh University regarding relevance of human rights education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Objectives of the study:**

The main objectives of the study was-

1. To study the level of opinion of the post-graduate students of Dibrugarh University regarding relevance of human rights education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Methodology**

#### **Method:**

Descriptive method was adopted in the present study.

#### **Population:**

The population of the present study comprised of all the post-graduate students pursuing general post-graduate courses in the 15 general post-graduate Departments of Dibrugarh University in the academic session 2015-16.

#### **Sample:**

Through a combination of purposive and incidental sampling techniques, samples of Departments and samples of students were selected for the present study. Out of the fifteen (15) general Post-Graduate Departments located in the campus of Dibrugarh University, the researchers had selected ten (10) departments using non-probability sampling technique (Purposive sampling). A sample of 100 students pursuing general post-graduate courses in the Dibrugarh University in the academic session 2015-16 was selected from the sampled Departments using incidental sampling technique.

#### **Tools of Data collection:**

The investigators had developed a questionnaire in order to collect data for the present study. The questionnaire consists of 20 number of questions printed or typed in a definite order. The questions were formed according to the need of the particular investigation. The questionnaire was checked, edited properly and thus ready for administration.

**Collection of Data:**

In order to collect data, the investigators had met the respondents' personally. Before administration of the questionnaire necessary oral instructions were given and asked them to follow the instructions. Copying was strictly prohibited. There were no time limitations for answering the questionnaires. When they finished answering filled-in forms were collected.

**Analysis of Data:**

Qualitative analysis was done in the present study. Percentage was used to carry out the analysis task of the data.

**Findings of the Study:**

According to 99% of the respondents, Human rights are rights innate to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of dwelling, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other category. Almost all 98% respondents opined that all are equally entitled to our human rights without bias. They opined that these rights are all interconnected, interdependent and indivisible.

Majority (98%) of the respondents opined that Human rights education develops the knowledge, skills, and values about human rights. They opined that Growing consensus around the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century recognizes education for and about human rights as essential. As opined by 86% of the respondents, human rights education is relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it can contribute to the building of free, just, and peaceful societies. They also opined that Human rights education is increasingly recognized as an effective strategy to prevent human rights abuses.

Almost all respondents ((91%) viewed that human rights belong to both individuals and society as a whole and therefore, the responsibility to respect, defend, and promote human rights is both individual and collective. According to 78% of the respondents, Human rights education provides the knowledge and awareness needed to meet this responsibility. They viewed that the responsibilities of all citizens in a democratic society are inseparable from the responsibility to promote human rights.

As viewed by the 88% of the respondents, to flourish, both democracy and human rights require people's active participation. They also viewed that Human rights education includes learning the skills of advocacy – to speak and act every day in the name of human rights. Almost all respondents (89%) opined that Human rights education also provides a basis for conflict resolution and the promotion of social order which is most essential in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Majority of the respondents (88%) viewed that as a value system based on respect and the equality and dignity of all people, human rights can create a framework for analyzing and resolving such differences.

As viewed by 92% of the respondents Human rights education also teaches the skills of negotiation, mediation, and consensus building which is essential in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Almost all the respondents (88%) opined that goal of human right education is to help people to understand human rights, value human rights, take responsibility for respecting, defending, and promoting human rights. They also opined that Human rights education is important in 21<sup>st</sup> century because an important outcome of human rights education is empowerment, a process through which people and communities increase their control of their own lives and the decisions that affect them.

As opined by the 93% of the respondents the ultimate goal of human rights education is people working together to bring about human rights, justice, and dignity for all. Majority of the respondents (88%) opined that Education about human rights provides people with information about human rights. They also viewed that it includes learning about the inherent dignity of all people and their right to be treated with respect, about human rights principles, such as the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights, about how human rights promote participation in decision making and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. As viewed by 87% of the respondents Education for human rights helps people feel the importance of human rights, internalize human rights values, and integrate them into the way they live.

**Conclusion:**

From the above analysis of the findings, it is clear that post-graduate students are aware enough in different areas of Human rights and Human rights education. Findings also show the high relevance of Human rights education in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century. On the basis of the above findings we may suggest to introduce Human rights education as an important course content at all levels of education. It should also be interdisciplinary and comprehensive. It will definitely helps in development of strength gleaned from loving, nurturing, and caring for ourselves which provides the positive courage to transform our misjudgments, assumptions and inaccuracies for better survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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