

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHILDREN

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All adults stand accused... the society responsible for the welfare of children has been put on trial. There is something apocalyptic about this startling accusation; it is mysterious and terrible like the voice of the Last Judgment: What have you done to the children that I entrusted to you.¹

I. INTRODUCTION

There are more than 375 million children in India, the largest number for any country in the world. India has made some significant commitments towards ensuring the basic rights of children. There has been progress in overall indicators: infant mortality rates are down, child survival is up, literacy rates have improved and school dropout rates have fallen. With State support to the social sector being systematically reduced, more than 360 million people, about 36 per cent of the population (1999-2000 statistics) are living below the poverty line, though the government's latest estimates put this figure at 26 per cent. It is estimated that women and children account for 73 per cent of those below the poverty line.²

According to the census of 2001, India has the largest child population in the world. Children in the age group 0-8 years number 398.3 million and thereby comprise 40% of the total population.³ Out of these, children in the age group of 0-6 years comprise 158 million.⁴

National Policy for Children, Government of India Resolution of 22 August 1974 proclaimed that, "Nation's children are supremely important asset. Their nurture and solicitude are our responsibility. Children's programmes should find a prominent part in our national plans for the development of human resources, so that our children grow up to become robust citizens, physically fit, mentally alert and morally healthy, endowed with the skills and motivations needed by society. Equal opportunity for

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¹ Maria Montessori, *THE SECRET OF CHILDHOOD* (New York: FIDES Publishers, INC., 1966) at 13.

² www.infochangeindia.org.

³ www.wcd.nic.in.

⁴ www.censusindia.net.

development to all children during the period of growth should be our aim, for this would serve our larger purpose of reducing inequalities and ensuring social justice.”⁵

II. INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS WITH REFERENCE TO CHILDREN

The first standard – setting United Nations instrument exclusively devoted to the rights of children was the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Affirming that mankind owes to the child the best it has to give and that the principle of the “best interests of the child” should guide the actions of those responsible for them, this Declaration offered a moral framework for the rights of the child. The United Nations chose to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of this Declaration by proclaiming the year 1979 as the International Year of the Child.⁶

In 1978 the Government of Poland submitted a draft Convention on the rights of the child to the Commission on Human Rights. The Commission on Human Rights, which had been assigned the task of drafting the text of the Convention, completed its work in 1989 and the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child the same year. It derives from the Convention that the child is the subject of law and that all Human Rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social - necessary to his or her survival, development, protection and participation are interdependent and indivisible. All countries except two, the United States of America and Somalia, have ratified the Convention. The Government of India ratified the Convention on November 12, 1992. Subsequently, the Vienna Convention of 1993 provided that nations must focus on ‘special care and assistance for children and need to create an environment in society conducive to healthy growth and development so that they are able to live securely and realize their full potential in life’.

III. CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS WITH REFERENCE TO CHILDREN

The Constitution of India was adopted on November 26, 1949 and came into force on January 26, 1950. Part III and Part IV which deal with Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy respectively, contain some special provisions with respect to children. Article 14 confers

⁵ K.P.S. Mahalwar and Shahbuddin Ansari, *Rights of Child and Judicial Activism – A Critical Appraisal* in Jawahar Kaul (ed.), HUMAN RIGHTS : ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES (1995).

⁶ Zarina Y. Farooqui, *Rights of a Child under the United Nations Aegis* in Vijay Chitnis, C. M. Madan and M. H. Hirani (eds.), HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LAW – NATIONAL AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES (Snow White Publications, 1997).

the fundamental right to “equality before the law” and the “equal protection of laws” within the territory of India. Article 15 specifically prohibits discrimination by the State on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. However, under Article 15 (3) the State can make any special provision for women and children. Under Article 24 no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.

Part IV of the Constitution which outlines the Directive Principles of State Policy has been made unenforceable by any court by Article 37, but the principles laid therein are fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws. Thus, the objective of the Directive Principles of State Policy is to embody the concept of a welfare State. In several decisions emanating from the Supreme Court it has been held that these Directives supplement Fundamental Rights in achieving a welfare state and the latter should be adjusted in their ambit so as to give effect to the former.⁷

Article 39 which falls within Part IV calls upon the State to direct its policy towards securing (among other things): -

- (e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the *tender age of children are not abused* and that the citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;
- (f) that *children are given opportunities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against moral and material abandonment.*

Under Article 45 the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they completed the age of fourteen years. This Directive has been held to be a fundamental right forming part of the Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution.⁸ Parliament has enacted the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002 and made *right to education a fundamental right.*⁹

⁷ Narenda Kumar, CONSTITUTIONAL LAW OF INDIA (Delhi: Pioneer Publications, 2003).

⁸ *Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh*, AIR 1993 SC 2178.

⁹ The 86th Constitutional Amendment reads as follows: -

ARTICLE 21 A-

The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years, in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

IV. JUDICIAL APPROACH TO RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

The judiciary in India has been the forerunner in protecting and promoting human rights by expanding the domain of public interest litigation encouragingly and with positive results. The teeming masses ignored by the legislature and turned away by the executive, look up with a sigh of hope to the men in robes, asking for justice. Homicide of human rights anywhere is a matter of concern for everyone everywhere.¹⁰ Some path-breaking judgments, which have been delivered by an activist judiciary, especially in issues relating to rights of children are quoted to demonstrate the apathy of the legislature and the executive. Enforcement is the Achilles' heel of radical law. These judgments also bring home the harsh fact that at the implementation level, welfare legislations in favour of children meet with their Waterloo.

In *People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India*,¹¹ more popularly known as the *Asiad Workers* case, the Supreme Court held that the prohibition contained in Article 24 could be plainly and indubitably enforced against every one, whether State or private individuals. It is the obligation of the State to ensure that private contractors who had employed children in construction work should not contravene the prohibition. The Court held "construction work" as a hazardous employment where children below 14 years should not be employed.

In *Sheela Barse v. Union of India*,¹² the Supreme Court impressed upon the State Government to set up necessary remand houses and observation homes where children accused of an offence could be lodged pending investigation and trial. In *Sheela Barse v. Secretary, Children Aid Society*,¹³ the Supreme Court commented upon setting up dedicated juvenile courts and specialist juvenile court officials and the provision of proper care and protection of children in observation homes.

In *Gaurav Jain v. Union of India*,¹⁴ by way of public interest litigation the petitioner asked for the improvement of the plight of prostitutes and their

Part IV A of the Constitution, which deals with Fundamental Duties has also been amended by addition of clause (k).

Article 51A. Fundamental duties – It shall be the duty of every citizen of India,-
(k) Who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to all children or, as the case may be, ward between the age of 6-14 years.

¹⁰ Krishna Iyer, HUMAN RIGHTS AND INHUMAN WRONGS.

¹¹ AIR 1982 SC 1473.

¹² AIR 1986 SC 1773.

¹³ AIR 1987 SC 656.

¹⁴ AIR 1990 SC 292.

children. The court issued directions for the constitution of a committee to examine the problem and for the segregation of the children of prostitutes from their mothers living in prostitute homes and to allow them to mingle with others and become a part of society. In *Vishal Jeet v. Union of India*,¹⁵ the Supreme Court issued directions on a PIL to the State Governments and Union Territories for eradicating the evil of child prostitution and for evolving programmes for the care, protection, treatment, development and rehabilitation of the young fallen victims.

The *M.C. Mehta v. State of Tamil Nadu*,¹⁶ was a PIL filed against employment of children in the notorious Sivakasi match industries. The Supreme Court pronounced upon the constitutional perspective of abolition of child labour and issued extensive guidelines to the Government of India with respect to education, health, nutrition, etc. of the child labourers. The *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India*,¹⁷ was a PIL, which related to the employment of children in the carpet industry in the State of Uttar Pradesh. The Supreme Court reiterated the directions given under *M. C. Mehta's* case.

The *Sakshi v. Union of India*,¹⁸ was a PIL, which brought into limelight the problem of child sexual abuse in India. The Supreme Court directed the government/ Law Commission to conduct a study and submit a report on the means of curbing child sexual abuse. In *Sakshi v. Union of India*,¹⁹ the Supreme Court issued fresh guidelines on child abuse trials and recording of evidence in a bid to spare victims from undergoing further trauma.

However, sometimes the judiciary takes a retrograde step and undermines the whole issue of the rights of children and their violation. Justice Lentin in an article "Judging the Judiciary – Continuing Search for Ideal"²⁰ quoted a Mumbai High Court judgment that reduced the sentence of a father who raped his minor daughter on the ground that he was a poor widower who fell to temptation but was otherwise a good father.

V. CHILDREN UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS

There are children who are particularly disadvantaged because of their social, economic, physical or mental condition. These children are placed under the category of children under special or difficult circumstances. The

¹⁵ AIR 1990 SC 1412.

¹⁶ (1991) 1 SCC,283.

¹⁷ AIR 1997 SC 699.

¹⁸ (1999) 6 SCC 591.

¹⁹ TIMES OF INDIA, September 19, 2004.

²⁰ TIMES OF INDIA, New Delhi, July 15, 1994.

website of Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resources and Development, Government of India, lists the following problem areas with respect to the rights of children.²¹

- (i) **Children in Labour** - India has the largest number of working children in the world. Estimates on the magnitude of child labour vary from approximately 11.28 million (Census of India, 1991) to 23.2 million estimated by the International Labour Organization. The government admits that about 2 million children are employed in hazardous industries, occupations and processes. Other unofficial sources estimate 100 million working children in the country.
- (ii) **Children in Bondage** – The number of bonded labourers in India is 5 million. A large number of these would have begun their lives as child labourers. As children they are literally sold to the contractors or landlords; on gaining adulthood they are unable to break away from this state of bondage and after some time replace their labour with that of their children and this cycle of debt, poverty and bondage goes on.
- (iii) **Children on Streets** – This is the most vulnerable group. India has the dubious distinction of having the largest population of street children. Street children suffer from destitution, neglect, abuse and exploitation. It is estimated that in urban areas alone there are 11 million children on the streets. Of them 420,000 street children live in the six metropolitan cities of the country.
- (iv) **Children who are Juvenile Delinquents**
- (v) **Children in need of Adoption** - There are no comprehensive statistics available on the number of abandoned babies in India. Due to government apathy in the matter and resultant malpractices in adoption matters, the Supreme Court issued comprehensive guidelines on adoptions by foreigners.²²
- (vi) **Children in Prostitution** - Estimates by NGOs puts the figure of child prostitutes at 12.15% of the total number of prostitutes. Out of these 40% are inducted into the profession before 18 years. In India child prostitution also thrives through religion sanctioned practices and beliefs, such as the 'devdasi' and 'jogin'.
- (vii) **Children of Prostitutes**
- (viii) **Children of Prisoners**

²¹ www.wcd.nic.in.

²² *Laxmikant Pandey v. Union of India*, AIR 1984 SC 469.

- (ix) Refugee Children
- (x) Slum and Migrant Children
- (xi) Children who are Physically or Mentally Challenged
- (xii) Crimes against Children – Child rape and sexual abuse of children constitute the maximum number of incidences of the total statistics available. Children up to 16 years constituted 19 % of the victims.²³

The Government of India has enacted some specific legislations dealing with children.²⁴

- (1) Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929
- (2) The Children (Pledging) Labour Act, 1933
- (3) The Employment of Children Act, 1938
- (4) Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 – there are many more laws which, pertain to labour reforms and welfare in which some provisions have been made with special reference to children.
- (5) Maintenance, custody and guardianship and adoption provisions under various personal laws.
- (6) Penal law and evidence, crimes against children under the Indian Penal Code, 1860
- (7) The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- (8) The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2000
- (9) The National Commission for Protection of Rights of Children Act, 2005.

The rights of the child, approved by the United Nations and reflected in the Constitution and other statutory provisions, are phony prescriptions, as harsh facts of life reveal.²⁵ The reasons for violation of rights of the children are obvious. Among all the groups in society, children are the most *vulnerable*. It is correctly said '*children do not vote*' and therefore, are never taken into consideration by the governments and the policy makers. Their age makes them *dependant* and hence they are always in need of protection. *Poverty, illiteracy, war, armed conflicts and persecution* are some of the other factors because of which rights of children get trampled upon.

²³ Categories of crimes against children and their state-wise break up is given in the website of the Department of Women and Child Development.

²⁴ Asha Bajpai, *Children and Young Persons*, HALSBURY'S LAWS OF INDIA (Butterworths, 1999).

²⁵ *Supra* n. 10.

More than any other moral language available at this time in history the language of Human Rights is able to expose the 'immorality and barbarism of modern face of power.... We cannot take rights seriously without taking suffering seriously'.²⁶

VI. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION (HRE) IN SCHOOLS

What is human rights education? A simple answer to this question can be that, *HRE is all learning that develops the knowledge, skills and values of human rights*. It includes recognition of ones own biases, accept differences, take responsibility for defending the rights of the others and mediation and conflict resolution. Why teach about human rights at all? Why should young people learn about these matters in school? The answers to these questions are all around us. To borrow a phrase from the UNESCO Constitution "it is in the minds of human beings that flagrant breach of human rights and prejudices have their beginning and it is in the minds of men that regard for human rights need be created."²⁷

HRE is a way of clearing and preparing ground for reclaiming and securing our aim to be human. It is to learn about justice and empowering people in the process. It is a social and human development strategy that enables men, women and children to become agents of social change. It can produce the blend of ethical thinking and action needed to cultivate public policies based on human rights and it opens the possibility of creating a human rights culture for the 21st century.²⁸

The first International Conference on the Teaching of Human Rights, Vienna, September 1978, and the Pune Declaration on Education for Human Rights in Asia and Pacific, 1999 have stressed upon the significance and importance of human rights education. Further the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed in December 1994 that the period spanning from 01 January 1995 to 31 December 2005 would be the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. The General Assembly defined human rights education as *Training, Dissemination and Information* efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through imparting of knowledge and skills and moulding of attitudes. World Conference on HR (ECOSOC) called upon the States and institutions to include Human Rights, Humanitarian Laws,

²⁶ J. Palok Basu, *LAW RELATING TO PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND ALLIED LAWS* (Modern Law Publication, 2003).

²⁷ Nomita Aggarwal, *Mainstreaming of Human Rights Education – Challenges and Prospects*, paper presented in the South Asian Law Schools Forum for Human Rights Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal in June 2004.

²⁸ www.pdhre.org.

Democracy and Rule of Law as subjects in the curricula of all learning institutions in formal and non-formal settings. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights during its day of general discussion on human rights education and public information activities relating to International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) stated that *Human Rights Education is itself a human right*.

In India, the University Grants Commission appointed the Justice Sikri Committee in 1980, which chalked out a “Blueprint for the Promotion of Human Rights Education”. The emphasis was on the attitude formation and value inculcation especially at the impressionable age of school going children. It was noted that HRE should not remain confined to a few topics in the curriculum but should be reflected in the hidden curriculum as well. However, the focus of HRE in India has remained limited; the social relevance edge did not get the projection it deserved.²⁹

The recommendations of the following Commissions, Committees and Policies reflect the importance of HRE in schools directly or indirectly; namely, the Kothari Education Committee (1964 – 1966), National Policy on Education (1986), National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education (1998) and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2000).

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is sensitizing National Council for Education, Research and Training (NCERT) and its other State counterparts (SCERT) to design text - books and other study materials in such a way that human rights teaching are included in the curriculum of studies at various stages in the school. NCERT has already published a Source Book on Human Rights materials to guide teachers for teaching subjects in schools, which was later translated into Hindi and Urdu.³⁰

Presently, the subject of human rights is taught at the school level as a part of world history. The subject is taught in the classrooms without any practical exposure. Such stereotypical teaching without any practical and social relevance will not achieve the desired purpose of human rights education. Therefore, what urgently needs to be done is to make human rights education an independent subject of study. However, the teaching methodology should not be the same as that followed for all other subjects. The subject of human rights requires a special and different treatment.³¹

²⁹ *Supra* n. 27.

³⁰ Bhaskar Chakravarty, *Human Rights Education – UN and India*, National Seminar on HRE, Law and Society, organized by NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad.

³¹ *Supra* n. 27.

The aims of HRE for school students are³²:

- (i) *to encouraging their ability in making judgments and criticizing the state of world affairs, their country and their society;*
- (ii) *to awaken and strengthen their readiness to stand up for human rights and to resist disregard and violation;*
- (iii) *to stand – up for human rights of others;*
- (iv) *to use realization of human rights as the most important measure in judging political situation in their own and other countries; and*
- (v) *to inculcate in them tolerance and respect the differences in others.*

A. Teaching Methodology

The challenge before teachers of human rights is how to approach the issue of human rights before school students. The insights offered by the comprehensive website of UNESCO on human rights education are all encompassing. The following points give students an opportunity to actually experience the importance and significance of human rights³³:

- (i) Perceiving – which includes observation, description and research.
- (ii) Understanding – which includes interpretation and systemic analysis.
- (iii) Action – which includes among others, feedback, staging events, role-playing and playing games, which set examples.

Developing a culture of human rights through HRE has strong moral imperatives and other crucial benefits. HRE is vital in giving young people i.e. children a sense of belonging to them and to the society; it helps them understand that they count like everyone else. These children are the future citizens who will be lawyers, judges, administrators, legislators, law-enforcement officials, doctors, engineers, teachers, etc. Educating them Human Rights is one of the most reliable investments a society can make for its future.

This education presupposes field experiences, action oriented ways of teaching and learning and an innovative teaching methodology. In schools HRE should aim at conduct transformation and make respect for human rights of others a way of life. The focus should be inculcating an attitude of self-esteem, respect of ideas and beliefs of other people and of fostering an attitude of tolerance and removal of prejudices. Students at the school level should not be burdened with detailed texts of human rights literature.³⁴

³² UNESCO education server - www.dadalo.org.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Gurjeet Singh, *Role of Human Rights Education*, National Seminar on HRE, Law and Society, organized by NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad.

B. Role of Teachers

HRE has to be the catalyst in bringing about social and attitudinal change. It has to be an important weapon to eradicate social evils. The role of teachers cannot be segregated from the social context. *HRE cannot be merely an intellectual exercise.* Imparting of knowledge in the classrooms is not enough and it should cover all modalities, formal, non-formal and informal which could sensitize a person, his/her conscience and develop attitude of imbibing respect for human rights of others. It requires building linkages between what occurs in society and what is transmitted in classes to students. The teaching of Human Rights often places the dilemma of 'Claim v. Reality' before the teachers. Therefore, a teacher/educator of human rights must attempt that the lessons on human rights must endeavour the following.³⁵

- (i) to discover the relationship of human rights to the student's own life;
- (ii) to establish links to personal values;
- (iii) to use encounters with other people to understand the true value of human rights;
- (iv) to discover the role of current political situation and history in understanding and implementing human rights; and
- (v) to question the reporting in newspapers and media.

Some innovative teaching methods and activities, which may be taken up in schools in teaching human rights are discussed hereinafter.

- (i) Questions on human rights and approaches should be aimed at creating lessons that are action-oriented. For example, the teachers should involve the students in discussions and debates on questions, such as, what is hidden behind the term 'human dignity'; what does tolerance mean; are women second-class citizens; are there any human rights organizations in our town/city; etc.³⁶
- (ii) Extensive use of audio – visual materials should be made.
- (iii) Young students should be encouraged to narrate during classroom instructions what they feel about specific human rights abuses, for example, child labour, female infanticide, etc.
- (iv) The imagination of students should be ignited by asking them to narrate their feelings on various topics, such as, "if you are a domestic servant, what would you feel?"

³⁵ *Supra* n. 32.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

- (v) Students should be involved in social service schemes designed by the school.
- (vi) Human rights activists and NGOs working in the field of human rights should be invited to address the students to inform them of the concerns of human rights abuses of the society in which they live.³⁷
- (vii) Events such as skits, drama, ‘nautanki’, musical events, dance, poetry, painting competition, slogan competition, collage making competition on a topic of human rights concern, essay writing competition, debate and discussion on a current issue of human rights violation may be organized in the school to make human rights education a fun experience for the students. During theatrical activities they should be involved in role – playing to understand the psyche of the victim and the violator.³⁸
- (viii) The project – work done by students when the above said activities are organized should be displayed for the benefit of the entire school. For example, poster display, wall – newspapers display, and presentations should be exhibited.
- (ix) Students should be provided with a “*conceptual language*” by means of which they will be able to communicate ideas, feelings, emotions and actions. Students should be encouraged to communicate with other schools via e-mail or personal visits and build a network of young human rights activists.³⁹
- (x) Specific tasks may be delegated to senior students such as simplifying the language of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and then make cards for distribution. They may be asked to choose the five most important rights from their perspective and then write an essay or an article on the first most important right.⁴⁰
- (xi) Students should be sent in the field along with NGOs and should be given specific tasks such as questioning people and institutions and the results should be collated and displayed in the school.
- (xii) The morning school prayer and school assembly should be utilized to raise human rights violations reported in the newspapers of the day.⁴¹

³⁷ *Supra* n. 27.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Supra* n. 32.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Supra* n. 27.

- (xiii) A newsletter of the Asian Human Rights Commission reported the innovative way of creating awareness on human rights in a school in Taiwan. A fair was organized outside the President's official building to learn about human rights in a fun way. All the activities such as the food stalls, games stalls and music were organized with a human rights theme. Children were issued passports and every stall that they visited earned them a stamp on their passports. At the end of the day, they were encouraged to narrate their experiences and what they learnt throughout the day.⁴²
- (xiv) Observance of Human Rights Day on 10th December is a good method of creating awareness among school children. The same is already being done in CBSE schools, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathana and the National Open School.

Giving pupils the chance actually to experience human rights in lessons is of key importance. It is also essential to emphasize that the idea of human rights isn't merely an abstract one that only touches them in an indirect way, but an incredibly important and current problem that concerns everyone. Indeed, the challenge is to make clear that human rights represent a call for everyone to accept responsibility for their observance.

C. SUGGESTED CURRICULUM FOR HRE IN SCHOOLS

At the primary level, significance and importance of human rights and duties should be taught and at the secondary level, knowledge of international and national organs and their functioning should be imparted. At the higher level, students should be acquainted with the different aspects of human rights along with inter – disciplinary approach, for example, in a science class the impact of human organ trade and human genome research on human rights should be discussed.⁴³

(i) Suggested Curriculum at the Primary Level

- (a) The meaning and concept of human rights;
- (b) The importance, significance and relevance of human rights; and
- (c) Human rights and present social context.

(ii) Suggested Curriculum at the Secondary Level

- (a) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- (b) the working of United Nations, Human Rights Commissions at UN;

⁴² www.acr.hrschool.org.

⁴³ *Supra* n. 27.

- (c) the working of the National Human Rights Commission;
- (d) practical usefulness of HRE and its present and future relevance/prospects; and
- (e) case studies on human rights issues.

(iii) Suggested Curriculum at the Higher Level

- (a) The historical evolution and development of the concept of human rights;
- (b) relevant provisions of the Constitution of India with special reference to human rights;
- (c) the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- (d) inter-disciplinary aspect and relevance of human rights;
- (e) reasons/causes for violation of human rights in society;
- (f) submission of a project on a human rights issue based on the field-work experience for limited hours with any Human Rights Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

VII. CONCLUSION

“I am the child

All the world awaits for my coming.

All the earth watches with interest to see what I shall become.

Civilization hangs in the balance

FOR WHAT I AM THE WORLD OF TOMORROW WILL BE.

I am the child

You hold in your hands my destiny.

You determine, largely whether I shall succeed or fail

Give me I pray you, the things that make for happiness

Train me, I beg you, that I may be a blessing of the World.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Quoted in *M. C. Mehta v. State of Tamil Nadu and Others*, AIR 1997 SC 699.