

# **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM**



**ORGANISED BY**

**IARF - HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE CENTRE, INDIA**

**&**

**BIRDS & ISI, BANGALORE.**

**VENUE: ISI, BANGALORE**

**DATE: 2<sup>ND</sup> TO 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2017**

## **ABSTRACT**

The General Assembly of United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 which proclaims that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”. The declaration has provided guidance to many nations in ensuring that their laws are in accord with the Fundamental Principles of Human Rights. The declaration serves as a laser beam for protection and promotion of Human Rights. Everyone in this country is expected to say with certainty that “I am a human being and whatever concerns humanity is of interest to me”, for it is essential not only to live one’s life but to live and respect others as well because it is exquisitely beautiful to all and one cannot afford to shatter the life of another. Sensitivity includes mutual respect and protection. That should be the barometer as well as stem of human life through established standard of training programs.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- ❖ To train students on Human Rights.
- ❖ To establish a just society.
- ❖ To train students to work for marginalized people and for their rights.
- ❖ To equip students as a Human Rights Defender.
- ❖ To establish a culture of peace and harmony in Indian society through Human Rights training program.
- ❖ To build Leaders for the society.

## **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

### **Group Activity**

Initially, before the commencement of the program, all the participants were asked to shuffle their seats and introduce oneself to another; They were also divided into several groups and participant A was asked to introduce participant B and vice versa.

The following are some of the expectations of the participants from the training program which came to light through several group activities:

- To learn more about Human Rights in depth and help people.
- To know about Human Rights in Religious studies.
- To accrue more information for writing civil exams.
- To get a clarity on the concept of Human Rights.
- To get knowledge about Human Rights and to explore new places.
- Some of the students had come with the vision of the occupation of composing text for publication and hence to enrich their knowledge through the lectures of the Resource Persons and their valued experiences.

- To mingle with different people and to create network with Social Workers and also with the Organizations which work towards social justice and promote peace and harmony in the society.
- For the application of Human Rights in society.
- To know about Human Rights in related to gender studies, for marginalized and poor people.
- To know violations, challenges in Human Rights through case studies.
- To work with the United Nations in the field of Human Rights.
- To enrich knowledge about the Human Rights for giving counseling to the people.
- To know Human Rights and its implementations in their respected area of study.
- To know about Human Rights to become an effective leader.
- To advocate for minorities.
- To become International Human Rights Defenders.

## Inaugural function

The HRRC, in collaboration with BIRDS and Indian Social Institute, organized International Human Rights Training Program on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2017, in order to bring adults as Human Rights Defenders and Educators and further promote the culture of Human Rights in the society and give the participants an exposure to United Nations. The Inaugural program started at 9am, with a Hindu Bhajan and continued with Islamic and Christian prayers. The gathering was welcomed by Br. Albert Xaviour, Executive Director of HRRC and BIRDS. The distinguished dignitaries, professors, participants, guests and press media were present in the Human Rights training program in order to bring peace with making unique changes in the society.

The program was graced by the arrival of the guests.

**Mr. Kees Schilder**, from Netherlands who is dedicated with a devotion to work for Tribal people's rights to adivasi groups, dalits, conflict resolution and peace building, was the right person to be called for Human Rights Education. He mainly spoke about equality and humanity. Human rights are not about academics, books, treaties but about being humans. The uniqueness of the human race is the capability of reasoning therefore all human beings is one. Human beings are inclined to see the differences by color, religion, ethnic identity, caste, class but if we go deeper and think and analyze, all are equal. One should realize that it is not the difference but uniqueness which is present in all. 'Human Rights' is the wake up call for humanity. Mr. Kees further stressed that peace should start at home and then should be extended to the society at large. He also advised



students to work persistently as the process of bringing changes in society and promoting harmony among the mass is a long term and a continued process, results tend to be discouraging at initial attempts but the attempts should continue without ceasing. He also highlighted the importance of prayers and meditation and further advised the maintenance of a spiritual life. Mr. Kees gave new insights to justice and promotion of peace in the society. His speech revealed the beauty of Human Rights and peace.

**Ms. Irom Sharmila** is a well-known social activist across the globe. Her sufferings, sacrifices, courage and commitments to bring justice in the society are commended and serve as a model for all. Madam highlighted on the fact that Human Rights is rather experienced than theoretically learnt; madam further compared the environment that she grew up in with the present scenario where mercy, kindness, humanity has lost its ground. Madam brought to light the act of injustice by the so called protectors of the nation through the misuse of the “Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act” (AFSPA), because of which many innocent lives were lost.

She spoke about her main motive behind hunger strike and also remembered her bitter experience in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu. She emphasized the social injustices which are prevailing in Indian society like non-entry in temples for backward castes, non-acceptance of people suffering from diseases like HIV aids, denial of the right to life of children born of illegitimate relationships and several other ugly and wretched social issues.

She said that the youths are the mirror, beauty and wonder of the society. One should understand the fact that all are born alone and depart alone. One should not stick in the belief pattern of the old generation which mainly emphasizes on discrimination and inequality. Being human is pointless unless one respects the other. She also encouraged youths to believe in themselves and fulfill their goals.

She finally expressed her gratitude towards the organizing committee for the honor she received.

**Fr. Dr. Selvaraj Arulnathan**, Director, Indian Social Institute, in his speech expressed his thirst to do something for the society. Indian Social Institute is working for social changes. He wished the participants for a fruitful learning and to practice it from the heart. Human Rights remind us of World War I and World War II, where millions of people died for no reason, whoever claims to be part of Human Rights should never harm anybody. Fr. Selvaraj shared his expertise in defending Human Rights in the worst violated places in South Asia like Sri Lanka and Bhutan. Politically, Human Rights violations in India include the devadasi system and the caste system, corrupt ideologies, prejudice about women and so on. He also rightly stated the conditions of the metropolitan cities where the so called educated crowd are still bound by the atrocious mentality of racism and further encouraged the crowd to subscribe not to violate Human Rights. The main role of Indian Social Institute is to defend the rights of the marginalized communities.

Fr. Selvaraj further appreciated Br. Albert Xaviour for organizing the Human Rights Training program through which many inputs on becoming successful agents of change were highlighted.

Everyone's speech on Human Rights training program was highly inspirational and set the tone and pace for the upcoming sessions. Certificates were given to guests by Br. Albert Xaviour, Executive Director, HRRC and BIRDS. The Inaugural program came to a closure with a message of thanks to all the guests, professors, press media and the participants.

### Session 1

**Resource person: Ms. Deepta Rao, Practicing Advocate**

**Topic: Domestic Violence**

**Ms. Deepta Rao**, is a practicing Advocate and was referred by Human Rights Commission to take a session on domestic violence which is a sensitive issue of gender studies. Predominately the whole session was about giving a new definition to violence against women. There is a constant tension in the society due to inapplicability of law. Hence she advised students to push themselves in making law more practicable and applicable in the society. The willingness of the people to make changes is significant in making law effective.

Practicing and implementing law has to go hand in hand and it also is a necessity to sensitize, train and educate it.

The beauty of Domestic Violence act in rescue of women and the legal aid were brought up in the session. The inputs and outputs of law were discussed with the students. Finally Ms. Rao concluded her session by emphasizing the importance of Social Media in promoting social justice. Her session brought to light the gap between the actual law and its applicability and the solutions to mend it.



### Session 2

**Resource person: Mr. Vasudeva Sharma, Executive Director, CRT, Bangalore**

**Topic: Children's Right**

**Mr. Vasudeva Sharma**, Executive Director, Child Rights Trust, member of KSCPCR (2009-12), Chairperson-CWC, at the outset explained the evolution of protection of children's rights in the scenario of India.

Below mentioned are some of the acts which were discussed with the participants along with their significance and applicability in real scenario.



- 1) United Nations Convention on Rights of Child (UN CRC), 1989
- 2) Juvenile Justice Act (JJA), 2015
- 3) National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR Act), 2005
- 4) The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2005
- 5) Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012
- 6) National Productivity Council (NPC), 2013

The role of police in filing the case is more significant and how police should mediate to solve the problem rather than filing the case against the accused is also brought into light. Due to POCSO act, 2012, children's sexual harassment came to public view. In this session the participants were taught the significance of the acts and articles related to protection of children's rights.

### Session 3

**Resource person: Dr. Ambrose Christy, Coordinator, South India NGOs,**  
**Topic: Human Rights Awareness for Peace**

**Dr. Ambrose Christy**, coordinator, South Indian NGOs, this session was all about Human rights awareness for peace. Dr. Christy pointed out the irony of the education system which is conditioning the mindsets of the students. A conditioned mind does not think whether others are right or wrong. It only takes decisions on the surface level. He further questioned the need to organize training programs on Human Rights and the need to protect it if it is considered universal. He aptly conveyed that violation is prevalent in the society hence there is an essence of training and education in this regard. He explained the features of India and its pluralism and diversity. He brought to light the picture of recent trends in the country of growing individualism, polarization of people/community, fundamentalism, shrinking secular spaces, more communal and religious violence, discrimination of minorities etc. He also explained a swift

shift in our value system that is from diversity to homogeneity, from peace to violence, from tolerance to intolerance, from love to hatred. If one does not accept and respect, favoritism will happen and it leads to violence. He correctly explained the root cause of violence and the ways to get rid of it.



## Group activity

Dr. Ambrose Christy organized a group activity for the participants to make collage on the topic “How can we create awareness on Human Rights to bring peace in our society?”

All the participants were asked to do a presentation in the form of a collage following mentioned themes:

- Defending Human Rights
- Educating Human Rights
- Promoting Human Rights
- Peace and Human Rights



All the presentations presented by the participants were moderated by Dr. Victor Paul on the parameters of content, innovation to convey message, participation, and collective work. One among the seven groups which did best presentation was awarded. The group activity was an enriching session through which new ideas were brought in to create awareness on Human Rights in our society.

## Session 4

**Resource person: Mr. Steve Rohan Rocha**

**Topic: Children’s Right**

This session had more audio visual effect as the resource person presented many of events and the conferences where the children from vulnerable groups like adivasi, dalit had spoken for their rights. The resource person gave a new dimension to Human Rights awareness. He emphasized the innovation which has to be done for the sensitization. He also mentioned some of the unique innovations brought in through his initiatives i.e. ‘Bell Bajao Aandolan’.

## Session 5

**Resource person: Mr. Subramanian, Secretary, SHRC, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**

**Topic: Powers and Functions of the State Human Rights Commission**

This session was conducted by Mr.Subramanian, Secretary of SHRC Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, who provided useful insights into the working of the NHRC & SHRC with major emphasis on the Human Rights act, 1993. He shared many of his experiences which enriched the

session and enhanced the understanding of the students regarding the ground realities. He also explained about the State and Central relations, division of powers in Human Rights.



### Session 6

**Resource person :Fr. Dr. Selvaraj Arulnathan SJ, Director, ISI Bangalore**

**Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights**



This session was on UDHR by Fr. Dr. Selvaraj Arulnathan SJ, Director, Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, explained how UDHR came into being and further gave an overview of the 30 articles. He gave a message to the audience and participants that,  
'Differences should be upheld and celebrated  
Discussions and discriminations are to be abolished  
Human Rights enlighten you and make you ready for action'.

### Session 7

**Resource person: Dr. Joans Richard A., Head, Department of Social Work, Kristu Jayanti College, Bangalore**

**Topic: Qualities of Human Rights Defender**

This session was needful for the participants which focused on the qualities of a Human Rights Defender. A short video clip was shown and a group task was assigned to all the participants on the topic 'Challenges and Qualities of Human Rights Defenders'.



### Group activity

After showing the video in session 6, a group task was given to the participants based on the video clip. The message conveyed by the resource person to the participants are as follows:

- One should not wait till they are victimized
- One should have the will to help and skill to help
- One should possess the will to do and skill to do
- Participation of all in the society.



## Session 8

**Resource person: Mr. Kiran Jeevan, Public Relations Officer, St. Joseph College, Bangalore**

### **Panel discussion**

This session was a panel discussion on “My responsibility in My Nation”. Mr. Kiran Jeevan, Public Relation Officer, St. Joseph College, Bangalore mentioned that we daily come across many disappointing fights, we can point towards that or can choose to be silent. There is a tendency in people to always blame the Government or someone else for the mistakes. India is diverse in nature. Diversity has become a threat in many scenarios.

He gave highlighted severe issues like girl education, open defecation, farmers’ suicide, ideological murder, institutional murders, child labor, environmental degradation, inequality, sexual harassment, corruption, starvation, malnutrition, castism and communalism, manual savaging etc. to students and told to select three among them and present it. This session was a

thought provoking one and filled the participants with new energy to contribute to nation and the will to take up the cause of being Human Rights Defenders.



## Session 9

**Resource person: Dr. Mathew Philip, Director, SICHREM, Bangalore**

**Topic: International Human Rights System and UPR**

The session was to engage the students on the inputs and insights into the working of the United Nations. Participants realized the will and courage they need to build in order to complete the tasks set before them.



## Session 10

**Resource person: Dr.Fr. Alwyn Prakash D'Souza, SJ, Head, Human Rights and training Unit, ISI, Bangalore**

**Topic: How can we become Human Rights Educators**

This session was the most required session for the participants after all the information and learning they received. He gave the message – “If your WHY is clear, you can find out any number of HOWs!” Following this session all the participants were divided into groups according to the college and region and they discussed on the future plan on how to be a Human Rights Educator in their respective fields. The last session consisted of presentations by each colleges and sharing the experience by all participants held under the guidance of Dr. CNN Raju, Director, United Religious Initiative, Bangalore.

The program concluded with a valedictory ceremony which was a reflection of the training so far with the Chief Guests and dignitaries.



## Conclusion

The training program was indeed a platform for the young minds and scholars in putting forward their thoughts, ideas and suggestions in regard to Human Rights education. It featured the best trainers, speakers and motivators in their respective expertise as the Resource Persons. The training program was apt of the young adults of today as they are the ones to lead the future just as Nelson Mandela rightly quoted “*The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow*”. The participants’ involvements were appreciable as every task and activities assigned to them were performed wholeheartedly and with interest. The organizers were undeniably successful in attaining the purpose for which it was initiated.



**BR. ALBERT XAVIOUR**

DIRECTOR

BIRDS-HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE CENTER, INDIA