

Volume No.: 1 February, 2013

ISSN 2320 -2696

# *Fiat Justitia*

*let justice be done....*



Estd. 1884

*Deccan Education Society's*  
**Navalmal Firodia Law College, Pune**

## *Fiat Justitia*

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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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~ Prof. (Dr.) T. S. N. Sastry\*

The Death of the 23-year-old Physiotherapy student is the most dreaded incident in the annals of the Karma Bhoomi, Bharat that is India. It is a shame to read in the Papers (Indian Express December 30, P.3) that own Father and Brother raped a Mumabi Girl more than a Year. Rape and other heinous crimes committed against women certainly bring in mindboggling questions need to be addressed; especially what is happening to the ethical, moral, and other behavioural pattern of man in India towards their counterparts.

A number of suggestions poured in including the preparations for an amendment of criminal law with a proposed legislation to Chemical Castration and probably 30 years of punishment, death penalty to rapists in rare cases like the present ones. These suggestions may bring in certain changes in the prevailing atmosphere, but a host of issues remains to be answered including the violation of human rights for such punishments. Would this type of stiff punishments bring in justice adequate justice for the victims? Such deterrence would weed away the crimes completely. Would they amplify respect for women? Would they promote the free exercise of their human rights? Will they bring in metamorphose in the emotional and behavioural patterns in male folk towards their counter parts? All the emotions and expressions or change in law may bring in some changes but may not transform the behavioural pattern of the male dominant society of India or increase respect towards womenfolk overnight. To develop a woman oriented society, apart from the changes in legal system, there is a need to re-look for correctional and behavioural prototype of males. Without looking for long standing correctional changes, simply amending the law as a response to the national outburst of sentiments in no way augment the rights of women in the longer run or crimes committed against their modesty be stopped successfully. To wipe out every tear in the eye's of women and to reap riches to freely exercise their guaranteed human rights on par with males in India the impartation of Human Rights Education at all levels of the society.

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## HUMAN RIGHTS

T. S. N. Sastry\*

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Human rights Education does not mean simply preaching the international legal principles or to embark on the provisions of the various legal instruments with hypocrisy by conducting seminars, conferences etc. Human Rights education simply means to impart the learning skills that develop the knowledge, skills, values, culture to equip people to tackle the issues plaguing the society. Many a times, human rights education especially in developing countries focus on economic, community development or with issues connected with reform in certain sectors. The real pedagogy of human rights education is individual centric and to bring in changes in knowledge, values, skills and behavioural pattern. Such impartation of knowledge of human rights would certainly enhance the skills in one's understanding about the problems in the society, accept the differences, and teaches how to acquire responsibility to defend the rights of others. In simple, human rights education not only imparts skills and value system, but also promotes mainly, how to live together without abusing the rights of others.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies, especially the UN High Commissioner drew a number of plans to oversee the impartation of Human Rights Education to all sections of people especially through education and mass based programmes as per the 1993 recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights . A great majority of developed countries introduced human rights education programme at different strata, especially in the educational sector. Over the years, a number of models have been developed to impart HRE at different levels. Among them, values and awareness, accountability, transformation, socio-psychological, conflict resolution and correctional behavioural patterns have occupied a centre-stage since many of them inculcate fostering and enhancing leadership qualities, personal empowerment to address the specific conflict ridden situation to evolve solutions specific to each society.

Coming to national scenario, the Government of India drew up an action plan during the regime of late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986 to impart knowledge on moral, ethical and social values through education to eliminate poverty and all other maladies. In 1992, N. Janardharan Reddy Committee approved the corrections suggested by Acharaya Ramamurthi committee in 1990 to the New Education Policy of India. The correctional policy further expanded the objectives of the original plan and included the inculcation of promotion of human rights of various sections of disadvantaged people, including the rights of women. The UGC also prepared a blue print for imparting Education on Human Rights and Duties at the Universities and Colleges in mid eighties to follow suit the National Policy on Education. The objectives include the promotion of

values of human rights and duties, to sensitize the citizens on the values and norms of human rights and to develop human rights research for the affective implementation of Human Rights Education.

In 1993, the Government of India enacted the Human Rights Act for the further promotion of Human rights in various fields. According to section 12 of the Act, it is one of the objectives of NHRC to promote human rights education to disseminate the perspectives of human rights and to equip the citizenry to desist all types of derogatory practices that hamper the growth and development of disadvantaged sections of the society. The National Commission for Women was established earlier to the NHRC in 1990 with an aim to promote women's rights in the country. Apart from the two, a number of other commissions are established over the years to promote the rights of various sections of disadvantaged people and to impart human rights education at different levels on different aspects. However, all these efforts could not transform in a massive scale to bring the expected change in promoting respect for women and mostly confined to few Universities or research organisations due to lack of active patronization by the stake holders, administrative and financial support from the state.

At this juncture, in response to the call of the Maharashtra State Human Right commission in mid of 2010 to impart human rights education in the State in a massive scale, the University of Pune introduced human rights education as a compulsory components for all Post Graduate students from the academic year 2011 studying in its campus. The University of Pune is first in the country to offer such a mass based programme to its students to achieve and promote the objectives of the social equality, values, and skills among the future generations of the country. In the years to come, the University plans to expand the programme to programme its affiliated colleges in both English and Marathi.

The continuing incidents of atrocities against women, certainly calls for an urgent need to equip human rights education both at formal and informal levels. At the formal level, programmes and courses need to be designed to impart the values and knowledge of human rights from elementary to University level compulsorily by employing values and accountability model. At the non-formal level, undertake awareness and transformational mass based programmes through seminars, conferences, workshops, advertisements, disturbing pamphlets, community education programmes. In both the models, the impartation need to be linked diverse issues to promote tolerance, conflict resolution, and problem oriented

aspects and be centred round the local, regional and national environment. A strict vigil is required to check the programmes on the Media especially, movies and TV shows, and other print media to stop any activity that adversely affects the modesty of women. In order to implement such a massive plan, the Ministry of Human Resources Development need to constitute a high power committee consists of Parliamentarians, judges, academicians, representatives of Media, Chairpersons of the National Commissions, and Non-governmental Organisations. The implementation of any scheme for the promotion of human rights education be entrusted to the National and State Human Rights Commissions.

Before imparting the human rights education, the teachers and trainers need to be well equipped with the correctional behavioural mechanism and able to equip the values, morals, and ethical practices to augment the rights of women and other disadvantaged sections of the polity. Without employing this basic ground norm, amending any law with exemplary punishment would only provide a temporary remedy or may satisfy the outburst of a civil society but cannot wipe out the miseries surrounding the free exercise of women's rights. Even the Justice Verma Committee in its report too advocated the women centric teaching of value based education system. In order to augment the ideals of the constitution to achieve Equality before law, the state and all sections of society need to serious retrospection for the impartation of human rights education without any inclination towards one-up-man ship to develop India as a robust country to meet the challenges of the twenty first century and its future generations.

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