

ROLE OF NGOS IN THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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Abstract

Today's men are divided by caste, creed, sector, race, religion, region, economy, education, policy and again within this division again divided by power and money, therefore, man as such is losing his place, and status. Given the situation individuality fails to find its fullest expression due to suppression and oppressions. Realizing the gravity of growing problems, the entire world joined hand together in developing human rights a social, legal as well as national and international concept, with great emphasis on awareness and education of human rights. Human rights being the birth right are therefore inherent in all individuals irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex and nationality. Because of their significance to human beings, human rights are sometimes referred to as fundamental rights, basic rights, inherent rights, natural rights and birth rights. Human rights are essential for all round development of the personality of the individuals in the society, be necessarily protected and be made available to all the individuals. They must be preserved, cherished and defended if peace and prosperity are to be achieved.

Globally, the champions of human rights have most often been citizens, not government officials. In particular, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have played a primary role in focusing the international community on human rights issues. NGOs monitor the actions of governments and pressure them to act according to human rights principles. This paper intends to explore the meaning of human rights, role of NGOs in protection of human rights.

Keywords: Human rights, NGOs, Protection

INTRODUCTION

'Human rights are not a privilege conferred by government. They are every human being's entitlement by virtue of humanity. The right to life does not depend, must not be contingent, on the pleasure of anyone else, not even a parent or sovereign...You must weep that your own government, at present, seems blind to this truth.-Mother Teresa

Universality and humanism are two essential characteristics of Indian culture. With passage of time, many changes have been brought by human beings, may be due to enormous changes in needs, wants, aspirations and desires. These changes have certainly created a materialistic culture worldwide. This in turn has disturbed the peace, harmony, love, brotherhood, belongingness, tolerance and non-violence. And it has generated unhealthy competition, selfish motives, fear, terror, violence, separation, casteism, and regionalism and so on. Thus today's men are divided by caste, creed, sector, race, religion, region, economy, education, policy and again within this division again divided by power and money, therefore, man as such is losing his place, and status. Given the situation individuality fails to find its fullest expression due to suppression and oppressions. Realizing the gravity of growing problems, the entire world joined hand together in developing human rights a social, legal as well as national and international concept, with great emphasis on awareness and education of human rights.

Human Rights: Meaning

Human rights are the most fundamental of all rights. These rights belong to each person of the world i.e. every man, woman and child. Without human rights it is not possible to live as a human being. Human rights are the basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity. Human rights are generally accepted principles of fairness and justice. Human rights affect the daily lives of each individual. People from all over the world with different religion, race, gender, languages shares the same human rights. Human rights treat every individual as a special or unique person. Human rights are for everybody. Through human rights, it is possible to live with each other and respect each other. Universal Declaration of Human Rights says, 'all members of the human family are created free and equal in dignity.'

Human beings are rational beings. They by virtue of their being human beings possess certain basic and inalienable rights which are commonly known as human rights. Human rights being the birth right are therefore inherent in all individuals irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex and nationality. Because of their significance to human beings, human rights are sometimes referred to as fundamental rights, basic rights, inherent rights, natural rights and birth rights.

The term "Human Rights" was first introduced in the United States Declaration of independence in 1776. The concept of human rights was first emerged after the World war-II. With the growing inter-conflicting interests and entailed discords it became necessary to recognize unanimously the rights of a human being for peaceful survival. The United Nations was created to protect future generations from the curse of war and to reiterate the belief in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and value of the human being, and in the equality of men and women. It was perhaps first time in the history of human beings that the identity of each and every human was considered meaningful. The term human rights are of recent origin, it was coined in 1947 by a committee appointed to draft the International Bill of Rights. There are certain groups of human beings which either by nature or because of deep rooted custom are weak and vulnerable, such as child, women, disabled persons, migrants' workers or persons belonging to a particular race. However they being human beings do possess human rights and fundamental freedoms. But their rights have been violated very frequently by the dominant

sections of the society. The movement of the under privileged and deprived sections for securing a place for themselves, under the auspices of the united nations has contributed a great deal in spreading the message of human rights.

Human rights are therefore those rights which belong to an individual as a consequence of being human. Human rights being essential for all round development of the personality of the individuals in the society, need to be necessarily protected and be made available to the individuals. They must be preserved, cherished and defended if peace and prosperity are to be achieved.

Agencies Promoted Human Rights

Many organisations around the world dedicate their efforts to protecting human rights and ending human rights abuses. Major human rights organisations maintain extensive websites documenting violations and calling for remedial action, both at a governmental and grass roots level. Globally, the champions of human rights have most often been citizens, not government officials. In particular, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have played a primary role in focusing the international community on human rights issues. NGOs monitor the actions of governments and pressure them to act according to human rights principles.

Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

The term “Non Governmental organization” or “NGO” was first formalized within the United Nations system in 1945 with its inclusion in Article 71 of the United Nations Charter. Non Governmental organizations, both national and international perform usefully their monitoring and implementation roles relating to human rights. The NGOs play important role to become a concrete expression of International, National, regional and Local voice to assist and stand up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Therefore, it is necessary for NGOs to be given new strength and resolve in their actions.

Role of NGOs

NGOs play a pivotal role in many fields, such as in prevention of HIV/AIDS to educate to teach and train vulnerable groups, child care, child exploitation, child labour, sex tourism, and providing counseling in number of matter including domestic disputes, subject relating to rights women and children and so on NGOs thus are playing a major role in pushing for sustainable development not only at International level but local and National level. Campaigning groups have been key driver of inter governmental negotiations, ranging from the regulations of hazardous wastes to a global ban on land mines and the elimination of slavery. Thus NGOs supplement the efforts made by government. Local NGOs reach the grass root level and provide relief to disaster affected people.

Functions of NGOs

The following are the functions of NGOs:

a) *Information Gathering, Evaluation and Dissemination*

One of the most important functions performed by NGOs engaged in human rights work is that of monitoring the behaviour of the state and of other power elites of gathering, evaluating and disseminating information and, in the process, exposing human rights violations. NGOs provide information to their own constituencies, their governments and the mass media. They also provide information to inter governmental organisations charged with human rights responsibilities. With respect to information, it is important to recognize that NGOs are often in a better position than government agencies both to collect and to assess information with respect to the observance of economic, social and cultural rights at the grassroots.

b) *Advocacy to Stop Abuses and Secure Redress*

“Advocacy” as a legal term, means pleading on behalf of someone else. For a human rights organisation, advocacy may mean speaking out for the voiceless and, in this fashion, it entails expanding and making more visible what may be only a latent conflict. Every NGO are work towards the realization of this function.

c) *Legal Aid, Scientific Expertise and Humanitarian Assistance*

Legal aid refers to a range of law related activities engagement of legal defense, provision of co-counsel, filing writs of *habeas corpus*, *filing amicus curiae* briefs, sending legally trained foreign-national observers to public trials. In recent years, another type of related expert assistance has been provided to victims by NGOs i.e, expertise which derives from the scientific community. Thus, forensic scientists have helped in identifying bodies buried in mass graves, physicians and other health workers have provided treatment to torture victims.

d) *Legislation to Incorporate or Develop Human rights standards*

NGOs recognize that law on the books is not law in fact-that law must be implemented, not merely drafted nonetheless, substantial efforts have been devoted to bringing national legislation into conformity with international human rights standards. Thus, NGOs are often engaged in drafting legislative proposals, preparing position papers on pending legislation, and testifying before parliamentary or other government committees.

e) *Education, Conscientization of Empowerment*

NGOs have come to realize that people cannot defend their rights unless they know their rights. Only through education and Conscientization can NGOs combat the status quo in which large groups at the base of society are effectively excluded from political participation in decisions so fundamentally affecting their lives, including resource allocation, the choice of technology, and the development model. NGOs are engaged in developing new methodologies, especially for teaching the illiterate, including street theater, comic books, poster competitions, folk music, films, videos and games. The educational efforts have also been heavily directed towards developing self-reliance, as with participatory research, skills development.

f) *Delivery of Services*

This function is rather different from the others. It involves less protection from state power and more helping, often in collaboration with the state, to realize economic, social and cultural rights, and sometimes civil and political ones. Many governments have come to realize that NGOs are better able to deliver service than government authorities. This may pertain to such things as reaching victims in disaster relief, assistance to refugee populations, providing skills training for under privileged groups, offering legal aid to those who cannot afford it.

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