



EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

The present-day conception of human rights has historical roots. Rousseau, Socrates, and Plato in the West, and Manu, Vyasadeva, Gandhi, Aurobindo, and others in India have enunciated doctrine of human rights. Schools are places where it is theoretically possible to operate a community based on social justice and human rights. Schooling not only provides basic education but also aids a child to explore the world and express their thoughts. Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) are didactic areas that add basically to our capability to live together in communities, in countries and nationwide. The aim of EDC/HRE is the establishment of sustainable and participative forms of democracy based on respect for human rights and good governance. As such, it is an ongoing venture for producing societies characterized by human rights principles like inclusion, non-discrimination, participation, and the rule of law. The National Curriculum Framework for primary and secondary education (NCERT 1988) identifies and addresses some of these concerns such as promoting values of egalitarianism, democracy, secularism, equality, removal of social barriers, and creating a sense of common citizenship. It proposes that the school curriculum reflects some world issues and helps make children become aware of and appreciate different world cultures. Hence, this study sought to explore the concepts of Human Rights Education and Education for Democratic Citizenship, its curriculum as framed by the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT 2000), and Teaching of Human Rights and Democratic citizenship through Co-curricular Activities.

Keywords: Human Rights Education, Education for Democratic Citizenship, Curriculum, Co-Curricular Activities and Teacher



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1.1 Introduction:

“You have to be the change you want to see in the world”. “To safeguard democracy the people must have a keen sense of independence, self-respect, and their oneness.” “The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within. In true democracy every man and woman is taught to think for himself or herself”. **Mahatma Gandhi**

Over the past few years many developing and the developed countries has faced many challenges to sustaining democracy across a diverse range of culture, countries and political
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traditions. There is the alarming need for active, informed citizens who will sustain democracy and the future of their democracy rests with educating the young. The promotion of democratic citizenship and human rights in the education system is vital for all countries. From awareness of both rights and responsibilities to mounting critical thinking, such competencies need to be endlessly developed and promoted. Education for human rights and fundamental freedoms are therefore important in order to create a democratic society which must be guaranteed to all new generations from pre-school age onwards

Democracy and human rights can be cultured and internalized through experiences in the classrooms, schools, families and communities. Therefore, a democratic climate should be provided in the schools for teaching and nonteaching staff, parents and community leaders etc.

1.2 Human Rights Education:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights embodies a set of guarantees enabling one

1. not just to live but to live with dignity;
2. to develop fully and use one's human qualities, intelligence, talents, and conscience; and
3. to satisfy one's physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs.

The Declaration states that respect for human rights is the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." The Declaration has influenced the constitutions and legal systems of various countries. Many other declarations followed this issue at the International Congress on Human Rights (Teheran, 1968), the International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights (Vienna, 1978) organized by UNESCO, the Seminar on the Teaching of Human Rights (Geneva, 1988), and the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), which suggested the adoption of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004).

Article 26.2 of the UDHR states the role of educators in achieving the social order called for by the declaration:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. — *Article 26.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

1.3 Education for Democratic Citizenship

Although citizenship is a concept that has been discussed over the time since Plato and Aristotle, recently, especially after the 1990's, it has been given a renewed attention. The education for democratic citizenship has the mission to form and develop for the individual, abilities of active participation in public life, from participation in the voting process, to specific interventions as to influence political decision, to protection and promotion of his own rights or to express a responsible behavior in the society (Velea, 2004). It has its own identity and operational content resulting from the integration of the three general terms: education-citizenship-democracy. EDC stands for learning a democratic behavior by a diversity of experiences and societal practices. It is a system of educational practices and eternal learning situations destined to teach persons, groups and communities about the suitable way of actively participating in the community life.

Changes occurring in the contemporary world generated new issues in terms of education, based on a number of values seen as priorities: communication, participation, responsibility, morality, democracy, tolerance, cooperation etc. Theoretical developments of these issues and the practical undertakings they arise and support are conveyed by means of expressions such as: *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (EDC). The education for democratic citizenship stands for the base of respecting freedom, peace and justice, helping the creation of an ambiance of understanding, tolerance and true equity in terms of dignity and law observance (Engle & Ochoa, 1988). It therefore serves the duty to train the active citizen participating in the democratic act and close to democratic values and principles.

1.4 Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human rights Education: The Association

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) are didactic areas that add basically to our capability to live together in communities, in countries and nationwide. As the Council of Europe (2010), states "Human Rights Education" as education, training and information which is aimed at building a universal culture of human rights whereas "Education for democratic citizenship" focuses on educational practices and activities designed to prepare young people and adults to play an active part in democratic life and exercise their rights and responsibilities in society.

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are closely interrelated and mutually supportive. They differ in focus and range rather than in goals and

practices. Education for democratic citizenship focuses primarily on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation- civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural spheres of society, while human rights education is apprehensive with the broader scale of human rights and basic freedoms in every aspect of people's lives.

The link between democracy and human rights is captured in article 21(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states:

"[t]he will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures."

The World Conference on Human Rights calls on all States and institutions to include human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and rule of law as subjects in curricula of all learning institutions in formal and non- formal settings. Human rights education should include peace, democracy, development and social justice, as set forth in international and regional human rights instruments, in order to achieve common understanding and awareness with a view to strengthening universal commitment to human rights. — *Paragraph 79 and 80, section 2 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*

The importance of having a policy main concern combining education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) was an attribute of a recent European study, *Strategic Support for Decision Makers: Policy tool for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights* (Kerr et al., 2010). It emphasized the call for clear regulations to underline the importance of EDC/HRE within education policies, and the allocation of resources to close the gap between policy development and implementation.

Democracy provides the innate setting for the protection and effective understanding of human rights. These values are alive in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and further developed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which enshrines a host of political rights and civil liberties supporting meaningful democracies. The values of freedom, respect for human rights and the principle of holding periodic and genuine elections by universal suffrage are essential elements of democracy.

A good number young people grow up with the wisdom of life lessons such as concern, care, harmony, responsibility and integrity all the way through daily engagement with families, friends, schools and community institutions. The aim of EDC/HRE is the establishment of sustainable and participative forms of democracy based on admiration for

human rights and good governance. As such, it is an ongoing venture for producing societies characterized by human rights principles like inclusion, non-discrimination, sharing, and the rule of law.

Human rights and democracy are inextricably linked. A justly democratic society is one in which all human rights are cherished and protected.

The democratic concepts such as the rule of law, non-discrimination and worldwide suffrage that promote human rights. The fundamental principles are realised through democratic institutions such as an self-governing judiciary, a free and responsible press, a civilian government etc. The state and the international community also has an important role to play in reducing the violence, poverty and insecurity that threaten the free and complete exercise of democracy and human rights. Thus, dealing with pressure to democracy without compromising human rights or democratic processes will always keep on to be a major challenge for all democracies.

1.5 Human Rights Education, Education for Democratic Citizenship and the School

In the education of active, democratic citizenship a number of integrated resources play role; yet amongst all, school deserves particular care. The school must be seen as a community where teachers and students take part together in long term actions and hopefully attractive, striking, useful, generating pleasure, and allied with life. The school should be able to work toward building a closer relationship between itself and the community. The school is a model of good society as John Dewey (1909) suggested. Schools are places where it is theoretically possible to operate a community based on social justice and human rights. The setting of a school should encourage release expression of views and dialogue between students and teachers.

The school helps to create an educational base for teaching the historical development of human rights and their existing significance. Apart from providing basic education it also aids a child to explore the world and express their thoughts. Introducing human rights education in primary and secondary schooling implies that the school becomes a symbol of human rights learning and practice. Teachers are therefore, the main depositories of the curriculum, who play a key role in reaching this aim.

1.6 Human Rights Education, Education for Democratic Citizenship and the Curriculum

The first National Curriculum Framework formulated by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 1975 states: "The awakening of social consciousness, the development of democratic values and of a feeling for social injustice and national integration are extremely important.... All subjects should be taught in such a manner so as to foster the spirit of scientific humanism."

The National Curriculum Framework for primary and secondary education (NCERT 1988) identifies and addresses its concerns by promoting values of egalitarianism, democracy, secularism, equality, removal of social barriers, and creating a sense of common citizenship. It proposes that the school curriculum reflects some world issues and helps make children become aware of and appreciate different world cultures.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT 2000) reaffirms the 10 core components identified in the National Policy on Education (1986):

1. the history of India's freedom movement;
2. Constitutional obligations;
3. the content essential to nurture national identity;
4. India's common cultural heritage;
5. egalitarianism;
6. democracy and secularism;
7. equality of the sexes;
8. protection of the environment;
9. removal of social barriers;
10. observance of small-family norms; and
11. inculcation of scientific temper.

Human rights should pervade the whole school from its philosophy and organization to the content of its curriculum. A pragmatic curriculum would be well placed to help foster civic-mindedness and political consciousness among the citizens, thus enabling them to fully participate in the country's democracy (Jotia, 2011). Human rights education for younger children could emphasize the development of self-esteem and empathy and a classroom culture supportive of human rights principles.

On the other hand, the more open approaches aim to teach students how to understand and develop their own participatory abilities in both school and community contexts, generating learning opportunities through debate and discussion, project work, and, in general, a wide range of participatory experiences. Such designs are mainly based on the idea of the democratic school (Dewey 1978). The project presented by the Spanish Education Reform—Ley Orgánica de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia 1990)— Its approach theoretically to converts the formal education system into a school of citizenship designed to respond to the challenges of the new era with a formal teaching system based on knowledge, procedures, attitudes, and values. The key concepts were: the basic principles of democratic operation; rights, duties, and responsibilities; human rights; participation; diversity and tolerance; conflict and resolution; social groups; sociopolitical organizations; and the defense and recovery of the ecological balance. It proposes a cross-curricular treatment of contemporary problems and concerns like education for peace, education for diversity and equal opportunities, environmental education, and education about the media, to deal with during class time in order to raise citizen awareness and open up new channels of action and social improvement.

The first Croatian Citizenship Education Curriculum (CEC) defines the communities to which the student belongs on three levels: (1) *the immediate community* (classroom, school and the local community); (2) *the national community* (the state), and (3) *the European and global communities*. The student is understood as the citizen, who is the bearer of certain rights and responsibilities in each of these communities. Accordingly, it aims at gradually prepare the student as an active and responsible citizen of the classroom, school and the local community. In its 1st cycle, the student acquires knowledge, develops skills and learns the values of personal dignity, human rights, equality and the rule of law; democratic decision-making and governance; socially desirable behaviour, including team work, peaceful conflict resolution and solidarity; (inter)cultural (self)awareness, sensitivity and dialogue; socially responsible economy and entrepreneurship, consumer protection; sustainable development.

1.7 Teacher's Role in Human Rights Education and Education for Democratic Citizenship:

Education on human rights and their basic values is debatably of fundamental importance for enabling children to be familiar with human rights and that they are not just appropriate to those suffering in distant war-ravaged or hunger ridden countries but are equal and undeniable principles that belong to everyone by virtue of their common humanity. Teachers, therefore, need to become more at ease and confident about teaching on human rights values and principles. The change is only possible, through equipping the next generation with the facts, ideals, and skills necessary to contribute to the building of a broader culture and society that is reverent of human rights.

Teachers can best bring human rights lively in their classrooms through examples they use, questions they raise, through active discussion, critical thinking and expression, project-based work and enriching field trips. Teachers are challenged with figuring out how to present human rights in an approach that is having an important effect and empowering for their students. Hence, information of democracy, its approval and the ensuing willingness to promote tolerance, pluralism, democratic participation, and human rights in daily life are core tasks of education at school reaching far beyond Politics as a single subject.

Schools are places where democratic ideals such as equality, freedom and justice are instilled in individuals. Therefore, teachers need to have not simply an understanding of democratic society, ideals, behaviour and attitudes but also need to exercise this knowledge and understanding in the classroom. However only theoretical information about democracy would not work out in the long term.

However, teachers need to be fluent and able to put them into practice in different settings. They include different forms:

1. Presenting learners with concrete problems to resolve or make a decision on, and
 - o encouraging them to generalize from these to other situations rather than by starting from abstract concepts;
2. They should actively encourage learners to learn by doing, rather than by preaching
3. They should design learning activities more or less like real situations of life of the school or college, the community or the wider world;
4. They need to collaboratively employ group-work and co-operative learning;
5. teaching through discussion and debate should be encouraged for more interactions;

6. encourage learners to think for themselves, their opinions and views and skills of argument should be developed;
7. They should allow learners to contribute to their own learning, by suggesting them the topics for discussion and by assessing their own learning and that of their peers.

Hence, it suggests that teachers' beliefs, thoughts and decisions on educational matters engage the major part of the teaching context and process. There is a need of deeper understanding of Democratic Citizenship Education and for that teacher training institutions need to work towards democratization of their pedagogy.

Conclusion:

To democratize education there is need to start by designing and developing a curricula that will reinforce democratic habits ad ideals. Human rights, conflict resolutions, and social roles and responsibilities should also be part of the content. Children and young people may possibly not be old enough to vote in elections or take a seat on juries, but they have rights and duties and they are free to have a say. EDC/HRE teaches them the skills they need for school and family life, at the same time as giving them knowledge for the future. Democracy deficits, fragile institutions and underprivileged leadership are among the key challenges to the efficient recognition of human rights. Therefore In transitional democracies and countries emerging from conflicts, we just need to build a strong and autonomous judiciary, a delegate, competent and responsible parliament, a free and effective national human rights institution, and a lively civil society.

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