

## **Human Rights and Social Justice: A Study on the Contemporary Scenarios in India.**

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### **Abstract:**

Holistic Education is nothing with the values and preachings of Human Rights. It is must for the students to understand the persistence and resilience regarding the fluidity of human rights and principles. It does not stick with one propaganda and it is diversified with access to various other areas as well. These dynamics of adequacies relate to the levels of attribution in freedom of speech, expression, social justice, gender equality, religion, health and tolerances. In the fundamental pedagogy of higher education, it is very much important to emphasise the dignity and respect for human rights in higher education to strengthen the impact of supporting and developing human responsibility and personality. It connects with the interdisciplinary fields of studies to enhance the ability to understand the concept of potentialities in education and the purpose of how it transmits worldly affairs overseas in the norms of mainstream areas. This kind of Holistic Education will help the students understand the basic requirements through roots and nooks and corners of widely distributed ideas.

**Keywords:** Human Rights, Social Justice, Gender Equality, Higher Education, Holistic Education.

### **Introduction:**

Human Rights is the basic harmony which helps in need for every individual to choose the right path in their life. It evaluates the responsibility and determination of human kind in analyzing their compassion and empathy in various situations. According to the recent news in "The Wire", it mentions that,

"Arguably, the most important global document on education is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), adopted by the United Nations in 1966. India became a signatory in 1979. Under this instrument, the most significant one concerning education is Article 13." (Pramod K Nayar)

"Article 13 states:

*The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."* (Pramod K Nayar)

"Turning to higher education, the document under 2(c) declares:

*Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;*

And 2(e) calls for:

*The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved."* (Pramod K Nayar)

Higher Education in India, especially in this twenty-first century, denotes not only the secondary or tertiary level of education but also the other educational categories such as colleges, universities, institutions for additional courses, training courses and many more. The era of learning only the book based contents and improving or gaining knowledge has been changing for a very long time. We are in a period where education is just about acquiring marks but also understanding the importance of existence and attaining other kinds of wisdom as well. It includes Holistic Education, human rights, mental health and other health awareness, gender equality, sustainable living ways, climate change, social justice and other criteria. In a keynote, higher education actually tunes the mentality of any student to take direction and flow in the field of their growth and development. It helps to enhance their skills and succeed in life in all aspects.

### Importance of Mental Health in Higher Education:

Mental Health Awareness in Higher education should pave the way for students to enhance the habitual outcomes of learning and unlearning things from different angles of life. Students are supposed to navigate their way of thinking through multiculturalism and multilingualism for their effective growth. Interculturalism may provide the areas of understanding students' welfare from their social, cultural and economical backgrounds which can help the teachers to broaden their knowledge in different aspects. Yet, the growth of the students life does not stop by just acquiring various streams of wisdom. That's when social justice plays its vital role in providing psychological background study on children. It's necessary to communicate with the students and understand their needs and deeds. Some children are expressive whereas some might not be very expressive. It depends upon their upbringing and it affects their behavioral upheavals. In the recent study article of "The Indian Express" expresses that

"The number of deaths by suicide by students saw an increase of 4.5 per cent in 2021, the latest data from the National Crime Records Bureau show. Maharashtra had the highest student deaths by suicide in 2021 with 1,834 deaths, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 1,308, and Tamil Nadu with 1,246 deaths." (Tushar Verma)

"In 2020, as many as 12,526 students died by suicide, while in 2021 the number rose to 13,089. Between 2017 and 2019, student suicides made up 7.40 per cent to 7.60 per cent of the total suicides in the country. This increased to 8.20 per cent in 2020 and reduced only marginally to 8 per cent in 2021." (Tushar Verma)

"However, the report does state that out of the 10,732 youngsters under the age of 18 years, who died by suicide, 864 were because of 'failure in examination.'" The largest cause of suicide in this age group (of under 18 years) was "family problems." " (Tushar Verma)

The Indian EXPRESS

**STUDENT SUICIDES OVER FIVE YEARS**

YEAR	Total Student Suicides	Percent of male student suicides	Percent of female student suicides
2017	9,905	59.71%	47.56%
2018	10,159	52.85%	47.15%
2019	10,335	53.82%	46.17%
2020	12,526	55.62%	44.38%
2021	13,089	56.51%	43.49%

Graphics by Abhishek Mitra

(Image Courtesy: The Indian Express)

Mental Health reflects in diverse areas where the students from different places go through in different ways. The impact on the welfare of the students depends on the time of pre and post covid periods. It also originates from the privileges, societal influences, economical conditions, parental relationships and marginalization of their life. Sometimes it happens because of the discrimination and differentiation due to situations. Mental Health affects even because of the peer pressure faced by the students for various reasons. The background study on the students shows the majority and minority groups they belong to and how their survival is the other point to get note on the progress of their mind. There are several strategies that can be followed in understanding and diversifying the ability and growth of the children but the first thing is to provide mental health awareness and to assure them that everything works well in their own pace and space. It is necessary to have a proper

counselling session to give assistance and assurance on the mental health care of the children. It's in the hands of the government, institutions, teachers and parents to bring out the nomenclature of importance in the study of mental health, which is that actual social justice that will be provided to the students for their welfare.

### **Gender Equality is the main norm in Higher Education:**

Living in the era of the twenty-first century, still many people do not make any attempt to understand the lives of LGBTQIA+ community people and it's high time that everyone needs more awareness regarding them and their community by accepting the fact that they belong to the Indian Culture. According to the reports and research of "Human Rights Watch" says that,



(Image Courtesy : Human Rights Watch)

"India's Supreme Court decriminalized same-sex conduct in 2018 by striking down a colonial-era sodomy law."

"In 2020, the central government published the draft Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules and sought comments from civil society."

"As a result of that process, the rules, which were published in October 2020, removed the medical requirement and also instructed local governments to institute transgender welfare boards."

"The Delhi Child Rights Commission in 2021 recommended a ban on medically unnecessary "normalizing" surgeries on children born with intersex variations. This follows the southern state of Tamil Nadu banning such operations in 2019 after a court upheld the right to informed consent for intersex children. Notably, the Delhi Medical Council supported the rights of intersex children."

"In June 2021, the Madras High Court issued guidelines for the safety of LGBT and intersex people, including by preventing harassment by state authorities."

"In September 2021, a petition in the Delhi High Court sought the right of same-sex couples to marry under the Hindu Marriage Act. The matter was pending at time of writing."

"In October 2021, India's National Medical Commission ordered publishers and medical schools to edit their textbooks and curricula to exclude discriminatory and unscientific portrayals of LGBT and intersex people."

It is mandatory to include in the students curriculum about the awareness pride community to provide necessary information for their welfare. Yet, the most significant part to get noticed is that the growth of women and adequate statistical measures shows the inequality that happens in workspace or higher education irrespective of their success and growth proves that we need more systematic gender equity studies in the Higher Education curriculum. This involves the betterment of gender orientation, equity based lifestyle, broad minded cultural hegemonies and other forms that are in the necessity to normalise the lifestyle of humankind. Empathy and Compassion plays a vital role in this space than narrow mindedness. This examines the structure of the empowerment of anyone who identifies their gender in whatever criteria they belong to and they can enhance their skills to the future generations.

### **Importance of Holistic Education in India:**

Holistic Education is the best way to empower students by providing value-based insights in their curriculum. There is a prejudice against Holistic education that it makes people have a certain narrow minded belief system but it enhances the social circumstances that are in need for the students to understand the transformations.

"According to the report published by the National Survey of India, the Literacy Rate of India in 2022 is 77.7 % with Kerala as the most literate state in India( 96.2%) and Andhra Pradesh the lowest (67.35%)." (Tarin Hussain)

It doesn't matter whether the state is illiterate or literate, people do not choose to follow humanity these days. Even the highest literacy in India, Kerala, lacks in the basic requirements of humanistic behaviour by indulging in cannibalism, and other superstitious beliefs which end up in the catastrophic world. For instance, the recent incidents that happened in Kerala, 2022. According to the reports of "The Indian Express",

"The key accused in the case of killing of two women in Kerala, purportedly as part of a "human sacrifice for financial prosperity", is a sexual pervert and psychopath who is suspected to have eaten flesh of one of the victims." (Shaju Philip)

According to the recent news from "The Quint",

"Sharon Raj (23), who died under mysterious circumstances on 25 October, is found to have been poisoned by his girlfriend in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram, since he was unwilling to end the relationship." Even "the case has seen several twists including a suicide attempt and superstitions." (Smitha TK)

Belief System is acceptable only to a certain extent but when it exceeds the limit, it will end up in delusion. Such as, the Burari deaths that happened in 2018 which was a massive ritual suicide by the whole family in Delhi.



(Image Courtesy : Google)

The reason for upbringing Holistic education in higher education is to standardise the purpose of humanity and social behaviours with virtue and mannerisms. According to the recent reports of "The New Indian Express",

"The purpose of holistic education is not only to prepare students for academic success but also to enable them to learn the challenges of living as a whole. It is more than the whole student's education and addresses the broadest development of the entire person at the cognitive and affective levels." (Dr. Subhas Sarkar)

"Holistic education prepares a student for lifelong learning. The educational focus moves toward the life skills, attitudes, and personal awareness the student will need in an increasingly complex world. The holistic approach to education develops a learner's social and academic maturity to accept life's challenges, build their understanding, and learn from their errors." (Dr. Subhas Sarkar)

"Further, NEP 2020 has a vision that will lead the students to return to their society and pay back to their society, parents, village, district, state, and nation." (Dr. Subhas Sarkar)

"In this context, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that a Holistic education system is vital for national transformation." (Dr. Subhas Sarkar)

"Therefore, "Holistic Education is the Soul of National Education Policy 2020." " (Dr. Subhas Sarkar)

Human Rights and Social Justice have a magnificent role in Holistic Higher Education and with the required transformation, education with Holistic attributes can bring out the change in the society.

### **Sunmation:**

The need to reiterate the values of Human Rights and Social Justice in this contemporary society is in high demand, especially with the students of higher education. The rising intolerance and indifference towards other breathing organisms as cited in the main article shows dire need to understand beyond differences and barriers. Providing holistic education and necessary changes in the existing educational environment can help the teachers and students to enhance the habitual outcomes by shaping their goals and minds. According to the article from "The Wire",

"We should welcome the full diversity of humanity's cultural resources into education and extend from valuing diversity and pluralism to supporting and sustaining them. Teaching should focus on

unlearning bias, prejudice and divisiveness. Empathy – the ability to attend to others and feel with them – is essential for building pedagogies of solidarity." (Pramod K Nayar)

"The sustained emphasis on education as a common or public good is welcome and has been part of India's public discourse too. And this emphasis is not about basic education alone if we are to think of a larger scope for the 'right to education'." (Pramod K Nayar)

"When human rights norms become mainstreamed into the curriculum and pedagogy, the training imparted in keeping with the above principles, the transformative potential of higher education is realised and "students would be transformed in that they would gain significant skills and knowledge, the capacity for critical reasoning and an understanding of themselves". (Pramod K Nayar)

The importance of human rights and social justice in this contemporary scenario in India will definitely bring out the massive change among the people by focusing on their welfare and multiple development of the human personality and their immense growth in future for sure.

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