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Need of Human Rights Education for Children

Dr. Anshu Tripathi

Associate Professor, Dept. of Teacher Education, K.S. Saket PG College, Ayodhya, UP, India

ABSTRACT: Human rights education is defined as the learning process that builds up the required knowledge, values, and proficiency of human rights which the objective is to develop an acceptable human rights culture. This type of learning teaches students to examine their experiences from the human rights point of view enabling them to integrate these concepts into their values and decision-making. According to Amnesty International, human rights education is a way to empower people so that they can create skills and behavior that would promote dignity and equality within the community, society, and all over the world. Children's rights education is the teaching and practice of children's rights in schools, educational programmes or institutions, as informed by and consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. When fully implemented, a children's rights education program consists of both a curriculum to teach children their human rights, and framework to operate the school in a manner that respects children's rights. Articles 29 and 42 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child require children to be educated about their rights.

In addition to meeting legal obligations of the Convention to spread awareness of children's rights to children and to adults, teaching children about their rights has the benefits of improving their awareness of rights in general, making them more respectful of other people's rights, and empowering them to take action in support of other people's rights. Early programs to teach children about their rights, in Belgium, Canada, India, England and New Zealand have provided evidence of this. Children's rights in schools were taught and practiced as an ethos of 'liberating the child' well before the UN Convention was written, and that this practice helped to inform the values and philosophy of the Convention, the IBE and UNESCO, though sadly these practices, and this history are not really acknowledged or built-upon by the UN. This is one reason that children's rights have not become a foundation of schools despite 100 years of struggle.

KEYWORDS: human, children, education, rights, need, awareness, schools, programmes, teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

Children's human rights education refers to education and educational practices in schools and educational institutions that are consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is a form of education that takes seriously the view that children are bearers of human rights, that children are citizens in their own right, that schools and educational institutions are learning communities where children learn (or fail to learn) the values and practices of human rights and citizenship, and that educating children about their own basic human rights is a legal obligation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children's rights education is education where the rights of the child, as described in the Convention, is taught and practiced in individual classrooms. But in its most developed form, children's rights are taught and practiced in a systematic and comprehensive way across grade levels, across the school, and across school districts. With full-blown children's rights education, children's rights are not simply an addition to a particular subject or classroom. Rather, the rights of the child are incorporated into the school curricula, teaching practices, and teaching materials across subjects and grade levels and are the centerpiece of school mission statements, behavior codes, and school policies and practices.[11]

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Fully developed children's rights education means that all members of the school community receive education on the rights of the child. The Convention serves as a values framework for the life and functioning of the school or educational institution and for efforts to promote a more positive school climate and school culture for learning.[1]

A core belief in children's rights education is that when children learn about their own basic human rights, this learning serves as an important foundation for their understanding and support of human rights more broadly.

Children's rights education in schools has value because it fulfills the obligations of countries to respect the rights of the child and implement the provisions of the Convention. But beyond the fulfillment of a legal obligation, children's rights education has value for children. Felisa Tibbitts has suggested that child rights education can be expected to affect learners in three ways. First is in the providing of basic information and knowledge on the nature of rights and the specific rights that children are to enjoy. Children can be expected to have a more accurate and deeper understanding of rights. Second is in attitudes, values, and behaviors consistent with the understanding of rights. Children can be expected to have greater respect for the rights of others as shown in their attitudes and behaviors. Third is in empowering children to take action in support of the rights of others. Tibbitts refers to this as the 'transformational model' of rights education. Children here are more likely to take a stand in preventing or redressing human rights abuses. An example would be to support a victim of bullying and stand up against a bully in the school playground.

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Research by Katherine Covell and R. Brian Howe shows evidence of the above effects.[1][2][3] Compared to children who have not received children's rights education, children who have received children's rights education are more likely to have an accurate and adult-like understanding of rights, to understand that rights and responsibilities are related, and to display socially responsible behaviors in support of the rights of others.

II. DISCUSSION

The earliest reported evaluation of a child rights education project was that of the initiative in Bruges.[5] Involving children ages 3 to 12, the primary focus of the evaluation was on the students' social behavior. Gains in social understanding, respectful behaviors, concern for others, and pro-social action were the key observed changes. For example, the children became more interested in social justice and rights-related issues such as peace, war, injustice, and hunger. And they wanted to discuss the rights of marginalized children – those living with disabilities, in institutions, and of ethnic minority status.

Similar outcomes were found in evaluations of the effects of children's rights education in Cape Breton schools. Evaluations conducted on students in grades 6 and 8 (ages 12 and 14 years) showed improved classroom climate, engagement, and behavior.[1][2] At the grade 6 level differences were found in children's understanding of rights, their acceptance of minority children, and their perceived levels of peer and teacher support. Teachers reported improved behavior and more positive classroom climate. In addition at the grade 8 level, children in rights-based classes showed increases in their self-esteem. Similar child-initiated projects to those reported from Bruges were seen also. For example, at one school upon realizing that not every child in the area was assured their right to nutritious food, the students initiated a breakfast program by obtaining cooperation and donations from the local community. In a different school, the class decided to work at a local food bank to help children whose families were unable to provide sufficient nutritious food.[4,5]

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Anecdotal data from the teachers who used the grade 12 curriculum described how engaged their students were in the activities, and noted improvements in their students' appreciation of global problems, and of the complexity and importance of respecting human rights. Students who had participated in the project completed a survey. The results showed them to be three times more likely than their peers to understand humanitarian assistance for children in difficult circumstances as a fundamental human right.

The most comprehensive evaluation data are of the Hampshire RRR initiative. Annual assessments over six years were conducted to assess the effects of the RRR. Included were children ages 4 – 14. Children and teachers in schools where RRR had been fully implemented were compared with those in demographically equivalent schools without RRR. These comparisons showed the following effects of RRR. Across ages, children showed a greater understanding of rights and their relation to responsibilities, increased levels of self-regulation, confidence, effort and motivation, participation and engagement in school, and achievement. These cognitive and attitudinal changes were reflected in significant improvements in behaviors. Children were reported by both their classroom teachers and the school principal to be more respectful, cooperative, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of other children. Incidents of bullying were reduced dramatically with disagreements being resolved using the discourse of rights rather than through physical or verbal aggression.[6,7]

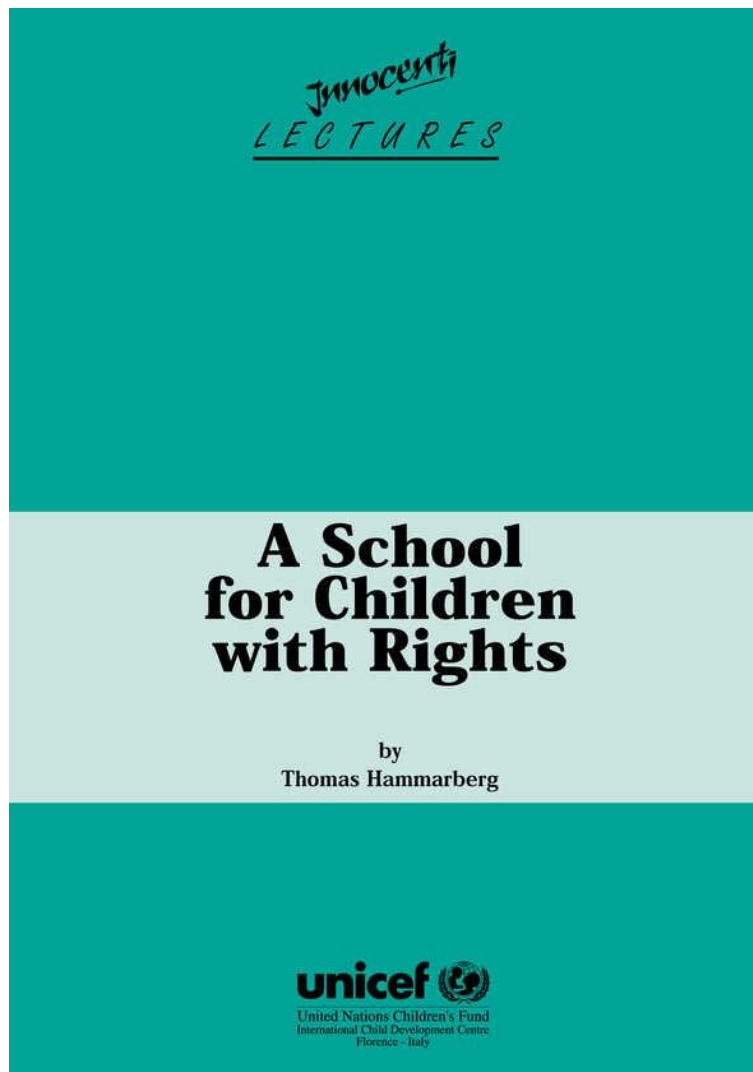
Teaching in RRR schools also led to changes in the teachers. School administrators noted significant changes in teachers use of democratic teaching and positive classroom management, and in less confrontational dealings with their students. Teachers were listening to children and taking their views into account. And the greater the level of student engagement and participation, the more teachers showed gains in a sense of personal achievement and significant decreases in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

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Among all the positive findings of the evaluation of the RRR, the most intriguing was that at each time of measure the most disadvantaged school showed the greatest positive changes. Improvements in engagement, behavior and academic achievement were remarkable, and have been attributed to how the RRR transformed the culture of the school. The evidence suggests that schools that are fully consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child can mediate the effects of a challenging environment of rearing and help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers.[8]

The right to education has been recognized as a human right in a number of international conventions, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which recognizes a right to free, compulsory primary education for all, an obligation to develop secondary education accessible to all, in particular by the progressive introduction of free secondary education, as well as an obligation to develop equitable access to higher education, ideally by the progressive introduction of free higher education.

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IV. RESULTS

In 147 countries around the world, UNICEF works to provide learning opportunities that prepare children and adolescents with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT, 2009

- It is an important legislation in the field of education. It has come into force with effect from 01/04/2010.
- Now education upto elementary level has become a fundamental right of every child aging 6-14 yrs.



Key areas of our work in education include:

- Access: Gender-equitable access to quality education from early childhood to adolescence, including for children with disabilities, marginalized children and those living in humanitarian and emergency settings.
- Learning and skills: Quality learning outcomes and skills development that come from strong education systems and innovative solutions.
- Emergencies and fragile contexts: Improved learning and protection for children in emergencies and on the move.
- The lesson of the learning crisis is clear: Business as usual is not improving learning outcomes. A new, more radical approach that focuses on enhancing learning is long overdue and forms the basis of UNICEF's global education strategy. [9]

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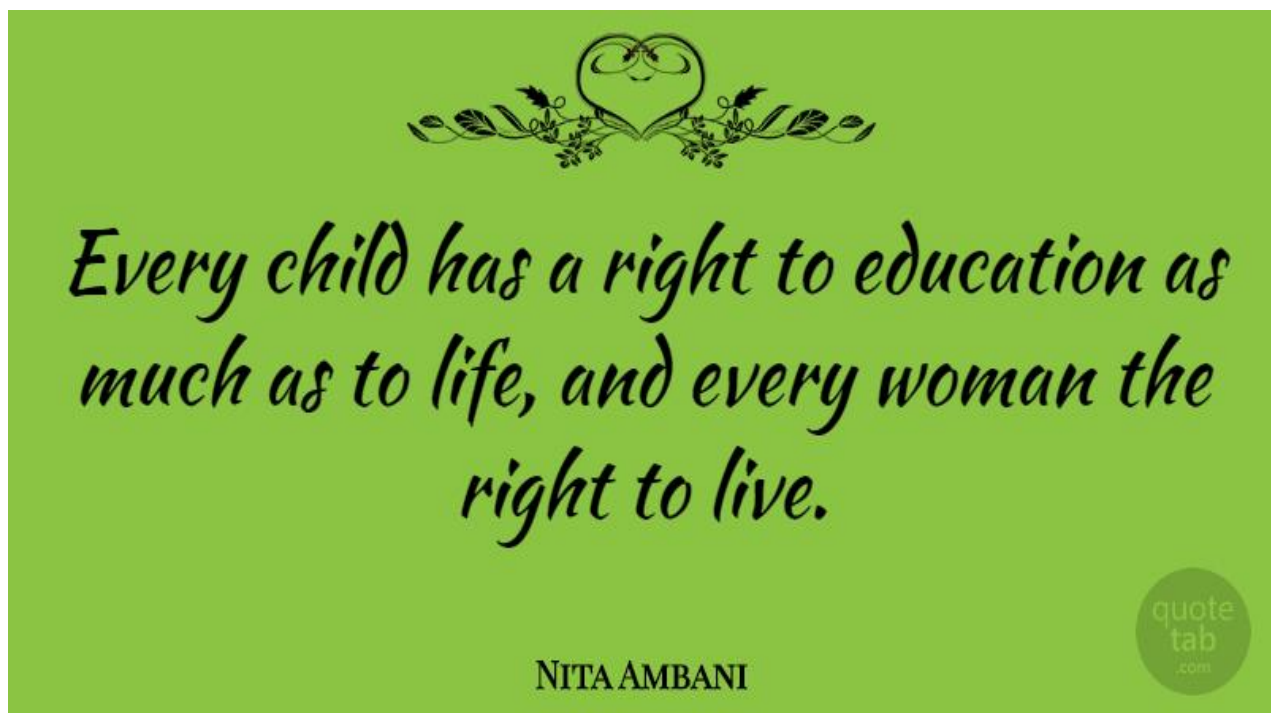
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To build a world in which every child learns, UNICEF will increasingly promote equity and inclusion. This includes making targeted efforts for children who are excluded on the basis of gender, disability, poverty, ethnicity and language, as well as those who are displaced or affected by emergencies.

School is the foremost fountain of knowledge children are exposed to. It gives a chance for them to acquire knowledge on various fields of education such as people, literature, history, mathematics, politics, and other numerous subjects. This contributes to cultivation in the thought process. When one is exposed to the influences coming from various cultural sources, his/her on world and existence becomes vast.



School is the first avenue of socialising for a child. Up till then, parents and immediate family members are the only people the child has human interactions with. And familiarity is a breeding ground of stagnancy. With schools, children are exposed not only to new ideas but also to same aged compatriots. This instills sociable practices such as empathy, friendship, participation, assistance which turn out to be important in their adulthood.[10,11]

A child, after conception, goes through various physical development. While home provides a restricted outlet, in school, a child can channelise his energy into more sociable avenues. Studies have pointed out that while in familiar environment, the child is equipped to deal with sudden bursts of energy, the learns to be at his/her best behaviour only when exposed to same-aged individuals. Plus, familiarity leads to taking advantage of situations, while in school, the playing field is levelled. Also, the presence of activities such as sports, craft help children direct their boundless energy into something productive.

Earlier, schools were considered as places to learn events in history chapter, solve tough mathematical problems or recite poems and sonnets. In the current educational scenario, a child learns to go beyond the traditional way of rote learning. They are taught to develop a mind of their own and through the flexible curriculum, curiosity is promoted. The child is freed from the shackles of mental blocks and lets his/her imagination run its course. Importance of

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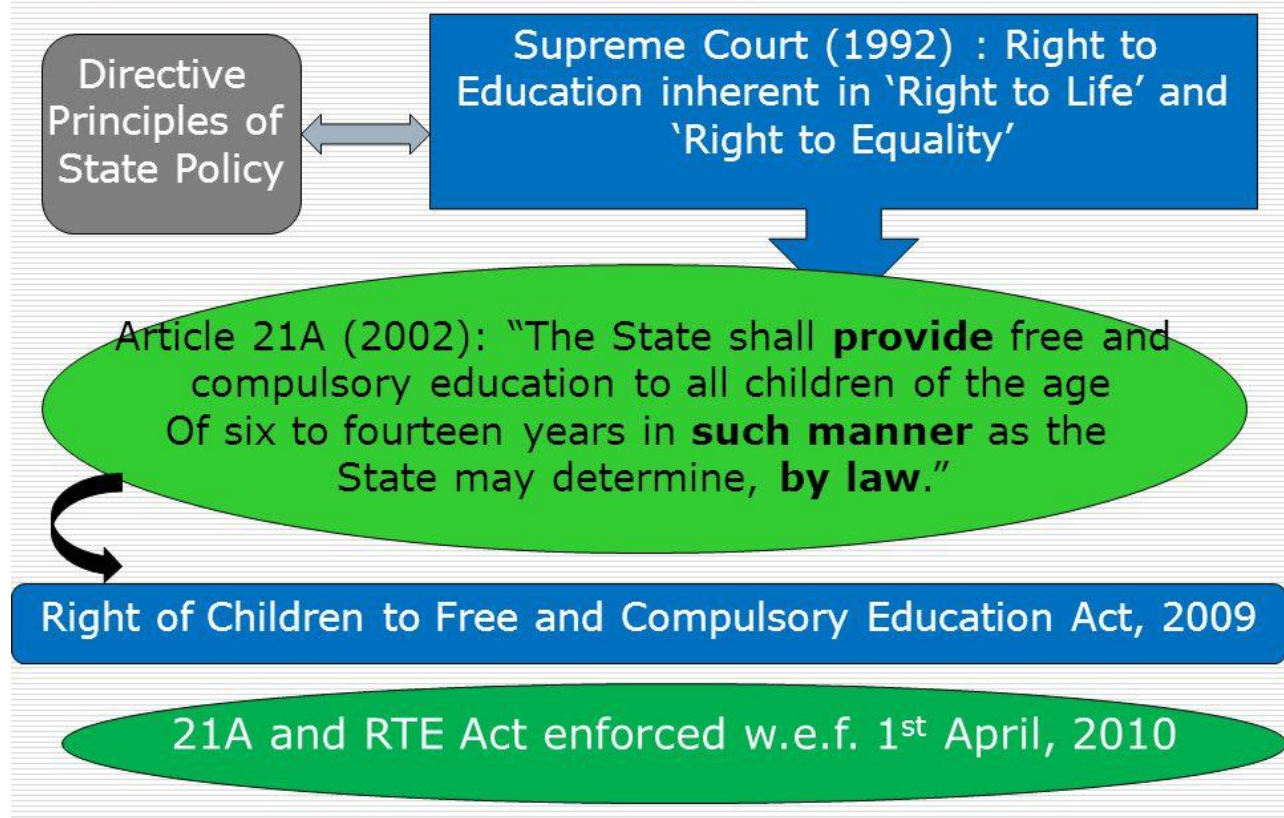
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imagination is stressed upon extensively. Play enactments and an encompassing curriculum lead to a well-developed cognitive system.

Education a Fundamental Right : India



Life is also about learning, apart from living. While we can learn to a certain extent from our parents, they tend to be unilateral. At school, children are exposed to various sources from whom they can imbibe immense knowledge, instrumental for their development. Hence school is necessary for children to inculcate the workings of life” Education forms the foundation of any society. It is responsible for the economic, social, and political growth and development of society in general. The thread of the growth of society depends upon the quality of education that is being imparted. So schools play an important role in moulding a nation’s future by facilitating all round development of its future citizens.[12,13]

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Government has taken up various steps and has launched various schemes for encouraging the education of children like- Samagra Shiksha which is prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes Mid-day meal With a view to enhancing enrolment,

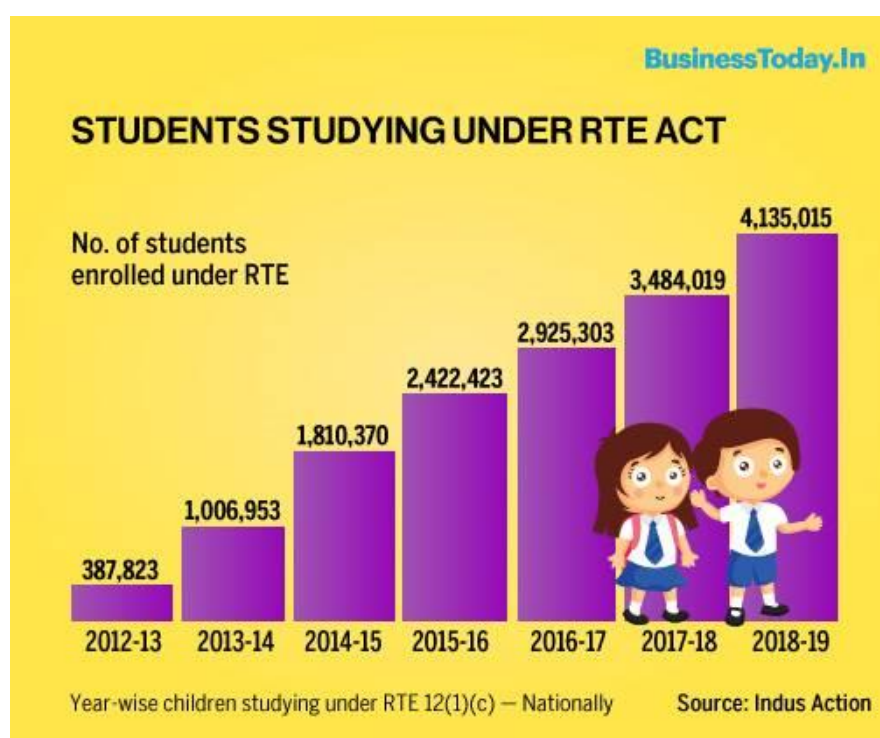
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retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children government aided primary school was to be served a prepared Mid-Day Meal. Scheme for Infrastructure Development in Minority Institutes facilitates education of minorities by augmenting and strengthening school infrastructure in Minority Institutions in order to expand facilities for formal education to children of minority communities.



Right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school. It clarifies that 'compulsory education' means an obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. 'Free' means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. It makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age-appropriate class. It provides for appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications. It prohibits physical punishment and mental harassment, screening procedures for admission of children, capitation fee, private tuition by teachers and running of schools without recognition.[14,15]

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