

## Topic#1

### INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS:

Human rights are like armour: they protect you; they are like rules, because they tell you how you can behave; and they are like judges, because you can appeal to them. They are abstract – like emotions; and like emotions, they belong to everyone and they exist no matter what happens. Like time, they treat us all in the same way – rich and poor, old and young, white and black, tall and short.

### Literal Meaning of the Terms:

**HUMAN:** belonging to or relating to people, Homo sapiens

- The term man has traditionally referred to humans in general, or humankind.

**RIGHT:** A right is a power or privilege to which a person has a just claim.

- That to which a person has a just or lawful claim.
- That which is morally or socially correct or just; fair treatment.
- A moral or legal entitlement to have or do something.



### DEFINING HUMAN RIGHTS:

A human right is a right that you have simply because you are a human.

The United Nations defines Human Rights as those rights, which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings(United Nations, 1987)

Human rights are commonly understood as **inalienable**( can't be taken away)**fundamental** (basic, essential) rights to which a person is **inherently** (natural or basic part of human life) entitled simply because she or he is a human being.

Simply we can say that human rights are our basic rights as we are human beings and these cannot be taken away from us.

### The concept of human rights :

Human rights can be considered from different viewpoints and may be conceptualized on **two levels**.

On one hand these are a set of legal and formal articles demanding political commitment both at national and international levels. For example the conventions, fundamental rights in constitution etc which are implemented by the States. The concerned states (countries) must implement these documents and laws to ensure the safety of the people's lives and their property.

On the other hand, these are a set of social and cultural values, present in democratic and human societies/communities, such as tolerance, respect for dignity, truth and peace. Every country / state/ society has its own way of living that decides the do's and don'ts for every member. In this regard, the systems of values vary from society(country) to society and even among people who belong to the same community.

### **CATEGORIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS:**

Civil – the right as a citizen, as a member of society

Political – the right to vote, to freedom of speech and to obtain information

Economic – the right to participate in an economy that benefits all; and to desirable work

Social – the right to education, health care, food, clothing, shelter and social security

Cultural – the right to freedom of religion, and to speak the language, and to practice the culture of one's choice

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN RIGHTS:**

**Universal:** The human rights are the same for all people everywhere – men and women, young and old, rich and poor, regardless of our background, where we live, what we think or what we believe.

They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life.

**Inalienable:** Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. Human rights belong to all human beings as a birthright and cannot be taken, sold or transferred to someone else from a person under any situation

In particular circumstances some – though not all – may be suspended or restricted. For example, if someone is found guilty of a crime, his or her liberty can be taken away (even in that case the prisoners have their own rights); or in times of national emergency, a government may declare or impose a curfew restricting freedom of movement. The people giving up their right as a trade-off in exchange for personal security as they think that the government must provide.

**Indivisible:** Refers to the equal importance of each human rights law. Human Rights are not capable of being divided as all human rights have equal status, and cannot be positioned as "less important" or "nonessential." Social and economic rights (education and job) are equally important as civil, political and cultural rights (freedom to follow one's own religion)

**Interdependent:** Human rights are interdependent and interrelated. The fulfilment of one right often depends, wholly or in part, upon the fulfilment of others. For example, your ability to participate in your government is directly affected by your right to express yourself, to get an education, and even to obtain the necessities of life. the violation of one right will often affect several other rights.

## NEGATIVE VS POSITIVE RIGHTS:

Philosophers and political theorists make a distinction between **negative** and **positive** rights.

- A **negative** right is a right that protects individuals from another person/group/state interference with their liberties.
- Negative rights permit or oblige inaction.
- A negative right is your right not to be interfered with. For example,
  - ✓ Freedom of movement and residence.
  - ✓ Freedom of religion and thought.
  - ✓ Freedom of opinion and expression.
  - ✓ Freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
  
- A **positive** right is a right to be subjected to an action of another person/group/ the state ; positive rights permit or oblige action.
- A positive right is your right to receive goods or services; for example
  - ✓ The right to an adequate standard of living.
  - ✓ The right to education.
  - ✓ The right to take part in cultural and scientific activities.