
UNIT 11 HUMAN RIGHTS AND CULTURE FOR PEACE

Structure

11.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

11.2 Defining Human Rights

11.3 The Origins and Historical Development of Human Rights

11.4 Culture of Peace

11.5 Evolution of the Concept

11.6 Eight Action Areas for Creating a Culture of Peace

11.7 Summary

11.8 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

11.1 INTRODUCTION

While the 20th century was undoubtedly a century of unimaginable breakthroughs, especially in the areas of science and technology, regrettably, it was also a most horrific one - with two world wars, the holocaust and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Perhaps the greatest positive outcome of World War II was the birth of the United Nations in April 1945 and the signing of its Charter by 50 countries; because it was in this Charter, that for the first time references were made to human rights. Soon after, in November 1945, the UNESCO was established to ensure that there would never again be another world war. Its goal was to achieve peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture in order to further the universal respect for human rights and justice as proclaimed in the UN Charter. It was in 1989 that the UNESCO came up with the concept of a 'Culture of Peace', indicating that the world must make a shift from a Culture of War to a Culture of Peace. Culture of Peace is the most recent development in the field of peace education.

In this Unit, we will briefly look at the origins of Human Rights, some historically influential and well known human rights documents leading to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). A culture of human rights is now growing throughout the world, with governments taking important steps to place it on their national agenda. However, even though human rights are protected and guaranteed by law and government policy, ensuring that they are upheld, can only happen if the common people- civil society- is well educated on this subject. Hence the need for human rights education is very important. Hand in hand with this, is the understanding of how peace begins in the heart of the individual, what are the barriers to peace and the 8 action areas for creating a culture of peace.

Aims and Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to know

- Evolution of human rights
- Our basic and fundamental rights
- Importance of human rights education
- Meaning of culture and true peace, and how as individuals we can contribute to creating a peaceful world.

11.2 DEFINING HUMAN RIGHTS

What are Human Rights? Human rights are, literally, the rights that one has, simply because one is a human being. These are basic and inherent rights with which a person is born in the world and these are equal and inalienable rights. Human dignity is the quintessence of human rights. The concept of human rights is based on the respect for the inherent dignity and fundamental worth of the individual which is at the very depth of all human life leaving aside all artificial man-made divisions based on colour, race, sex, religion, etc. Human rights are *equal* rights, they are also *inalienable* rights and as members of the species of *Homo sapiens*, they are also *universal* rights.

Basic and Fundamental rights

Basic human rights are the ones without which it would be impossible to live, such as the right to food, water, shelter and basic medical care. Fundamental rights are those which allow us to be citizens and participate in our society such as having the right to freedom of speech.

Traditional views limited human rights to civil and political rights. Included amongst these are the right to life, liberty and security; the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, social class or political opinion; the right to vote; freedom of movement; freedom of speech and freedom of the press; the right to be free from arbitrary invasion of privacy within family and home and legal rights such as the right to due process of law.

It has been acknowledged that this set of rights is far too limited in scope and that a more multi-dimensional and holistic approach must be taken. Such an approach includes not only the basic civil and political rights noted above, but also essential social, economic and cultural rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to education; the right to work and to equal pay for equal work; and the right of minorities to practice and enjoy their own cultures, languages and religions.

Of particular importance is the protection and advancement of the rights of disadvantaged and minority groups, including women, the elderly, children and indigenous peoples. The United Nations has adopted a holistic approach in broadening the scope of human rights, and the international community has repeatedly affirmed the interdependence of both sets of rights.

11.3 THE ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

‘Human rights’ is a modern term, but the principle it evokes is age old, ever since the creation of humanity. It stemmed from the conscience of visionaries, philosophers, peace lovers and humankind in general. These were people who dreamt of an equitable world in which all people can enjoy basic and inherent rights simply because they belong to the human race. Some of these visions emerged out of religious beliefs, feeling of brotherhood, compassion and still others emerged as a result of indignation on seeing injustice being inflicted on women, children, war victims, slavery, genocide and ethnic cleansing. Initially these claims had no legal basis and were considered to be moral claims. In due course these rights were formally recognised and protected by law. Often they were incorporated in the constitution in the form of a Bill of Rights.

“One can trace these ideals in the ancient Indian *Vedic* texts, the *Puranas* and the *Epics*. The *Rig Veda* talks about the three civil liberties- *Tana* (body), *Skridhi* (dwelling, house) and *Jibazi* (life). The *Arthasastra*, the greatest political treatise gives details of civil and legal rights. It states that “the king shall provide the orphan, the aged, the infirm, the afflicted and helpless with maintenance. He shall also provide subsistence to the helpless expectant mothers and also to the children they give birth to”. The *Manusmriti*, *Mahabharatha* and *Arthasastra* also focus on the conduct of war- when a war should and should not be fought, as it was one major cause of human rights violations in ancient India. Furthermore, the underlying principle of *vasudaiva kudumbakam* propounded the concept of universal equality” (Mr.D.R.Kaarthikeyan, *Human Rights and Societies in Transition*, pp.363- 364).

More than 2500 years ago the teachings Gautama Buddha expounded were truly revolutionary and egalitarian. In his *Lotus Sutra* he reveals “At the start I took a vow, hoping to make all persons equal to me, without any distinction between us”. His teachings were expounded for the happiness of all people with no discrimination based on social position, power, wealth or gender- in fact he was the first to include women in the Buddhist sangha.

In the West, one of the first examples of a codification of laws concerning individual rights is the **tablet of Hammurabi**. Hammurabi was a Babylonian king who lived about four thousand years ago. The Codes of law he established offered fair wages, protection of property, proportionate punishment and justice, standards on how to live and treat each other. The 282 laws he created became a precedent to the laws that later evolved in the West. However, the Codes were not exhaustive. For instance they did not spell out how they treat their enemies- the Assyrians, nor did it touch upon freedom of beliefs and religion.

A distinctive contribution to modern human rights thinking was made by Ancient Greece- the cradle of Western civilisation. The Greek concept of **natural law**, were laws that reflected the natural order of the universe. The idea behind natural law is that the source of authoritative moral principles, by which we judge people’s actions and society’s laws, is not God or the supernatural but nature. At the same time there was no denying the influence of Greek gods who they believed controlled nature. The idea of natural rights continued in Ancient Rome, where it evolved a little more into the belief that natural rights belonged to every person, whether they were a Roman citizen or not. However these

doctrines concerned mainly the duties rather than the rights of man and they also legitimised slavery and serfdom hence they were lacking in freedom and equality rights.

The next fundamental philosophy of human rights arose from the idea of **positive law**. **Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)** was the first to argue that human beings have rights because they are human beings and that right to life is an inherent right. Positive law is the idea that law and human rights come from the state. Hobbes and his contemporary Jeremy Bentham believed in centralising an absolute political power, therefore under positive law, instead of human rights being absolute, they can be given, taken away, and modified by the state or society to suit its needs.

John Locke (1632-1704)

The positive law view was changed to include the idea that the state's law stemmed from a constitution, the legal framework of the society. Locke's three main arguments were – all human beings have natural rights to life, liberty and property; governments are formed by people to realise these natural rights and to ensure protection of them from criminals; citizens should be empowered to revolt or overthrow the government in case it failed in its task to protect them, abused its powers or if it violated natural rights. This became the underlying idea behind the American and French revolutions and the subsequent American Declaration of Independence.

Magna Carta (1215)

The Magna Carta, a document written in 1215, meaning Great Charter was the first document forced onto an English King by some rich barons and land owners in an attempt to limit his powers by law and protect their privileges. King John's treasury had been exhausted in all the wars and Crusades he had been fighting, especially in the Middle East. When he asked the nobles and wealthy land-owners for money, they agreed on the condition that he sign a document with various rights like, recognition of their property rights as owners of vast tracts of land; rights to move freely throughout England for the purpose of trade and commerce and just legal proceedings. Again, these rights were limited in scope as they protected the rights of only a certain class of people. However, the Magna Carta influenced many constitutional documents, including the United States Constitution.

The English Bill of Rights (1689)

This was written in 1689 during the reign of the Protestant King William when he overthrew the Catholic King James II who had ruled as an absolute monarch. The principal clauses in this document were that monarchy was henceforth illegal and that there should be an elected parliament to advise the king; freedom of speech and debates within parliament, and the right not to be inflicted with cruel and unusual punishments for those convicted of crime. About 100 years later, these rights were to impress and influence George Mason in writing the Virginia Declaration Rights which in turn strongly influenced Thomas Jefferson in writing the Declaration of Independence (1776) and later when James Madison drafted the U.S Bill of Rights in 1789, he too relied heavily on George Mason's views.

The American Charters of Freedom

Two very impressive documents of human rights are the **U.S. Declaration of Independence** (1776), and The U.S Constitution and its first ten amendments, which constitute the **Bill of Rights** (1789 and 1791). The Declaration of Independence from England was drafted

by Thomas Jefferson between June 11 and June 28, 1776 wherein he set forth a list of grievances against the King of England in order to justify the breaking of ties between the colonies and the mother country (England). It famously proclaims, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed” (The Declaration of Independence, adopted July 4, 1776). However, The Declaration of Independence was a political proclamation without a legal binding in American courts. It is the American Bill of Rights, with its reference to the first ten amendments to the American Constitution that carries legal weight.

French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789)

Close on the heels of the successful American Revolution, the French activists and dissidents began the French Revolution against the monarchical regime of Louis XVI in 1789. The French revolutionaries began addressing everyone including the King as “Citizen”. The French Declaration was issued in the same year as the American document and has basically the same rights as the U.S. Constitution. Its most notable feature is its repeated insistence on the right of equality. Its title itself specifies that it is not just for French citizens, but for everyone. The very first article declares that “men are born free and equal in rights”. It also insists that taxes “be assessed equally on all citizens in proportion to their means”. The two documents have a lot in common as they proclaim fundamental freedoms, the right to security, and rights to a trial with fair processes.

The UN Charter and the United Nations

The first half of the twentieth century was wrought with unimaginable suffering, brutality and cruelty. The century began with the First World War; in its aftermath was born an international body, the **League of Nations**, in 1919, to promote international cooperation, achieve peace and security and to prevent the outbreak of another war. However, the League of Nations ceased its activities after failing to prevent the Second World War. The magnitude of violence and mass destruction especially by the holocaust and atomic bombings shocked the international community so much as to “outrage the conscience of mankind”. Determined postwar visionaries set out to champion the cause of International Human Rights, most notable amongst them being Eleanor Roosevelt. As a result, representatives of 50 countries met in San Francisco in 1945 and drew up a **United Nations Charter** which was deliberated upon and signed on 26 June 1945. The **United Nations** officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when the Charter had been ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, UK, and USA and by a majority of other signatories. Since then, each year on 24 October United Nations Day is celebrated. It was in this Charter’s preamble that for the first time human rights was clearly stated- “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small”. So historically we can see that the term “human rights” came into wide use after World War II replacing the earlier phrase “natural rights” from the Greco-Roman concept.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted and proclaimed in the third General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Thereafter, **December 10th** became known as **International Human Rights Day**. The document

consists of a preamble and thirty articles, setting out in detail a broad range of individual freedoms and fundamental rights which all men and women, everywhere in the world, are entitled, without any distinction. It was the first official international recognition that all human beings have fundamental rights and freedoms, and the first time that the rights and freedoms of individuals had ever been set forth in such detail. Among others, these include civil and political rights such as the right not to be subjected to torture, to equality before the law, to a fair trial, to freedom of movement, to asylum and to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion and expression. The rights outlined in the UDHR also include economic, social and cultural rights such as the right to food, clothing, housing and medical care, to social security, to work, to equal pay for equal work, to form trade unions and to education.

The drafting of the UDHR involved representatives from all regions and notable amongst them is Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. As First Lady to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, she was already an internationally respected and well admired lady. As Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights, she was its most influential member and her work on the UDHR will forever remain her greatest legacy to mankind.

The UDHR was followed by two Covenants in 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The three together constitute the **International Bill of Rights**.

The UDHR was originally intended as a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations”, and considered ‘soft law’, i.e. a resolution without binding force. Nonetheless it has over the past fifty years become a living document for customary international law, and all governments are now bound to apply its principles. Both the above stated Covenants were signed and ratified by India in 1979 thereby binding India to observe these standards and providing its citizens with these rights.

However, the “International accords and the resulting structure of human rights law are not in themselves sufficient to bring about any tangible improvements in the lives of individuals whose rights are being infringed. The tragic reality of human rights violations and abuses can be found everywhere; the spirit of the UDHR has yet to become a reality for people around the world in equal measure (Daisaku Ikeda, 1998 Peace Proposal, p.33). Hence the urgent need for human rights education. (See: www.unhchr.ch/udhr/ Learn more at www.knowyourrights2008.org)

The Constitution of India

Post-independence, the new government of India framed and adopted its Constitution on November 26, 1949. In keeping with the UDHR, it guarantees the basic freedoms as Fundamental Rights in Part III of the Constitution under the headings- Right to equality, Right to Freedom, Right against exploitation, Right to freedom of religion, Cultural and educational rights, Right to Constitutional remedies, Right to privacy, etc. The Constitution also abolishes the practice of untouchability. The Part IV of the Constitution, called the Directive Principles of State Policy state principles which are aimed at the welfare of citizens based on justice in social, political and economic life. For example, equal work for equal pay for both men and women, free and compulsory education, uplift of Dalits, etc. The Directive Principles are not legally binding, but serve as a moral guidance to the government and promote socio-economic justice.

Human Rights Education

Human rights education is an integral part of the right to education and is increasingly

gaining recognition as a human right in itself. Knowledge of rights and freedoms is considered a fundamental tool to guarantee respect for the rights of all. Organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Education Associates promote human rights education with their programmes believing *“that learning about human rights is the first step toward respecting, promoting and defending those rights”*. Human rights education is vital to building a universal culture of human rights. As a follow-up to the Decade for Human Rights Education (1995 – 2004), the United Nations initiated a World Programme for Human Rights Education in January 2005. This is an ongoing programme in which during the first phase of 2005- 2009 it focuses on the primary and secondary school systems with concrete strategies and practical ideas for implementing human rights education nationally.

Human rights education can be defined as education, training and information aiming at building a universal culture of human rights through sharing knowledge, imparting skills and moulding attitudes to: the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; the promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, ethnic, religious groups; and the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law. Human rights education is, therefore, an action-oriented process.

11.4 CULTURE OF PEACE

The twentieth century was truly an era of endless tragedy with the two World Wars, the holocaust, and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And in the ten years following the end of the Cold War in 1989, more than fifty states were engaged in violent conflict, division or independence in which an estimated four million lives were lost. Truly it was a century of mass slaughter and mega deaths. The old concept of peace was- an absence of war- or, the stillness between wars when no particular war was being waged, although of course preparations were being made for the next war. As part of the global effort to transform the age-old “culture of war” into a new “culture of peace”, the United Nations declared 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace, and designated the first decade of the 21st century (2001- 2010) the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World.

Definition

What is ‘Culture’ and the ‘Culture of Peace’?

Culture comes from the same root as ‘cultivate’, meaning to grow or develop. Culture is the sum total of a people’s way of life, their world views, their spiritual and religious beliefs, history and collective memory, arts, language and literature, social institutions, social and personal relations. Culture is the way in which we realise our humanity, our commonalities and human differences. Virtually every aspect of our lives is influenced by the cultures in which they lived. People themselves devise and develop their cultures. The culture of war has been devised and developed by human beings, and so it is human beings who have to devise and develop a culture of peace.

As stated in the United Nations definition, a Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes and solving problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations. It is interesting to note that “culture” is defined in the broad anthropological sense and not in the popular sense of music, dance and other arts.

11.5 EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT

The concept of a ‘culture of peace’ was formulated at the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men, held in Ivory Coast, Africa in 1989. The idea to use the term was inspired by an educational initiative called *Cultura de paz* developed in Peru in 1986, and by the Seville Statement on Violence adopted by scientists from around the world, which stated that war is not a fatality determined by genes, violent brains, human nature or instincts, but is rather a social invention. Therefore, the same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace’. If war is not in our genes, where does it come from and why has it recurred so persistently throughout history? The answer is in our culture. Over the course of history, we humans have developed a culture that permits and encourages war and violence- a culture of war.

To understand what is meant by a culture of peace we need to first discuss the differences between the culture of war and the culture of peace. History has shown that cultural encounters have not always been peaceful. Attempts by one culture to subjugate and impose itself on another have resulted in much violence and bloodshed. Whether such violence is inherent in the nature of culture, or is the result of deliberate distortion and manipulation is difficult to say. However one can surmise that culture manifests two contrasting aspects. One resonates with the original sense of the word “culture” and involves the cultivation of the inner life of human beings and their spiritual elevation. The other is the aggressive, invasive imposition of one people’s manners and mores on another, inscribing there a sense of resentment and sowing the seeds of future conflict. In this case culture serves not the cause of peace, but the cause of war.

One of the classic examples of this invasive, aggressive aspect is the cultural imperialism that was intertwined with European colonial policy in the modern era. While the term “cultural imperialism” was coined only during the 1960’s during the global process of de-colonisation, its reality and experience date back to the earliest days of European exploration and expansion including the five-hundred-year history of modern colonialism. This is an example of the violent potential of culture in both intent and application.

Differences between a	
Culture of Violence/War	Culture of Peace
Violence	Non Violence
Hierarchical, vertical authority	Democratic, participative
Rules, orders	Dialogue, communication
Exploitative of people and natural environment	Respect for human rights, dignity and the natural environment. Sustainable development
Male dominated	Power sharing between men and women. Empowerment of women
Secretive (information is controlled)	Open sharing of information
Demonizing the ‘other’ or enemy	Tolerance and respect for diversity
Division	Unity & Cooperation
Responding to conflict with violent suppression	Negotiation, mediation, search for non violent solutions to causes of conflict
Source: http://www.un.org/events/UNART/panel_culture_of_peace04.pdf	

As Dr. David Adams former Director of UNESCO and chief architect of the 'Culture of Peace' programme explains -What is required to start a war?

- an enemy
- armaments
- a society in which people follow orders
- a belief that power can be maintained through violence
- control of information (secrecy, propaganda).

In fact, if any one of these is missing, you cannot have war. No enemy - no war. No armaments - no war. No control of information - no war. And if people do not follow orders and if they do not believe that power can be maintained through violence - no war.

Add to these three other important aspects of the culture of war:

- profitability - whether for plunder, colonies, economic domination or the profits of the military-industrial complex.
- male domination
- education for war

There is only one way out from the cycle of violence: a culture of peace:

instead of enemy images,'! understanding, tolerance & solidarity

instead of armaments, '! disarmament, universal & verifiable

instead of authoritarian governance, '! democratic participation

instead of secrecy and propaganda, '! the free flow & sharing of information

instead of violence,'! dialogue, negotiation, rule of law, active non-violence

instead of male domination, '!the equality of women

instead of education for war,'! education for peace

instead of exploitation of the weak and of the environment,'! economies of peace with equitable, sustainable development.

(Source: Dr.David Adam's website - <http://www.culture-of-peace.info/index.html>)

Barriers to Peace

Nuclear Threat- Nuclear weapons are the ultimate embodiment of human negativity. There are enough nuclear weapons stockpiled to destroy the earth and kill every person on the planet.

The Illusion of "Efficiency"- The dehumanising that has taken place in the name of technological and scientific progress, whereby human beings have been reduced to things has been a cause for great alarm. This dehumanising tendency is evident in the language of war planning where the death of innocent people becomes "collateral damage", attacks

become “strikes” and “liquidation” and “neutralise” become euphemisms for killing. Even media reports blare figures like ‘ten thousand dead’ but the value of human life cannot be measured by numbers alone. Each of those people were irreplaceable and precious father, mother, child, friend to someone.

Prejudice and Stereotyping- To motivate people to make war, the ‘Enemy’ must be a recognisable evil- a stereotype. The root cause of such prejudiced behaviour is ignorance.

Environmental Irresponsibility- Pollution and the destruction of the natural environment require solutions that go beyond national boundaries. Global warming could cause 40-50% of the world’s population to be affected by insect transmitted diseases such as malaria and dengue fever.

Poverty- Hunger is poverty in its extreme form and the root cause of many of the conflicts of the world. So long as there is poverty and hunger, there can never be true peace. The Roman philosopher Seneca wrote, “A hungry person listens not to reason, nor cares for justice, nor is bent by any prayers.”

Isolationism- The rising tide of internationalism has made people afraid and retreat into their own familiar and comfortable place and customs, avoiding contact with foreigners. Ignorance of other cultures and countries creates a narrow, distorted view of life and the world. Education is the key to fostering global-minded individuals.

Greed- Competition between countries for land and resources led to two World Wars and the Cold War. Now the struggle is for economic domination. The US with just over 4% of the world’s population consumes 28% of world resources.

11.6 EIGHT ACTION AREAS FOR CREATING A CULTURE OF PEACE

1. Culture of peace through Education

In finalising the 8 action areas, education has been put first as this is the primary medium through which culture is systematically transmitted and social goals are clarified. Fostering a culture of peace through education by promoting education for all, focusing especially on girls; revising curricula to promote qualitative values, attitudes and behaviour inherent in a culture of peace; training for conflict prevention and resolution, dialogue, consensus-building and active non violence.

2. Promote sustainable economic and social development

Target the eradication of poverty; focusing on the special needs of children and women; work towards environmental sustainability; foster national and international co-operation to reduce economic and social inequalities.

3. Respect for all human rights

Human rights and culture of peace are complementary: whenever war and violence dominate, there is no possibility to ensure human rights; at the same time, without human rights, in all their dimensions, there can be no culture of peace. To create awareness by distributing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at all levels.

4. Equality between men and women

Ensure full participation of women in economic, social and political decision-making,

eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and render support and assistance to women in crisis situations resulting from war and all other forms of violence.

5. Democratic participation

Fostering democratic participation by educating responsible citizens; reinforcing actions to promote democratic principles and practices; establishing and strengthening national institutions and processes that promote and sustain democracy.

6. Understanding tolerance and solidarity

Overcome enemy images with understanding, tolerance and solidarity by promoting a dialogue among civilisations and respecting difference and cultural diversity.

7. Free flow of information and knowledge

Freedom of information and communication and the sharing of information and knowledge are indispensable for a culture of peace. However, measures need to be taken to address the issue of violence in the media, including new information and communication technologies.

8. International peace and security

Promote general and complete disarmament, have greater involvement of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in promoting a culture of peace in post-conflict situations; initiatives in conflict situations; encouraging confidence-building measures and efforts for negotiating peaceful settlements.

(Source: UNESCO- <http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/default.htm>)

11.7 SUMMARY

Human rights, democracy and peace are a single entity wherein if one disintegrates, they all disintegrate. In the long history of humanity, there has been no true happiness, no true peace and one of the main reasons for this sad state of affairs is the failure to securely establish human rights. Today the language of human rights, if not human rights themselves, is nearly universal. Governments everywhere claim to believe and respect the dignity of their citizens. However, even if human rights are protected and guaranteed by law and government policy, we have to make sure that ceaseless efforts are made to ensure that they are upheld, hence the great urgency in disseminating human rights education. Today the impact of human rights upon International Relations is profound, the global community is no longer willing to remain silent on systematic abuses- victims have a voice and can seek protection. As Louis Henkin says, 'human rights are the idea of our time'; we can see a visible rise of universal human rights culture which depicts a moral progress. The wisdom of our ancient scriptures and beliefs in *Vasudaiva Kutumbakam* - the 'world is one family' and *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah* - 'let peace and happiness descend on all' seem to echo in the current slogan - 'All human rights for all'.

11.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Define human rights. Why is human rights education so important?
2. What is the UDHR? Trace the causes that led to its drafting.
3. Enumerate the Eight action areas for creating a culture of peace.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Galtung, Johan, and Ikeda, Daisaku., Choose Peace, Pluto Press, London, 1995.

Verma, J.S., The New Universe of Human Rights, Universal Law Publishing Co.Ltd, Delhi, 2004

www.ohchr.org/

Ikeda, Daisaku., Humanity and the New Millennium: From Chaos to Cosmos- 1998
Peace Proposal: <http://www.sgi-usa.org/newsandevents/docs/peace1998.pdf>