

HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE AND EFFECTS ON SOCIETY

Mariam Fatima *

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Human rights are the elemental rights that every human must be entitled to for them to live a life of dignity and liberty. These are the most basic rights which one does not even give a second thought to while exercising, this of course is the case when one comes from a somewhat privileged background and has his basic needs fulfilled. But when we take a look at the marginalised sections of society or the vulnerable sections and how much they suffer due to the violation or just unfulfillment of these rights, we truly understand the importance of the implementation of human rights. In order to maintain such human rights and to regulate their equal and uniform implementation, the United Nations have formed the United Nations Human Rights Council. This council discusses the various inefficient implementation and the violation of human rights in an international forum. Taking into consideration the magnitude of the population of the world, it is found to be more efficient when citizens or people of the society in their individual capacities take measures for the implementation of these rights and spread awareness of the same. The UNHRC is an international body, that works on a worldwide platform, but for a more specified and concentrated focus on these human rights issues, there are non-governmental organizations and other organizations that work towards the same. One of the many ways these organizations work towards the awareness and regulation of human rights is through Human Rights Movements. These movements address the major human rights violations or inefficient implementations that are done by any authority or body. These movements were started by the NGOs and the people of the country; they aim to the betterment of the quality of life for the society as a whole. These Human Right Movements are started to deal with violations of rights and address the same, some examples of such movements are the Black Lives Matter movement of the United States, the Democracy movement of Hong Kong, and similarly, the Farmer's protests, CAA, and NRC protests or the Dalit movement of India, to name a few.

*BA LLB, FIRST YEAR, SYMBIOSIS LAW SCHOOL, HYDERABAD.

This research paper will focus on such Human Right Movements and the effects that they have on society at large. The paper will examine the various aspects of these movements such as the spread of information and awareness, are they effective with significant results, and the overall impact they have on society. The opinions of the general public will be taken into account for more effective research and an improved understanding of the topic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the paper, *Social Movements and the Social Construction of Human Rights*¹ written by Neil Stammers, he mentions that “Social movements have typically been defined as collective actors constituted by individuals who understand themselves to share some common interest and who also identify with one another, at least to some extent” it can be inferred by this that such movements require unity among the society in order to come together to form a movement that can make significant changes, it is a form of a social group bound together by common objectives, therefore Human Right Movements are also referred to as *Social Movements*. In the book *Human Rights and the Environment: Philosophical, Theoretical, and Legal Perspectives*, Linda Hajjar Leib speaks about the controversies that these movements tend to bring with them. In the book chapter two *An Overview of The Characteristics and Controversies of Human Rights*², she concentrates on the “major controversies and issues in the conceptualisation and implementation of contemporary international human rights”. This chapter is divided into sections to discuss the different relevant aspects, it examines the main theories that underlie the concept of human rights, and also investigates the implementation mechanisms for human rights and the impediments to their enforcement at national and international levels. The article *Global Civil Society and the International Human Rights Movement: Citizen Participation in Human Rights International Nongovernmental Organizations*³ by Kiyoteru Tsutsui and Christine Min Wotipka focuses in detail on the involvement and the participation of the citizens of countries

¹ Stammers, N. (1999). Social Movements and the Social Construction of Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 21(4), 980–1008. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/762754>

² Leib, L. H. (2011). AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTROVERSIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS. In *Human Rights and the Environment: Philosophical, Theoretical and Legal Perspectives* (pp. 41–68). Brill. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h1t2.6>

³ Tsutsui, K., & Wotipka, C. M. (2004). Global Civil Society and the International Human Rights Movement: Citizen Participation in Human Rights International Nongovernmental Organizations. *Social Forces*, 83(2), 587–620. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3598341>

in the human rights movements that take place. It examines the pattern of citizen participation in the global human rights movements, this is done by analysing the membership of citizens in the human rights international non-governmental organizations or HRINGO. The research paper gains knowledge about the interest and the involvement of the general public in such movements.

Further in the journal article *Social Movements and Human Rights in India: An Overview*⁴ by S.R. T.P. Sugunakararaju, she mentions that “Social Movements are a significant part of contemporary social life”. This article deals with the topic in a two-fold manner, it classifies social movements into “two broad categories namely, old social movements and ‘new social movements’” the article discusses in detail these social movements, perspectives of different scholars on the same, and their significance. This article is more in line with this research paper as it is more relevant to the country of India. We find another piece of literature most relevant to our study, it is the journal article *Human Rights Movement in India: A Historical Perspective*⁵ written by, Aswini K. Ray. In this article, the author precisely discusses the historical perspective of the Human Rights Movement in India, it speaks about the asymmetrical perspectives of post-colonial India and the western nations, gives the topic a historical viewpoint, and deepens the scope of research of this paper.

CHAPTER 3

IMPORTANCE OF TOPIC

Journal of Legal Research and Juridical Sciences

Human rights are the founding basic rights that every human is entitled to exercise. In the present scenario, we see a lot of violations of these rights taking place, the human rights of millions of people are being violated every day. To tackle this rate of violations of human rights, there have to be efficient and effective measures taken. Human Rights Movements are one of these measures that take place to spread awareness and information about these violations in order to seek support and resources to put a stop to these violations. The impact and effect that these Human Rights Movements have on the general public and society is the focus of this research paper at hand. The effects along with the significance it has in today’s world will be discussed. This study is based on the data collected by people of different

⁴ Sugunakararaju, S. R. T. P. (2012). SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 73(2), 237–250.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856586>

⁵ Aswini K. Ray. (2003). Human Rights Movement in India: A Historical Perspective. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(32), 3409–3415. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4413888>

backgrounds and their opinions about such movements. This topic needs to be dealt with on a large scale and collect data from diverse backgrounds in order to gain an insight into the effects of these movements.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives formulating this research paper are as follows:

- i. To understand the overall impact and effect of Human Rights Movements on society, does it benefit or deteriorate the quality of life of the society as a whole
- ii. To understand if the general public is aware of such movements that take place around them
- iii. To gain an insight into the opinions of the public on this topic

This research paper will deal with these objectives in order to perform effective and insightful research on the topic at hand.

HYPOTHESIS

The impact and effects of Human Rights Movements on society are widespread. Though they might bring a certain degree of discomfort to a small number of people for some period of time, these movements result in benefiting and improving the quality of life of the society as a whole. These movements prove to be significant as they push society to change and create a better environment for all. The public is fairly aware of the Human Rights Movements that take place around the world, however, there is much room for the spread of awareness and knowledge on this topic.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper uses primarily a doctrinal method of research. There has been the inclusion of different research papers, articles, and books in order to obtain credible information about the topic at hand. There has also been the incorporation of various online sources which provide diversity to the research paper and deepen the scope of research. Journals have also been referred to gain different perspectives on the topic. All sources used in due course of this research have been given credit.

AREA OF STUDY

The area of study for this research paper at hand has been restricted to the country of India, including all the states, cities, and union territories.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design of this paper is primarily qualitative and secondarily descriptive and analytical. The research paper makes an effort to examine details of different journal articles which talk about Human Right Movements as a whole and inculcate a proper understanding of what they are and aim to bring to the society. The paper also discusses through these articles the impact of these movements on society and the world. A survey has also been performed by means of a questionnaire. The survey was conducted in order to gain opinions of the public and attain an idea of the general public has knowledge about these movements and their viewpoints on the effects of the same.

CHAPTER 5

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The sampling size has been confined to 50 members. The respondents are students from different backgrounds, including students of this university.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In due course of completing this research paper, both primary and secondary data collection methods have been used. Through a questionnaire survey, the required information has been acquired. Along with the survey, data has also been collected from articles written by renowned authors, journals, and books. Necessary data has been gathered from genuine websites and online sources, which have been authored by experts in the field.

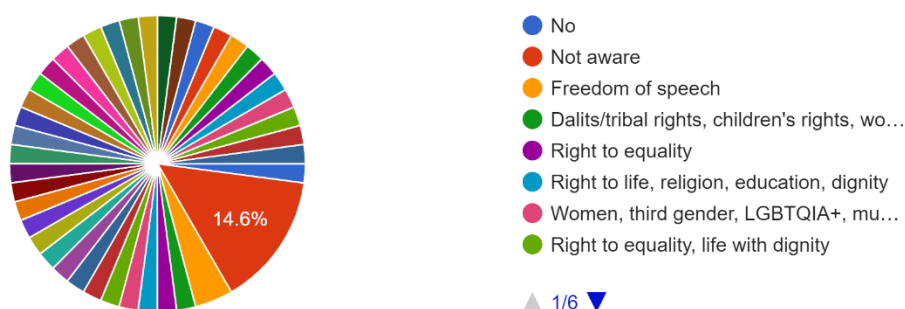
DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

After the collection of necessary details and information, the data is analysed by using statistical techniques. The interpretation of data is done manually and by means of a computer.

1. Do you think Human Rights are under threat in India? If yes, mention which human rights are under threat.

Do you think human rights are under threat in your country? If yes, mention which human rights are under threat.

48 responses



Tabulating the above data as **YES, NOT AWARE, and NO.**

S. no.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1.	Yes	39	81.2%
2.	Not Aware	7	14.6%
3.	No	2	4.2%
	TOTAL	48	100%

According to the table, 81.2% of the respondents feel that certain human rights are indeed under threat in India whereas 4.2% think that no rights are under threat and 14.6% are unaware of the matter. The respondents who hold an opinion of **YES** were further asked to mention which human rights they think are under threat. All the respondents shared their opinion about which rights are under threat.

2. Have you experienced or witnessed first-hand any human rights violations?

Have you experienced or witnessed first-hand any human rights violations?

48 responses



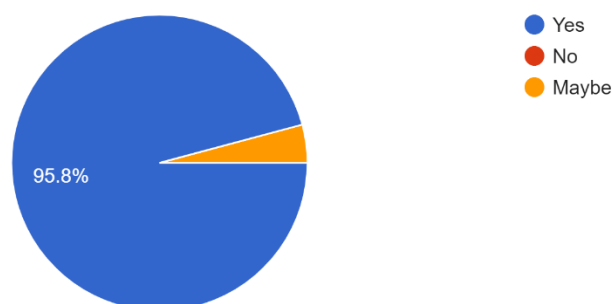
S. no.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage%
1.	Yes, experienced	8	16.7%
2.	Yes, witnessed	9	18.7%
3.	Yes, but not first-hand	14	29.2%
4.	No	17	35.4%
	TOTAL	48	100%

According to the table, 31 respondents or 64.6% have in some way experienced or witnessed violations of human rights. Whereas, 17 or 35.4% have not experienced or witnessed any such violation.

3. Are Human Right Movements important for society to grow and evolve?

Are Human Rights Movements important for society to grow and evolve?

48 responses



S.no.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	46	95.8%
2.	Maybe	2	4.2%
3.	No	0	0%
	TOTAL	48	100%

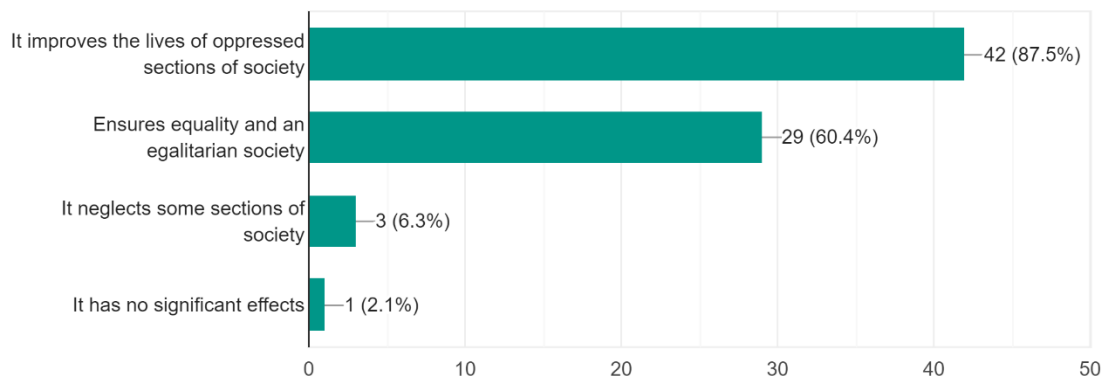
Journal of Legal Research and Juridical Sciences

According to the table, 95.8% or 46 of the respondents hold an opinion that Human Right Movements are important for society to grow and evolve, 2 respondents that makeup 4.2% of the total think maybe it is so. No respondent holds the opinion that these movements are not important for society to grow and evolve.

4. What do you think is the effect of Human Rights Movements on society?

What do you think is the effect of Human Rights Movements on society?

48 responses



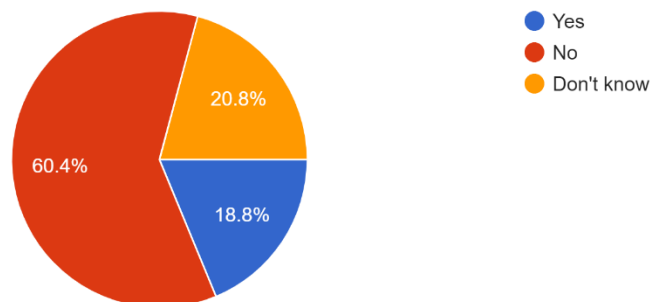
S.no.	Response	No. of Respondents / Total Respondents	Percentage out of 100%
1.	It improves the lives of oppressed sections of society	42 / 48	87.5%
2.	Ensures equality and an egalitarian society	29 / 48	60.4%
3.	It neglects some sections of society	3 / 48	6.3%
4.	It has no significant effects	1 / 48	2.1%

According to the table, the majority of the respondents are 42 and 29 which make up 87.5% and 60.4% respectively think that the effects that these Human Right Movements have on society are that they improve the lives of oppressed sections and ensure equality and egalitarian society. Whereas 3 out of 48 or 6.3% think that these movements neglect certain sections of society. 1 respondent or 2.1% of the total holds an opinion that these movements have no significant effect on society.

5. Do you think there are sufficient opportunities for Human Rights Movements in your country?

Do you think there are sufficient opportunities for Human Rights Movements in your country?

48 responses



S.no.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1.	No	29	60.4%
2.	Don't Know	10	20.8%
3.	Yes	9	18.8%
	TOTAL	48	100%

According to the table, 60.4% of the respondents think that there are not sufficient resources for a Human Rights Movement in India, 20.8% are not aware of this matter and 18.8% think that there are sufficient resources.

6. What are your views on human rights and human rights movements, their significance, and their effect on society?

S.no.	Response
1.	Everyone deserves to live a dignified life, regardless of their situation. It is no one's choice to be a part of the marginalized community and we fail to recognise

	that.
2.	Human rights and human rights movements are important to spread awareness and improve the lives of those who are facing these problems. Even in today's society, there is a lack of awareness of violations of human rights in countries like Palestine, Yemen, China, etc. And the media bias doesn't help with this problem which is why human rights movements are important.
3.	Human rights movements are effective to the extent. If it gets some political & religious ideologies then the movement takes a rift towards affecting human rights. For example, whenever a person tries to question the central government of India, straightway UAPA is applied & the person's life is put to threat & this is the ground reality. Laws, and human rights movements are effective to an extent. There is a significant improvement in the society & I appreciate that. But I want to put forth a question that there are many laws made to prevent the crime but still human rights issue is more prevalent in India. The key to this issue is to think & critically analyse the situations & people should not follow the bandwagon.
4.	Till people don't normalise human rights are equal for all there will always be differences in people and their education and the lifestyle which in turn affects the society.
5.	Brings up topics for discussions and may result in changing of point of you. Gives voice to the oppressed.
6.	Human rights and human rights movement in life is an assurance that we can live in peace and harmony but in our country, in certain cases, it is always misused by power.
7.	I think it's our responsibility, as future generations we must make sure that this isn't something which will pass down and cause trouble to more people. The movements will surely have their own benefits which will lead to a better future.
8.	Human rights are very important for the betterment of future generations. It helps in the growth of society in a positive way.

9.	Human Rights need to be protected and guaranteed to all citizens. Human rights movements make significant changes in the upliftment of societies and provide equality to all the weaker sections of society.
10.	They are extremely important to ensure a better quality of life for marginalised communities.
11.	Human rights are a very important factor helping in the development of a country and human rights movements help people achieve their rights and bring them to the notice of the public and make them realize in case of a violation. Human rights movements encourage people to voice their opinions. Human rights ensure people have the right to freedom and expression they ensure people meet their basic needs and protect them from abuse on the basis of caste, gender, creed, etc. Human rights movements help people to attain these said rights and fight for them in case of any violation.
12.	As citizens, we must unite and be firm on our decisions. What I have seen is initially everyone is energetic but as time passes the energy goes down

According to this table, most respondents feel that Human Rights Movements are important for the society and result in the improvement of the lives of the people of the society. Respondents share their opinions about how such movements are important as they provide betterment for the future generations, improve the quality of life of marginalised sections of society and make significant changes for the better. Among these opinions, respondents have also rightfully pointed out that education places an important role in this process, and that often it is seen that the energy with which a movement start is not carried on throughout which results in the decline of the movement and one also feel that everyone must analyse situations on an individual capacity before following the herd of the public.

Overall, respondents have responded in a way that clearly suggests that Human Right Movements have a significant impact and effect on the society and result in a better quality of life for the future.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Through this questionnaire sent to the student of different institutions, it has been inferred that students are fairly aware of these Human Rights Movements that take place. The general opinion among students suggests that Human Right Movements have a significant impact and effect on the society and result in a better quality of life for the future. The study also takes into regard the opinion of the students on the violation of Human Rights in India and if they think that there are any rights that are under threat in the country. The study further also explores the thought of the resources available that can facilitate and give rise to a Human Right Movement. Human Rights Movements according to the study are an essential part of rightfully enforcing human rights and putting an end to any violations of them. The research paper overall concludes that these Human Right Movements affect the society for the better and benefit the quality of life of the people of the society. They also result in creating a better environment for future generations by promoting equality and an egalitarian society. Even though it can be inferred from the survey that a small percentage of people face discomfort due to these movements and do not fully support them and hold an opinion that they can be done in a better manner, the majority have responded positively to such movements and their effects on society.

REPORT WRITING

Journal of Legal Research and Juridical Sciences

A report gives us a systematic knowledge of understanding and also a factual base for the formulation of policies and strategies related to the topic at hand. In this research paper, we have taken up the topic of Human Rights Movements and their Effects on Society. After a thorough analysis of all the details relating to this topic, it is understood that the effects that Human Right Movements on the society are positive effects that improve the life of the people in the society. Human rights are important for any human being to live a dignified and full life. Any violation of these rights invites serious sanctions from the general public and the international forums such as the United Nations. Human Right Movements are one of the actions that help control and halt the violations of these fundamental rights of human beings. These movements not only spread awareness about the violations but also prevent potential violations in the future, as a result, these movements majority of the time, make a better society that grows and evolves and is egalitarian. Movements such as the Black Lives Matter

Movement, the Farmer's Protest, Dalit movements, and the CAA and NRC protests to name a few have resulted in significant changes in the society of today and have created a better future for tomorrow.

REFERENCES

1. Stammers, N. (1999). Social Movements and the Social Construction of Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 21(4), 980–1008. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/762754>
2. Leib, L. H. (2011). AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTROVERSIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS. In *Human Rights and the Environment: Philosophical, Theoretical and Legal Perspectives* (pp. 41–68). Brill. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h1t2.6>
3. Tsutsui, K., & Wotipka, C. M. (2004). Global Civil Society and the International Human Rights Movement: Citizen Participation in Human Rights International Nongovernmental Organizations. *Social Forces*, 83(2), 587–620. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3598341>
4. Sugunakararaju, S. R. T. P. (2012). SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 73(2), 237–250. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856586>
5. Aswini K. Ray. (2003). Human Rights Movement in India: A Historical Perspective. *Economic Journal and Legal Political and Judicial Weekly, Science* 38(32), 3409–3415. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4413888>