

***Human Rights striving towards an Inclusive and Vibrant Democracy* by Debolina Sarkar (ed.), co-published by Departments of Political Science, Geography and Human Rights, Loreto College, Kolkata and Levant Books, 2013, 133 pages, ₹ 175.00, ISBN: 978-93-80663-82-1.**

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The first chapter in section I 'Some Important Human Rights Concern Areas for 21st Century' by Debi Chatterjee is a very valuable and relevant paper showing his concern towards Human Dignity. He says that though there are many other areas of concern including spheres of politics, economics, ethnicity, religion and many more but central to it is the idea of human dignity. He mentions that the concept of rights evolved in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe at national level but the international concern for human rights came up during the Second World War. With the setting up of UN, human rights received a new international recognition. Different articles dealing with the Human Rights in the UN Charter have also been mentioned by Chatterjee. He also shows concern about the fact that though Human Rights has been given importance in the UN Charter and the obligations imposed on states to respect the same, the Charter did not either define 'Human Rights' nor attempt any codification of such rights; this task was undertaken by the Commissions of Human Rights. In the forthcoming decades, the concern for Human Rights revolve around developments in the context of a globalizing scenario.

Achin Chakraborty in the second chapter critically analysis the paradigm shift in welfare policy thinking in India. His paper gives us the perspective that would help us in relating the recent progress in terms of legislations and the moral philosophic conceptual development in the areas of Human Rights and Human Development. The third chapter by Pranab Kumar Chakraborti mainly deals with the learning of Democratic values. He talks about democratic values, describing it as 'Egalitarianism' which means accepting the equal rights, equal privileges and equal responsibilities for everyone. He also discusses about Altruistic Personality, giving five basic requirement for altruistic personality - empathy, belief in justice for all, social responsibility, internal locus of control and low egocentricism.

The fourth chapter, 'Right to Education Act 2009: A Step towards Inclusive and Vibrant Democracy' by Madhumala Sengupta begins with a brief discussion of the Act, which helps to understand its various provisions, thereby highlighting and analysing

the pros and cons of the Act. Debasri Banerjee in the fifth chapter 'Towards an Inclusive and Vibrant Democracy: Role of Education' argues that our society is fragmented into different segments at the political, religious, economic, social and ability levels which has led to segregation and exclusion instead of inclusion. This means that we need to have a concerted effort to be inclusive in democracy. Further, she mentions few basic requirements like guarantee of basic Human Rights, separation of power, freedom of expression etc. for the inclusion of democracy.

The sixth chapter by Aditi Ghosh clearly mentions that true democracy cannot exist without education - education that is not only about knowledge but also about cultivation of the powers of circumspection. She says that without education we risk totalitarianism and become vulnerable to indoctrination and eventual servility to some powerful elite. The teachers and the parents who are the first educators of children have a vital role to play in imparting education for a democratic society.

Charlotte Simpson Veigas in the next chapter discusses about the Jesuit Education at the Calcutta Province of the Catholic Church. The Jesuits in Kolkata have effectively worked towards the formation of values of freedom, equality, fraternity and social justice. She argues that though the Jesuits were like a company without product, brand or business plan, they clearly visualised what they valued and those values reflected in their work. The Jesuits in Kolkata Province have contributed in their own humble way to the realisation of an egalitarian society by reaching out to the marginalized through various policies, admission in their schools and by intervention through education.

The eighth chapter by Debika Guha describes the concept of inclusion or inclusive education stating that it is an attitude - a value and belief system - not a set of actions only. She says that there are several national and international initiatives taken for the spread of inclusive education, which is concerned with removing all barriers to learning and this inclusive education does not simply mean to move children from existing special education service to an ordinary classroom. She discusses the Cascade System of education which can benefit the educational placement of the exceptional child as per their degree of disability.

The last chapter in Section I 'Democratic Values of Rights and Duties in child education' by Mousumi Boral states that democracy does not simply mean to include 'of the people, by the people and for the people' in the structure and functions of the government alone; it is also the mutual trust among the people to achieve the best in the society. She talks about the education system in India and the problems of the youth, saying that the current education system of India has become dysfunctional and inadequate to address the social and ecological challenges of our times. Further says that to manage a meaningful life, children need to manage their stable thought process, control emotions and secure a balanced relationship.

Section II of the book contains of three chapters. The first chapter by Clarence J. Dias mainly deals with the values, norms and principles of Democracy and Human Rights. He says that Democracy can be representative or participatory and in reality comprises the most practical blend of the two. Dias also discusses about the values, norms and principles related to the preservation of culture of the minorities, the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. He also talks about the cultural diversity and pluralism, collective rights and responsibilities, protection mechanism and their institutionalization. He further describes some of the more successful approaches towards developing and institutionalizing a protection mechanism at the national level.

The chapter by Ranjita Dawn focusses on the representation of people with disabilities in the Indian scenario. She also mentions about the International scenario of representation of people with disabilities. Some of the international agencies are working for the welfare of the disabled like UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and ILO. To conclude she writes that though efforts are being continuously made by both governmental as well as non- governmental agencies to facilitate the total rehabilitation of the disabled person, it still awaits much initiation.

The last chapter in section II by Gargi Adhikari focusses on the effects on children after any war or armed conflicts ; how they are recruited as combatants in army conflicts; how sexual violence are most of the time used systematically as a mechanism to humiliate, demoralize and terrorize the opponent. She concludes by saying that war and displacement can destroy a child's connection to his or her past and impose a frightening and uncertain future. Thus the international community shall have to take a more proactive stance when it comes to handling children involved in any war or armed conflicts.

There has been a clash between democracy, development and human rights although they have to be seen in their constitutive connection. The different papers published in this book so help us clarify and provide a clear understanding of the these different concepts - democracy, development and human rights. Though different in their own respect in reality they are co-related with each other. The concepts attempt to preserve the values of the society and are beneficial for the betterment of citizens and individuals collectively.