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Figure: Participants with Facilitator and College Officials

REPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION WORKSHOP HELD AT BETHUNE COLLEGE, NORTH KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL.

On: 25th & 26th August 2012

At a Glance		
Venue	:	Bethune College, North Kolkata, West Bengal.
Date	:	25-26 August 2012
Facilitator	:	Prof. Asit Kumar Basu
Number of Participants	:	41
Gender	:	Girls-41; Boys-0 (Women's College)
Age Group	:	19-26
Religious Representation	:	Hinduism (Secularists and Orthodox) & Brahma Samaj

Introduction:

Two day Human Rights Education program was held at Bethune College, Kolkata on 25th & 26th August 2012. The participants, comprising students and teachers had taken active part to make the program worthwhile along with the facilitator. Based on the evaluation of the participants the program was successful and influential. The participants could learn a lot from the program. The participants represented different religious, caste and economic groups. Out of 41 participants, by religion one was from Brahma Samaj, three were secularists and rests were Hindus. Only a few Muslim girls are studying in this college. However, no Muslim students joined in the program even after repeated request. Most of the Muslim families of the region prefer to marry off their daughters who are between 18 and 22, than sending them to college. In fact they are very much reluctant to give education to women.

In terms of quality, grade and status, Bethune is one of the top colleges in west Bengal.

About the Community (North Kolkata)

Religious discrimination among the lower, middle and upper caste people and economic division among both upper and lower class Hindu families and gender discrimination is more or less common among all. Women are oppressed and deprived in the society. Peace is being hampered due to presence of social problems like intolerance, inhuman activities, and oppression in the society. Communal tensions and problems are being occurred due to the violation of Human Rights and violations of Human Rights are being occurred due to the lack of 'Human Rights' education among the common people. Therefore it is very important to propagate the ideas and articles of human Rights, declared by United Nation for all.

Main Aim:

To enhance and promote Religious Harmony and Human rights among the different faith community, groups, caste, class, sex, color etc. and enjoy all sorts of freedom which has been laid down by UN as Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Objective:

To educate, motivate and change the mind set up of the young people of different religious traditions and to eliminate all form of intolerance and discrimination through the exchange of dialogues.

Timeline:

Two day program- On 25th & 26th August 2012 from morning 9.30 am to 5.30 pm

Session outline:

1st Session (on 25th August at 9.30 am to 1pm)

- Greetings from the facilitator for joining this learning/action process.
- Social purposes and learning goal of the HRE workshop.
- Introduction of participants and statements of expectation.
- Identifying their concerns about intolerance, religious discrimination and conflict.
- Sharing and categorizing their concerns.
- Proposing goal for social change to overcome obstacles to religious freedom.
- Sharing goals.
- Thinking about action.

2nd Session (2pm to 5.30 pm)

- Reading, acknowledging and clarifying – Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

- The declaration on the Elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief (DIDRB).
- Major Human Rights Treaties
- Relate the goals of the participants to the rights describe in the UDHR & DIDRB

3rd Session (on 26th August at 10.30 am to 1 pm)

- Film show – ‘Rita’s Choices’
- Responding to the film - awakening their awareness
- Inquiry about injustice
- Analyses the injustice within a Human Rights framework.
- Alternative views and application of Human Rights to prevent such injustices
- Applying Human Rights (DIDRB) what actions may be undertaken

4th Session

- Review – Rita’s Choices on the light of DIDRB and the said goal
- Film Show – ‘Sacred Grove’
- Responding to the film - awakening their awareness
- Inquiry about multiple injustices
- Analyses the injustice within a Human Rights framework.
- Alternative views and application of Human Rights to prevent such injustices
- Action to be undertaken

5th Session (2.00 pm to 5.30 pm)

- Review of Sacred Grove on the light of said goal
- Film show – ‘Where is Home’
- Responding the film - awakening their awareness
- Inquiry about multiple injustices
- Analyses the inter-religious injustice within a Human Rights framework.
- Alternative views and application of HR to prevent such injustices
- Action to be undertaken

6th Session

- Reviewing their concern and goals
- Recommending actions
- Planning action for social change
- Strategic planning for action

Methodology:

Group Discussions, lectures, case studies, Audio visual learning and group report presentation

Issues Discussed:

Social problems – intolerance, tension, humiliation etc; Educational goal, Social goal, Social Change, freedom of religion & belief etc.

Expected learning outcomes:

Short-term:

Participants will be able to change their mind set up and have been oriented or motivated towards positive attitude of life.

Long-term:

Peace will prevail in the society and all sorts of social violence, conflicts and tension will be resolved.

Resources Required:

Teaching kits & training materials.

Language Problem:

There was no language problem (Both English & Bengali were used)

Balance of gender and age

As it is a women college, obviously all the 41 participants are girls and their age group within 19 to 26 years and are of different faith communities.

What are the steps being taken to reduce the tension between the participants from different faith groups?

I have requested the participants to maintain calm and peace during discussion and insisted them to have open and free discussion and patience to hear.

Have you had ice-breaking /team building activities?

Yes

Which faith traditions attended the program?

Hinduism (Many subdivisions) & Brahmo Samaj

How many people from each faith do you expect to attend?

Brahmo Samaj-1

Hinduism (Secular)-3

Traditional Hinduism-37

Name of Potential Mediator:

Ms. Dr. Lina Sen

Evaluation process:

Series wise evaluations were done after completion of the all six sessions. A format has been prepared for this by the IARF-SACC.

Participants' Comments (Selected)**Abheri Bose (F), 21, Hindu (Secular)**

With due respect to this workshop which has been organized here, I would firstly like to acknowledge all the teachers, my friends and our facilitator, who all jointly brought out this workshop, action oriented. The workshop was enriching in nature, because of the participation of different departmental professors and also with the collaboration of their respective students. The whole workshop was a versatile and unique one. It came up with numerous opinions and ideas and individual perspectives that were normally treated merely negligible.

As for the recommendation part, I will be thankful, if such workshops will be held in a broad manner in other sections of our own society starting from educational centers to other form of system which can bring about certain change, so that all people of our society can be benefited.

Mahashweta Bhattacharya (F), 20, Hinduism (Orthodox)

The workshop conducted by IARF SACC was extremely enriching and educating in nature. There are many areas in our life, where we don't realize, especially respecting and caring others. But through this workshop I understood and I was moved by such emotion. The documentaries shown in the workshop were very touching and inspiring. They made me aware of different social problems that still exist in our society and the great need for spreading the knowledge and awareness of human rights to every nation, culture, ethnic group etc.

The group work which we performed in the workshop made us to learn how to work together forgetting every social prejudice in our mind.

Joyita Basak (F), 20, Hindu (Secular)

From this workshop I could learn many important issues related to human rights. It really enhanced my knowledge. I'll pass this knowledge to my friends and relatives. Moreover I'll protest against multiple injustices going on in the society. I believe that team work is needed to bring about changes in the society rather than individual efforts. I thank IARF SACC and respected facilitator for giving us this great opportunity.

Also, I kindly request IARF to organize this kind of program in our society, so that our entire community will be aware of human rights and religious freedom.

Ipsita Banik (F), 20, Hinduism (Orthodox)



I like the overall course starting from the meditation to the evaluation. The three films shown, made me emotional. I could understand that even in this modern world, we are so conservative about our caste, religion, tribes etc. We are also rigid that we will not change our views.

There are people from backward society, who would definitely change and upgrade themselves with education, morality, modern views etc. For them and with them other people can also join and bring a change in the society. We would have to raise our voice towards the injustice. We should learn to give others their rights and must understand others viewpoints. We should be optimistic. All this I learnt from the workshop. Besides this, I learned group work, team work and cooperation from this workshop. Contemporary issues such as human trafficking, child abuse, sexual harassment, child labor, sex education, female feticide etc should be stopped.

If possible I would definitely want to work with human rights education, especially for upgrading and enriching the life of women and adolescents.

Binita Choudhury (F), 20, Hinduism (Orthodox)



I came to know about this program from my teachers. We thought it may be a new experience for us and decided to participate. This is the first time I experienced such a program. Really it was a nice workshop where I came to know myself in a different way. This program helped us to understand our nation, our constitution, our duties and do's and don'ts as a responsible citizen. Such kind of program really helps us to make ourselves better in our way of living. It also helped us to develop our own personalities like, belonging in a group, the cooperation, the activity, the discussions among group members, the power of leadership etc.

This kind of program should be organized more and more to make us bother about the human rights and values in such a condition of our society where the human dignity and values are ignoring day by day. I thank our facilitator and IARF for organizing this program.

Ms. Moumita Dutta (F), 34, Brahma Samaj



It was a wonderful experience as there were open discussions, exchange of views as well as opinions and debates that helped to enrich us. The course material was also resourceful, contributed to a great extent to enhance knowledge related to human rights. Documentaries shown were very useful as they highlighted various maladies of so called 'modern society' and provided a reminder that all of us have certain roles to play in the society.

I would like to thank IARF for organizing such a valuable program having high values for students and teachers alike.