



international association for
religious freedom
belief with integrity
South Asia Coordinating Council

Human Rights Education workshop

Held At Gnana Jyothi Ladies Association, Mysore

Held on 8-9 February 2013

Sponsored by IARF SACC



REPORT

Facilitators: Adv. Md. Shabeer Ahmed & Adv. Mrs. M.A. Hemalatha Rao

At a Glance

Venue	Gnana Jyothi Ladies Association, Mysore
Date	8-9 February 2013
Facilitators	Adv. Md. Shabeer Ahmed & Adv. Mrs. M.A. Hemalatha Rao
Number of Participants	50
Gender Balance	All participants were female
Age Group	18-58
Religious Representation	Islam-5 & Hinduism-45

Main Aim of the series

Promotion of religious harmony, understanding and peace in society.

Objectives of the series

Creation of awareness on human rights and religious freedom; promotion of respect for different faiths and realization of religious freedom and human dignity.

Timeline

Date and time of the series / session

8th and 9th Feb 2013. From 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (for two days).

Session outline

Day One

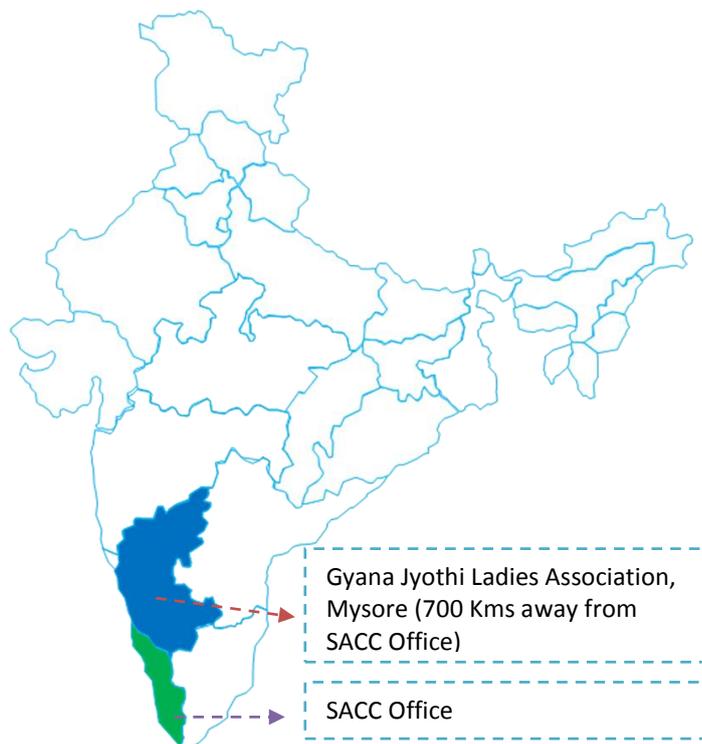
- Registration
- Inauguration
- Introduction of participants, expectations and assessment
- About IARF and HRE Project
- Identification of issues of religious intolerance and discrimination in groups
- Presentation by groups
- Screening of "Rita's Choices" followed by discussion
- Discussion on UDHR & DEIDRB
- Screening of "Sacred Grove" followed by discussion

Day Two

- Reflections on Day – 1
- Screening of "Where is Home" followed by discussion
- Group exercise – identification of issues of injustice in the three films and presentations
- Identification of local issues and action plan for addressing them
- Presentations
- Evaluation
- Valedictory function

Methodology employed

- Introduction in group by formation of pairs.
- Group interactions and discussions.
- Group exercises, preparation of charts and presentations.
- Viewing of films for sensitizing and creating awareness.



- Distribution of handouts on UDHR and DEIDRB.
- Songs and energizers & games conducted by the participants themselves..
- Formation and adherence to ground rules.

Issues rose during each session

- Denial of religious freedom, dignity and human rights related to these in the following issues:
- Inter-religious and inter-caste marriages.
- Loss of identity of tribal communities.
- Discrimination based on religion and belief in educational institutions, jobs and government policies.
- Inter-religious conflicts between different religious communities such as Muslims, Christian and Hindus.
- Discrimination within families.
- Government in action at the time of communal conflicts and support for religious majority community.
- Religious intolerance and hatred.
- Desecration & destruction of places of worship.

Ideas and solutions to the issues identified by the participants

- Creation of awareness of human right of religious freedom through the educational system, workshops, distribution of literature pertaining to it, etc.
- Inter faith dialogue for understanding and harmony.
- Understanding and knowledge of scriptures of ones own religion and other religions.
- Promotion of understanding and harmony through interfaith get-togethers, participation in the rituals, practices and festivals of different religions for better communal relations and understanding.
- Abolition of caste system and elimination of caste-based discrimination and intolerance through government policies, programmes and legislation.
- Protection of places of worships by local communities and Government as per rule of law.

Assumptions that were made

There were assumptions of prevalence of religious intolerance and discrimination in Mysore city and Mysore District. Accordingly it was assumed that the participants would show some initial resistance to freely discuss the issues that are directly related to them.

Risk factors and how they were taken care of

It was felt that during the discussions and interaction some contentious and sensitive issues would emerge. At times these discussions tended to turn into debates and heated exchanges. This was taken care through a very friendly, interactive and participatory approach that was adopted from the beginning through ice breakers, songs and creation of an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Learning Outcomes: Please give a detailed report of the outcomes of the session / series as identified by you and the participants at the end of each session / series

Short-term

- Mutual respect among the participants of different faiths and understanding of different points of view.
- Understanding of different religions and the belief and practices associated with them.
- Understanding of concerns of religious discrimination and intolerance in the framework of human rights.
- Exploring the ways of promoting religious harmony and tolerance in the society.

Long-term

- Establishing religious harmony, peace and understanding in the society.
- Nurturing a culture of human rights in general and rights pertaining to religious freedom and dignity in particular.

What resources were used? Did the arrangements like equipment, meeting hall, and seating, etc. work smoothly? What difficulties were faced?

Meeting hall, HRE films, Projector, microphone, stationery, tables and chairs, etc. The arrangements worked smoothly.

What was the contribution made by the community/ communities? Please give details.

Meeting hall, PA system, Tables, chairs, LCD Projector, Laptop and lunch for both days were provided by Forum for Harmony and Peace Mysore.

Stationery, Transportation Conveyance, tea-coffee, snacks, and, Certificates with group photograph were also provided by Forum for Harmony & Peace Mysore. Photographs of the HRE Series of both the days were also taken by the organizers.

Even the honorarium given to facilitator (Rupees 3000/-) was also spent for the program.

Materials: What films and which sections of the HRE Manual/handouts were used in the training sessions?

All the three films – “Rita’s Choices”, “Sacred Grove” and “Where is Home” were screened. UDHR, DEIDRB, IARF’s Statement of Purpose, etc. handouts were used prominently through out the series.

Did you face any difficulties with regard to the use of the materials?

No

Did you encounter any language problems among participants in terms of the materials (for example, handouts, and films)? And how did you handle them?

Since the HRE literature and films were in English, Some of the participants had little difficulty with language. Kannada is the Mother Tongue of participants. The films were explained to them in Kannada for better identification & understanding of the issues. All the HRE related handouts had to be explained to the participants both in English & Kannada.

How did the community receive the learning programme?

The learning programme was received with curiosity and enthusiasm.

Did you face any resistance from the community?

No

Do you feel the community/target group you chose was appropriate, why? Please give concrete examples.

The students and teaching staff of Gyanajothi open mind for receiving an important learning like HRE. Since there were representatives of different religions, the HRE series provided them an opportunity to come together and openly discuss the issues. It also helped them to understand different religions and to hear different points of view. A change in attitude of the Students would help to create an environment conducive to mutual respect and harmony. The students learning about rights would create far reaching impact on their family and community.

Please write about the composition of the learning group. How did you ensure a balance of gender, ages etc?

Participants were in the 18-58 age groups.

Hindus (Different Sects) -	45
Muslims -	05

Please write about attendance of participants at the session / series? For example, did you have problems getting the same people for each session etc. (Please attach the Participants’ Attendance Pro forma) – the questions immediately following will provide a summary of what is on the attendance pro forma

a) Which faith traditions attended?

Hindus and Muslims

b) How many people from each faith attended?

Hindus (Different Sects) -	45
Muslims -	05

Give details of the gender balance amongst the participants from these faith groups?

All participants were female

Did you include any young people? If so, how many?

The participants were both young adults and adults

Were there any serious disagreements and tension between the participants from different faith groups? If so, what were the points of disagreement and how they were resolved?

Some of the participants expressed strong views about Conversion by Christians. In the ensuing discussion facilitator, Adv. M.A. Hemalatha clarified the subject by explaining that these are fabricated stories by a few and not at all a reality. As a practicing lawyer in Mysore she is quite aware about this issue.

What ice-breaking/team-building activities did you conduct? (Please specify)

Introduction of the participants was done by forming pairs and introduced each other. There were songs and group play. Groups were formed for the participants to carry out interactions and exercises closely as teams.

Please add the names, gender, faith traditions and approximate ages of at least 3 people in the group who were your support team. Please give contact details.

- Mr. M.R. Preethan (Male, Hindu, 28 years)
- Mr. Mansoor Ahmed (Male, Muslim, 36 years)
- Miss. Neha Fathima (Female, Muslim, 20 years)
- Mrs. B. K. Laskhmi Devi (Female, Hindu, 55 years)
- Ms. Nagma Ara (Female, Muslim, 30 years)

Name of mediator and the role he/she played

Mrs. M. S. Hemavathi, Gyanajothi Association Mysore. She conducted the ice breaking and introductory sessions.

What areas of the session / series could have been done better and how do you plan to make these improvements in the next session / series

Discussion on UDHR and DEIRB could be improved by providing the relevant material in Kannada. For the future series the material would be provided in Kannada. Translation would be done. Similarly, videos would also be dubbed in Kannada.

Please share any further information that you wish to.

The HRE literature needs to be translated in to Kannada language. The videos also need to be dubbed in Kannada. This will be very helpful for the participants to participate effectively.

Participants Feedback (Selected)



Ayesha Azmeen (F), Islam, 22

The workshop was interesting and taught us many important privileges attributed to women and weaker sections of the society. Thanks to IARF for organizing program.

I am happy to join this workshop. The ideas and insight I got from the workshop is highly useful for my life. Especially knowledge about ones basic rights will give more courage to fight for human rights.

Heena Kousar (F), 19, Islam



Nagarathna (F), 25, Hindu

The program was very wonderful. The topics discussed in the workshop were very relevant to contemporary situation of our nation. Thanks to IARF for this kind of efforts to educate many like us.

Kalpana H. (F), 27, Hindu

The seminar was very good in its content and standard base. Films were very interesting and presented major social issues in the nation. Most often we are easily fallen to the traps in our job sector and other areas of social life. But this kind of empowerment is really appreciable.



View Photos

<https://picasaweb.google.com/102248381836550333578/HREAtGnanaJyothiLadiesAssociation?authuser=0&feat=diirectlink>