



international association for

**religious freedom**

belief with integrity

co-ordinating council-south asia

## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT, JUNE-JULY, 2012



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Participants with Facilitators & College Officials at St. Joseph College for Women, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

### Two Programs

Venue : Simdega College, Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Date : 23-24 June 2012.

Venue : St. Joseph College for Women, Gynapuram, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Date : 09-10 July 2012.

#### At a Glance

Venue	:	Simdega College, Ranchi, Jharkhand
Date	:	23-24 June 2012
Facilitators	:	Prof. Asit Kumar Basu & Ms. Nikhat Saheba
Number of Participants	:	30
Gender	:	Girls-15   Boys-15
Age Group	:	19-26
Religious Representation	:	Hinduism-19; Christianity-8 & Islam-3

#### Introduction

Two-Day Human Rights Education Program was held at Simdega College, one of the oldest colleges in Jharkhand (the most backward state in India) being established in 1960. Thirty Students and College staff were actively presented in program. Support from the media was overwhelming. In Inaugural and valedictory sessions, reporters of four Hindi dailies were presented to report the program. News and reports were published in detail on 24<sup>th</sup> June in various Dailies with photos.

#### Why Jharkhand?

Simdega district of Jharkhand is a tribal area, covered by hills and dense forest. It is also a Maoist<sup>1</sup> area. Some students of this college also have close connection with Maoists. The area is dominated by tribals, converted Christians from tribes, Hindu tribals, Hindus and some Urdu speaking Muslim. Simdega is the district head quarter, so some outsiders from other parts of the state and even from other states come here as a service personnel or business personnel. Therefore its socio cultural feature is a mixture of traditionalism and modernism.

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People are not much aware about the Human Rights and right to practice religion & belief. As a result common people and the so called elites commits mistake and violate human rights very often.

Some of the common problems of this area in connection with Human rights are:

- 1) Gender discrimination is very common – girls/ women are oppressed and inferior in the society, giving birth to girl child is an unwritten offence.
- 2) Witchcraft is common – older women are being identified as witches.
- 3) Human Trafficking (boys and girls) from tribal villages is a common here.

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<sup>1</sup> The **Maoists** are revolutionaries (with a political viewpoint (or claim to have) that resemble the Communist Chinese revolutionary Mao.) mainly consisting of the extremely poor people including a large number of *dalits* and tribals. They come mainly from the toiling masses of India. They seek to arm and train poor ones, so that these masses can resist the onslaught of the rich. In this effort they go beyond the idea that mass movements should focus on some specific issues like increase of wages, better health care, more honesty of public servants and so forth.

The view of the Maoist rebels is that the poor and exploited people must first and foremost establish their own democratic political power and their own state power in various places. This is because without controlling state power, the poor and the exploited can at most hope for only limited improvements in their living conditions, i.e., so long as it does not inconvenience the rich who usually control state power. So the Maoists mobilize the poor to fight against the existing state, even armed fight if possible, as they consider the existing state to be a set of agents acting for the big multinational corporations, rich landlords and the wealthy in general. The fight is an extremely challenging and unequal one as the rich are aided by the government bureaucrats, the police and even the military. What they have been attempting to build up is a mass movement, even armed, to take on the violence of the ruling classes and its representative state machinery.

- 4) Communal tension is present and quite common among the Muslims and the Hindus. The elite Hindus believe that the local Muslims are anti-national. They are involved in many anti-national and anti-social activities. They even damage government properties intentionally being motivated by selfish reasons.
- 5) Maoists' activities are common in this area. Rich people, Contractors, Business men are their target for collecting money. They employ boys and girls in their work on salary basis. Unemployed and uneducated young tribals join them for having money.

Considering the situations mentioned above, we understood that this area is ideal for organizing our HRE Program. With this earnest desire we approached Simdega college authority. The College authority was very cooperative and hospitable.

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### **Main Aim**

- Sensitize people about the rights of freedom of religion & belief.
- Promote Religious Harmony & Peace in backward Tribal State –Jharkhand.

### **Objectives**

- Minimize socio-cultural and political conflict, violence and tension from the society.
- Eliminate all form of intolerance, humiliation and hatred through exchange of dialogue among different faith groups.

### **Timeline**

Two day program - On 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> June 2012 from morning 9.30 am to 5.30 pm

### **Session outline**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> session (on 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10.30 am - 01pm)**

- Greetings from the facilitator for joining this learning / action process.
- Introduction of participants & ice-breaking & the expectation.
- identifying their concerns about intolerance, religious discrimination & Conflict - sharing and categorizing their concerns
- Social purposes, learning goal, social goal of this HRE workshop
- proposing goal for social change to overcome obstacles to religious Freedom - Sharing goals
- Thinking about action
- Film show 1<sup>st</sup> time & responses after the show.

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#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Session (02:00 pm to 05:30 pm)**

- Reading, acknowledging, & clarifying – Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- The declaration on the Elimination of all forms of intolerance & discrimination based on religion or belief (DIDRB).
- Majors Human Rights Treaties
- Relate the goals of the participants to the rights describe in the UDHR & DIDRB

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> session (on 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am to 01:00 pm)**

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

#### **4<sup>th</sup> session**

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

#### **5<sup>th</sup> 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 injustice
- Analyses the inter-religious injustice within a Human Rights framework.
- Alternative views & application of HR to prevent such injustices
- Action to be undertaken

#### **6<sup>th</sup> session**

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

#### **Methodology**

Group works - discussions, lectures, case studies, Role play, Audio & visual learning and group report presentation.

#### **Issues arisen**

Human Dignity, hatred, humiliation, intolerance, Religious conflicts, Rights to freedom of religion & belief. Here hatred is very common among the rich elite community and intolerance is common among all groups of people. Therefore tension, conflict are regular incident in this locality.

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#### **Assumptions**

Tribal Hindu, Muslim and converted Christians from tribal are the major population of this area. Sometimes they fight each other & communal tension prevails over the area.

#### **Risk factors**

It is a backward town of Jharkhand State, and the inhabitants are tribal Hindu, converted tribal Christians and some Urdu speaking Muslim, therefore a little tension and risks are found among them in regards to establish their rights of religious freedom and belief.

#### **Learning outcomes**

##### **Short-term:**

Participants have changed their mind set up and oriented & motivated to accept the freedom of religion & beliefs as important human rights.

##### **Long-term:**

All sorts of social violence, conflicts and tension will be resolved.

#### **Resources Required:**

Cooperation and man power support from the local organization.

Teaching & training materials required - Pad, pen, power point, projector machine, flip charts, marker pen etc.

**Language Problem:**

There was no language problem (Hindi and English has been used)

**Location:**

Simdega College, Simdega district, Ranchi University, Jharkhand

**Why have you chosen this community/ target group?**

It is a backward Region; all sorts of discrimination prevail in this society. Tension & misunderstanding is obviously present among the young generation of this locality.

**Had there been a balance of gender, ages etc?**

Yes. Since it is a co-education College, both male and female participants attended the program and the age group between 19 to 26 years. College had selected potential students of various faith groups for attending this HRE program. Equal number of girls and boys from different faith communities joined the program.

**What steps are you considering to undertake in order to lessen the tension between the participants from different faith groups?**

I have inspired and insisted participants to maintain peace and to be calm and patience during discussion. They are strictly restricted to make loud voice at the time of free discussion.

**Which faith traditions attended?**

Islam, Christian, Hindus

**How many people from each faith attended?**

3 from Islam, 8 from converted Christians and 10 from tribal Hindu and 9 from OBC Hindu.

**Name of Potential Mediators:**

Prof. Ms Anju Puspa Ben, NSS Program Officer

Prof. Deoraj Prasad, NSS Officer

**Evaluation process:**

Series wise evaluation will be made just after completion of the six sessions. A format has been prepared for this by the IARF, SACC.

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**Comments of Participants (Selected)****Amit Kerketta (20), M, Christian**

The Human Rights Education program held in our college was very informative and I have learned many things related to human rights and religious freedom. Since I am motivated I have to share this message, therefore I would like to share my knowledge with my friends and relatives. Moreover my villagers will be benefited if I teach them these rights. And they can utilize their rights for right reasons. Through this kind of programs, social problems, especially discrimination based on caste and color should be prohibited completely, even from the minds of people. Really I'm indebted to the HRE facilitators and IARF.

**Prity Keshri (19), F, Hindu**

Through this program we are benefitted in different ways. It was for the first time we realized the need of treating all with equal dignity regardless of caste, creed or religion. Every person has equal rights and equality in all and we must utilize them to live a better life. Since the Articles which defend human rights are recognized by the constitution violation of them will draw punishment. Also one should raise his/her voice against cruelty and inhuman acts. Discrimination is one of the biggest evils in the society. Men and women are not considered equal in the society. This is so visible in



educational and industrial sector. Though changing society is a difficult task we must try for the same, and I owe every credit to IARF for motivating and alerting us with concrete support. It would be much better if you can provide us with more printed resources.

**Uttam Kumar Prasad (22), M, Hindu**



Facilitators really helped us to know the articles of our constitution. I am really glad to know about these articles. I will pass this knowledge to others. This will help the society to move ahead and deal with social problems better. We have to present a good message in the society; at least new generation can be motivated by the HRE program. However education for few days will not make much sense, frequently this kind of program has to be executed. Hope IARF will make frequent efforts to make changes in the society.

**Khushboo Khan (19), F, Muslim**



First of all through this program we were made aware of our rights. We are alert to social issues. We also realized our duties. No one should be oppressed in the society or hurt anyone's religious sentiments. Everyone should enjoy the freedom of language, religion and thoughts. If any kind of injustice is happening one should seek the help of police and law. It is very important to know our rights, in order to live a dignified life. Moreover every human being should be aware of his/her rights. It gives us the confidence of living a better life. The facilitators really done good job and we are thankful to them.

**Dibya Kulli (20), F, Christian**



Through this program, I feel like being independent. We should respect our fellow beings, work together and stand together in equality to move ahead in life. This kind of program provides platform for religious sharing, where members of different religions will be exposed to each other. We can help others only after we realize our rights and potential. I thank IARF for this kind of initiative. Also materials in vernacular language would be a better tool to study further.

**St. Joseph College for Women, Gynapuram, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.**  
**09-10 July 2012**

**At a Glance**

Venue	: St. Joseph College for Women, Gynapuram, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
Date	: 09-10 July 2012
Facilitators	: Prof. N. Prakasa Rao & Ms. EPS. Bhagyalakshmi
Number of Participants	: 50
Gender	: Girls only
Age Group	: 19-25
Religious Representation	: Hinduism-25; Christianity-09; Islam-11; Sikhism-02; Jainism-02 & Sindhi-01

**Introduction**

Program started with offering prayers of different faiths. Prof Y. Satyanarayana the founder and former vice chancellor A. P. Law University was the chief guest. Principal of St. Joseph College for women Dr. D. N. Vernica was the guest of honor.

Dr. Vernica pointed out that human values are more important than rights and advised the youth first to respect themselves being human being and respected oneself first she said. One must feel being born as human being. One must have self respect. Education without human values is useless, she said. Firstly does self respect then talk about human rights, she said.

Prof Y. Satyanarayana in his address pointed out that human rights are not given by anyone nor offered by any one they are by birth itself. It is the duty of the concerned Governments to protect them, he added. He also said that everyone should have a deep and profound care for others. All societies should maintain human rights for their own survival. A person can survive without food for sometime but cannot live without dignity and honor he said.

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Prof. N. Prakasa Rao explained the project and gave details of the two day event and Ms. EPS Bhagyalakshmi proposed vote of thanks.

**Main Aim of the Series**

Promotion of religious harmony, understanding UDHR and DEIDRB and building good relation with people of different faiths and beliefs etc.

**Objectives of the series**

1. Clear understanding of human rights issues related to faith and belief
2. More knowledge and respect for the faith traditions other than his/her own.
3. To lead to positive change through interpersonal relations

**Session outline****Breakdown of the topics covered and activities per session**

- IARF Statement of purpose
- UDHR
- DEIDRB
- Freedom of Religion and Belief
- Human Rights
- Why does IARF see HRE and Religious Freedom important?

- Three films, preparation and presentation of action play.
- Discussions on Films (two times); Identification of violation of religious freedom and how to resolve them.

### **Methodology employed**

Ice breaking games, lecture and discussions, Group discussions, Question and Answer sessions, Demonstrations, Films etc.

### **Issues rose during each session**

Conversion, Reservations based on religion, Gender differences, Government's intervention in religious issues (E.g. Gujarat), Religious conflicts, Terrorism and extremism, Kashmir issue, Issues of minority, Dress code, Inter caste and inter religious marriages, Registration of marriage etc.

### **Assumptions made**

Since it is a series for two days it is assumed that the discussions will continue throughout the series. Graduate students are knowledgeable; hence level of understanding is very high. Therefore serious topics can be discussed.

### **Risk factors and how they were taken care of**

The identified group had common interest and care was taken while selecting them. Therefore no such problem was reported.

**Learning outcomes: Give detailed report of the outcomes of the session/series as identified by facilitator and participants at the end of each session/series.**

### **Short-term**

1. Graduate class was the group and they were ready to learn about human rights and accepted each other.
2. They could understand the purpose of IARF.
3. Discussion about UDHR, DEIDRB etc were easily done.
4. Religious concerns were easily shared.
5. They could know inter and intra religious issues.
6. Through films, they identified issues like inter religious issues, denial of tribal rights, problems of minority etc.

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### **Long-term**

1. To meet regularly as many times as possible.
2. To join Religious Freedom clubs at colleges with the cooperation of the Head of the institutions.
3. To join peace committee with the help of district administration.
4. To observe all religious festivals.
5. To visit religious places to understand religions better.
6. Home stay program, ie., Christian will stay at Hindu homes and vice versa for one or two days to understand the culture of each religion.

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

**What difficulties were faced?**

No difficulties

**What was the contribution made by the community/communities?**

The college head was cooperative and provided infrastructure like meeting hall for free of cost. Reception was quite encouraging.

**Materials: What films and which sections of the HRE manual/handouts were used in the training sessions.**

Three films were shown. HRE manuals and hand outs were used. IARF's statement of purpose handout was also used.



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

No difficulties were faced. But handouts contains so many sections which are not fully necessary for HRE hence cut short and take important portions.

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

There was no language problem since the participants were under graduate students. However we translated few portions whenever demand arose by the group.

**How did the community receive the learning program?**

They whole heartedly accepted the program

**Did you face any resistance from the community?**

No.

**If you live at some distance from the workshop site, did this pose any challenges to you?**

It caused challenge. But we cope up. We use own vehicles, bus and rickshaw.

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

Yes; because the target group was ready to learn knowledge about human rights. Purposefully we chose the graduating students.

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

It was a women's College and the Age group was between 18 and 22.

**Please write about the attendance of participants at the sessions/series? For example, did you have problems of getting the same people for each session?**

There was no attendance problem. Same groups came together for all sessions.

**a) Which faith traditions attended?**

Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Sindis and Sikhs.

**b) How many people from each faith attended?**

Hindus	-	25
Muslims	-	11
Christians	-	09
Sikh	-	02
Jains	-	02
Sindhi	-	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>50</b>

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**Give details of the gender balance among the participants from these faith groups.**

It was a women's college

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

Yes. 50

**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?**

They arose the topic of discrimination while admission in colleges, based on religion. One participant was victim, however, we could make he understand the reality.

**What ice-breaking/team-building activities did you conduct (Specify)?**

Different groups were formed and elected leaders for each group. Members of each group actively involved in debates, discussions and presentations.

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

Bilkish Ameen Md (Muslim)

Neetu Mishia (Hindu)

Rehana Jain (Jain)

**Name of mediator and the role s/he played**

Dr. D. Ramalakshmi (Head of the Department, Political Science and Public Administration.

**Please give detailed information about participants' feedback and evaluation of the session/series.**

Enclosed separately with photos

**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?**

- The inaugural session could have done simple and in less time.
- Time limit should be given to speakers.
- Since language problem exists translation to vernacular consumes time.

**Please share any further information that you wish to share**

- Special skit should be prepared.
- Posters should be prepared
- Kit should be provided also in vernacular languages
- Films also should be dubbed into vernacular languages.
- Visit to places of religious importance also be added.
- Opportunity must be given participants to stay together from different faith traditions to get closer each other.

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**Participants' Comments (Selected)****Neetu Mishra (18), F, Hindu**

I feel very lucky after attending this workshop and hope not only me but everyone. It led me to take bold steps against the violation of human rights. The way in which sessions were progressed was really appreciable. However I felt that the allotted time was not enough to cover all the areas of the planned sessions. We would definitely forward this knowledge of human rights to many.

**Bilkis Amreen (18), F, Muslim**

I am very much lucky to attend this workshop. It was really a great experience in participating group discussion. It provided a platform to share my views and know more of others. Whatever I have learned from this workshop, especially about human rights and religious freedom, I'll definitely forward to others and I also will follow it.

**T. Jyothsna (18), F, Christian**

I got much knowledge about the human rights and human values. Now I'm able to interact in group activities. I'm also aware about the seriousness of human rights' violations and its protection. I'll try to implement and follow all things what I've learned from the workshop. It would be much better if the organization (IARF) could include case studies and stories from India. Also publishing experiences of participants, especially which are much pressing to gather public support will be much better.

**Priyanka S. (20), F, Jain**



The workshop was a very good learning experience. It was not only informative but also provided interactive sessions with the participants and the facilitator. The topics discussed were relevant and need of hour. This kind of workshops must be done frequently to reap maximum result. The yeoman service done by IARF is appreciable and their commitment is excellent.

**Birti Ishar (18), F, Sikh**



Within this little time I learned so much. It was a pleasure attending the workshop and understanding the degree of the sensitivity of religion and issues related to religion. Discussions and lectures about human rights were impressive. I also learned about different castes, tribes and how discrimination and intolerance exists among us. I want to join this kind of workshops in the future too.

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**Facilitators' Comments**

It is surprising to observe that none of them were aware about HR, UDHR and DEIDBR. The students told that they came to know about human rights only through this work shop and expressed their gratitude to IARF. The group actively participated in group discussions and in the preparation of charts etc. Since the workshop was participatory one it made them to talk freely without any hesitation. As a result many doubts have been clarified and cleared.

The group said that this workshop contributed them something more than the regular studies in the class room. One group said that religion should unite people but misconceptions and misunderstandings of the true word religion was responsible for division among people which will disturb peace and therefore this type of workshops is the need of the day they said

The group strongly felt that it enables them to know their rights and also rights of others and the meaning of the right is possible if it is associated with responsibilities, this workshop enhanced their responsibility to protect the rights.

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The entire group is planned to visit religious places to know more about different religious faiths during vacation. One participant narrated her experience and said that her mother is Christian and father is Hindu and childhood onwards she was under the influence and pressure of both and she was silent to satisfy both since she loves both. Now this work shop gave her clarity and she will tell to the parents to leave her choice as to which religion to be followed and she expressed thanks to IARF.

The group strongly suggested including the problems women as a special issue since they are the worst sufferers in all religious communities. Consciousness and religious responsibility towards protection of environment were also stressed.

All participants were happy with the way the workshop was organized especially they liked the participatory method and discussion through film.

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View Photos @ <http://www.iarfsacc.org/media/photos/index.php?cat=13>