



international association for

religious freedom
belief with integrity

Human Rights Education Workshop
Held at
Government Arts College, Paramakudi, Tamilnadu
On
9th and 10th January, 2013

REPORT

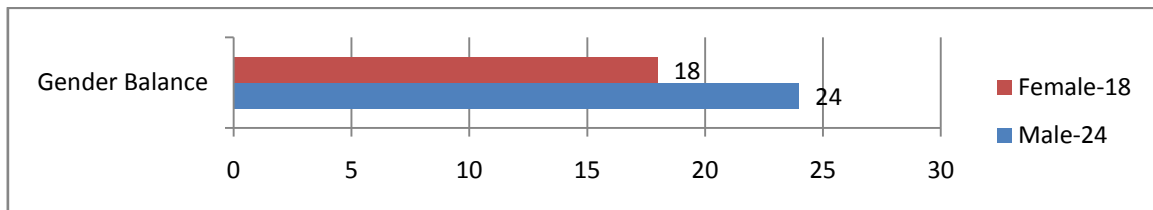
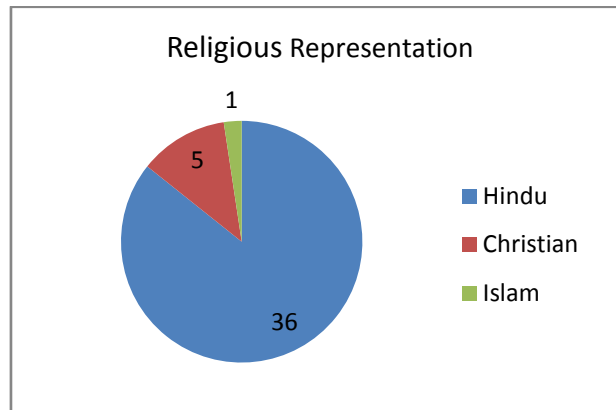
Facilitator: Dr. G. Rajaram



Participants with Facilitator, College Officials and Guests

At a Glance

Venue	: Govt. Arts College, Paramakudi, Tamilnadu
Date	: 9-10 January, 2013
Facilitators	: Dr. G. Rajaram
Number of Participants	: 42
Gender Balance	: Male-24, Female-18
Age Group	: 18-26
Religious Representation	: Hinduism-36, Christian - 5 and Islam -1



Introduction

Paramakudi is the second largest town in the district of Ramanthapuram of Tamilnadu State. It is situated on National Highway 47 just 80 km from Madurai and 85 km from Rameshwaram, a famous Hindu religious pilgrimage center. River Vaigai flows through this city. Hindus, Muslims and Christians live in the city. They live very peacefully and no major religious conflict reported in the recent past. However, the town is often appearing in headlines of leading Newspapers for the reported communal conflicts between upper and lower castes (*Thevar* and *Dalit*). Every September and October, two important religious celebrations of the above castes cause ardent tension eventually resulting in robbery, massacre and abduction.



Government Arts college, Paramakudi strictly follow the admission norms of Government of Tamilnadu and hence students belonging to all religious sects and caste study in the College, which is situated about 2 km from town.

Therefore, it was a challenging task before the IARF SACC to organize a Human Rights Education workshop in the town to sensitize the young people, especially in caste issues. But there is a great need to inculcate the sense of tolerance and appreciation in the minds of young students.

Keeping this task in mind, on 9th and 10th January, 2013, two day HRE workshop was organized at Govt. Arts College, Paramakudi in collaboration with College, Guru Rural Empowerment and Action Trust (GREAT) and IARF SACC. Dr. Thomas Mathew, Chairman SACC inaugurated the program in the presence of Mr. Subramaniam, Vice Chairman, SACC. Principal of the College, Dr. T. Manoharan, presided over the function. Dr. G. Rajaram facilitated the workshop.

Inaugural Session

Prayer	
Welcome Address	: Prof. D. Manoharan, Head, Department of Commerce
Presidential Address	: Dr. T. Manoharan, Principal
Briefing about the workshop	: Dr. G. Rajaram, Facilitator IARF SACC HRE
Inaugural Address	: Dr. Thomas Mathew, Chairman IARF SACC
Felicitation	: Mr. M. Subramaniam, Vice-Chairman, SACC
Vote of Thanks	: Prof. K. Kudalingam, Head, Department of Business Administration

Main Aim

- Sensitize people about the rights of freedom of religion and belief.
- Promote Religious Harmony and Peace in backward state of India.

Objective

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 days program - on 9th and 10th January, 2013 from morning 9.30 am to 5.30 pm

Session outline

1st Session on 9th January at 9.30 am to 1pm)

- Inauguration
- Greetings from the facilitator for joining this learning / action process.
- Introduction of participants and ice-breaking and the expectation.
- Identifying their concerns about intolerance, religious discrimination and 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 1st time and responses after the show.

2nd Session (2 pm 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).
- Majors Human Rights Treaties
- Relate the goals of the participants to the rights describe in the UDHR and DIDRB

3rd Session (on 10th January at 9.30 am to 1 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 and application of HR to prevent such injustices
- Applying HR (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 the film - awakening their awareness
- Inquiry about multiple injustice
- Analyses the injustice within a Human Rights framework.
- Alternative views and application of HR 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 injustice
- 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 works - discussions, lectures, case studies, Audio visual learning and group report presentation.

Issues rose

Hatred, humiliation, intolerance, Religious conflicts, Rights to freedom of religion and belief.

Assumptions

Lower caste Hindu, Muslim and converted Christians are the major population of this state. Sometimes they fight each other and communal tension prevails over the area, therefore this issue raised in the discussion.

Risk factors

Little tension and risks are found in the area in regards to their communal feelings and violation of Human rights.

Expected learning outcomes

Short-term

Participants change their mind set up and oriented and motivated to accept the freedom of religion and 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 and training materials like pad, pen, power point, LCD projector, flip charts, marker pen etc.

Language Problem

There was no language problem (English and Tamil are used)

Location

Govt. Arts College, Paramakudi, Tamilnadu.

Have you already had contact with the Institute?

Yes

Why have you chosen this community/ target group?

It is presumed, tension and misunderstanding present among the young generation of this locality, that's why it is chosen.

How did you ensure the balance of gender, ages etc?

Eighteen (18) Girls and twenty five (24) boys between 18 to 26 years old joined in the program.

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

I inspired and insisted participants to maintain peace and to be calm and patience during discussion. They were allowed to start open and free discussion instead of loud voice.

Did you have ice-breaking /team building activities?

Yes

Which faith traditions attended the program?

Hindus, Christian and Muslim

How many people from each faith attended the program?

1 from Islam, 5 from Christians and 36 from Hindus.

Name of Potential Mediator

Mr. Venkata subramanian.

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.

Participants' Comments



Mr. S. Anand (M), 21, Hindu

Personally, the program was very informative and useful. I could analyze the society, whether it is right or not. After attending the program I have realized that I have more rights and responsibilities. It is very essential to behave well in the society. I'm indebted to IARF and looking forward to attending more such programs.



Ms. G. Manimegalai (F), 26, Hindu

After attending this program I could learn much about human rights and religious freedom. Every student must know these facts. The articles of UN are very supportive and effective. Facilitator was kind enough to explain everything in detail. The program is very essential in everyone's life. All sessions were very useful.



Mr. Sameem Ansari S. (M), 22, Islam

Before attending this workshop I was not aware about in detail of human rights. This is for the first time I'm attending a workshop. I'll try my level best to follow human rights and respect others. I'll share this knowledge with my family and friends. Ultimately all are human, in spite of their religious differences.



Ms. K. Deni Sahayam (F), 21, Christian

The program was very helpful to understand human rights and religious freedom. The documentaries were very useful and communicated thoroughly to us. I'll help many to know this truth and necessity of leading a peaceful life.



Ms. S. Maria Gracy (F), 20, Christian

This program was very useful. The content of the sessions were very important and highly relevant to the contemporary society. Facilitator was very friendly and approachable. Thanks a lot to IARF for organizing this wonderful program. We must help and promote others. I'll earnestly work for a just society.

Click the link to view Photos

<http://www.iarfsacc.org/media/photos/index.php?cat=89>