

JEA SA

**Democracy, Constitution
and
Human Rights Education:
Need of the hour**

Starting point

UNITY IN DIVERSITY
OF IDENTITIES

WHAT KIND OF UNITY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

DIVERSITY IN IDENTITIES IS A BASIC FEATURE OF INDIA

- **POLITICAL:** Politically a federal state with 29 states and 9 union territories
- **SOCIAL:** Around 3000 castes and 25,000 sub-castes + 645 distinct tribes
- **RELIGIOUS:** Birthplace of 5 major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Ajivikas and Sikhism + 2 major religions from outside, Christianity and Islam, since 1st century A.D. and 7th century A.D respectively
- **CULTURAL:** 122 major languages and 1599 other languages

**GIVEN THIS CONTEXT:
TWO QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT KIND OF UNITY
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT**

1. Is it negating diversity by amalgamating different identities of the country into one single (majoritarian) identity? ...**Uniformizing into single (majoritarian) identity?**

2. Is it recognizing, respecting and celebrating the diversity of different identities while at the same time binding them together into forming one composite wholeness? ... **Unity in Diversity of Identities?**

**OBVIOUSLY THE LATTER DUE TO ITS
MULTIFACETED RICHNESS!**

What is the binding basis of
the diverse identities in the country?

THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION –
ITS VISION, VALUES & PRINCIPLES:

**SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

recognizing diversity and inclusiveness
& endowing every citizen with inalienable dignity and rights.

How is it a binding basis?

(1) *Why did we choose
“inclusive democracy”?*

The vast diverse and uniquely different socio-cultural realities of India in 1947 dictated our idealistic constitution makers to opt for *inclusive democracy*, as against majoritarian democracy, in order to DIVERSIFY EQUALITY & FREEDOM AMONG ONE AND ALL.

(2) *Why did we choose “egalitarian democracy”, thereby ignoring caste, patriarchy, etc.?*

- Although the caste system is an integral part of Indian society, the framers of our Constitution ignored it and (i) strongly affirmed equality rights and (ii) acted pro-actively in removing the caste disabilities (untouchability).
- Similarly, gender equality was affirmed and promoted.

(3) *Why did we choose “**secularism**”?*

Given the painful background of the wounds of partition which surcharged the atmosphere with communalism, the freedom fighters, **respecting religious diversity**, preferred to build India into a secular Nation.

(4) *Why did we constitute India as a “socialist” republic?*

- It is because of the *(a) economic inequality in the distribution of resources* that India faced at the time of independence and the *(b) massive poverty the vast majority suffered,*

..... we chose a socialist republic that will *(i) diversify the ownership and use of resources, and (ii) adopt the reservation system based on social justice.*

- Hence, the following provisions found place in the Constitution:
 - *Justice: social, economic and political in the Preamble;*
 - *Right to Equality (Art. 14-19);*
 - *Right against Exploitation (Art. 23-24);*
 - *Socio-economic directives in the Directive Principles of State Policy.*

Hence the Message we get: Unity in Diversity is--

- Basic principle of the Indian Constitution
- Valuable principle for nation-building
- Practical principle to provide an atmosphere of safety & security, justice & freedom for the citizens to live and develop.

Why is this principle BASIC, VALUABLE & PRACTICAL?

Unity in Diversity: Basis in Human Dignity & Human rights

The principle of Unity in Diversity ensures:

- *Dignity of all Human Persons*
- *Individual rights: freedom, equality, etc.*
- *Collective rights: group rights*
- *Right to have differences and right to be different*
- *Solidarity rights*
- *Right to live and enjoy rights together as a nation*

Hence the need to cherish, nurture & realize this principle in day-to-day life...HRE is one effective way of doing this.

Part II. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

**What can be its perspective?
What appropriate pedagogy to use?**

I. The WHAT of Human Rights Education

- The core essence of human rights education is our basic belief in HUMAN DIGNITY. It is innate to every human being. In a favourable social environment the seed sprouts, grows, flowers and blossoms. *Human rights education does not aim at creating human dignity as such, but providing favourable conditions to enable this dignity blossom to its fullness.*
- This means that this HRE is an enabling process that:
 - *develops and sharpens one's sensitivity* towards of human beings as persons with dignity, and, therefore, as persons endowed with rights, and at the same time...
 - *shoulders one with responsibilities or duties* towards protecting, defending and promoting the rights of others.

- This means that certain changes are expected to happen at various levels:
 - ✓ The way we & they ***feel*** about and towards others
 - ✓ The way we & they ***think*** about others
 - ✓ The way we & they ***develop attitudes*** towards others
 - ✓ The way we & they ***speak and write*** about others
 - ✓ The way we & they ***value the importance*** of others
 - ✓ The way we & they ***fashion for themselves a world-view or vision of life***, of human society, of history, of Nature, and of the whole Universe.

II. The WHO in the Choice of Social Groups

- The text books of human rights education will focus on certain social groups like the *poor, dalits, children, tribal, women, refugees, minorities, unorganised workers and environment.*

Why do we choose these groups as important SUBJECTS (not objects) for human rights education?

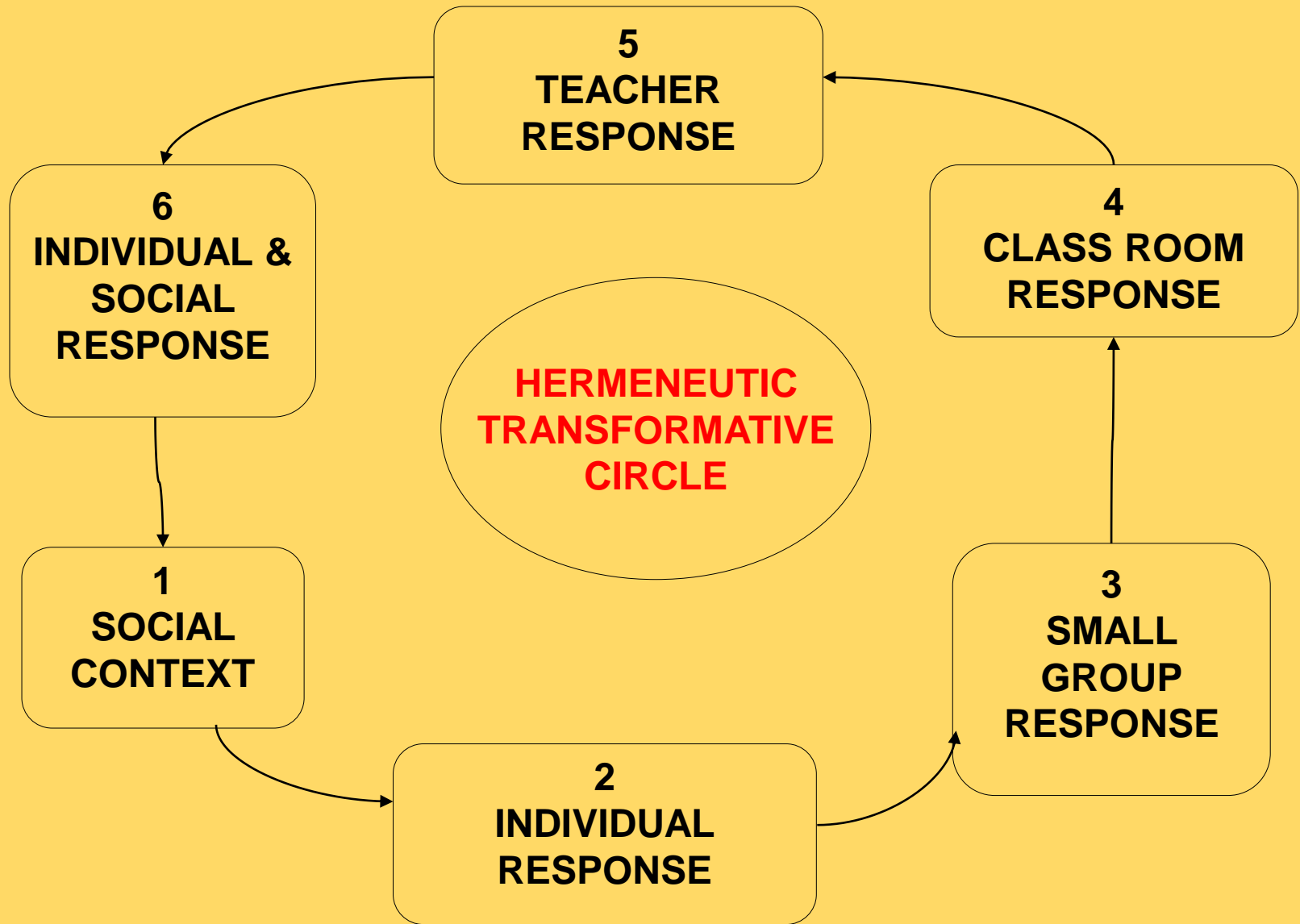
- The simple and humanistic answer is that they *suffer the loss of their dignity and the denial of their rights more than others.* The effects are exclusion from the mainstream of life, and alienation from themselves and from life itself. *This causes deep inner pain and suffering in them.*
- *Such deep pain and struggle is the foundational experience and motivating factor for people who believe in humanism* to do something for such marginalized people. Besides, *it is a motivating factor for our moral and social responsibility towards the young, that is, to create a sense of thirst for humanness rooted in dignity and rights among the younger generation.*

III. The Pedagogical Process of Human Rights Education – 6 stage cycle

The methodological process of human rights education can be described in terms of:

(a) a participatory, hermeneutic, transformative circle

(b) having six interrelated moments, thereby consisting of a six stage cycle:



(1) Individual contextual experience - The student is enabled to encounter with the social context through the medium of the syllabus content (stories, events, incidents, bio-sketch, etc.).

(2) Individual response - The student is enabled to do interpretative dialogue with the social context and with herself/himself on the basis of the messages and questions arising from this context and from within herself/himself.

(3) Small group response - An interpretative dialectical process of sharing, analysis and reflection of students in small groups.

(4) Classroom response - Similar process as above takes place now in the class room.

(5) Teacher response - An interpretative synthesis by the teacher based on the collective contribution of the students.

(6) Individual and social transformative response: A transformative response, which effects changes within the students and in the social context.

The Outcome of HRE Process

Self-Transformation

(oneself--moral, spiritual, human)



Socio-cultural Transformation

(immediate socio-cultural
surroundings)



Political Transformation

(world at large: regional, national, global)



PART III. IN SCHOOL EDUCATION MINISTRY

**WHAT ARE OUR PRESUPPOSED
CONVICTIONS/BELIEFS?**



1. Who are we? → IDENTITY

Congregational / Clerical – Christian

– Caste – Ethnic – Citizenship →

Political entity in public sphere -

concerned about negative &

positive power relations in society

→ Upholder of Human

Rights/Duties?

2. What are we? —→ BELIEFS

**Personal – Caste - Ethnic —
Religious & Moral — As citizen we
have Constitutional Rights/Duties:
(Fundamental Rights/Duties & Directive
Principles of State Policy)
as our Beliefs ?**

**3. For whom are we LIVING & DOING? →
UNIVERSAL OPTION & PREFERENTIAL OPTION?**

4. ARE WE ENGAGED IN:

Religious services only? – Secular services only ?
– Charitable services only? - **Moral & Social
Conscience Reflectors on behalf of the
EXCLUDED & DIVIDED masses?**

***THEN value based Human Rights/Duties matter
much in our School Education Ministry!***

5. What we need to do?

INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

- Education Service Providers (need based) - at civil society level
- Systemic HRts Interventionists
 - at civil society level
 - at state level

(ISSUE BASED PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
ETHOS / CULTURE)

Concluding words....

Why choose HRE as important Jesuit apostolate?

Keep in mind the greater service of God and the more universal good as the norm for the right course of action.....[*Constitution of the Society of Jesus, nn. 622-623*]

- Choose that part of the vineyard which has *greater need because of the lack of other workers.....*
- Choose that where the *greater fruit will probably be reaped....*
- Choose that where our *indebtedness is greater....*
- Choose those persons and places which, through their own improvement, become *a cause to spread the good accomplished to many others under their influence/guidance (multiplier effect)....*
- Choose to labour more intensely in those places *where the enemy of Christ has sown cockle (Math. 13:24-30).....*



For JEASA

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