

# THE TEACHING OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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The way in which human rights doctrine and consciousness have spread since the end of World War II is one of the cultural phenomena of all history. Never in historical experience has there been a universal acceptance of minimum norms in relation to individual rights comparable to the Universal Declaration, and never in history has the awareness of such a norms permeated so widely through the global community. The fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration is thus an opportune time for us to take stock of the concept and of the means of bringing it to as wide an audience as possible.

There are heavy responsibilities on our generation that the momentum of this forward movement is not lost and that we build securely and confidently on the foundation we have been privileged to inherit.

## The Living Body of Human Rights

Human rights learning becomes so much empty rhetoric if it remains the monopoly of lawyers and human rights activists. It is said of many branches of the law that the law in the field, the living law as practised in the community, comprises by far the vast bulk of the real law. The law we see in the books is only the tip of the iceberg. The law as it is reaches deep down into the living community in a way which book learning does not reflect. For example, for every case of contract that ends up in the courts or the law reports, millions of contracts are entered into daily in any large city which never surface in that formal fashion.

If this is so in relation to law, it is much more so in regard to human rights. They are much more part of the living fabric of community life and need hence to be more widely known.

Foremost amongst the ways in which we can conserve and enrich this inheritance is education. Such attempts at all levels of the community from one end of the spectrum to the other, and all the way in between, a vital need exists for more education on human rights. It is wrong to assume that there is

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