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*Human Rights and Women*





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# Role of NGOs in Protection of Human Rights

● Praveen Ghodeswar

The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 and the subsequent adoption of UN Human Rights instruments marked an area of concerns for promoting universal respect for observance of human rights for all. There were unprecedented developments in formation of civil & political rights and rights of marginalized groups like women, SC STs, children, minorities, refugees, migrant labours, third gender etc. The concept of human rights has not developed overnight; it is the result of contributions of several civilizations and states. It has its own course of development at the national, regional and international level. It is the outcome of the contributions, aspirations and experience of generations.

We are aware that Indian constitution has conferred certain fundamental rights on the citizens of the nation. The purpose behind conferring these rights is to assure the citizens about equality and equal protection of law. In the developed as well as developing countries, people enjoy fundamental rights, which help them to live their lives with dignity. It means certain rights are necessary to live with dignity. It's a very basic principle. However, millions of people around the world do not have this fundamental right, which is the basis of all human rights. Human rights include the rights to live, food, shelter, freedom of expression and freedom from violence, religious freedom etc. they are the part of our daily life. They are about how we live individually and in the community. All these human rights are explained in the Universal Declaration of Rights.

The United Nations adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and covenants on different issues of humanity. Only after the formation of the United Nations, Human rights are recognized formally and universally. The term human rights denote all those rights, which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings. In other

words human rights being eternal part of the nature of human beings are essential for individuals to develop their personality, their human qualities, their human intelligence, talent and conscience and to enable them to satisfy their spiritual and other higher needs. Every human being has right to live and live with dignity. The person has to protect his property and personality. Human beings differ from each other, but the concept of human rights implies that all human beings are equal and have to be treated alike irrespective of their religion, caste, creed, colour, gender, race, place of birth and so on.

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been major force in the human rights movement throughout the world over the last half century. They are plying a valuable role in the promotion, protection and implementation of human rights all over the world. The NGOs have been given consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations by the article 71 of the UN charter. There are more than 2500 NGOs who have consultative status with ECOSOC. NGOs have been active in promotion of human rights at the international level since the establishment of UN in 1945. They have played a crucial role in achieving the inclusion of human rights standards in the UN Charter. Since 1960s the influence and reach of NGOs has increased substantially.

Apart from promoting knowledge of and respect for human rights among the masses, fighting against individual violations of human rights, offering direct assistance to those whose rights have been violated, providing platform for the general public to raise human rights standards and providing effective legal aid services at the national level, the NGOs are also engaged in contributing towards the promotion of human rights at international level. According to Minnesota Advocates for human rights, the contribution of NGOs in the field of human rights can be categorized as Setting standards, Documenting violations and Lobbying for an effective enforcement.

The NGOs have been instrumental in setting international human rights standards. NGOs were instrumental in achieving the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The NGOs have significantly contributed in the drafting process of UDHR also. NGOs have also played a noteworthy role in the development and evolution of international human rights law through various treaties, conventions and declarations. Several UN human rights conventions pressed by the NGOs have