

**CIVICS Unit-4**
Human Rights and UNO

Dear Students

Warm Greetings, now we are going to learn about – *Human Rights*

Introduction

Everybody is born equal. Each individual in the world has the right to lead a dignified life of his or her own choice. Human rights are related to individuals and society. Human rights denotes all those rights that are inherent and ensure that we live as free people and exercise our choices. The state's role is to ensure that people have equal rights.

What are Human Rights?

Human Rights are rights inherent to all human beings regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language and religion. Human rights include freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression and fair trial, the right to life work and education.

Where do Human Rights come from?

A set of basic rights and freedoms has deep roots in European and American countries.

a. Written Precursors of Human Rights Documents

- **The Magna Carta of 1215(England)** – gave people new rights and made the king subject to the law.
- **The Petition of Right 1628(England)** – set out the rights of the people.
- **The Habeas Corpus Act of 1679(England)** – an act for the better securing liberty of the subject.
- **The English Bill of Rights of 1689** – set out certain basic civil rights.
- **The French Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizen 1789** – a document of France, stating that all citizens are equal under the law.
- **The US Constitution and Bill of Rights 1791** - safeguards the rights of the citizens.

b. The Birth of United Nations

The idea of human rights emerged stronger after the Second World War. This War led to unimaginable violation of human rights. During the times of war, human lives lost its value and those affected by war had to struggle till the end of their life. Atrocities during the Second World War made clear that previous efforts to protect individual rights from government violations were inadequate. The rights of man were prevented or eliminated in several parts of the world due to several factors. It is proved that the government of some countries alone could not protect human rights. People wanted to ensure that never again would anyone be unjustly denied life, freedom, food, shelter, and nationality. These voices



played a critical role in the San Francisco meeting in which the United Nations Charter was drafted in 1945. At this juncture, an International body, the United Nations Organisation (UNO) which was established on 24th October 1945 took up the issue. Human Rights is an important theme in all UN policies and programmes in the areas of peace and security, development, humanitarian assistance and economic and social affairs.

c. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

One of the greatest achievements of United Nations is the creation of human rights law. To advance this goal, the UN established a Commission on Human Rights. The Commission guided by Eleanor Roosevelt's (wife of former US president Franklin D Roosevelt) forceful leadership captured the world's attention. Finally, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. It is a milestone document in the history of Human rights. The Declaration was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in Paris, France on 10th December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217A). In remembrance of every year 10th December is observed as the Human Rights Day and its regular observance commenced from 1950. It is also known as modern International Magna Carta of Human Rights. Its principles have been incorporated into the Constitutions of most of the (more than 185) nations. UDHR has been translated into more than 500 languages. It is the most translated document in the world.

Human Rights are based on the values of

- **Dignity** – The right to life, the right to integrity, the prohibition of enforced labour, slavery and degrading punishment.
- **Justice** – The right to fair trial, proportional punishment to crime, the right not to be tried more than once for the same crime
- **Equality** – Equality before law. No discrimination on race, religion, gender, age, ability/disability etc.