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Human Rights Education Initiatives in Ethiopia:
Challenges and Opportunities

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ABBREVIATIONS

UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
CRC	Convention on the Right of The Child
CERD	Convention on The Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CEDAW	Convention on The Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CAT	Convention Against Torture
ICESCR	International Covenant On Economic Social Cultural Rights
OHCHR	Office of High Commissioner For Human Rights
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic Of Ethiopia
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
APAP	Action Professionals Association For The People
FSCE	Forum on Street Children Ethiopia
SAHRE	Society for The Advancement of Human Rights Education
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
UN	United Nations
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council

INTRODUCTION

Almost all states around the world have ratified the ICCPR and ICESCR in which the main human rights standards are stipulated. Many have accepted the other relevant international human rights instruments including CRC, CERD, CEDAW and CAT. Many have also incorporated human rights provisions in their Constitutions.

Ethiopia is one of the countries that have ratified all the major human rights instruments mentioned above. However human rights problems involving civil and political rights are still occurring including problems related to Economic and Social rights, as there is widespread extreme poverty through out the country. There are also quite a number of traditional practices and attitudes that seriously violate the rights of women and children in particular.

Though there is no comprehensive and systematic survey conducted, one may presume that a lot of people around the world, and in Ethiopia too, are not aware of or do not articulate their rights as a human being. And this lack of awareness has contributed a great deal to the existence of various types of human rights violations in different countries including Ethiopia.

This situation has undoubtedly called for an action to help people become aware of their rights by using Human Rights Education. Since recently, the importance of human rights education was given recognition worldwide, particularly after the World Conference on Human Rights (1993). In this Conference human rights education was even considered as prerequisite for the enjoyment of other human rights and, therefore, making it the responsibility of the states to carry out such programmes.

In a number of countries interventions in human rights education has been tried by NGOs as well as government agencies. In Ethiopia, too, human rights education is being carried out since a few years back, and more precisely after the military communist government is toppled down in 1991. Though human rights education activities in Ethiopia are at a rudimentary stage, the theme of this thesis would be reviewing some of the activities in the country.

The thesis contains three chapters. The first chapter tries to identify international conventions, declarations and other documents that are incorporating statements concerning human rights education. It is concerned about clarifying what human rights education means as well as defining its scope. It goes on by discussing whether human rights education is human rights as many writers claim to be. Here the provisions of the binding instruments are reviewed in attempt to find the answer. The same chapter talks about the content, targets, and methodology of human rights education. The relationship between civic education and human rights education is also another area of discussion in attempt to define

their difference and similarity. Finally the UN Decade for Human Rights Education is reviewed along with its implication in human rights education interventions in a particular country.

Chapter two is entirely devoted to the Ethiopian experience with regard to human rights education. Here, the domestic normative framework concerning human rights education is reviewed. The larger portion of the chapter however dwells on how different actors are carrying out human rights education work concerning the content, targets, strategies, methodology, evaluation, impact and other related issues. Chapter three tries to amplify the challenges that could be faced by any actor involved in human rights education in Ethiopia. Such as how one could effectively use human rights education for betterment of the life of the marginalized, the effect of globalisation and some of the challenges from culture and religion. The role of the Government and the human rights NGOs is also questioned as long as what is ideally needed from a human rights education is an empowering one.

Methods used for the research

Generally the thesis is aimed at showing the experiences in Ethiopia with regard to human rights education as well as some challenges and opportunities that might be faced while carrying it out. It basically reviews what is being done with regard to human rights education by the government as well as some local human rights NGOs operating in the country.

The following methods are substantially employed to collect information relevant for the study.

Desk study: The majority of the resources used include books and periodicals available at the Rauol Wallenberg Institute. Reports and documents from Ethiopian human rights NGOs are also used including Relevant materials from the Internet. *(All documents cited here from the Internet were available on the web as at December 6, 2002)*

Interviews: Through structured interview, staff of the relevant Government agencies and local human rights NGOs in Ethiopia were interviewed on the overall work of their respective organizations with regard to human rights education. Some staff members of donor agencies were also contacted.

Data collection: Data collection (interviews) was conducted from August 15 to September 10, 2002 in Ethiopia. However some problems were encountered. An attempt to contact some more human rights NGOs (there are not many however) was not successful. Relevant personnel of many other donor agencies could not be accessed due to various reasons.

CHAPTER I. (PROBLEM OF) DEFINING THE MEANING AND SCOPE OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

1.1. THE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

1.1.1. Binding Instruments

Some writers seem to agree that the right to human rights education is recognized in many international/regional human rights instruments.¹ They claim that the idea of human rights education has been in existence as far back as the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.² Art 26(2) of the UDHR provides:

“...education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for maintenance of peace.”

In the preamble of the UDHR it is also stated that every individual and every organ of society shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for the rights and freedoms set forth in the text. In this instrument even though the phrase human rights education is not explicitly mentioned, it is widely held that the substance of the provision definitely includes human rights education.³ The subsequent binding international human rights instruments add even more elements to the concept. The ICESCR, for instance, stipulates that state parties;

“...agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all

¹ See for instance, Gudmundur Alfredsson, *The right to human rights education*, Eds, Asbjorn Eide, Caterina Krause and Allan Rosas, *Economic, social and cultural rights-A text book*, Kluwer Academic publishers, 1995. Pp.213-228, Upendra Baxi, *Human rights education: the promise of the Third Millennium?* eds, George J. Andreopoulos and Richard P. Claude, *Human rights education for the Twenty First Century*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, pp. 142-154, and Janusz Symonides, *The state duty to promote human rights education* eds, Sia Spiliopoulou Akermark, *Human Rights Education: Achievements and Challenges* Institute for human rights, Abo Akedemi University, 1998 PP. 11-30

² Gudmundur, *supra note 1*, page 215

³ Gudmundur, Upendra Baxi and Janusz Symonides, *supra*, at note 1.

persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups and further the activities of the United Nations for maintenance of peace.”⁴

The Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) also contains similar more detailed phrases. Under Article 29 it is provided that:

“...States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.”⁵

Other basic international human rights instruments, such as the CERD⁶, CEDAW⁷, CAT⁸ and The ILO Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal

⁴ Art 13 of ICESCR

⁵ see also General Guideline Regarding the Form and Content of Reports to be Submitted by States under CRC, *Human rights education and human rights treaties*, available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm>

⁶ Article 7 of CERD: ‘...state parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture, information with the view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting, understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations, racial or ethnical groups, as well as to propagating the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the UDHR, the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of All Forms of Racial discrimination and this convention.’

See also the General Guideline Regarding the Form and Content of Reports to be Submitted by States under the CERD, *Human rights education and human rights treaties*, available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm>

⁷ Article 10 of CEDAW stipulates that ‘state parties agree to eliminate any stereotyped concept of the role of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by revision of text books and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods.’

⁸ Article 10 provides that states ‘... shall ensure that education and information regarding the prohibition against torture are fully included in the training of law enforcement personnel, civil or military, medical personnel, public officials and other persons who may be

Peoples in Independent Countries (No.169)⁹ also provide about human rights education.

Perhaps the only human rights instrument that more clearly stipulates about human rights education and a duty of the state to provide it is the African Charter on Human and People Rights¹⁰. It provides that state parties to the charter ‘... shall have the duty to promote and ensure, through teaching, education and publication, the respect of the rights and freedoms contained in the ... charter and to see to it that these freedoms and rights as well as corresponding obligations and duties are understood.’¹¹

1.1.2. Non Binding Instruments

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993)

On 25 June 1993 the World Conference on Human Rights adopted with out a vote the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. This is the first international document, which gives such a prominent plan to human rights education.¹²

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action contains paragraphs making special reference to human rights education.¹³ It elaborates much on what human rights education means and what it should contain and whom it may target. It makes statement that human rights education training and public information is essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. It further recommends, by endorsing the World Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy adopted by the Montreal Congress,¹⁴ that states

involved in the custody, interrogation or treatment of any individual subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment.’

⁹ Article 31 of the Convention states that ‘educational measures shall be taken among all sections of the national community, and particularly among those that are in most direct contact with the peoples concerned, with the object of eliminating prejudices that they may harbour in respect of these peoples. To this end, efforts shall be made to ensure that history text books and other educational materials provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of these peoples.’

¹⁰ ‘*The Bells of Freedom: With resource material for facilitators of non-formal education and 24 human rights echo sessions*’, Action Professional’s Association for the People (APAP), 1996, p.5

¹¹ Article 25 of The African Charter on Human and People Rights

¹² Janusz Symonides, *supra note 1*, p. 25

¹³ See paragraphs 78-82 of *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*

¹⁴ Convened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at Montreal from 8 to 11 March 1993, and the statement by the Congress notes that ‘education for human rights and democracy is itself a human right, and a prerequisite for the realization of human rights, democracy and social justice.’

develop specific programs and strategies for ensuring the widest human rights education and dissemination of public information, taking particular account of human rights needs of women.

The Plan of action for the United Nations decade for human rights (1994)

A comprehensive definition of human rights education is rather provided in The Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. The Plan of Action, taking together the UDHR, ICESCR, CRC and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action has formulated a definition for human rights education as follows;

“Human rights education may be defined as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of *knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes* which are directed towards,

- a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of dignity.
- c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups,
- d) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society,
- e) The furtherance of activities of United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”¹⁵

Whereas this document is not binding on states, it only elaborates and summarises, as the document itself declares, what has been already stated in the different binding international instruments mentioned earlier.

UNESCO documents

UNESCO has been involved extensively on human rights education and there are a number of declaration and recommendation specific to Human rights education to its credit. The major ones are: Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974), Declaration On Fundamental Principles Concerning The Contribution Of Mass Media To Strengthening Peace And International Understanding To The Promotion Of Human Rights And To Countering Racialism, Apartheid And Incitement To War

¹⁵ The Plan of Action of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, Paragraph I (2)

(1978), The International Congress On Teaching Of Human Rights (1978)¹⁶, The International Congress On Human Rights Teaching, Information And Documentation(1987), And World Plan Of Action On Education For Human Rights And Democracy(1993). In particular, The Vienna Declaration And Program Of Action endorsed the latter.

General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights resolutions

It is the General Assembly of the UN that declared the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 1995 the United Nations decade for human rights education.¹⁷ In this resolution and subsequent ones the general assembly recognized human rights education as a human right.¹⁸ Apart from defining some aspects of human rights education it urges every time that governments should implement the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, and also calls up on human rights bodies to monitor the implementation. Resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights also dealt with similar issues.¹⁹

1.2. IS HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION A HUMAN RIGHT?

As discussed in the previous section, some writers cite UDHR and ICESCR as two most relevant human rights instruments recognizing human rights education as a human right. In both instruments similar words are employed to provide for the right to education that it ‘shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect human rights and fundamental freedoms’

Though there is no specific phrase as ‘human rights education’ referred to in the instruments, the understanding held by different writers is that the right to human rights education is implied in the provisions. But one may still question whether or not human right education is clearly and legally recognized as a human right to be claimed by everyone, excluding non-binding subsequent instruments, particularly the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action and General Assembly Resolutions.

¹⁶ This was the first of the series of congresses devoted to human rights education. For the first time, human rights educators, activists and government officials met to discuss various questions linked to the development of human rights teaching. See Janusz Symonides, *supra note 1*, PP. 11-30

¹⁷ General Assembly Resolution No. A/RES/49/184 available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/education/reschr.htm>

¹⁸ Not more than seven Resolutions were issued by the General Assembly to date.

¹⁹ See Commission on Human Rights Resolution Nos. E/CN.4/RES/1994/51, E/CN.4/RES/1995/47, E/CN.4/RES/1996/44, E/CN.4/RES/1998/45/1999/64, E/CN.4/RES/2000/71, E/CN.4/RES/2001/61, E/CN.4/RES/2002/74. Available also at <http://www.unhchr.ch/education/reschr.htm>

Moreover the relevant provisions in UDHR and ICESCR seem to state about only education. If at all there is recognition of human rights education, it appears that it will only be exercised with in formal education framework. The paragraph that immediately follows indeed stipulates about the full realization of the right to education in the primary, secondary and higher education level. The CRC substantially talk about education in terms of learning in schools. CEDAW also seems to focus on formal education. The CAT, however, enumerates a variety of target groups that should be aware of the provisions of the Convention.²⁰ Therefore in a country like Ethiopia, for instance, where formal education is at the lowest level and adult literacy at 39.1%,²¹ there would be no chance of access to human rights education for the bulk of the population. The Revised Guideline Regarding the Form and Contents of Reports to be Submitted by State Parties Under Articles 16 and 17 of the ICESCR doesn't for instance elaborate on the subject of human rights education.²²

On the other hand, some statements on human rights education can be observed in other international instruments, but still not in the substantive provisions. The General Guideline Regarding the Form and Content of Reports to be Submitted by State Parties Under Art 44, paragraph I (b) of the CRC provides for instance about the translation of the Covenant and its dissemination to different groups such as immigrant groups and refugees, publicizing the document, organizing education on the convention to public officials and professional groups such as teachers, police, judges prosecutors, lawyers, medical doctors, social workers etc, The General Recommendation No. 6 adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women recommended to state parties 'to take appropriate steps to ensure the dissemination of the convention, the reports of the state parties under article 1 and the reports of the committee in the language of the state concerned'. CERD also contain some relevant statements. The General Guideline Regarding the Form and Contents of Reports to be Submitted by State Parties Under Article 9, paragraph 1 of the convention requires that state reports to provide as much information as possible on each of the main subjects which are; education and teaching, Culture and Information. Still the above instruments do seem to focus on general state obligation rather than highlighting human rights education as a human right to be claimed by every one.

²⁰ It provides that; '*... education and information regarding the prohibition against torture are fully included in the training of law enforcement personnel, civil or military, medical personnel, public officials and other persons who may be involved in the custody, interrogation or treatment of any individual subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment.*'

²¹ See UNDP Human Development Report, 2002

²² It only contains the following: 'what difficulties have you encountered in the realization of the right to education? What time related goals and bench marks has your government set in this respect, please indicate the role of international assistance in the full realization of the right enshrined in article 13.' Available also at: *Human Rights Education and Human Rights Treaties*: <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm>

Then, The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, which was adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), has become the most important document for it makes specific reference on human rights education. The document emphasised the importance of incorporating the subject of human rights education programmes and calls up on states to do so. It further noted that education on human rights and the dissemination of proper information both theoretical and practical, play an important role in the promotion and respect of human rights with regard to all individuals with out discrimination of any kind such as race, sex, language or religion, and this should be integrated in the education policies at the national as well as international levels.²³ It also called on all states and institutions to include human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and the rule of law as subjects in the curricula of all learning institutions in formal and non-formal setting. Most importantly, the Plan of Action endorsed the World Plan of Action for Human Rights and Democracy, which declared that *human rights education is itself a human right*.

Can one argue therefore that human rights education is recognized as a human right only during the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (1993) and not as earlier as when the binding instruments are adopted? Since the Conference noted what contents and whom should be targeted by human rights education the question could be answered in the positive. And yet the document by itself is not a binding one. It could only be of legal relevance as long as it is elaborating on what has been already incorporated in the previous binding human rights instruments, and its purpose being simply establishing international consensus. In other words, the Conference may not be creating new binding rights. It is only a document showing the commitment of states towards human rights education based on the previous binding instruments.

For instance many authors mention the World Conference on Human Rights as an authority to determine whether or not human rights are universal, indivisible or interdependent. This might not mean that human rights have never been universal or interdependent before the Conference took place. After all, the preamble of ICESCR had already stated that ‘the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights’ implying the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

Similarly as far as human rights education is concerned there is no intention to be bound unless what the Conference recommended about human rights education is already implied in the already existing binding instruments. Subsequent international documents indeed substantiate the understanding that

²³ The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, Paragraph 33

human rights education as a human right has already been recognized long ago. The Plan Of Action For The UN Decade On Human Rights Education still makes reference to the binding instruments such as UDHR (art 26), ICESCR (art 13), CEDAW (Art.10), CERD (Art. 7) and CRC (art 28) as the basis for the recognition of human rights education as a human right. Moreover, the Recommendations of the mid-term global evaluation of the progress made towards the achievements of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) endorsed by Commission on Human Rights Resolution explicitly states that ‘member states had ratified human rights treaties which contained provisions on human rights education, thereby setting themselves treaty obligation with regard to education in general and human rights education in particular.’²⁴

Janusz Symonides however remains doubtful by enquiring whether the reiteration by the General Assembly of this phrase mean that the right to human rights education is recognized? He further notes:

“ ...when this question was discussed on 5 December 1994 by the committee on Economic, social and cultural rights, doubts were formulated pointing to the fact that until now this right can hardly be found in any human rights instruments. The argument that the very existence of a state obligation to promote human rights education leads logically to the recognition of the existence of parallel rights has been challenged.”²⁵

The same writer suggests some measures to reinforce this ‘emerging’ right such as the acceptance of human rights education more vigorously in constitutions and domestic law,²⁶ the adoption of the Optional protocol to the ICESCR which could give individuals and groups the right to present communications concerning the implementation of Article 13 or the elaboration and adoption of a special instrument dealing with human rights education,²⁷ may be as straight forward as the African Charter for Human and People’s Rights providing clearly the government responsibility for human rights education as well as a unique call for effective human rights education.²⁸

At the moment the role of other international bodies including the Un Treaty Bodies in further elaborating the rights of education is not encouraging hence

²⁴ Commission On Human Rights Resolution 2001/61

²⁵ Janusz Symonides, *supra note 1*, p.29

²⁶The Philippines constitution is the first world wide to proclaim the promotion of human rights as a national goal. See Richard Claude, ‘*Methodologies for human rights education: A project of the independent commission on human rights education.*’ Available at. <http://www.pdhre.org/materials/methodologies.html>

²⁷ Janusz Symonides, *supra note 1*, p.30

²⁸ Bells of Freedom, *supra note 10*, p.5

undermining its status as a human right.²⁹ The UN treaty bodies, while investigating state reports, seldom investigate on the progress made in the field of human rights education from the perspective of the individual right holder in the particular country or the treatment of the right is far from uniform.³⁰ The Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the Right to Education, while investigating human rights in education particularly in formal education, seldom looks in to the right to human rights education as an independent right to be enjoyed by everyone in her periodic and annual reports.³¹ The problem is likely to be complicated further as people would not appreciate human rights education equally as other human rights.

1.3. WHY HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION?

If we were accepting human rights education as a human right, the simplest answer to the reason why we need human rights education would be because we have the right to know our rights.³² The UDHR and ICESCR declare that everyone has the right to education. It was also noted by the General Assembly resolution that human rights education is ‘a prerequisite for the realization of human rights, democracy and social justice.’³³

If human rights education is also implied in the phrase ‘the right to education’, according to General Comment 13 of the Committee on Economic Social Cultural Rights, it is an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities. Education has a vital role in empowering women, safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, and controlling population growth.

The enjoyment of many civil and political rights such as freedom of information, expression assembly and association, the right to vote and to be elected or the right to equal access to public service depends on at least a

²⁹Human Rights Education and Human Rights Treaties, available at:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm>

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ See for instance Annual Report of the Special Rapporteur to the Right to Education for 2002 and the Preliminary Report, 1998, E/CN.4/1999/49, available also at:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/FramePage/SReducation+En?OpenDocument>

³² ‘*Ripple in Still Water: Reflections by Activists on Local- and National-Level Work on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*’, International Human Rights Internship Program, 1997, available also at: <http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/monitoring/ihrip97.html>. See also Bells of Freedom, *supra* at note 10.

³³ Resolution 48/127(1993). Gudmundur also notes that human rights education is always a prerequisite for individuals and groups demanding and enjoying respect for their rights and freedoms. See Gudmundur, *supra* at note 1. P.213

minimum level of education including literacy. Similarly many economic social and cultural rights such as the right to choose work, to receive equal pay for equal work, the right to form trade unions, to take part in cultural life, to enjoy the benefit of scientific progress and to receive higher education on the basis of capacity can only be exercised in a meaningful way after a minimum level of education has been achieved.³⁴ There is also a growing consensus under present international law that tolerance and respect of human rights shall be major characteristics of educated human beings.³⁵

The Guideline for National Plan of Action also mention about education *in* human rights and education *for* human rights to mean that human rights education is not only teaching people about their rights and responsibilities but also teaching people how to respect and protect their rights.³⁶

The purpose of human rights education may not be seen only as a right from the individual perspective. It could also be an obligation in some respects as some of the instruments impliedly explain. For instance, the UDHR and ICESCR stipulate that 'education shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial groups and shall further the activities of the united nation for the maintenance of peace'. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action also stated that human rights education training and public information are essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering of mutual understanding tolerance and peace. The Guidelines For The National Plan Of Action For Human Rights Education mentions the growing consensus that education in and for human rights is essential and can contribute to both the reduction of human rights violations and the building of free, just and peaceful societies. Human rights education is also increasingly recognized as an effective strategy to prevent human rights abuses.³⁷

Does it mean that individuals or some groups have the obligation also to learn about human rights to bring about tolerance or harmonious relations amongst peoples? This is an important issue because it is unlikely that an abusive husband, a racist or communities approving early marriages and FGM will ever be interested in human rights education or demand for it. Indeed CEDAW and CRC enumerate other actors, apart from women and children who should be acquainted with the rights of women and children respectively.

According to the Plan of Action for the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, human rights education shall seek to further effective democratic

³⁴ Manfred Nowak, 'The right to education', eds, Asbjorn Eide, Caterina Krause and Allan Rosas, 'Economic, Social and Cultural rights: A Text Book' Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995, P.189

³⁵ Article 13 of the ICESCR

³⁶ 'Siniko. Towards a Human Rights Culture in Africa A manual for teaching human rights', Amnesty International-International Secretariat, 1999, P. 7

³⁷The Guide Lines for National Plan of Action for Human Rights Education. Paragraph B (12)

participation in the political economic social and cultural sphere and shall be utilized as a means of promoting economic and social progress and people centred sustainable development.³⁸

It was also noted that effective 'human rights education can:

- Produce changes in values and attitudes
- Produce changes and behaviour
- Produce empowerment for social justice
- Develop attitudes of solidarity across issues, communities and nations
- develop knowledge and analytical skills
- Encourage participatory education.³⁹

According to Gudmundur the purpose of human rights education is mainly dual. On the one hand, such education aims of course at promoting the standards, including for example the equality of men and women and the welfare of the child. On the other hand, the instruments demonstrate clear and strong commitments to improving racial, ethnic and religious relations and to strengthening international and internal peace and stability. The multiple link established between human rights education, equal enjoyment of all human rights and non discrimination in that enjoyment are intended to contribute to mutual understanding, tolerance, friendship and harmony between nations and groups.⁴⁰

1.4. WHAT SHOULD BE THE CONTENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION?

Since everyone has the right to know his/her rights, it is logical to conclude that the content of a particular human rights education has to include all human rights provisions incorporated in the various human rights instruments. The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action enumerate as subjects of human rights education ' human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and the rule of law...'⁴¹

Should the content of human rights education limit itself then to topics related only to international bill of rights? Many writers list a number of subjects to be covered in human rights education. Some include dignity, liberty, equal opportunities, equality of sex and the human rights of women, life in a free society, democracy, the rights of the child, elimination of racial, ethnic and religious discrimination, the right of disabled persons, sense of moral and social responsibility, self determination, decolonisation, race and humanitarian law, ⁴²

³⁸ The Plan of Action of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, Paragraph II (7)

³⁹ Ripple in Still Water, *supra* at note 32

⁴⁰ Gudmundur, *supra note 1*, p. 222

⁴¹ Paragraph 79 of The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

⁴² Gudmundur, *supra note 1*, page 223

and even data analysis.⁴³ Teaching about different civilizations, cultures and languages are also recommended to be subjects of human rights education.⁴⁴

In addition to appropriate knowledge and understanding, human rights education operating within a context of the affirmation of the value of human life and dignity, should involve also developing the capacity to care and be compassionate; to commit to the struggle for human rights and to understanding the role non-violent civil disobedience has played in this struggle; to exercise personal responsibility and human agency; to develop the imagination and creativity necessary to envision and create a just and caring community; to develop the critical consciousness necessary to sustain rational judgment; the skills of self-reflection and personal transformation; the courage and strength necessary to sustain the struggle.⁴⁵ The UN definition states, that "human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive life-long process by which people at all levels in development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies,"⁴⁶

Does it mean that human rights education can touch up on other issues that are not strictly related to human rights? Some authors assert that human rights education must include a view of human rights larger than those found only in official enunciation and instruments.⁴⁷

The Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education while defining human rights education notes that human rights education is 'aimed at the building of universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills.'⁴⁸ Indeed manuals on human rights education are incorporating issues other than the mere provision of information of the international human rights instruments. For instance, *Compass - A Manual for Human Rights Educations* contains topics including *activism and the role of*

⁴³Audrey Chapman, Herbert Spierer, and Caroline Whitbeck, '*Science, scientists, and human rights education*', eds, George J. Andreopoulos and Richard P. Claude, '*Human rights education for the Twenty First Century*', University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, p.365

⁴⁴ Gudmundur, *supra* note 1, page 223

⁴⁵Towards A Pedagogy Of Human Rights Education, International Consultation on the Pedagogical Foundations of Human Rights Education, CEDAL, La Catalina, Costa Rica, 22-26 July, 1996, available at: <http://www.pdhre.org/dialogue/costarica.html> , Paragraph 25.

⁴⁶ General Assembly resolution 49/184 of 23 December 1994 proclaiming the Decade for Human Rights Education

⁴⁷ Upendra Baxi, *supra* at note 1, P. 232

⁴⁸ For instance a Cambodian human rights education program also contains communication skills, see Allen s.keller, Sim Kim han, Sam Sopheap, and Gabriel Otterman, '*A Cambodian human rights education program*', eds, George J. Andreopoulos and Richard P. Claude, '*Human rights education for the Twenty First Century*', University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, p.350

NGOs, xenophobia, environment, poverty and even sport.⁴⁹ Another writer notes: 'human rights education must empower people, not only to know their human rights in terms of developing cognitive mastery of information, but must also develop skills to use, assert and vindicate their rights. *Thus human rights education should become ever more mature, moving from accumulating information to empowering people's capacity to act on information.* Such empowering action plans include:

- engaging in networking;
- formulating plans and organizing projects of self-help;
- developing well-informed complaints backed by specific legally grounded human rights claims;
- showing government the people's expectation that human rights will be promoted, respected, and implemented.⁵⁰

The General Assembly Resolution Adopting The Recommendation Of The Mid Term Global Evaluation of The Progress Made Towards The Achievement of The Objectives of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights in addition mentions as contents of human rights education Good Governance, impunity and international criminal tribunals to deal with crimes against humanity, human rights defenders (and the related united nations declaration), racism and discrimination and the link between human rights and development.⁵¹

A staff member of a human rights NGO while discussing experiences gained in Sri Lanka's human rights education, once said:

*'The definition of human rights education as merely a process of teaching human rights concepts and values to enable the general public to become aware of human rights is flawed. Psychological, cultural, and systemic factors contribute to human rights violations, implying that human rights education must go beyond raising awareness to fostering values and skills that will change both individual beliefs and organizational systems that infringe on human rights. Human rights education is not, therefore, merely the teaching of human rights concepts and values but rather a life-long process of reflection and critical analysis of personal and social experiences using the ideals and concepts of human rights as standards to evaluate them.'*⁵²

⁴⁹ See the table of content of the manual at the council of Europe website: <http://book.coe.int/>

⁵⁰ Enhancing Participatory Non-formal Education among Cambodian Human Rights NGOs, A Report with Recommendations for The Asia Foundation, Phnom Penh, March 1999, Richard Pierre Claude, available at: <http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/research/TAFreport.html>

⁵¹ Commission on Human rights Resolution 2001/61

⁵² Felicia I. Yeban, 'Lessons Learned from Sri Lanka: A Survey of Human Rights Education', available at: http://www.hrea.org/lessons_learned/Sri-Lanka.html

The Guideline for National Plan of Action for Human Rights Education also mentions three dimensions of education campaigns through which human rights are promoted and the content of which could be developed accordingly:

‘a) Knowledge: provision of information about human rights and mechanisms for their protection;

(b) Values, beliefs and attitudes: promotion of a human rights culture through the development of values, beliefs and attitudes which uphold human rights;

(c) Action: encouragement to take action to defend human rights and prevent human rights abuses.’⁵³

As in the proceedings of The International Consultation On The Pedagogical Foundations Of Human Rights Education, held in 22-26 July 1996 it was noted that human rights education, among other things, consists in a critical reflection on the historical processes which have brought about the obstacles to the realization of human rights, a critical analysis and understanding of the deeper structures and social and economic forces underpinning the obstacles both in the State and civil society and identification of sites and social agencies for the removal of such obstacles in the processes of social change and transformation. An aspiration of human rights education is to engage individuals and communities dialectically with the struggle against these obstacles. This aspiration requires more than knowledge of the content and mechanisms of international human rights instruments, which is the focus of much traditional human rights teaching. It also involves the nourishment of the human impulse to engage in the struggle for human rights for all people. Human rights education should be approached in a fashion that includes the analysis, understanding and reading of power relations and social forces so as to enable a struggle to change those power relations that impede the full realization of human rights. This struggle joins that for an equitable division of resources; accessibility to knowledge; control over the preservation of land and indigenous cultures; access to employment and healthy conditions of work; demilitarisation of society, elimination of weapons of mass destruction and land mines; reduction of arms transfers and trade; and economic self-determination of peoples, nations, and other groups. In the current international and national political economy, these obstacles are embedded in systemic processes, which human rights education should elucidate, while animating organization of action for the realization of all human rights.⁵⁴

⁵³ The Guideline for National Plan of Action for Human Rights Education Paragraph B (13)

⁵⁴ Towards A Pedagogy Of Human Rights Education, International Consultation on the Pedagogical Foundations of Human Rights Education, CEDAL, La Catalina, Costa Rica, 22-26 July, 1996, available at: <http://www.pdhre.org/dialogue/costarica.html> ,paragraph 25.

From the above enumerated diverse list of contents, it can be observed that the subjects or contents of human rights education could encompass more than a simple provision of information about human rights as incorporated in the international or national human rights instruments. One writer had the opinion that the listing of human rights education needs can, and must be expanded with care, the implication being that human rights education can never be a static body of given knowledge of rights enunciation but must forever remain a dynamic engagement with these knowledge. He further notes that human rights education will be future oriented as well.⁵⁵

As the contents of human rights education are very vast and varied, it makes human rights education almost meaningless or ambitious or making it similar to peace education or+ global education. In an attempt to define the scope of human rights education Felissa Tibbitts mentions that human rights education first of all should always make reference to human rights instruments as its basis.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the plan of action stated that human rights education should be relevant to the daily lives of peoples where as one of the purposes of the Guideline for National Plan of Action for Human Rights Education is to ‘promote a common understanding of the purposes and content of human rights education’ in a particular country ⁵⁷there by diminishing the vast subject of human rights education in to a manageable size. It can also be argued alternatively that there is perhaps no limit in the number or types of subjects to be covered by human rights education. But when carrying it out in a particular community every subject of human rights education will not be the focus but those that are relevant to the problems of the community and target group.⁵⁸

1.5. WHO SHOULD BE TARGETED FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION?

As discussed above neither the ICESCR nor its reporting guideline make any clear reference to human rights education and to whom it should be made available. However Article 13(2) of the ICESCR stipulates that the right to education should be extended to primary, secondary and higher education students. On the other hand, CRC, CEDAW, and CERD for instance mention specific target groups that should be familiarized with the specific rights provided in the respective instruments. Under CERD, for instance, the targets are, students, and (using radio TV and the press) the public, and in particular law enforcement officials.⁵⁹ Under the CRC targeted groups include the general public, parents, teachers, law enforcement officials, immigration officers, judges,

⁵⁵ Upendra Baxi, *supra note 1*., P.149

⁵⁶ Tibbitts F., ‘*Emerging models for human rights education*’, Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/0302/ijde/tibbitts.htm>

⁵⁷ Paragraph D(a)

⁵⁸ See the subsequent discussion on targets of human rights education.

⁵⁹ General Recommendation xiii (adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women)

prosecutors, lawyers, defence forces, medical doctors, health workers and social workers.⁶⁰ The CEDAW targets the general public even though students and teachers could also be implied.⁶¹ CAT targets law enforcement personnel, medical personnel, public officials and others.⁶²

Summarizing the instruments Gudmundur notes that human rights education should be provided at all school levels, politicians, judges, prosecutors, defence attorneys, police, prison guards, other officials engaged in the administration of justice, members of armed forces, parents and journalists, teachers and human rights teachers in particular, and mentions that the list is not exhaustive.⁶³

There is also obligation to provide human rights education for special professional and vulnerable groups. Thus, for instance, the Geneva Convention For The Protection Of Victims Of War (1949), apart from the obligation to publish and disseminate the conventions so that their principles may be known to the entire population, impose on states a far more reaching obligation to undertake necessary educational measures to make them known especially to the armed forces. The Declaration On The Rights Of Disabled Persons (1975) provides in paragraph 13: ‘disabled persons, their families and communities shall be fully informed, by all appropriate means, of the rights contained in this declaration.’ And also in The Basic Principles On The Use Of Force And Fire Arms By Law Enforcement Officials (1990), there is a requirement that the principles should be brought to the attention of law enforcement officials as well as other persons, such as judges, prosecutors, lawyers, members of the executive branch, the legislature and the public.

The Recommendation of the Mid Term Global Evaluation of the Progress Made Towards the Achievement of the Objectives of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education adds other actors to the list of targets such as secular and religious community leaders, HIV patients, people with disabilities, minorities, the elderly and non state actors as multinational corporations, trade and financial organizations (world trade organization, world bank, IMF etc)⁶⁴

Looking at the above list of targets of human rights education, it appears to be difficult to identify individuals or groups who are actually outside of the list. While everyone need to know and has the right to know his/her rights, specific human rights however could need specific targets as the different instruments and reporting guidelines mentioned above recommend. It is also held that successful human rights education efforts should be designed with the knowledge that people

⁶⁰ General Reporting Guideline, CRC

⁶¹ See General Recommendation 6&3 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

⁶² Article 10 of CAT

⁶³ Gudmundur, *supra note 1*, p.224

⁶⁴ Commission on Human Rights Resolution2001/61

tend to learn best what they feel they need to learn information, *which is relevant to their own lives*.⁶⁵

Human rights education could also be critical for some groups such as young children and parents because educational research showed conclusively that attitudes about equality and human dignity are largely set before the age of 10.⁶⁶ Therefore, with simple analogy, it is not an easy task to decide whether we can conclude that the subject of social and economic rights could be more relevant to poor and destitute communities, humanitarian law for war torn areas while non-discrimination or equality could be more relevant in areas where there is racial or ethnic tension. Indeed at national levels we can observe quite different approaches to the use of human rights education in addressing widespread human rights and development challenges which will affect the content and targets of the intervention. For instance in developing countries human rights education is often linked with economic and economic development, and women's rights. In post totalitarian or authoritarian countries, human rights education is commonly associated with the development of civil society and the infrastructures related to the rule of law and protection of individual and minority rights. In older democracies, it is often conjoined favourably with the national power structure but geared towards reform in specific areas, such as penal reform, economic rights and refugee issues.⁶⁷

In other words, it would mean that human rights education is not about knowing all human rights incorporated in all human rights instruments but that which is more relevant to the problems of the individual or a particular group.

1.6. WHAT METHODOLOGY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION?

Again, the substantive articles of international human rights instruments do not mention anything about methodologies to be used in human rights education field. But subsequent international instruments in particular the 1993 World Plan Of Action On Education For Human Rights And Democracy affirmed that human rights education must be 'participatory, creative, innovative and empowering at all levels of society.'

Experts in human rights education field reiterate it in various forums that participatory, interactive methodology is the most relevant and appropriate way to develop skills and attitudes as well as knowledge, in both children and adults.⁶⁸ Lecturing rather emphasises rote learning and memorization, which retard the

⁶⁵ Ripple in Still Water, *supra note* 32

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Tibbits F., 'Emerging models for human rights education', Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/0302/ijde/tibbits.htm>

⁶⁸ 'Siniko. Towards a Human Rights Culture in Africa A manual for teaching human rights', Amnesty International-International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1999. Available at: <http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/Siniko/>

development of important critical thinking and problem solving skills citizens need if they are to participate actively in their societies.⁶⁹ In one workshop it was noted that ‘appropriate and effective strategies for human rights education should emphasize popular and participatory education, that human rights education must be rooted in the lives of learners especially those most marginalized and vulnerable. The educational process should be inclusive, action oriented and empower people and civil society to improve their quality of life and build a culture of peace based on democracy, development mutual understanding and respect.’⁷⁰

Non-formal education for example is considered as one type of participatory method.⁷¹ This method of education supplies the means by which people deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. In this intervention human rights education facilitators must use problem-posing techniques where facilitators and participants are involved in a partnership of mutual cooperation and in which the role of the teacher as ‘know it all’ is abandoned’.⁷²

The human rights educator provides a framework in which thinking, creative, active participants consider a common problem and find solutions. She/he raises questions: why, how, who? The people are active, describing, analysing, suggesting, planning and deciding. Human rights education may also need to be participatory as it may provide a forum for dialogue about, for instance, the fine balance among *culture*, *law* and *freedom* implying that equality is practiced while respecting differences.⁷³ As Lynn Davis observes ‘human rights standards are about balance rather than assertion, balancing the rights of one versus the other, or the other versus social obligation’.⁷⁴ Amnesty International also believes that human rights education creates a space for dialogue and change.⁷⁵ To cite an example, as part of human rights education on women human rights and gender equality, some rural women decided to enter in to a dialogue with their chief, with whom they spent many months discussing equality and the imperatives of women's participation in the decisions that determine their lives in the private and public arenas. The outcome was that the local government held regional council elections and of those who participated in the dialogue with

⁶⁹Edward L. O’Brein, ‘*Community education for law, democracy and human rights*’, eds, George J. Andreopoulos and Richard P. Claude, ‘*Human rights education for the Twenty First Century*’, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, p.420

⁷⁰ Workshop on Asia pacific human rights education organized by the Australian human rights information centre 25 august 1996, Sidney, Australia.

⁷¹ Bells of Freedom, *supra*. At note 10

⁷² Ibid page 12

⁷³ ‘*Circle of Rights. Economic, Social & Cultural Rights Activism A Training Resource*’, International Human Rights Internship Program/Forum-Asia, 2000, p. 400

⁷⁴ Lynn Davis, ‘*Citizenship education and human rights education: key concepts and debates*’, British council, 2000 p.17

⁷⁵ Available at: http://www.web.amnesty.org/web/web.nsf/pages/hre_home

the Chiefs, 22 women ran for office, and eight of them were elected to the 15 seats.⁷⁶

International human rights instruments and human rights training manuals also support the idea that human rights education should be participatory. A number of human rights education manuals and resources emphasise on participatory education. To make the education process actually participatory quite a number of methodologies are suggested. The OHCHR also adopts participatory methods in its training activities particularly for adults.⁷⁷ According to the manual the OHCHR developed, the methods requires an approach, which is *interactive, flexible, relevant* and *varied*.⁷⁸ It also suggests a number of participatory techniques which include: presentation and discussions, panel discussion, working groups, case studies, brainstorming, simulation/role playing, field trips practical exercises, round table discussions, visual aids, and debate.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ 'Human Rights Training: A Manual on Human Rights Training Methodology', OHCHR united nations publication, Available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/pdf/train6.pdf>

⁷⁸ According to the Manual the terms are explained as follows: '*Interactive-* implies the use of a participatory interactive training methodology. Adult trainees most readily absorb human rights course curricula when they are not spoon-fed the material. Rather for effective training, they should be fully involved in the process. As practitioners, the trainees will bring to the course a rich pool of experience, which must be actively drawn on in any interesting and effective course.

Flexible- contrary to certain myths associated with adult training, it is not advisable to adopt a 'military' approach, in attempt to force trainees to participate. The result of such techniques is more often than not the sowing of resentment among trainees and consequently, the closing of effective avenues of communication between trainees and trainers. While a certain level of control should be maintained by the trainer, the first rule should be flexibility. Questions –even challenges–from the audience should be welcomed, and should be addressed by trainers in a positive and forthright manner. Similarly, excessively rigid time keeping can leave participants feeling frustrated and resentful and should be avoided.

*Relevant-*the unspoken question of the trainee through out the course will be: 'what does this have to do with my daily work?' The extent to which the trainer continuously answers this question will be an important measure of his/her success. Every effort must therefore be made to ensure that all material presented is relevant to the work of the audience, and that such relevance is made clear where it is not self-evident. This task may be easier when operational themes are being addressed. It may require more careful preparation, however with respect to more topical themes such as the protection of especially vulnerable groups.

Varied- To secure and retain the active commitment of participants, it is best to vary the teaching techniques used through out the course. Most adults are not accustomed to long classroom sessions, and a tedious and monotonous routine will leave them more conscious of the classroom than of the subject matter. A varied selection of techniques should be used, alternative discussion with role-playing and case studies with brainstorming, as appropriate to the subject matter.'

⁷⁹ Ibid p. 4-5, see also Bells of Freedom, *supra* at note 10 and Nancy Flowers, with Marcia Bernbaum, Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, and Joel Tolman 'The human rights education handbook, effective practices for learning, action and change', University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center, 2000, Available at: <http://www.hrusa.org/hrmaterials/hreduseries/hrhandbook1/toc.html>, see also Allen s.keller, Sim Kim han, Sam Sopheap, and Gabriel Otterman, 'A Cambodian human rights education

Paul O'Brien even goes to the extent of asserting, while discussing his experiences in Kenya, that effective human rights pedagogy '*isn't what we learn - it's how we learn it.*'⁸⁰ He notes that all education seeks to be transformative in two ways--ontologically, changing who we are, and epistemologically, changing what we know. His organization, Rights Awareness Project (RAP) believed that human rights pedagogy should focus more on being ontologically transformative, and spend less time focusing on information. He adds; 'if we could help build anger or hope or love, or a sense of power or trust, if we could spark a dream, or ignite the passion of a group of people to work together, then, we believed, those people would do more to guarantee their human rights than we ever could. Bottom line, we believed that human rights are taken, not given.'⁸¹

While several documents and literatures emphasise on human rights education, particularly training activities, to be participatory, should we then rule out training endeavours that are not participatory as ineffective, or much less effective human rights education interventions? For instance though civic education in schools include some kind of participatory method,⁸² human rights education at higher institutions in many parts of the world may not involve, *as a policy*, participatory methods. It may sometimes depend on individual teacher or instructor. Martin Scheinin, who had experience with undergraduate and postgraduate law students, highlights the importance of participatory human rights education and uses participatory methods in his teachings. Admitting that encouraging participation of the audience is accepted for pedagogic reasons he argues that participatory learning is more crucial for human rights training because it creates commitment and transforms legal technicalities to practical action.⁸³

Nevertheless some human rights education interventions such as the use of posters, leaflets obviously may not involve the audience actively. Where as human rights awareness raising programmes through the medium of Radio, TV and the press is recommended by a number of international instruments such as CERD⁸⁴,

program', eds, George J. Andreopoulos and Richard P. Claude, '*Human rights education for the Twenty First Century*', University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, p.351

⁸⁰ Paul O'Brien '*Lessons learned from Kenya: effective human rights pedagogy: it isn't what we learn - it's how we learn it*', available at: http://www.hrea.org/lessons_learned/Kenya.html

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² See some examples in Felisa Tibbitts, '*Case studies in human rights education: examples from Central and Eastern Europe*'. Available at: <http://www.hrea.org/pubs/HRECasestudies/>

⁸³ Martin Scheinin, '*Experiences of teaching human rights with law students and professional targets groups*' eds, Sia Spiliopoulou Akermark, '*Human Rights Education: Achievements and Challenges*' Institute for human rights, Abo Akedemi University, 1998, pp.49-50

⁸⁴ See the Reporting Guideline of CERD

it is very unlikely to arrange a dialogue with the audience to make it participatory in the traditional way.

1.7. CIVIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

From the foregoing we have seen that human rights education deals with such issues as democracy and participation. Such topics, on the other hand, are also included in the curricula of civic education and other subjects in various countries including Ethiopia. Therefore a discussion on civic education might be necessary to show whether or not human rights education and civic education are related.

To look for solutions it would perhaps be appropriate if we start with some definitions.

About Citizenship education:

“ Citizenship or civic education is construed broadly to encompass the preparation of young people for the roles and responsibilities as citizens. The purpose of citizenship education in school and colleges is to make secure and to increase the knowledge, skills and values relevant to participative democracy; also to enhance the awareness of rights and duties and the sense of responsibilities needed for the development of pupils in to active citizens. Civic education is to develop knowledge, skills attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens ...and to develop in students a capacity to exercise judgements in matters of morality, ethics and social justice”⁸⁵

“Education for citizenship is concerned with both the personal development of students and the political and social development of society at local, national, and international levels. On personal levels citizenship education is about integration into society. It is about overcoming structural barriers to equality: challenging racism and sexism in institutions, for instance.... On political level and social level it is about creating a social order that will provide security without the need for repression. Education for Citizenship includes learning about human rights and responsibilities and will develop;

- social and moral responsibility*
- community involvement*
- political literacy”⁸⁶*

⁸⁵Lynn Davis, *supra* note 74 , p.5

⁸⁶ Ibid

On the other hand the following has been said about human rights education:

*'human rights education shall be defined as training dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of the universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes.'*⁸⁷

' the aims of human rights education are :

-fostering the attitude of tolerance, respect and solidarity inherent in human rights

-providing knowledge about human rights, in both their national and international dimensions and the institutions established for their implementation.

*-Developing the individual's awareness of the ways and means by which human rights can be translated in to social and practical reality at both national and international level.'*⁸⁸

*'Human rights education should include peace democracy development and social justice as set forth in international and regional human rights instruments in order to achieve common understanding and awareness with the view of strengthening commitment to human rights'*⁸⁹

*'Human rights education is the effort through the combination of content and process, to develop in school students of all ages an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, to sensitise them to the rights of others and to encourage responsible action to safe guard the rights of all in school and the wider world.'*⁹⁰

While it is possible to see similarity or interrelationship between human rights education, Lynn Davis however identifies some differences between the two.⁹¹ According to writer the first difference is that civic education would be taught more with in a contextual framework that is, if citizenship education is the preparation to being a good citizen, then the country with in which civic education is being thought (i.e., the country's historical, political and economic realities) must be considered at an early stage while human right education can be based on convention which have been translated in to multiple languages. Secondly it involves in the precise area of learning tackled and curriculum domain. As the

⁸⁷ The Plan of Action of UN Decade for Human Rights Education

⁸⁸ UNESCO International Congress on the Teaching of human rights, 1978

⁸⁹ The World Conference on Human Rights, 1993

⁹⁰ Development Education Associates, Lynn Davis, *supra note* 74

⁹¹ *Ibid*, P.14

writer remarks; ‘... while the triumvirate of knowledge/understanding values and skills will underpin both civic education and human rights education, it is clear that the knowledge base in particular will differ. Civic education will entail learning about the political structure and constitution of a country. Human rights education will entail learning about the international declarations and conventions as well as particular national versions. The values dimension will differ much across countries, depending on the value base both to being ‘citizen’ and to the degree of flexibility of critical reflection encouraged across values in each country. If there is perceived to be a vacuum around the values then human rights provide a framework. But if there is a religious code in existence, then the introductions of the convention may be secondary. It would mean that the discussion around values in human rights education is likely to be focussed on the implications from international conventions. However there is far less comparative research specifically about how countries interpret human rights than about how they interpret civic education...’⁹²

Another debate would be which of the two is the umbrella curriculum. Should citizenship education ‘contain’ human rights or human rights form framework in which to discuss issues of citizenship and identity and so on or do both come under the broad heading of democracy? There seems to be no clear-cut answer. For instance both human rights education and civic education could mean the same thing in the following understanding.

“ Citizenship education means belonging to a democratic community, accepting the rights and duties entailed by their membership. By rights we mean human rights, in particular in relation to state, and by duties we mean the demand for active participation in social life”⁹³

However in some countries the subject human rights appear to be one of the lists of subjects in the civic education curriculum. For instance in England ‘fairness, justice, the rule of law’ is one of the topics out of nine of civic education subjects. ‘Human rights instruments and institutions’ are one of the 10 subjects in the Ethiopian civic education curriculum, too.⁹⁴

In the Ethiopian civic education syllabus, human rights elements can be discerned substantially in other topics, too. For instance, there is a chapter on harmful traditional practices touching up on the issues of children such as child abuse, crime and harassment and also issue of women such as gender, stereotypes, child marriage, abduction, prejudice etc. The curriculum also contain topics related to global issues such as poverty which was also recommended in

⁹² Ibid, p.14

⁹³ Ibid, p.15

⁹⁴ ‘Civic Education for Ethiopian Secondary Schools, Syllabuses for grades 11-12’, Ministry of education, 1998

the Commission on Human Rights resolution,⁹⁵ but fails much in relating it to human rights.⁹⁶

It is however suggested that both human rights education and civic education should be linked for the best of results. One important link is the use of human rights instruments within civic education. Another benefit relates to the utility of human rights as a foundation for deciding public issues of citizenship and moral value.

“ Human rights provide clarity to what seems like endlessly arguable causes as well as to vague terminology. The woolly notion of ‘respect’ and ‘tolerance’ are central examples. Should respect all people, all cultures and all their practices? Should we tolerate everything in the name of cultural self-determination? Clearly not. If we are looking at cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, if we are looking at territorial claims leading to ethnic cleansing, if we are looking at religious enmity expressed in bombing, then we will want an education of intolerance. Human rights knowledge enables us to work out when a claim to a right is actually backed up by international law, when traditional practices should be respected and when they should be challenged: when national or regional pride is justifiable and when, on the other hand, it starts to spill over in to denial of another’s dignity or even life. We have the courage and the vocabulary to stand up for principles...”⁹⁷

The above statement, in other words, calls for a civic education that is always consistent with human rights standards which will be flawed if otherwise.

1.8. THE UN DECADE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The United Nations General Assembly, in its meeting during which it declared the years 1995-2004 as the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and endorsed the action plan prepared and submitted by the Secretary general of the United Nations and entrusted the coordination of this plan to the High Commissioner for Human rights.

The United Nations has defined the goals of the decade as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes which are directed towards:

⁹⁵ Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2001/61

⁹⁶ Akililu Abrham and Tafesse Olika, ‘*Civic Education: Student Text*’, Grade 11, Ministry of Education, 2001, pp. 85-112

⁹⁷ Lynn Davis, *supra note 74* p.15

- a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- (b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
- (c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups;
- (d) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society;
- (e) The furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.⁹⁸

The Action Plan prepared by the United Nations in view of these goals has five main objectives

- a) The assessment of needs and the formulation of effective strategies for the furtherance of human rights education at all school levels, in vocational training and formal as well as non-formal learning;
- (b) The building and strengthening of programmes and capacities for human rights education at the international, regional, national and local levels;
- (c) The coordinated development of human rights education materials;
- (d) The strengthening of the role and capacity of the mass media in the furtherance of human rights education;
- (e) The global dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁹⁹

As first step towards the attainment of these objectives at the national level, the United Nation has called on the member states to establish National Committees in order to develop and implement their programmes. It has also recommended that the governments cooperate with non-governmental organizations and experts on human rights for the purpose. Guidelines For The National Plan Of Action For Human Rights Education has emphasised the necessity of developing national plans for human rights education by enumerating the functions they are expected to fulfil.

The National Committees will define the priority target groups for education in human rights and develop education programmes for groups which have not undergone such an education, make suggestions to upgrade existing human rights education activities and subsequently will monitor their implementation and evaluate the results

As a responsible body to coordinate the Decade for Human Rights the OHCHR has carried out notable works contributing to its cause. It has played a role in development of the Guidelines for the National Plan of action for Human

⁹⁸ Paragraph I(2) of The Plan of Action of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education.

⁹⁹ Ibid, Paragraph III(10)

Rights Education. It has also developed a number of human rights training manuals for specific target groups, including prison officers, primary and secondary school teachers, the police, human rights monitors etc. It has also developed database on existing programmes, materials and organizations for human rights education at the international, regional and national levels.¹⁰⁰ There is also technical cooperation programme. The human rights treaty bodies are also encouraged, when examining reports of States parties, to place emphasis on obligations of States parties in the area of human rights education and information and to reflect this emphasis in their concluding observations.¹⁰¹

From country reports collected from a number of countries as late as 2001 not many have established National Committees for human rights education. Some have indeed progressed in establishing one.¹⁰² However almost all states have reported that they are carrying out human rights education activity for specific groups now and then and also mention the incorporation of human rights in school curricula.¹⁰³

The UN Decade for Human Rights Education is particularly insistent in the establishment of National Committees in every country. Is it then obliging states to have a centralized and coordinated human rights education programme? If that is the case it means that other actors involved in human rights work, such as NGOs, if they are not represented well, will have to follow the recommendation or decision of this committee. There could be both advantages and disadvantages while following this arrangement, particularly in a country like Ethiopia which is in the process of democratisation. The advantage could be that it would be easier for different actors, particularly international human rights monitoring bodies like Treaty Bodies to follow up and monitor progresses in human rights education activities based on the detailed guideline prepared for the national plan of action for human rights education. It is also useful in pulling resources and avoiding duplication of efforts and making the intervention a comprehensive and sustainable one.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ See the website of OHCHR at <http://www.unhchr.ch/hredn.nsf>

¹⁰¹ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 52/127 on the report of The Third Committee, 12 December 1997

¹⁰² For instance, France, Turkey, the Holy See, Romania, Norway have established National Committees. See also Elena Ippoliti 'The realization of the plan of action for the united nations decade for human rights education (1995-2004)', eds, Sia Spiliopoulou Akermark, 'Human Rights Education: Achievements and Challenges' Institute for Human Rights, Abo Akedemi University, 1998, pp. 68-69

¹⁰³ See detailed summary country reports in; 'Summary of national initiatives undertaken within the Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)' available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/initiatives.htm>

¹⁰⁴ See 'Human Rights Education and Human Rights Treaties' Available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm>

The disadvantage one may imagine could be that, as the committee will be formed more likely with the initiation of government agencies than other actors such as NGOs, the former in turn may dictate the latter's intervention in human rights education. Though the guidelines recommend the inclusion of NGO representatives in the committee, the role of the government could still be influential and damaging with the pretext of creating a "common understanding of the content of human rights education" as per the Guideline. For instance in Turkey the committee is composed of representatives from Prime Ministry, Ministries of Justice, Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, National Education, Health and Culture, representatives of four non governmental organizations active in the field of human rights and four university professors. It can be easily observed how the government is over represented as compared to other actors.

Therefore, in such cases, human rights education as a tool for empowering people (particularly in countries where democratic culture is not well developed) such as taking up controversial issues as well as actively demanding the respect of their rights from the state could be curtailed, and human rights education interventions at the best could simply be transferring information not followed by the desired transformation of poor communities in to a better one as highlighted in the previous discussions.

CHAPTER II. SOME EXPERIENCES IN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

2.1 THE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA.

In Ethiopia there is no legislation that has been issued specifically providing about human rights education as yet. However, one may find the following legislations and policy documents that make reference to human rights education.

i) The Constitution

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (adopted in 1994) under Charter III devotes 25 articles on human rights. The larger part of the section deals with civil and political rights with only a single article to provide for economic, social and cultural rights. This lone article stipulates on the issue of education that the Ethiopian state has the obligation to ‘allocate ever-increasing resources to provide to the public health education and social services’.¹⁰⁵ Another place in the Constitution where any mention about education may be found is under Chapter 10 of the constitution where national policies and principles are formulated. Here, it is provided that ‘to the extent the country’s resources permit, policies shall aim to provide all Ethiopians access to public health and education, clean water, housing food and social security.’¹⁰⁶

Looking at the Constitutional provision mentioned above one may question whether or not ‘education’, let alone human rights education, is recognized as a human right in Ethiopia. However, there is still a possibility to positively interpret ‘education’ as it is mentioned in the Ethiopian constitution the same as ‘education’ as it is formulated in other international instruments discussed elsewhere. This line of understanding of the provision may be reinforced by the Constitutional article which provides that ‘the fundamental rights and freedoms specified in the constitution are to be interpreted in a manner conforming to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international instruments adopted by Ethiopia.’¹⁰⁷ The constitution also provides that international instruments ratified by Ethiopia are part of the law of the land.¹⁰⁸ Fortunately, Ethiopia is a party to all relevant binding international human rights instrument. She is in particular a party to ICESCR, CRC, CAT, CERD and CEDAW.¹⁰⁹ At the regional level Ethiopia is also a party to the ACIPR which clearly formulates about human rights education.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Article 41(1) of the FDRE Constitution

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Article 89

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, Article 13

¹⁰⁸ Article 9(4). There is a controversy how ever whether courts can apply international instruments ratified by Ethiopia without it being promulgated in the official gazette.

¹⁰⁹ Ethiopia has ratified ICESCR in 1993, CRC in 1991, CERD in 1976, CAT in 1994 and CEDAW in 1981

¹¹⁰ Ratified in 1998

Therefore, at least technically, ‘education’ as per the Ethiopian Constitution may mean the same thing as ‘the right of education’ as envisaged in the UDHR or ICESCR or CRC or the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights or the Vienna Declaration or any other relevant international instrument Ethiopia has ratified or agreed to comply with.

ii) The education and training policy and national strategies

Ethiopia has Education And Training Policy, which was issued in 1994. This policy document does not fail to mention and relate human rights and education. It notes that ‘one of the objectives of education and training policy of Ethiopia is to bring up citizens who respect human rights, stand for the well being of people, as well as for equality, justice and peace, endowed with democratic culture and discipline as well as bringing up citizens who differentiate harmful practices from useful ones, who seek and stand for truth, appreciate aesthetics and show positive attitude towards the development and dissemination of science and technology in society.’¹¹¹

Specifically the Education and Training Policy aims at providing education that promotes democratic culture, tolerance and peaceful resolutions of differences and that raises the sense of discharging societal responsibility, providing education that can produce citizens who stand for democratic unity, liberty, equality, dignity and justice, and who are endowed with moral values as well as providing education that promote the culture of respect for work, positive work habits and high regard for workmanship.¹¹²

The Education and Training Policy seems to reiterate what the international instruments have already mentioned and appears to focus mainly on formal education. Therefore all the values and principles mentioned in the policy objectives seem to be topics to be discussed and taught in the primary, secondary or at higher education level, which means, as per the policy, there would not be an opportunity for the majority of Ethiopians that are not, and for that matter, that will not be enrolled in the formal education field for the time to come. Nevertheless, obtaining its mandate from The Education and Training Policy, the Ministry of Education has already commenced civic education programme at primary and secondary level.¹¹³ Human rights law is also becoming at least one mandatory semester course in some law schools in the country.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Paragraph 10.14 of The Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Interview with Curriculum Development Coordinator, MR. Girmay Alemayehu

¹¹⁴ For instance, Addis Ababa University, law faculty, Civil Service College, and Bahir Dar University.

National Policy on Ethiopian Women also contains some provisions that relate with human rights education. For instance it is provided in the policy that it is aimed at creating a situation whereby society's discriminatory attitude towards women and women's complacency about it are eliminated through an elevated awareness, making sure that women participate in formulation of government policies, laws, regulations, programmes, plans and projects that directly or indirectly benefits women.¹¹⁵ The policy also states about informing and educating of concerned communities about such harmful practices as circumcision and the marriage of young girls before they reach puberty.¹¹⁶

On the other hand very recently the Ethiopian government has issued three documents outlining future programmes and strategies for different types government interventions in the country.¹¹⁷ Among the strategic documents, that which is specifically relevant to human rights education, perhaps is Capacity Building Strategies and Programmes. This particular document makes emphasis that a citizen who does not know about the constitution in effective manner wouldn't have sufficient participation in the moulding of democratic culture.¹¹⁸ It even criticises the previous attempts on civic education as almost a failure and as to have been carried out only for the sake of doing it. There is now indeed a strong assertion in the strategic document that civic education must be taken seriously in the future. Unfortunately, in this document, too, the emphasis on targets outside the school surrounding is not very much visible.

iii) Other laws

Two other domestic legislations may deserve mention here with regard to human rights education. One is the law that defines the Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs of the FDRE. This law vests the power and duty to the Ministry of justice 'to provide legal education through the use of various methods with a view to raising public legal consciousness in relation with protection of human rights.'¹¹⁹ It is indeed on the basis of this law that the Legal Training Department is active in the Ministry of Justice. Paradoxically though, anything relating to human rights training or education is not mentioned under the provision that vests power and duties to the Ministry of Education while the Education and Training Policy is providing for the incorporation of human rights values and principles in education.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ National Policy on Ethiopian Women, The Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1993, pp. 26-27

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 30

¹¹⁷ Issued by Ministry of Information, 2002, All produced in Amharic(Local) language. They were being discussed in a number of forums and are likely to reflect the future direction of Ethiopia in a number of issues.

¹¹⁸ 'Capacity Building Programmes and Strategies', Ministry of Information, 2002 pp 53-62

¹¹⁹ Federal Negarit Gazetta, Proclamation number 4/1995 Article23 (13)

¹²⁰ Ibid, Article 21

Another relevant legislation worth mentioning is the law that establishes the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.¹²¹ The powers and the duties of the commission includes educating ‘the public using mass media and other means with the view to enhancing its tradition of respect for and demand for enforcement of, rights upon acquiring sufficient awareness regarding human rights.’¹²²

It is also one of the duties of the Commission to ‘translate in to local vernaculars international human rights instruments adopted by Ethiopia and disperse the same.’¹²³ However, despite the law is promulgated almost two years ago the commission has yet to start its function.

2.2. ETHIOPIA AND THE UN DECADE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

To attain the objective of The Plan of Action for the United Nation Decade for Human Rights Education, the first step to be undertaken by member states is to establish national committees in order to develop and implement effective (in terms of educational strategies), comprehensive (in terms of outreach) and sustainable (over the long term) human rights education programmes.¹²⁴ However as at 2001, reports submitted by member states to OHCHR indicate that national committee for human rights education has not been established in Ethiopia.¹²⁵ This particular report only indicates, as far as Ethiopia is concerned, that human rights education is being given by Ministry of Justice through its Legal Education and Training Department and Women Affairs Department, promoting legal education, which includes a human rights component. It is also reported that Ministry of Education is undertaking a revision of school curricula in order that principles of human rights are included. The complementary role of NGOs was also mentioned.¹²⁶

Still now (as at September 2002) there is no development with regard to the establishment of a national committee on human rights education. The responsible persons in the governmental institution for that matter are not even aware of the existence of such a document as the UN Decade for Human Rights Education.¹²⁷

¹²¹ Federal Negarit Gazetta Proclamation No.210/2000

¹²² Article 6(3)

¹²³ Article 6(8)

¹²⁴ Paragraph 5 of The Guidelines for National Plan of Action for Human Rights Education.

¹²⁵ See the Summary Report, available at:
<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/initiatives.htm>

¹²⁶ Ibid

¹²⁷ MR. Getachew Adane, Head of Legal Education and Training Department at the Ministry of Justice.

2.3. OVERVIEW OF EXPERIENCES IN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

Despite the absence of a National Committee on Human Rights Education currently some actors are, however, involved in human rights education in Ethiopia. In this section the works of government organs as well as NGOs who are involved in human rights education activities are reviewed. At least in practice there is no legal obstacle scaring away people from engaging in human rights work. The institutions discussed here include Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and some experienced local human rights NGOs.¹²⁸ Namely, they are Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), Action Professional Association for the People (APAP), Forum on Street Children Ethiopia (FSCE) and Society for the Advancement of Human Rights Education in Ethiopia (SAHRE). The only reason these institution deserved a review here is that they are the main actors¹²⁹ involved in human rights education activities, as the country report to the OHCHR makes reference. And yet the government owned press and TV devote relatively space related to children with the Convention on the Right of the Child as a major component. Radio Ethiopia also airs radio programmes for children, youth and women in collaboration with government institutions and NGOs.¹³⁰

For convenience reason the works of the institutions will be reviewed in light of some important issues as related to human rights education such as aims, content, strategy, methodology, targets, sustainability and impact.

2.3.1. Aims and objectives

While the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education seem to have obtained their mandate with regard to human rights education from Proclamation No. 4/1995 and the Education and Training policy respectively, the NGOs might have it from their establishing Constitutions. The NGOs are not purely engaged in human rights education though. EWLA which is women rights oriented, is established with the objective of eliminating all forms of legal and traditionally sanctioned discrimination against women, ensuring the equal treatment of women and men in education, employment and access to public services and benefits, and advocating for remedial and affirmative measures for women to redress the accumulated consequences of discrimination, and it carries out the following programs:(1) Research, Law reform and Advocacy program, (2) Public education program, and (3) Legal aid. These three programs are however interrelated. For instance, public education uses cases entertained in the Legal

¹²⁸ All of them are established after 1993

¹²⁹ Other institutions, such as Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) and Women Affairs Office, ANPPCAN-Ethiopia are also involved in human rights education.

¹³⁰ Ethiopia's second periodic report to the Committee on the Right of the Child, Available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/view40?SearchView>

Aid Program. Otherwise the human rights education activity falls under the Public Education Program.¹³¹ The aim of the latter program includes making aware women their rights and making them assertive in defending their rights.

FSCE as a child-oriented organization aims at raising public awareness on the rights of the child in general and urban disadvantaged children in particular, increasing the involvement of concerned government organs and the public at large in the protection of the rights of children, and lobbying among top policy makers to introduce new policy and legislation that would create conditions that are more favourable for the realisation of the rights of the child in Ethiopia. Currently the organization implements four programs. These are: (1) Advocacy and Child Protection Programs, (2) prevention and support program for the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, (3) Regional Projects and, (4) Child Resource Development Centre, Nexus for Research, Training and Information Network. Nonetheless, awareness raising on the right of the child targeting different segments of society-is a cross cutting sub-program of all the programs.¹³² SAHRE has the objective of disseminating human rights education to the Ethiopian society, promoting principles, culture and values of democracy, enlightening the public about its constitutional rights, inspiring political awareness in the youth for active participation in community life and political processes and encouraging and supporting human rights activities through networking. To realise these aims it conducts the following programs; (1) Community empowerment/democratization program, (2) Schools democracy education program, (3) Civil society democratisation program, and (4) Citizenship orientation programs. According to the Executive Director, all four programs are significantly human rights education activities.¹³³

APAP has also three programs (1) human rights education and training program, (2) Community level voluntary institution support program, and (3) Research Advocacy and Publication Program.¹³⁴ While human rights education is mentioned only in one of the programs, there is however interrelationship between them.¹³⁵ For instance human rights education is important to initiate voluntary institutions to involve in human rights promotion, while research results and publications are extensively used in the human rights training workshops or other awareness raising activities. Nevertheless the human rights education and training program of the organisation aims at raising the awareness level of community level institutions leaders, low level judiciary, administrative and law enforcement official as well as the public at large about the promotion and the protection of human

¹³¹ Ms. Helen Seifu, Assistant to the Executive Director, EWLA

¹³² Annual Report of FSCE, 2001, p.2

¹³³ Mr. Gebremedhin Kidane, Executive Director of SAHRE

¹³⁴ Strategic Plan of APAP (2000-2004), 1999

¹³⁵ Mr. Abera Hailemariam, Acting Director of APAP

rights, the rights of women and children, the principle of accountability and transparency.¹³⁶

From the aims of the program carried out by the NGOs it can be seen that most of the organisations are mainly concerned with raising the awareness level of the public and certain specific groups. It is important to note however that the objective of human rights education does not end here. It has further objectives, which include, for instance, women becoming assertive, and changing traditional and cultural harmful practices(EWLA), the public actively participating in the political process and other affairs(SAHRE), and being active in fighting corruption that is becoming an impediment for realisation of some of the fundamental rights in Ethiopia(APAP).

2.3.2. Content of human right education

The interventions by NGOs and Government Agencies show that the content of their educational activities depend much on their organizational mandate. The Ministry of Justice undertakes its human rights programmes through Legal Education and Training Department. This department largely targets low-level judges, prosecutors and the police all over the country. According to the department head human rights education is only one component of among many topics in a specific training project. For instance the training for the judges include law of contract, penal law, family law, commercial law etc. The human rights element could only be investigating the legal right of women in the family law in relation to the human rights standards as provided in the Ethiopian Constitution. The issue of harmful traditional practices like FGM, child marriage, and abduction are discussed while going through the vast topic of criminal law. In the case of the police and prosecutors human rights issues are dealt with while dealing with some provisions of Criminal Procedure law focusing on the powers and responsibilities of the police and prosecutors. Generally, legal awareness overshadows the human right element.

The Ministry also organizes seminars and workshops on human rights whenever fund is available. In this case, general human rights issues are addressed to the public through radio and TV which is broadcasted for relatively short period of air time. Human rights training has never been regular, but shortly the Ministry of Justice will be undertaking a long term human rights program in cooperation with Norwegian Development Cooperation for officials of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary all over the country.

With regard to Ministry of Education, the content of human rights could be traced in the civic education curricula that have been developed not long ago. However, one author mentions that civic education in Ethiopia could be traced

¹³⁶ Strategic Plan(2000-2004), APAP, page. 29

back to 1960's after the enactment of 1963 Revised Constitution of Ethiopia.¹³⁷ It was taught with History subject for students of grade 7 and 8. Then, a subject called Political Education replaced it during the communist military government that took power between 1974-1991. Civic education only re-emerged again with the introduction of the present Education and Training Policy of 1994.

The present civic education curricula, which incorporates human rights issues,¹³⁸ is integrated in the curricula of other subjects for grades 1-8, while it is treated as an independent subject for grades 9-12.¹³⁹ According to the Curriculum Development Panel Head,¹⁴⁰ human rights issues are integrated in the 'Environmental Science' subject for grades 1-4, and in the 'Social Studies' subject for grades 5-8. It is difficult however to identify issues related to human rights in the 'Environmental Science' syllabus. But the Head of the Panel claimed that such topics as 'respecting one another', 'equality', 'working together', 'helping each other', 'good neighbourhood', and 'family ethics' as issues directly related to human rights. But objectively seen the syllabus and the text don't clearly relate such moral values with human rights standards. For instance, it is indicated in the text that children should be obedient to parents. Does it mean always? Generally, in the Ethiopian tradition, children are supposed to keep quiet and are seldom allowed to openly express themselves on certain matters.¹⁴¹ Is the topic maintaining this relationship? It doesn't clearly discuss such issues as, for instance, the right to freedom of expression with respect to the right of children.

The content of human rights is relatively discernible in grades 5-8 'Social Studies' subject. In the Grades 5-6 syllabuses there is a topic about democratic government where as the Grade 7 syllabus contains more extensively about the issue of citizenship which include such topics as 'the rights and duties of citizens under the Ethiopian Constitution', 'mechanisms to enforce rights', as well as 'the rights of women and children'. The Grade 8 syllabus, on the other hand, explicitly provides for definition of human rights, international instruments, and international human rights organizations. Even the expected outcome of teaching the subject explicitly includes obtaining sufficient knowledge about human rights.¹⁴²

Civic Education texts for grades 9-12 do incorporate some human right component. There is specific (small section) on the Ethiopian Constitution and the international instruments in Grade 11 textbook.¹⁴³ There is also one chapter on

¹³⁷ Kassaye Amare 'Fundamentals of Civic Education', Mega Printing, 2001, page 6

¹³⁸ Mr. Girmay Alemayehu

¹³⁹ In Ethiopia primary education includes eight grades, which is in two cycles: the first cycle (grade 1-4) and the second cycle (grade 5-8) secondary education include 4 grades and subdivided into two cycles. The first cycle (grade 9-10) and second cycle (grade 11-12)

¹⁴⁰ Mr. Girmay Alemayehu

¹⁴¹ Hirut Terefe, 'Gender and development', Eds. Christian Felleur, 'Ethiopia: An introduction culture, economics, politics and cooperation' 2000, p 23

¹⁴² 'Syllabuses of Social Studies from Grades 5-8', Ministry of Education, 1990, p. 3

¹⁴³ Aklilu Abrham and Taffese Olike, *supra note* 96, pp. 20-84

citizenship, democracy, and civil participation in the same textbook.¹⁴⁴ Human rights issues are also, to some extent, discussed while dealing with harmful cultural practices such as abduction, FGM, early marriage in light of the rights of women as incorporated in the Ethiopian Constitution.¹⁴⁵

With regard to higher education, at least in the law school at Addis Ababa University, the course content of human rights law include concepts and systems of protection of human rights, the creation, evolution and effectiveness of global and regional protection of human rights, and the normative recognition and enforcement of human rights with in the Ethiopian legal system.¹⁴⁶

As far as NGOs involved in human rights education are concerned, the subjects of human rights education in their intervention are significantly related to human rights. EWLA, which is mainly concerned with women issues, deals with harmful traditional practices and attitudes, discrimination and violence against women in relation to the human rights of women. And since recently, it has incorporated 'other' issues such as 'assertiveness', 'self-defence', 'communication skills' in one of its public education programs organized for female students and employees with the aim that such skills would help women defend their rights.¹⁴⁷

In APAP the contents of human rights education activities include human rights in general and the rights of women and children in particular. At the moment, it is taking up 'corruption' as a common societal problem as being an obstacle to the realization of human rights, particularly social and economic rights in Ethiopia. Hence in its training and publication activities, such topics as the definition and impact of corruption on human rights are covered. In particular, in human rights workshops organized for community leaders, skill oriented subjects such as report writing, conflict resolution mechanisms such as negotiation, mediation and arbitration, and workshop organization skills are incorporated with the aim of equipping participants with the relevant skills so that they may engage in the promotion and protection of human rights in their locality. The issue of women and children is also incorporated in every type of educational activity.

FSCE entirely focuses on the Convention on the Right of the Child and specifically on juvenile justice administration while targeting the police. SAHRE includes such contents as community self-governance, conflict resolution and domestic violence prevention, gender equality in communities and families, rights of the disabled and protection of the environment. It is also actively involved in

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ Belete Kebede and Dereje Getahun, 'Civic education: Student Text Book for Grade 10,' Mega Publishing Enterprise, Addis Ababa, 2000, pp.63-98

¹⁴⁶ Yihewew Tsegaye, Instructor of the Human Rights Law course at the Addis Ababa University, Faculty of Law.

¹⁴⁷ Almaz Woldeyes, 'Training manual on training on women issues and assertiveness for female students and employees', 2002, manuscript

schools and provides civic education, which, according to the Executive Director of the organization is also a human rights education.

As a component of human rights education activity, the NGOs have also produced quite a number of publications. In EWLA, since the last two years, there is a quarterly publication 'dimtsachen' produced with the aim of disseminating human rights issues focusing on women and an annual journal 'birchi'. SAHRE has produced a publications touching up on a range of issues targeting every reader or to be used by other actors for similar purposes. It has published and distributed such books as. 'Self-governance', 'Dissemination of the Constitution of the FDRE', 'National Networking guideline on Ethics, laws and human rights issues', 'A change from special to inclusion education to ensure equal opportunities and full participation', 'what do you know about inclusive education', 'HIV/AIDS and human rights'. It has also published 'Community Centred Civic Education' which is meant to be a reference book for civic educators. APAP on the other hand issues Bi-annual magazine called 'justice for all' with the aim of creating awareness about human rights and the law. There are also street law materials, (seven booklets,) focusing on law and human rights, and *Bells of Freedom, Interlinking Human Rights and Development* (human rights training manuals), to be used in its educational programs and to be distributed to interested individuals and other actors. Leaflets and posters are regularly used by APAP and EWLA focusing on human rights and specifically on the human rights of women in case of the latter. There is seldom a publication on human rights by the government agencies for public consumption.

However, in all educational programs undertaken by the government and NGOs, the relevance of international mechanisms for the purpose of enforcing human rights is not emphasised. Nonetheless, international instruments are being used in the training workshops and on some publications by certain NGOs.¹⁴⁸

Generally the subjects of human rights education in a number of organizations contain a range of human rights issues. However there is also a trend to incorporate, as part of human rights education activity, other subjects such as assertiveness, communication skills and report writing that would reinforce and make the targeted audience more effective while demanding for their human right.

2.3.3. Strategies

Almost all NGOs including the Government Agencies employ a number of strategies while disseminating human rights values. The strategies they use include; training, seminars, publications such as periodicals, posters leaflets, radio, television and organizing competition among students. Not all actors employ all these strategies at the same time. APAP for instance is not using radio and

¹⁴⁸ There is no official translation of the Conventions

television but is considering it in the future.¹⁴⁹ The latter has also attempted puppet show and forum drama. As far as using the radio and the TV is concerned the legal education and training department in the Ministry of Justice was complaining about its inability to have access to and sufficient time for extensive work. It has regular weekly program on the radio titled 'law and society' and not so regularly on the one channel TV. EWLA is using the new FM radio that began transmission in 2000 and has been using it since but is confined to the capital Addis Ababa only.

Dissemination through other actors is also used as a strategy to disseminate human rights. For instance, SAHRE, in order to reach a larger population of school children, targets school clubs or initiate the formation of a new civic education club. APAP, basically through its Voluntary Institution Support Program, organizes training workshops for members of such institutions, which include traditional institutions, community organizations, religious institutions, and amateur (drama, journalist) to reach a larger population through them.

2.3.4. Methodology

The major issue concerning the methodology of human rights education particularly relates to how training activities in particular should be conducted. In case of APAP, for instance, it has a strong belief that every human rights training should be participatory. And hence it employs adult education techniques. Accordingly, every training activity passes through a series of planned stages. Sequentially it involves; needs assessment, manual preparation, organizing the training and evaluation. While preparing the manual emphasis was made that every module/chapter in the manual contains objectives and expected out comes and varieties of methodologies such as role play, group discussions, debates, moot court etc are incorporated to make the training exercise participatory. In attempt to make the issue of human rights interesting almost all of the workshop sessions begin by identifying needs of human beings and then relate and discuss them in relation to human rights. The other NGOs do not have, as recently, the experience of using a manual or an indication that such a methodology is employed or adopted as a policy. Even if a manual is developed, it only contains the substance of the issue the training focuses on, which more or less looks like a research document.¹⁵⁰ Ministry of Justice mainly employs seminars spanning one to two days and have never used a manual containing participatory methodologies. Usually, an expert simply presents a research paper on specific legal and human rights issue.

¹⁴⁹ Mr. Abera Hailemariam

¹⁵⁰ See for instance Almaz Woldeyes, 'Training manual on training on women issues and assertiveness for female students and employees.' 2002(EWLA) and 'Training Manual for the Police', 2001(FSCE), manuscript.

Whereas the civic education texts and syllabuses theoretically contain some indications of participatory education techniques such as using charts, pictures, and other visual aids. A book produced by SAHRE, ‘community centred civic education’ which is published as a resource material for civic educators, for instance, begs for the use of participatory methods such as group discussion, drama, games, quizzes, as well as visits and fact finding. But it does not elaborate on how these methods could be used in a particular topic or subject. At the higher education level (for instance, at the Law Faculty of Addis Ababa University) the methodology of teaching human rights law course sometimes include class lecture, Socratic questioning as well as case studies.¹⁵¹

Using participatory method for illiterate participants, who are more than a majority in Ethiopia, is not well developed either in APAP or in other organization, too. In one of the training workshops organized in partnership with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Amhara Region Supreme Court and Justice Bureau, some of the trainees were illiterate. This situation forced trainers to explain issues orally than using visual teaching aids. Apart from this, during the training sessions only those who can read and write were reporting back the results of group discussions. This is actually contrary to the participatory teaching method, which upholds the principle of ensuring the involvement of all trainees.¹⁵² But plays and songs might also have been used at times as it has apparently brought, for instance, some desirable attitudinal change concerning FGM amongst illiterate people in some communities in Ethiopia.¹⁵³

Apart from training workshops APAP, for instance, is using ‘forum drama’, a drama that allows the audience to discuss over a particular human rights issue.

Generally, participatory methodology is not used by most of the organizations and government agencies at the moment. The idea of participatory education is given more importance rather in APAP though one may doubt the effectiveness of the human rights training workshops conducted by the organization as many of the staff has never been trained in facilitation skills. The positive thing however is that the staff has been experiencing this type of methodology for years and in-house training workshops on the subject were being organized for the staff at different times

2.3.5. Targets and areas of operation

The types of targeted individuals for human rights education depends on the mandate of each organization. APAP for instance identifies two levels of targets. The first comprise the ultimate target social groups that include the poor women children and other marginalized groups of the society. The direct and immediate

¹⁵¹ Yihene Tsegaye, Instructor at the Law School

¹⁵² Mr. Abera Hailemariam

¹⁵³ IRIN news October 2, 2002: <http://www.irinnews.org/>

targets of its programs are rather low-level judiciary and law enforcement agencies, administrative officials and community level voluntary institutions.¹⁵⁴ Publications, puppet shows and forum drama however target the general public and particularly the illiterate.¹⁵⁵ FSCE is child oriented organization and targets children as well as other actors that directly or indirectly affect the life of disadvantaged children. It specifically targets street children, sexually abused children, and children in conflict with the law. Apart from these, it targets parents; police the general public and community institutions.¹⁵⁶ SAHRE targets community organizations, schools, non-governmental organizations professional associations, trade unions, religious organizations, the media, the police, prison authorities, parliamentarians and the general public. EWLA focuses on groups and individuals that could affect the rights of women. Disadvantaged women, community leaders, the police, prosecutors and judges are also its main target population.

Ministry of Education obviously targets only school children through its civic education programme while the Ministry of Justice is mostly interested in officials of the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary such as judges, prosecutors and the police. It also reaches the general public through its TV and radio program as well as school children by organizing competitions. Apart from the TV and radio as well as drama which have the smallest number of audiences (because a lot of people do not own radios and TV sets), the training activities organized by many actors have never targeted illiterate people.

As far as area of operation is concerned, the NGOs cover almost all regions of the country while their office is based in the capital city Addis Ababa. While EWLA¹⁵⁷ and FSCE¹⁵⁸ have opened regional offices, APAP¹⁵⁹ and SAHRE¹⁶⁰ coordinate their regional interventions from the capital Addis Ababa. The civic education curriculum is targeting all schools in the country while the Ministry of Justice targets all regions of the country. However almost all actors involved in human rights education are not reaching the grassroots directly though there is always an attempt to reach them through other means, such as using such strategies adopted by APAP and SAHRE, by either involving community level institutions or school clubs respectively.

Generally most of the organizations do not target only the beneficiaries of certain rights alone but on all those actors that may contribute to the realisation of those rights. For instance, FSCE does not teach about the rights of children to the children alone but to all those actors that may contribute to the realisation of the

¹⁵⁴ Strategic Plan of APAP, 1999

¹⁵⁵ Mr. Abera Hailemariam

¹⁵⁶ Brochure and Mr. Fasil Woldemariam, Executive Director of FSCE.

¹⁵⁷ EWLA has opened branch offices in five regions

¹⁵⁸ FSCE works in urban areas and targets the towns of DireDawa, Dessie, Bahirdar

¹⁵⁹ APAP works in four regions including the city of Addis Ababa and DireDawa

¹⁶⁰ SAHRE works in all regions except The Afar Region

rights of children, which include the police, parents and the community as a whole. APAP also targets judges, prosecutors, and administrative officials because it believes that teaching the public alone would not bring the desired result. Therefore, it can be observed that, with in their own worlds, NGOs are trying to carry out a comprehensive awareness raising programs as the UN Decade for Human Rights Education recommends.

2.3.6. Networking and coordination

Networking and partnership

Networking between NGOs and the government has not developed well. This is a major concern all NGOs and the government, particularly the Ministry of Justice, mention.¹⁶¹ Except for the distribution of some periodic publications and invitation to workshops among and between different institutions, there is no systematic or institutionalised networking between human rights NGOs as well as with relevant Government Agencies while every organization is referring to networking in its plan and programs. For instance, though APAP has produced participatory human rights training manual like '*the bells of freedom*' and '*street law*' materials that can be used in training activities, they are seldom used by other NGOs and government agencies or no initiative is witnessed to revise them jointly.

APAP has of course established partnership with local lawyers associations to disseminate legal and human rights information. With the government however there is no institutionalised networking. But some kind of partnership exists with the government. As per its strategy, the organization carries out all activities, particularly the training programmes, in collaboration with relevant regional government bodies particularly Courts and Justice Bureaus that are controlling its main targets; the judges, the police and the prosecutors. This approach has helped APAP to identify the local human rights needs and the smooth execution of program activities.¹⁶² Moreover, it has also tried to involve the regional agencies while adopting its five-year strategic plan. FSCE also works basically with local level police departments in areas it is operational and setting up Child Protection Units to raise the awareness level of police officers in the locality. SAHRE, while establishing civic education clubs in schools comes in contact with school authorities.

Recently EWLA, being convinced that networking would help 'to solve common problems, ensure more effective use of resources by avoiding duplication, and contribute more effectively towards exchanging information, enriching experience and bringing about policy change'¹⁶³ is now in the initial step to establish networking among seven women focussed NGOs.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Mr. Getachew Adane

¹⁶² Mr. Abera Hailemariam

¹⁶³ Annual Report, EWLA, 2000, P.10

¹⁶⁴ Ms. Helen Seifu

At the international level, staffs of NGOs are getting human rights training on human rights developing their capacity ¹⁶⁵ though the Legal Education and Training Department within the Ministry of Justice is not benefiting from that, as it had been managed by, until last year (2001), by a person who studied management. Some NGOs like EWLA, however, are members of international organizations such as Equality Now while FSCE is a member of the international lobbying organization ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Pornography Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purpose). APAP at the moment is establishing a stronger partnership with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Lund, Sweden and have in partnership carried out human rights training for all lower level judiciary and public prosecutors in Amhara Region, as well as social court judges in the same region.

Resource Sharing with experienced international human rights organizations is not well developed. For instance, Amnesty International's "First Steps: A Manual for Starting Human Rights Education" was often mentioned as an example of a successful training material.¹⁶⁶ The manual has been translated into many national languages but it has never been used in Ethiopia. Still some organizations use the experience of other countries. For instance, APAP had produced *street law* materials following the South African model.

Coordination

Within the respective organizations almost all of them are not carrying out human rights education activity while employing training workshops, seminars, publications, drama radio etc. There are for instance activities involving research, lobbying, community support programs, mobilization of local level and professional associations. Nonetheless, in most of the organizations, every other project and activity does seem to reinforce the intervention in human rights education. For instance in FSCE awareness raising activity on the rights of children is a cross cutting sub program of all projects of the organization.¹⁶⁷ In APAP when it has started to tackle 'corruption' from the human rights perspective, it had to conduct some research for instance on how corruption affects the rights of individuals. Similarly, EWLA has to undertake a number of research activities on women issue to enhance its awareness raising workshops. For instance it had to conduct an inventory of all laws that are discriminatory and research on women reproductive health. Similarly, APAP had to involve in

¹⁶⁵ Staff of APAP had benefited a lot for their participation in various courses organized by Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Lund Sweden, Simia Ahmadi-Thoolen and Siseraw Dinku 'Raoul Wallenberg Institute's educational programs in human rights in Ethiopia 1998-2001: evaluation Report.', 2002. P. 34

¹⁶⁶ 'Summary of the On-line Forum for Mid-term Evaluation Review of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education', Available at: <http://www.hrea.org/mid-term-summary.html>

¹⁶⁷ Annual Report of FSCE, 2001, P.2

lobbying activity such as the promulgation of consolidated bill of rights¹⁶⁸ to enforce economic and social rights along with educational activities. EWLA again had to lobby for law reform on discriminatory laws because change in attitudes and behaviours alone cannot prevent the violation of the human rights of women or vice versa. It appears that most of the organisations are trying to make HRE comprehensive and effective in their own surrounding.

One may generally observe that the presence of a variety of interventions/programmes, at the same time making human rights education activities more comprehensive and effective which might not be if otherwise.

2.3.7. Evaluation

Evaluation as understood here is mainly to mean the assessment of human rights education programmes. Almost all NGOs carry out overall programme evaluation at a regular time, mainly annually, with major stakeholders participating. APAP for instance undertakes quarterly evaluation of its programmes. It examines the basics namely, 'goal setting, planning, and design, the determination of educational strategies and methods, and the anticipated achievements or benefits.'¹⁶⁹ Similar evaluation activities are also carried out by other organizations but giving no specific attention to educational strategies and methodologies.¹⁷⁰

Evaluating human rights program is normally problematic. The unique problems associated with it stem from its normative content, the fact that the educational goals go beyond cognitive and factual learning to address attitudes and behaviour. In doing so, they risk challenges from social sectors with different perceptions of the meaning of human rights and the form that human rights education should take.¹⁷¹ In fact evaluation activities and programs had helped some organizations to change their approaches and programs every time. In APAP's case, which started only as a legal aid organization, the process of evaluation has made it to revise its human rights work through out its lifetime such as the need to identify common societal problem (which is corruption), to incorporate women issues in all of interventions and the inclusion of administrators in the human rights education programmes, and to start targeting voluntary community level institutions. The involvement in research and publications is also a result of evaluation processes in many of the organizations.¹⁷²

As far as specific training workshops are concerned APAP in particular secures a time in every training program for the participants to evaluate the

¹⁶⁸ Strategic Plan of APAP, 1999, P.27

¹⁶⁹ J. Paul Martin, 'Epilogue: The next step: quality control.' eds, George J. Andreopoulos and Richard P. Claude, 'Human rights education for the Twenty First Century', University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, p.600

¹⁷⁰ EWLA, Annual Report, 2001

¹⁷¹ J. Paul Martin, *supra*, note 169 p.600

¹⁷² Strategic Plan of APAP, 1999

workshop objectively, which is not an experience in other NGOs which is done, if there is any, only orally and not systematically.¹⁷³

In the government offices, no evaluation of programmes or specific activities was carried out as yet. The Ministry of Justice is now in the process of evaluating projects thus far carried out¹⁷⁴ where as Ministry of Education has not done evaluation of the civics education to date. Actually the civic education work commenced in 1998, and for grade 12 only in September 2002.

2.3.8. Impact

There is almost a consensus that measuring impact of human rights education is not an easy task. It is rather a challenging task because the complexity of issues makes it difficult to determine the cause and effect relationship between a particular project and its outcome. The problem is more difficult when attempting to influence general attitudes and values in a society as human rights education is striving to bring about.¹⁷⁵ But sometimes identifying positive results in attitudes in fact may not be totally impossible.¹⁷⁶

All NGOS the writer of this thesis had contacted are generally seeing the impact of their programs quantitatively i.e. in terms of the number of trainees or the number of publications periodicals, leaf lets, posters distributed, and some times the promulgation of laws, or the impression of trainees at the end of a particular training workshop.¹⁷⁷ Although all these can be considered as successes, most organizations do not have systematic data as to whether what they have done actually helped in changing the attitude of the public. For instance, EWLA has put as it objectives the elimination of discrimination and violence against women while APAP envisages the general public coming to courts and bringing actions on cases involving human rights abuses. But neither of these organizations can systematically substantiate whether their intervention had

¹⁷³ Mr. Helen Seifu mentioned that this is because their workshops are not regular.

¹⁷⁴ Mr. Getachew Adane

¹⁷⁵ See also for a number of other reasons in, Jennifer Chapman, '*Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy*', Eds, Angella Milligan, '*Advocacy and citizen participation, International institute for environment and development.*' 2002. P.48-49

¹⁷⁶ For instance at a Minneapolis public elementary school some students received no human rights education, some had three lessons a week, and others participated in a program in which human rights were fully integrated in to both the curriculum and the culture of the classroom. The result is that there is a behavioural change which indicated a striking reduction in inappropriate behaviours among students receiving human rights education, with clear distinction between students receiving disparate lessons and those participating in an integrated human rights education program. See Nancy Flowers, with Marcia Bernbaum, Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, and Joel Tolman, '*The human rights education handbook: Effective practices for learning action and change.*', University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center, 2000, Also available at:
<http://www.hrusa.org/hrmaterials/hreduseries/hrhandbook1/toc.html>

¹⁷⁷ EWLA holds that it has contributed to the enactment of the Revised Family Law which abolished the old discriminatory laws

contributed anything towards these objectives. For instance EWLA organizes training workshops and produce publications to raise the awareness level of women and the public at large about the rights of women not to be subjected to FGM, early marriages, discrimination and violence, but it may not systematically measure any decrease in number of such practices as the result of its interventions. Nevertheless it cites some instances as success stories to demonstrate what it did had a tangible result such as women reporting early marriages, rape and abduction to the police in various places where it is operating.¹⁷⁸

APAP seems to have relatively progressed well in identifying the problem of measuring impact as a major concern. It has always been concerned about, for instance, the impact of its programs on the life of the poor, women and children, which are its ultimate targets. Since its establishment in 1993, it has been conducting a number of human rights training workshops and had produced publications on related issues. Starting from 1999 it wanted to make its intervention more focused to enable itself see the impact.¹⁷⁹ Hence it had developed a strategic plan for five years with the aim to see some tangible result at the end of the fifth year. While developing its strategic plan, therefore, and learning from its experience and regular evaluations, it believed that it had to identify a common single human rights problem affecting its target groups, which would be *corruption*.¹⁸⁰ Then it began to focus all its human rights education as well as other programs, publications and other activities on this particular problem. It has also conducted a baseline survey before starting implementing programs, which could serve as a benchmark against which impact will be assessed at the end of the implementation period of the five-year plan. Again through its regular evaluation process, APAP is now questioning whether or not it's being overstretched in terms of geographic area and targets as a reason for not seeing any impact due to its programmes or interventions.¹⁸¹

Similarly, successive training workshops were organized by APAP and Ministry of Justice for the police in Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region at different times but no one can be sure about whether such interventions had contributed in changing the conduct of the police positively. Rather, there are indeed more reports of violence and killings in the region, which may prove otherwise. Should we also similarly exclude positive results in civic education field

¹⁷⁸ Ms. Helen Seifu

¹⁷⁹ Earlier APAP was targeting Poverty as a problem to be addressed using human rights. See *'The two-year program of APAP for 1998 and 1999'*, 1998

¹⁸⁰ The strategic document explains the reasons for the adoption of an organizing theme corruption which include: 'to ensure the continuity of activities and programs of APAP in terms of impact... to ensure the development and implementation of realistic achievable operational programs and, to make APAP an organization aiming at observable change that can be appreciated by all of the key stakeholders...'

¹⁸¹ Mr. Abera Hailemariam mentioned that only a single judge, police, or prosecutor is targeted in a particular local area with the aim to bring about structural change in the respective offices.

because the schoolteachers have never received human rights training, but only doing the job on their own efforts?¹⁸²

SAHRE is also doubtful as to whether its activities had brought any real impact on the lives of its target groups. The organization has never attempted to evaluate the impact of its programmes. The Executive Director was even desperate that many participants for any reason are not retaining what they have learnt and has seen some individuals coming to a same training course again and again. And yet he observes that few people are coming to his office asking for advise on some human rights issues indicating, according to him, some degree of positive impact. FSCE believes that the term ‘street children’ is now accepted among the community instead of the derogatory term used to name children dwelling in the streets.¹⁸³ The establishment of Child Protection Units in collaboration with the police in different towns is considered by the organization the result of change of attitude of the Ethiopian police force as a result of awareness raising workshops.¹⁸⁴ It was also explained that the lives of some children has changed due to the intervention of the organization, while this out come could have been the result of other programmes not related to human rights education activity.¹⁸⁵ Sometimes there may not be any sign of impact at all due to subsequent measures by the government such as dismissal of judges who had received training on human rights.¹⁸⁶

Another problem associated with assessing impact is whether a particular change in human behaviour and certain outcome can be attributable to a particular intervention of an NGO or government. It could happen that various forces and actors might have contributed to a particular desired result. EWLA asserts that it had contributed to the promulgation of a Revised Family Law through its lobbying activities though Women Affairs Office with in the Prime Minster Office has also been campaigning on the same issue.

Human rights as empowering tool for the poor women and children to act for social change in order to improve their situation is seldom visible despite participatory methodologies are used (even by APAP). Community members accessed through voluntary community institutions are not being observed showing evidence of such initiatives at the moment. There is no indication either as to a decrease in number of violations perpetrated by the police while carrying out its activities.¹⁸⁷ For instance EWLA is working for the elimination of all forms of legal and traditionally sanctioned discrimination against women where as APAP is

¹⁸² Mr. Girmay Alemayehu mentioned that teachers so far have not received any training on human rights.

¹⁸³ According to Mr. Fasil Woldemariam, they were being called literally as ‘*vagabonds*’

¹⁸⁴ Annual Report of FSCE, 2001 p.7

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p.11

¹⁸⁶ Many of the social court judges trained in Amhara Regions were dismissed almost immediately after they received human rights training.

¹⁸⁷ But there are still a series of violations according to EHRCO reports

working to bring about an attitudinal change towards human rights and the rule of law.¹⁸⁸ FSCE is also working for raising the awareness level of different actors on the right of the child in general and urban disadvantaged in particular while SAHRE promotes principles, cultures and values of democracy. Whether or not these organizations have succeeded in realising their aims may not be answered confidently. Some funding agencies are perhaps conscious of the practical problems associated with measuring impact and they are positive to continue funding local NGOs with out asking for any impact for the time being.

Nevertheless, the issue of impact remains crucial. One may also question the legitimacy of any revision or change in plans and programs with out knowing what impact the previous programs had brought about on peoples lives. Indeed the recommendation of the mid term global evaluation of the progress made towards the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, perhaps noting the problem world wide, suggests that evaluation and studies and research of long term impact should be undertaken in order to better understand which approaches work best and why, and in order to elaborate evaluation criteria.¹⁸⁹

Perhaps borrowing the experiences of other countries, such as establishing *human rights communities*, could result in a tangible impact. In Argentina, India, and Senegal the so-called sustainable human rights communities were established in attempt to create communities that are guided by human rights in all relevant aspects of life. In this arrangement, the entire population undertakes to examine traditional beliefs, collective memory and aspirations as related to UDHR. In addition, the community's governing bodies, institutions and local groups learned about human rights as related to their functions to assure that the community's development plans maintain the dignity and serve the well being of all its members.¹⁹⁰

2.3.9. Sustainability

Sustainability of programs

In some organizations, for instance, there is always an attempt to make training workshops training of trainers (TOTs) workshops with the aim of disseminating the knowledge to the larger audience with a multiplying effect. As a strategy, APAP is organising training of trainers, for instance, for leaders of community-based institutions so that the latter would transfer the information to their constituencies. But due to lack of initiative or shortage of budget, the follow-up workshop or activity is usually not promising. Usually the simple organization of a training workshop is seen as an end in itself rather than institutionalising the

¹⁸⁸ Strategic Plan of APAP, 1999, P.25

¹⁸⁹ Adopted by The Commission on Human Rights Resolution, 2001/61

¹⁹⁰ Summary of the on-line forum for Mid-term evaluation review of the UN decade for human rights education, available at: www.hrea.org/mid-term-summary.html

process and producing sustainable impacts.¹⁹¹ The cost would more than double however if APAP has to involve in the follow up. Since the dissemination is normally discontinued, the issue of sustainability is therefore remains a concern. But still the organisation could tell some success stories whereby groups trained by it are involved in human rights promotion work using their own resources.

The fact that target groups are disinterested in human rights affects the sustainability of human rights programmes to a large extent, too.¹⁹² Usually the trainees are paid per diem by the organisations and sometimes they might be coming to training venues for the sake of participating because those nominated to attend workshops sometimes are not the right persons for the job.¹⁹³ In order to make its intervention continuous and sustainable, SAHRE, for instance, targets school clubs through which to disseminate human rights information to other larger number of students. The outcome is usually unsatisfactory because these clubs always demand for another round initiation or mobilization, which may demand another round of human and financial resources from SAHRE.¹⁹⁴ It seems that human rights education may sustain as long as the NGOs do exist, and as long as there is sufficient resource.

With regard to Ministry of Justice, the sustainability of its programs faces certain problems. The main reason is that, as the Vice Minister said, human rights education is being carried out only as an extra work, and it is carried out when ever external fund is available. The Department does not have a budget of its own for the purpose of human rights education.

Sustainability of organizations

At the moment human rights education in Ethiopia is largely carried out by NGOs. Therefore whether or not human rights education would continue to be a reality in the future depends much on the sustainability of such organizations. And for an organization to stay on working in the present Ethiopian context, external factors still play a bigger role. One is the unreliable attitude of the government towards human rights NGOs. While there is a positive ground for NGOs to engage in human rights work, there are some incidents which may scare some of them whenever they are critical about the government's conduct. For instances, APAP has been de-registered in 1995 for unexplainable reason and reregistered again after a long two years. And very recently, in 2002, EWLA was suspended with out being informed what it had faulted. According to the EWLA's reports issued after the suspension was lifted six weeks later, it could only guess one specific reason, that it had only been critical about the reluctance of law

¹⁹¹ See Simia Ahmadi-Thoolen and Siseraw Dinku 'Raoul Wallenberg Institute's educational programs in human rights in Ethiopia 1998-2001: Evaluation Report.' 2002, p. 29

¹⁹² APAP's Strategic Plan was meant to avoid this problem, Mr, Abera HaileMariam

¹⁹³ Mr. Abera Hailemariam

¹⁹⁴ Mr. Gebremedihin Kidane

enforcement agencies failing to bring to justice a man who had repeatedly abused and attempted to kill a woman despite a series of complaints by the victim and her family members,¹⁹⁵ and despite EWLA's assertion that it is within its mandate to be concerned with such matters.¹⁹⁶

Another serious issue concerning sustainability involves the availability of financial resources. Almost all NGOs are entirely dependent on foreign funding. The attempt to raise local funds has always been unsuccessful¹⁹⁷ or never tried. It was considered by possible funders as involvement in politics or at most disinterested in the issue.¹⁹⁸ It is fortunate however that at the moment many have diversified funders and therefore enlarging the chance of sustaining themselves if one or two of them decline to support them any more. One NGO staff argues that external donors do have the obligation to extend their support as long as effective human rights work is done,¹⁹⁹ and as long as stakeholders, including donors, are allowed to take part in a transparent manner in the process of implementing and evaluating programs and activities.

Since recently the idea of having 'donors consortium' is being materialised in a number of NGOs such as EWLA, APAP and FSCE. In this arrangement, donors are contributing to the funding of all programs annually prepared by an organization instead of the traditional way of supporting independent small projects. This device indeed has helped NGOs to plan for a long-term period ensuring perhaps 'the long-term impact of human rights education programmes.'²⁰⁰ At this point in time both NGOs and some donors do seem to have a positive attitude towards the arrangement. And the budget of most of the organizations is growing every year. Foreign funding would not be a guarantee however. It will depend entirely on the good will of the donor agencies as well as the human rights performance of the Ethiopian government.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ 'Dimtsachen' Special Issue, 2002, EWLA

¹⁹⁶ Ms. Helen Seifu

¹⁹⁷ Mr. Gebremedhin Kidane

¹⁹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹⁹ Mr. Abera Hailemariam

²⁰⁰ Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Mid Term Global Evaluation of the Progress Made Towards the Achievement of Objectives of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), p.8

²⁰¹ Gunnar A. Holm, Counsellor, Political Affairs, Norway Embassy, as well as Mr. Max Bjühr, Swedish Embassy in Ethiopia

CHAPTER III. SOME CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

As already mentioned, human rights education is rather a life long process than a one-time work. It would therefore be an ambitious effort to make every individual in Ethiopia aware of his rights and duties at one point in time so that he/she may begin defending them effectively. Even though this is the ideal goal of human rights education everywhere, it may be achieved only after experiencing quite a number of challenges every time and every where. In poor, traditional and undeveloped countries like Ethiopia the challenge would even be more. In the following, some issues (there could be other issues as well) will be raised that could have a certain impact on human rights education endeavours in the country.

3.1. POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Poverty is defined as the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.²⁰² Many agree that extreme poverty is by itself a human right violation.²⁰³ The former UN High Commissioner on Human Rights Ms. Mary Robinson once said "I am often asked: "what do you think is the worst human rights problem in our world today?" I reply "extreme poverty".²⁰⁴

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world with a population of more than 60 Million. It is a country in a worst situation because famine and drought is the everyday happening. Even at this moment over eight million people are in need of food aid after a failed rainfall the previous season.²⁰⁵ According to the World Bank report the Ethiopian population that lives with less than one dollar a day is 31% where as 76.4% live on less than two dollars. Prevalence of malnutrition below the age of five is for instance at 48%.²⁰⁶ In general Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries ranking the fifth from bottom in UNDP Human Development Index.²⁰⁷ Poverty is even more serious in the Ethiopian rural areas where more than 85% of the population is living. Despite strategies and policies

²⁰² Human Rights In Development, what is poverty: available at.

<http://www.unhchr.ch/development/poverty-02.html>

²⁰³ see General Comment No.3, para.10

²⁰⁴ 'Poverty and Racism: challenges for human rights and development in Africa.', Keynote address by Mary Robinson, Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 10 December 2001, Celebration of International Human Rights Day, Available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/development/newsroom.html>

²⁰⁵ Ethiopia: Over 8 million in need of food aid, 26 July, 2002 <http://www.irinnews.org/report>

²⁰⁶ Human Development Report, 2001, UNDP

²⁰⁷ Ibid

adopted in the past poverty and famine is still rampant in the country. As this is a fact about Ethiopia, it can be argued that the Ethiopian Government is violating the ICESCR because it has failed to satisfy a minimum core obligation to ensure the satisfaction of, at the very least, minimum essential levels of each of the rights because a state party in which any significant number of individuals is deprived of essential food stuffs, primary health care, basic shelter and housing or of the most basic forms of education is, *prima facie*, violating the Covenant.²⁰⁸

Does human rights education then contribute to the alleviation of poverty in Ethiopia? A number of international instruments cited in the previous chapters seem to support and reflect this. For instance the General Assembly Resolution noted that human rights education is a prerequisite for the realisation of human rights and social justice.²⁰⁹ The Plan of Action for Human Rights Education declared that human rights education shall seek to further effective democratic participation in the political economic and social spheres and shall be utilized as a means of promoting economic and social progress and people centred sustainable development.²¹⁰ Human rights education is also about encouraging people to take action to defend human rights and prevent human right abuses.²¹¹ Moreover it is being accepted that the content of human rights education should also include the issue of poverty as it is a problem affecting the realisation of other human rights.

The traditional outlook that economic social and cultural rights are not judicable seems to be outdated by now.²¹² Therefore, poor communities in Ethiopia who are targeted by human rights education could demand, even going to court, for the immediate realization of some of the rights such as the building of clinics or schools in areas there is not one. The CESCR indeed made it clear that even in time of severe resource constraints vulnerable members of the society can and indeed must be protected by the adoption of relatively low-cost targeted programs.²¹³ But sometimes it could be impossible to get redress from the court or other related bodies for the realization of certain rights because of genuine lack of resources on the part of the government.

Supposing there is lack of available resource in Ethiopia, the government has another obligation, which is very difficult to monitor *i.e.* the obligation to adopt appropriate measures to realise socio-economic rights in the future.²¹⁴

²⁰⁸ General Comment No.3, para.10

²⁰⁹ General Assembly 48/127, 1993

²¹⁰ The plan of Action of the UN Decade on Human Rights Education, ParagraphII(7)

²¹¹ The Guidelines for National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education,

Paragraph B (13)

²¹² See for instance successful court cases in Argentina and India, '*Circle of rights: Economic, social and cultural rights activism: a training resource.*', International Human Rights Internship Program and Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, 2000, pp 418-432

²¹³ General Comment No. 3

²¹⁴ Article (2) of ICESCR

However, in a country like Ethiopia where close to 3 billion dollar was spent on war in the past two years, where there is wide spread corruption, where only 4% of irrigable land is developed, and only 1% of electricity used despite the country's vast water resource as Ethiopia is being called the 'water tower' of Africa, the argument of lack of resources every time could be disputable.²¹⁵ Moreover, though Ethiopia is suitable for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) according to the reports by UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), at the same time it is criticised for stifling foreign investment and hence hampering development. Ethiopia has also a great potential for tourism. Generally, the government's inability to use all these potentials sooner may be, at face value, ascribed to the absence of appropriate policies in the country and, therefore, a violation of human rights. Hence, taking in to account all these facts, can the Ethiopian government, according to The General Comment of the CESCR, demonstrate that every effort has been made to use all the resources at its disposal in an effort to satisfy, as a matter of priority, the minimum obligations such as realising the right to food? Actually these are the major issues human rights education should focus on to bring about changes in Ethiopia.

On the other hand, as far as the choice of policies to adopt in order to bring about the necessary improvements is concerned, detailed obligation of conduct is more difficult to set.²¹⁶ However in its General Comment on the right to food, the Committee on Economic Social Cultural Rights has explicitly recognized the need for *participatory* decision-making. 'Appropriate institutional mechanisms should be devised to secure a representative process towards the formulation of a strategy drawing on all domestic expertise relevant to food and nutrition.'²¹⁷

Participation is therefore valuable because it is only through a participatory process that policies can be designed that are acceptable as benchmarks for monitoring the state's success in moving towards progressive realisation of rights.²¹⁸ As explained in the previous chapters active participation is also an important issue human rights education tries to cultivate. However, as far as participation is concerned, the concept has been abused to gain credibility and resources and to legitimise political discourse.

There are practically no programmes or projects that don't emphasise the necessity of participation and community based support. 'Nevertheless it has to

²¹⁵See, , 'Initial National Communication of Ethiopia to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)' National Meteorological Services Agency June 2001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, pp 2-3 available at: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/ethnc1.pdf>

²¹⁶ Asbjorn Eide and Wenche Barth Eide, 'Article 25', Eds, Gudmundur Alfredsson and Asbjorn Eide, 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A common Standard of Achievement', Kluwer Law International, 1999 P. 538

²¹⁷ General Comment NO.12(24)

²¹⁸ S.R.osmani, 'Human rights to food, health and education.' Available at: www.undp.org/rbap/rights/fhe.htm

be recognized that *to participate it is essential to be informed*. In this sense as much effort must be given to the process itself as to the substantive content. There must be a conscious effort to create an agenda, and not simply an interpretation of an agenda created from ‘outside.’²¹⁹ Participation is also defined as ‘not a mere strategy to manufacture consent, manipulate consensus or extract cheap labour. Participation is a principle based on an inclusive moral choice; participation means sharing power, legitimacy, freedom, responsibilities and accountability-participation is both a principle and a means to include as many people as possible in the process of social change’.²²⁰

To take one example, Ethiopia’s economy is largely dependent on agriculture. Currently, the land policy is based on the government ownership of land. This policy is even backed up by a constitutional provision.²²¹ However, whether this policy is obtained through a genuine and *informed participation* of the stakeholders, particularly the poor farmers, is not an easy question to answer. Nevertheless the new strategic documents adopted by the government still argue against any other alternative policy and assert that land should still remain in the hands of the government asserting that, if land is privatised, the farmers will be forced to sell their land out and become destitute, an argument which doesn’t look to have support from the farmers themselves.²²² This policy is perhaps contrary to the suggestion that land should be owned by the tiller of the land where agriculture is the major basis of income.²²³

There are however strong alternative arguments concerning land policy in Ethiopia as stated by some local scholars and as also indicated in the new strategic documents. One alternative suggestion is that poverty is occurring in Ethiopia due to the land holding system. The argument is that since the government owns land, it is susceptible to redistribution anytime. This, in turn, results in farmers not willing to put long-term investment on the land and resulting in soil degradation and poor output. Another also asserts that famine continues to be a threat unless the farmers are exempted from paying tax until the problem subsides.²²⁴

If these are, for instance, some examples of the main issues with regard to poverty in Ethiopia, human rights education may relate to and concentrate on this particular issue because, as the Plan of Action for the UN Decade on Human

²¹⁹ Patricia Arrdden, ‘*Participation for whom?*’, Eds, Angella Milligan, ‘*Advocacy and Citizen Participation*’, IIED, 2002, p.30

²²⁰ John Samuel Arrdden, ‘*What is People Centred Advocacy*’, eds. Angella Milligan ‘*Advocacy and Citizen Participation*’, IIED, 2002, p.30

²²¹ Article 14 of the FDRE Constitution

²²² ‘*Rural Development Policies and Strategies*’, Ministry of Information, Addis Ababa Ethiopia, PP. 66-90(Amharic Version)

²²³ Asbiorn Eide and Wenche Barth Eide, *supra*, at note 216, P.536

²²⁴ Laeke Mariam Demessie, ‘Ethiopia: Famine Threatens Again’, Available at: <http://www.ips.org/critical/watch/ethiopia.htm>

Rights Education recommends, human rights education should be relevant to the daily lives of the people.²²⁵ And there could not be any other serious concern at this point in time in Ethiopia than the problem of poverty both in rural and urban areas. Therefore, the education process should not be transferring information merely about human rights but also as they are related with poverty and how effectively the rights can be promoted or defended against or negotiated with the state and its agencies. In other words, through participatory human rights education which fosters critical thinking, the Ethiopian people should be made 'capable of perceiving hunger as more than just not eating, as the manifestation of a political, economic, and social reality of deep injustice.'²²⁶

The present interventions through human rights education do not seem to be very much popular in terms of bringing success among poor communities. Perhaps, the interventions were unable to conscientise the people in a way to enable them understand that human rights may assist them tackle poverty they are experiencing daily. The challenge is more, as one research indicated, for the poor in Ethiopia, the most important institution is not the state but the informal local institutions like *idir*²²⁷ followed by churches and mosques and some religious institutions.²²⁸ If change has to come, this undesirable attitude has to be changed in more positive ways. In the words of Paulo Freire 'if (a) person believes in god and prays, his or her prayer will certainly focus on asking for the strength to fight against the deprivation of dignity to which he or she is subjected. The person who has reached conscientization and is also a believer of god sees god as a presence in history, but not one that makes history in lieu of men and women's actions.'²²⁹ Therefore a human rights education activity may start at the grassroots level and it should all be about changing the values and attitudes of the poor in relation to the Ethiopian government, and particularly the latter's international and domestic obligations to realise the rights by highlighting the relevance of active participation by the marginalized to change their future in positive ways.

Accordingly, the affected community, for instance, may be helped through human rights education such as 'developing appropriate strategies which may range from the enactment of new laws or policy, litigation, use of other national institutions, seeking the intervention of United Nations or regional human rights mechanisms, or intervening with multilateral financial institutions.'²³⁰ All these

²²⁵ plan of action 11(6)

²²⁶ 'Circle of Rights', *supra* at note 73, p. 401

²²⁷ Informal Institution mainly for Burial Services

²²⁸ Dessallegn Rahmeto and Aklilu Kidanu, 'Consultations with the poor: A study to inform the world development 2000/2001 on poverty and development (National Report Ethiopia)', 1999, Addis Ababa, Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices/reports/national/ethiopia.pdf>

²²⁹ Paulo Freire, 'Letters to Cristina-Reflections on My Life and Work' (New York:routledge, 1996) cited in : 'Circle of Rights', *supra* at note 73, P.401

²³⁰ 'Circle of Rights', *supra* at note 73, P. 402

endeavours however may have a considerable effect on the content, methodology, targets, actors, resources and strategies of human rights education to be carried out in the country. Its success may also, and significantly, depend on the political willingness of the Ethiopian government.

3.2. GLOBALISATION, POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

From analysing the General Comment on state obligations²³¹ in economic, social and cultural rights, it can be presumed that poverty can be eradicated in a particular country as long as a country implements appropriate measures or policies. And as it has been noted previously, appropriate policies could only be in place if stakeholders have participated in the process, because it is only through *informed participation* that acceptable policies can be designed. The logical conclusion to this assertion would be that there could be extreme poverty in a particular country only because there is a wrong policy in place. However, whether a particular policy is appropriate or not is not an easy question to answer from the very beginning. And yet some writers argue that by investigating whether a policy went through a participatory process, it can be affirmed whether a policy is legitimate or not from the start.²³²

But can one imagine the problem of poverty in Ethiopia having as its cause and solutions outside the domestic sphere? Could globalisation be a Cause?

If we examine globalisation, economic activities take place within the framework of the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), The International Monetary Fund, The World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Economic activity is also influenced by regional trading blocks such as European Union and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Major features of the new rules of the game include multinational agreement on trade, services and intellectual property backed by strong enforcement mechanisms. Because the latter are more binding for national governments these new features *reduce the scope of national policy*.²³³ But it has also led to significant social dislocation, particularly in the developing areas of the world, and even in those parts of the world that are believed to have escaped the scourge of underdevelopment.²³⁴ Given these developments, the world today

²³¹ General Comment No. 3,

²³² S.R.osmani, '*Human rights to food, health and education*', Available at: www.undp.org/rbap/rights/fhe.htm

²³³ Human Development Report 1999, UNDP, P.1

²³⁴ J. Oloka-Onyango and Deepika Udagama, '*Economic, social and cultural rights: Globalisation and its impact on the full enjoyment of human rights*', Progress Report in accordance with Sub-Commission Resolution 1999/8 and Commission on Human Rights decision 2000/102, E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/10, 2 August 2001, p.5

can be described as “the concurrence of globalization and marginalization. While one section of humanity is growing and developing - literally basking in the glow of globalisation - the other wallows in increasing despondency and despair. The processes most closely associated with globalisation are rife with contradictions.”²³⁵

As Oxfam observes, the problem is not that international trade is inherently opposed to the needs and interests of the poor, but that the rules that govern it are rigged in favour of the rich. The human costs of unfair trade are immense. If Africa, East Asia, South Asia, and Latin America were each to increase their share of world exports by one per cent, the resulting gains in income could lift 128 million people out of poverty. Reduced poverty would contribute to improvements in other areas, such as child health and education. In their rhetoric, governments of rich countries constantly stress their commitment to poverty reduction. Yet the ‘same governments use their trade policy to conduct what amounts to robbery against the world’s poor.’ When developing countries export to rich country markets, they face tariff barriers that are four times higher than those encountered by rich countries. Those barriers cost them \$100bn a year - twice as much as they receive in aid.²³⁶

Various polite formulations can be found to describe the behaviour of rich-country governments. But the harsh reality is that their policies are inflicting enormous suffering on the world’s poor. When rich countries lock poor people out of their markets, they close the door to an escape route from poverty. Lack of market access is not an isolated example of unfair trade rules, or of the double standards of Northern governments. While rich countries keep their markets closed, poor countries have been pressurised by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to open their markets at breakneck speed, often with damaging consequences for poor communities.²³⁷

An example from Ethiopia may demonstrate something tangible in this regard. Ethiopia depends on coffee revenues for a large part of its income. Fifty-four percent of the country’s exports come from coffee. The export revenues from coffee for instance fell from \$257 million in 2000 to \$149 million in 2001 - a 42% reduction in just one year. This drop in income is almost twice the \$58 million granted the country in debt reduction under a World Bank program for Highly Indebted Poor Countries. As a result Ethiopian coffee farmers have went bankrupt and are being starved due to the fall of coffee price. Normally, the Ethiopian coffee farmer gets only 1% of what the consumer pays while small giant

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ ‘*Rigged rules and double standards, trade, globalisation and the fight against poverty*’, Oxfam, 2002, pp 3-4

²³⁷ Ibid.

coffee companies make huge profits while paying coffee farmers less than it costs to grow it.²³⁸

Is it possible that the Ethiopian government is responsible for this kind of state of affairs? If it is *not*, then human rights education as a tool to improve the lives of the poor or to protect them from being starved at the local level by pressurizing the government to comply with human rights standards, (such as utilizing all its resources and potentials wisely), could be frustrating and without no impact whatsoever. The solutions appear to be found beyond the boundaries of Ethiopia. These may include, as suggested by one writer; advocating for the inclusion of human rights in international treaties such as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and the WTO; demanding that human rights be considered in the making of foreign policy and in the IMF's policy of "good governance"; and insisting that the activities of transnational corporations are consistent with international human rights law.²³⁹ At the moment the OHCHR is also making progress in examining the rules and policies concerning globalisation for their compatibility with the norms and standards of human rights.

Human rights education for staff of institutions influencing the world trade such as the trans-national companies including the IMF, WB and, as suggested by the General Assembly Resolution, is probably meant to curb this problem. Using human rights education (which brings the international/global issues as described above to peoples living in developed countries and who have a bigger say in formulating policies) could also be an area of intervention. After all those actors affecting international trade are nothing else than fellow human beings. It is seldom a topic, for instance, in civic education or other human rights courses about the critical issue and the worsening situations in developing countries including Africa despite a surplus of production around the world. At the moment the issue seem more of an ethical one than a breach of human rights standards. The present Oxfam campaign for fair coffee price, for instance, never uses human rights terms.²⁴⁰ Even the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights seems to consider the issue of globalisation as an ethical one.²⁴¹

3.3. SOME ISSUES RELATED TO THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

²³⁸ Statement by H.E. Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the FDRE at a conference organized by Oxfam on the crisis in the coffee market, October 3, 2002, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

²³⁹ Robert McCorquodale and Richard Fairbrother, "*Globalisation and Human Rights*" Human Rights Quarterly (1999) Vol 21 No 3 pp.735-766.

²⁴⁰ '*Rigged rules and double standards, trade, globalisation and the fight against poverty*,' Oxfam 2002, pp 3-4

²⁴¹ '*Poverty and racism: Challenges for human rights and development in Africa*', Keynote address by Mary Robinson, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10 December 2001, celebration of International Human Rights Day

In the future it is hoped that the Human Rights Commission to be established in Ethiopia will widely involve in human rights education. It will perhaps become the main actor in the establishment of the National Committee for Human Rights Education as the UN Plan of Action for the Decade on Human Rights Education recommends. Time will tell however whether it will have positive element in the realisation of human rights education or show signs of shortcomings in some instances. But there is always a possibility that it may perhaps undermine the activity of human rights education in the country, particularly such educational interventions which are meant to empower the marginalized to resist against violation or demand certain rights from the government.

Basically, human rights education has the aim of equipping people with information and skills to demand for their rights using domestic mechanisms, the most important institutions being law enforcement bodies and the judiciary. Even though there is currently a determination from the Ethiopian government in building the capacity of such institutions as per the new strategic documents issued,²⁴² in the recent past Ethiopian judges and the police, particularly at the lower level, are taking the post only after a three months training and having no experience, since there has been regular dismissal of judges.²⁴³ Therefore, it is very difficult to imagine the police and the judges to pronounce sound judgements on cases brought before them.²⁴⁴ Hence the presence of a strong civil society which is aware of its rights will not be able to enforce its rights due to such problems, though human rights education in turn contributes a great deal in the creation of effective government offices.

Another problem relates to absence of infrastructure and facilities. Even though the police and prosecutors are aware of certain human rights standards, they complain, for instance, that they don't have the mechanism for verifying a child's age and simply have to charge him/her as if he/she is above 18 years old to avoid the risk of releasing an adult criminal despite the child's statement. It is also an accepted procedure (though everybody knows that it is wrong) that young children are imprisoned with adults only because there is no other room available to put them separately.²⁴⁵ Sometimes, the police may also be forced to inflict torture on suspects because they have no other option, as they have not received sufficient training to collect evidence by appropriate means, or there is no available budget to do so. As far as courts are concerned, a trial may take as long as five years violating the right to fair trial due to a backlog of files or small number of judges.²⁴⁶

²⁴² A Ministerial Office is established focusing on Capacity Building in 2002

²⁴³ For instance, 339 judges were dismissed in 1996, see Mona Rishmawi, Lynn Hastings 'Attacks on jurists: The harassment and persecution of judges and lawyers,' Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers of the International Commission of Jurists, 1997, p.131

²⁴⁴ Such cases as decided in Argentina and India, see 'Circle of Rights', supra, at note 73

²⁴⁵ FSCE is employing a different approach to handle this problem in some towns

²⁴⁶ FSCE is creatively avoiding the problem related with the availability of facilities by initiating Community Based Correction centre in Addis Ababa through one of its programs.

On the other hand, in Ethiopia, the situation with regard to formal education is also discouraging. Only 39 % of the population, which is largely living in the towns, is literate.²⁴⁷ Therefore, it is almost impossible to reach a significant number of the Ethiopian people despite whatever attempts are made to include human rights education in school curricula. There would always be a burden on the government and other actors to reach millions, which is almost impossible time and resource wise. A larger volume of information and time might also be required while organizing training for illiterates than literates. The government initiative to make use of other channels such as TV and radio may not be encouraging as the number of people having TV sets and radios is still insignificant.²⁴⁸

3.4. THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

In Ethiopia, currently, NGOs are more seriously involved in human rights education work than the government. As discussed above, whether or not they have produced the desired result is however questionable. But they deserve one comment however. From the review of human rights NGOs in Ethiopia one may have the impression that they are not exhibiting any real commitment in changing the desperate situation of the poor. In other words, there seem to be no strong commitment to voice the problems of the poor, women and children against the human rights obligation of the Ethiopian Government.²⁴⁹ As a result, some NGOs may find themselves in a difficulty to win credibility and trust from the people they are working for. Indeed cooperating with the relevant government agencies had been useful for instance for coordinating training activities in case of APAP and establishing Child Protection Units locally in cooperation with the police in case of FSCE.

Naturally, human rights work might not be undertaken as smoothly as it may seem in the country like Ethiopia, which is still in the process of democratisation. And it is perhaps natural to expect any kind of conflict with the 'political interests' of the government whatever it may be while carrying out human rights education work. However, as one writer stated 'human rights education is indeed political education. It is learning about the total complex of relations between human beings and in the society, education that enables human beings to

With the arrangement made in cooperation with the police children in conflict with the law are rehabilitated while they are still living with their parents and hence avoiding Correctional institutions. Whether problems in other areas could be avoided employing similar types of arrangements depends on a number of factors.

²⁴⁷ Human Development Report, UNDP, 2002

²⁴⁸ According to the 1994 Census, only 15.6% of the urban housing units have radio sets and 6.6% TV sets, See '*Country Gender profile: Ethiopia*', Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), 1999, P.23

²⁴⁹ Individuals may be joining NGOs perhaps not because they are committed in human rights work but because they are better paid and have similar benefits than the government offices at the same level.

participate in the decisions that determine their lives with *knowledge and commitment*.²⁵⁰

Indeed some organisations such as APAP claim that they are currently involved not only in the promotion but also in the ‘protection of human rights’, the latter obviously involving a risk of confrontation with the government in some instances. While APAP is carrying out its Community Institutions Support Program, for instance, it trains community leaders about human rights and other necessary skills such as, preparing pleading, report writing, conflict resolution mechanisms for local communities so that they may demand their rights against the government or abusive government officials. But in the past two years, all the trained community leaders could do was simply organize another similar (perhaps less in quality) human right training workshop. As a result the organization is now considering revision of its approach, which may include inventing a mechanism for close follow up of activities of those trained community based human rights activists in a sustainable manner.²⁵¹ This approach might even lead to a greater confrontation with government agencies while advocating the interests of its targets.

Otherwise, in the absence of any result or impact, the interventions in human rights education would be frustrating in Ethiopia. Actually the NGOs could be right for being very cautious not to be involved in activities which leave them in confrontation with the government. Some organizations even seem to take for granted the government’s statement of lack of resources for the cause of socio-economic problems in Ethiopia.²⁵² Nevertheless, how far the human rights NGOs should distance themselves from the real problem and need of the poor people on the one hand and the articulation of the government’s obligation as regards the poor and the marginalized on the other always remains a question. But, as human right organizations mandated to work for the respect of human rights in Ethiopia, they might be required to exhibit stronger character and be creative enough while dealing with the conduct of the government in relation to the recognized human rights standards.

For instance, there has not been open protest or statement from the human rights NGO community when very recently more than 31 demonstrators are killed by security forces in Addis Ababa²⁵³, when more than 24 died and 4738 displaced in ethnic clashes in the South of Ethiopia,²⁵⁴ when street people are

²⁵⁰ Shulamith Koenig, ‘Human Rights Education. Human rights culture and the community of non-governmental organizations: The birth of a political ideology for the Twenty-First Century,’ eds, Sia Spiliopoulou Akermark, ‘Human Rights Education: Achievements and Challenges’ Institute for human rights, Abo Akedemi University, 1998, p.125

²⁵¹ Mr. Abera Hailemariam

²⁵² Mr. Fasil W/Mariam, Executive Director of FSCE

²⁵³ EHRCO Special Report No.45, June 2001

²⁵⁴ EHRCO Special Report No. 45 May 2002

taken forcefully to suburbs of Addis Ababa,²⁵⁵ or when two renowned human rights activists and members of a human rights organization were arrested and detained 'while peacefully carrying out their legitimate human rights work.'²⁵⁶ The legality of such issues were seldom discussed from human rights point of view in training workshops or seminars organized for law enforcement officials and the public despite human rights education methodology recommends discussions on actual and real life issues. It is difficult to discern whether this silence is due to the fact that everyone agrees, for instance, with The Prime Minister that the killing of the demonstrators or rioters by police and security forces in Addis Ababa is an appropriate measure to restore law and order.²⁵⁷

NGOs may also focus more on the problems of the poor in town and rural areas (because this is where the main problem of Ethiopia exists) and search for the solutions to their problems such as through research, using statistics that indicate violations as well as analysing local as well as national budget,²⁵⁸. The local communities may also be helped to be organized and mobilized to demand for appropriate policy or for the delivery of a particular social service using various types of local enforcement mechanisms such as the courts and administrative bodies or could initiate dialogue with the government, and even peaceful protests in case the state institutions are not effective. If such kinds of intervention were to be carried out effectively, the relationship between NGOs and the government would obviously not be smoother.

Though the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Justice is optimistic that the new proposed strategic documents issued by the government recently call for an active participation from citizens for the realisation of human rights, and the government being ready to be challenged, the risk is always there as evidenced from recent incidents. EWLA's registration was suspended for six weeks simply because it issued a statement (as per its mandate) alleging the negligence of law enforcement agencies. EHRCO's two of its Executive Members were arrested and detained because they organized public seminar on the right of academic freedom to Addis Ababa University students and, as alleged by the Ethiopian government,²⁵⁹ inciting the students to act violently against the government.

Again the activity of human rights organizations could be more confrontational against the government, for instance, when it comes to educating

²⁵⁵ EHRCO Special Report No.52, July 2002

²⁵⁶ Amnesty International Report, 21 May 2001

²⁵⁷ Interview with The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Walta Information Centre, July 4, 2001. Available at:

http://www.waltainfo.com/conflict/interview/2001/june/meles_interview_with_bbc.htm

²⁵⁸ By analysing the amount of budget allocated to a particular community or social service sector communities may voice their demands, see Maria Socorro I. Dionko, 'A right based approach to budget analysis', International Human Rights Internship program, 1999

²⁵⁹ Criminal Charges against the defendants at the Federal High Court, 25 May 2001

and advocating for the repeal of laws that are politically sensitive. The present press law of Ethiopia, for instance, is considered by some international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Article 19 as being contrary to international human rights standards. And as recently as 12 June 2001, a law was issued which stipulates that any person suspected with corruption and detained shall not have a right to be released on bail. According to EHRCO, persons who were arrested prior to the promulgation of the law on suspicion of corruption, bail has been rejected on the basis of the new law that was proclaimed later.²⁶⁰ No human rights NGOs, apart from EHRCO, did speak out any kind of protest while many journalists were being arrested, detained and sentenced according to these controversial laws.²⁶¹ This state of affair could also be directed against a human rights organizations' immediate interest at any point in time if the latter wish to use the media and the press or their own publications for public mobilization purpose by amplifying and articulating government obligation and responsibility in respecting certain human rights.

Networking and partnership locally and internationally may contribute significantly, as some experience in the past demonstrated, to resist such unwelcome measures taken by the government against active human rights NGOs. Locally real networking and solidarity among NGOs is apparently lacking and there has not been a protest against such measures of the Ethiopian government mentioned above. But in some instances, some international responses in the past had contributed for a positive outcome. As far as EWLA's²⁶² suspension is concerned, for instance, some international human rights organizations have submitted letters to the Ethiopian government appealing for the respect of freedom of association including appeals from African Watch and Amnesty International. From its report it can be seen that many have submitted letters to the Ethiopian government so that the latter may respect freedom of association. There were a series of appeals from African Watch and Amnesty International, too. Communications were also submitted to the UN special rapporteur for Arbitrary Detention and Violence Against Women both for cases of EWLA as well as when members of EHRCO²⁶³ were arrested. A human rights activist and former president of the Ethiopian Teachers Association was released after five year in prison because, as some analysts say, international pressure has been mounting on the government for his release.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ EHRCO Special Report, June 2001

²⁶¹ Committee to Protect Journalists reported that more than 60 journalists have been arrested and about a dozen of publications put out of business, See Yves Sorokobi, 'Overview: Africa', p.55, available at: http://www.cpj.org/attacks01/pages_att01/acrobat_att01/AfricaOverviews.pdf. But the situation has improved since recently

²⁶² EWLA is for instance a member of African Women's Committee for Peace and Development, Equality Now, Annual Report of EWLA, 2000

²⁶³ EHRCO has an observer status in the African Commission on Human rights and People's rights, is a member of World Organization Against Torture and also a corresponding member of International Federation of Human Rights

²⁶⁴ Weekly newspaper *AddisTribune* may 17, 2002

At another level, networking /partnerships could also be established and strengthened with other civil society institutions that are not working purposely on human rights. For instance Forum for Social Studies²⁶⁵, non-profit policy research institution and Ethiopian Economic Association²⁶⁶ are active in proposing alternative policies and conducting studies, hence, making their endeavours a human rights work, too.²⁶⁷

3.5. ISSUES CONCERNING ETHNIC RELATIONS

Ethiopia is a country in which more than 80 ethnic groups are living. More than eighty languages are spoken with the greatest diversity found in the southwest of the country.²⁶⁸ While many of these ethnic groups are undeveloped without modern infrastructure and institutions, there are some who are still leading a primitive way of life.²⁶⁹ Ethiopian history in the past centuries, as recently as a year ago,²⁷⁰ is filled with internal and external conflicts. As some argue, as a result of which, Ethiopia has become one of the poor countries in the world.

The FDRE Constitution of 1994 declared the exercise of self-determination by different ethnic groups would be instrumental in building a political community founded on the rule of law and capable of ensuring a lasting peace, guaranteeing a democratic order, and advancing Ethiopia's economic and social development.²⁷¹ Prior to the adoption of the Constitution, Ethiopia had been a unitary state with strong centralised government. As per the current Constitution, Ethiopia is now divided along ethnic lines in to nine regions. Hence, these regions are now constituted and have started to administer themselves, and using their own language as a working language as well as in schools. The Constitution is also

²⁶⁵ The main goal of the organization is; 'to promote transparency and accountability in policy-making and implementation, and thereby to serve as a catalyst in the democratisation of the policy-making process, and help expand the democratic space.' It considers policy analysis as an important input to policy making and implementation, and hence it believes the building up of a policy-analysis infrastructure in the country as an important contribution. The brochure of the organization is available at: http://www.ethiopians.com/Fss_Brochure.htm

²⁶⁶ Its objective includes contributing to the economic advancement of Ethiopia and providing for a forum for the discussion of economic issues. See the website of The Organization: <http://eea.ethiopiaonline.net/>

²⁶⁷ EWLA for instance has been engaged in consultation process in the preparation of Ethiopia's Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PRSP) for the organization 'recognizes that women's economic marginalization is often a major factor obstructing their access to their constitutional and legal rights.' See Annual Report 2001, EWLA, p.11

²⁶⁸ 'World directory of minorities', Minority Rights Group International, 1997, page 412

²⁶⁹ Ibid. For instance the Anuak Tribe of Ethiopia .

²⁷⁰ There was for instancee acostly war with Eritrea in 2001

²⁷¹ Preamble of the FDRE Constitution.

granting these regions the unconditional right to succeed, a right which is rarely provided in other multi-ethnic states.²⁷²

But currently the situation on the ground does not show positive sign as far as the relationship between different ethnic groups is concerned. To cite some incidents; there were recent border conflicts between different groups such as between *Gedeo* and *Gugi* people, between *Borena Oromo* and *Garre Somali* between *Amhara and Oromo* in the western part of the country costing a number of lives.²⁷³ There were allegations of ethnically motivated killings of *Amharas* by the member of the Oromo Liberation Front. There was also a killing in Awassa leading to 25 deaths²⁷⁴ and recently bomb explosions were witnessed in the capital Addis Ababa which was also ethnically motivated. Since 2000, more than hundred people died and their house burnt down, and more than 10000 displaced as a result of conflict between *Amharas* and *Oromo* in western Ethiopia.²⁷⁵

Hence, ethnic tension seems to be a potentially dangerous problem²⁷⁶ currently in Ethiopia probably more than ever. As one writer observes:

‘In the 30 years prior to the demise of Mengistu's regime, the civil wars in the country were waged between the central government and insurgencies bearing ethnic names. But in the current situation people are being pitted against each other. Neighbours who have coexisted peacefully for decades, if not centuries, are being encouraged by official government policy to emphasize their ethnic differences so that ethnically homogeneous political structures can be created. Age-old relationships between peoples, intermarriages, cultural interactions and continuities, are in peril of being disrupted or wrenched apart. As the reality in the country has been a long history of coexistence and cooperation between ethnic groups at the grass roots, people are speaking out against the ethnic segregation that is being imposed on them from the top. However, unless the implications of this new ethnic policy are examined carefully and the policy itself revised, the government might end up creating more ethnic conflict than it deters.’²⁷⁷

²⁷² Article 39 of the FDRE Constitution states: ‘Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has an *unconditional* right to self-determination, including the right to secession.’

²⁷³ See Kjetil Tronvoll, ‘*Ethiopia: a new start*’, Minority Rights Group, 2000, p.22-23.

²⁷⁴ EHRCO Special Report No. 51, June 4, 2002

²⁷⁵ EHRCO, Special Report No.38, February 21, 2001

²⁷⁶ In its report, EHRCO called it a dangerous problem of the utmost concern, see EHRCO Special Report No.35, November 2, 2000

²⁷⁷ Hzkias Assefa, ‘*Ethnic conflict in the Horn of Africa: Myth and reality*’, Edited by Kumar Rupesinghe and Valery A. Tishkov, ‘*Ethnicity and power in the contemporary world*’, , United Nations University Press, 1996

The writer also argues that the incorporation of the right of self-determination including the right of cessation in the Ethiopian constitution is a product of an ideological framework rather than an outgrowth of the country's realities. Instead of the reality on the ground determining the model of theoretical framework to be used in diagnosing, understanding, and dealing with it, an ideologically dictated theoretical framework seems to have been imposed on the reality, which is then forced to conform with the framework.²⁷⁸

To resolve the current ethnic tension, the government has kept on dismissing members from the political parties who allegedly instigated the killings or accusing opposition parties for the cause of the problem.²⁷⁹ As far as human rights education is concerned, except for EHRCO, which is reporting the violations taking place relating to ethnic violence, other human rights NGO apparently do not seem to be concerned with the problem. The government, at least Ministry of Justice, has never organized training or whatsoever for government officials or local communities on the issue of ethnic tolerance and human rights. Though Ethiopia is a party to CERD, it has never reported after the adoption of the 1994 Constitution to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination relating to human rights education to smooth up ethnic tensions. The civic education curricula and texts apparently do not explicitly deal with this problem.

The problem related to ethnicity is more complicated in Ethiopia as described above since there have long been intermarriages among ethnic groups and trans-border movements among different ethnic groups. For instance, millions of peoples with a certain ethnic background live in other regions intermarried, and many are also dispersed in almost all areas of the country.²⁸⁰ Hence, as long as these ethnic groups are destined to live together and in the same surrounding and sharing resources, it is mandatory that they have to develop a culture of tolerance acceptable by all parties from human rights perspective. It may also call for a human rights education, which can go to the extent of amending the constitutional provisions that are proved to be catastrophic. Moreover, taking the situation on the ground at the present, minority rights issues will have to be included as the subject of human rights education all over the country.

An intervention to mobilize communities to alleviate poverty perhaps may never be successful with out tackling this problem first. It has been highlighted that one of the aims of human rights education is improving racial, ethnic and religious relations and strengthening and internal peace and stability. The issue of ethnic relation is therefore one of the priority areas of human rights education, which

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ 'Police apprehends suspects behind terrorist acts', Walta Information Center, September 22, 2002 available at: <http://www.waltainfo.com/ennews/2002/sep/22sep02/sep22e2.htm>

²⁸⁰ Ethiopian Statistical Authority, Population Census, 1994

need a special attention, otherwise leading to a catastrophe in the future and perpetuating poverty in Ethiopia.²⁸¹

3.6. CULTURE AND RELIGION

Culture

Ethiopia is a country with rich and an age long cultural beliefs and traditional practices. As traditional societies Ethiopians consider preservation of culture as a portrayal of their identity and expression of national pride.²⁸²

However, the different cultures practiced in the country are not always positive and, at times, may go contrary to certain human rights standards. For instance, the attitude of the public towards women is not entirely positive since women are looked down upon and considered as second-class citizens. The girl child and women are most of the time made to be confined indoors and this has a direct psychological impact on the female population.²⁸³ It is noted that the deep-rooted cultural attitude and traditional practices preach and perpetuate women's inferiority. Moreover, FGM, early marriage and abduction is practiced widely, about 73% undergoing the practice.²⁸⁴

Until now, for instance, FGM is not punishable under Ethiopian law. And EWLA is currently lobbying for the law abolishing it, which is of course an obligation the government of Ethiopia bears under CEDAW. But the problem is whether or not having a penal law immediately puts an end to such culturally deep-rooted practices. Experience from other African countries may demonstrate that it is seldom possible. It was not entirely a success, for instance, in some countries where this practice is taking place.²⁸⁵ A simple instance may demonstrate how culture plays a role in Ethiopia, too. A girl who exchanged for her own father to have a new wife was refusing to stay away from home and returned nine times to her family, and she had to kill her father when she is sent back for the tenth time. Another girl who was abducted twice committed suicide when she is abducted for the third time.²⁸⁶ In both cases the girls and other persons close to her never resorted to the police or the community asking for help presumably because in the victims' mind, (and actually), the community approves

²⁸¹ Report of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, 31 August - 8 September 2001, p.11, available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/racism/>

²⁸² Hadera Tesfay 'Country Gender Profile: Ethiopia', Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 1999, P.24

²⁸³ Ibid

²⁸⁴ Ibid

²⁸⁵ Bbonny Ibhawoh, 'Between Culture and Constitution: Evaluating the Cultural Legitimacy of Human Rights in the African State', Human Rights Quarterly 22.3 (2000) PP. 838-860

²⁸⁶ 'Dimtsachen', Special Issue, EWLA 2002, p.11

the practice. Hence, the approach from human rights education perspective may rather be successful in sustainable manner by changing the attitude of the community towards the harmful practice. The law prohibiting Child Marriage was, for instance, promulgated in Ethiopia as far back as 1960²⁸⁷, but the practice is still wide spread.

On the other hand, the present civic education curriculum indeed incorporates the issue of harmful traditional practices. Apparently, it only provides information with out any potential to change the attitude of students according to the previous discussions. It does not seem to allow students to relate the issue with their day-to-day life. For instance, the students are not encouraged, using participatory methods, to reflect on or analyse why the girls/their sisters are always doing the household work while the boys study, and play etc.

For the adult population immediate result in the ending of the practice of FGM or abduction or other type of cultural practice may not be achieved so easily. According to the base line survey conducted by the National Committee on Traditional Practices of Ethiopia (NCTPE), for instance, 69.3% still want to retain the practice. Hence, other alternative measures should obviously be sought for in addition to having a law abolishing it. Uganda and Kenya for instance have used other schemes to reconcile culture and human rights with regard to FGM. In Kenya local communities introduced 'alternative' circumcision 'rites' replace old traditions. It is a new procedure arrived at through community dialogue and consensus. The peoples with in these communities agreed to do away with the physical mutilation of the woman's body during the traditional female circumcision rites while retaining other harmless aspects of the circumcision rites.²⁸⁸ A similar ritual is arrived at Uganda. A girl is declared a woman with out being mutilated not only by the woman but also by male elders in the clan.²⁸⁹ Similar and creative approaches could also be applied in Ethiopia using human rights education to promote the rights of women, particularly against practices that are culturally and traditionally deep-rooted in the minds of the community.

In fact some positive results were reported in some regions in Ethiopia such as using other means than applying the penal law. For instance, in Tigray region 1,586 under age children successfully avoided being wed after initiating dialogue with the community and parents. In some areas in Oromia Region, the village elders agreed to modify the traditional rules governing certain harmful marriage practices after discussing the issue with the community²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Article 607, Civil Code of the Empire of Ethiopia, 1960

²⁸⁸ Bbonny Ibhawoh, *supra* at note 285

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*

²⁹⁰ 'Report on abduction, rape and other harmful practices, and measures taken in 2000,' Walta Information Centre, (Amharic version) unpublished, 2001, p. 13

With regard to other particular rights, too, some people and tribes in Ethiopia, for instance, are reluctant to send their children to school for they benefit more by not enrolling them. The prevalent attitude is that children are 'owned' by parents and not as having their own rights. Apart from that, the traditional communities in Ethiopia may have a different way of life. For instance the *Afar* tribe is nomadic and the *Anuaks* are hunters, and they may not appreciate formal education as an important asset to them for their livelihood, and even costly. Is a new kind of school arrangement possible to realise the right of education of children without affecting the traditional way of life of these tribes?²⁹¹ In such a situation perhaps the principle of compulsory elementary education, as ICESCR provides, may not be appropriate approach.

Moreover, for instance, in some cultures, particularly the *Issa Somali* of Ethiopia, a member of the clan will not have to worry about basic needs being unfulfilled, or being deprived of a family setting as long as the clan organisation of the *Issa* is around and able to afford it. A clear indication of the effectiveness of the system is also to be witnessed in the phenomenon of child streetism. Different sources, including officials in the city administration, police officers, and staff of NGOs, testify to the absence of children on the street from among the *Issa* in Dire Dawa where the problem of street children is among the most acute in the whole of Ethiopia. None of the children supported by the Street Children Project in the city are of *Issa* (or, for the matter, of Somali) ethnic origin. A major, if not exclusive, factor behind this is the support that *Issa* children automatically get from their clan when they need it.²⁹²

Similarly, in some *Sidama* communities, elders of only one clan resolve civil and criminal disputes arising in the community and the sanction they pronounce on the defaulting party usually is ritual cursing and ostracising him/her from social interactions. Moreover, people usually prefer to submit cases to such elders than to ordinary courts.²⁹³ Such traditional mechanisms are also present in many other ethnic groups.²⁹⁴ It is therefore a challenge whether or not human rights education should avoid such traditions and emphasise on state and individual relationship.

²⁹¹ After all the state is required to protect the identity and culture of minorities, see articles 1 and 2 of Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic Religious and Linguistic Minorities, General Assembly Resolution 47/135 December 18 1992

²⁹² '*Searching Inwards*', A study investigating the role and potential of traditional institutions for children conflicting with the law, Save the Children/UK and Radda Barnen (Swedish Save the Children) in cooperation with the Children and Youth Affairs Organisation (now a department in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) 1998, unpublished.

²⁹³ *Ibid*

²⁹⁴ Giday Degefu Koraro, '*Traditional dispute mechanisms in Ethiopia*', Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development, 2000

Therefore, human rights education may at times need a different approach in terms of strategy, content, methodology than the traditional way of strictly advocating for the respect of a particular human rights. Since the civic education curriculum of Ethiopia is to be compiled with nationally, a curriculum developed locally and that which takes in to consideration local cultures may be needed. Or else it may need the creative approach of teachers. After all the World Conference on Human Rights (1993) noted that though human rights are universal ‘the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind.’ But such creative interventions may not go to the very extreme of undermining the respect of fundamental human rights which would sometimes be difficult where to draw the line.

One case may illustrate how, perhaps irreconcilably, culture/tradition and human rights may come in to conflict. It is about a training package (developed by the Norwegian Red Cross and UNICEF in Seera Leon), which included a story depicted as ‘*the cultural way of managing conflict*’²⁹⁵. The story is that a man had two wives living in the same compound. One of the wives was very quarrelsome as a result the husband is always outside home to have peace of mind. One of the wives went to the traditional healer to tell him the problem. The traditional healer told her to put water in to her mouth as soon as her mate started to abuse her. He further told her that she must not swallow the water nor allow it to drop from her mouth. If she did evil spirit will haunt her. The woman obeyed and there was peace in the compound.²⁹⁶

This story could lead to unnecessary result from the human rights perspective as the writer observes. First the trainees will not relate polygamy with human rights. The story treats polygamy as part of Sierra Leone culture and there is nothing wrong about it and the learners to question it. Finally what the learners will remember is that women should keep their mouths shut, what ever may be happening to them.²⁹⁷ This is obviously against the fundamental human rights values and principles.

Religion

Ethiopia is also the home of many religious beliefs. The main religions in the country are Muslims and Christianity each constituting 40%. The remainders are protestant, Roman Catholic or followers of traditional religions.²⁹⁸ Religion has

²⁹⁵ Rapid response education programme. Peace and human rights education, mimeographed, UNICEF ministry of youth education and sports and the Norwegian refugee council, Freetown, march 2000, page 45, cited in Katerina Tomasevski ‘*Right to education primer*’, SIDA, 2001 page 48

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ ‘*World directory of minorities*’, Minority Rights Group International, 1997, page 412

always played a positive role in Ethiopia by establishing a strong moral conduct resulting in the peaceful coexistence of communities and individuals everywhere despite the presence of extreme social and economic problems in the country.

In many forums it has been noted that Ethiopia is a country where one can witness better religious tolerance.²⁹⁹ But this assertion may not be entirely true as some religious conflicts are currently taking place. This is a potentially serious problem the Ethiopian government has prime responsibility to deal with. Perhaps religious leaders should be targeted through human rights education to gain knowledge regarding religious freedom so that they may display a culture of tolerance towards followers of other religious beliefs.

On the other hand, it could be asserted that the Ethiopians people largely are devout believers. As already mentioned before, they have developed more attachment to these religious institutions such as the mosques and the church than the state and its agencies.³⁰⁰ Quite often people tend to go to churches in large numbers when they encounter economic and social problems apart from spiritual ones.³⁰¹ It is an everyday ritual to conduct mass prayers rigorously when national calamities such as war and famine is happening in the country. With many peoples in the congregation and a great deal of potential, human rights activists could search for mechanisms to enable them use such religious institutions including other traditional institutions as a vehicle for the promotion and protection of human rights. Human rights education could be used to mobilize believers to be active in public issues that affect them and critically articulate the scope of the responsibility and obligation of the Ethiopian government so that they may question and resist human rights violations.

In Ethiopia these religious institutions may rather be blamed of alienating the people from the matters that is affecting their lives, particularly when it comes to controversial social, political and economic issues in relation to the Ethiopian government human rights obligations. Observing the potential these institutions have, the government, on the other hand, is using them in such campaigns as HIV/AIDS eradication programs in an attempt to change the attitude of the public towards the disease.

Some NGOs like APAP and EWLA, indeed, invite representatives from religious institutions to participate in human rights training workshops because these institutions reach at or are appreciated by people at grassroots; the poor

²⁹⁹ Birgitta Benzing, *'Ethiopia: Culture and Traditions; An introduction'*, eds, Christian Felleur, *'Ethiopia: An introduction in to culture, economics, politics, and cooperation,'* 2000, p.15 see also, *'Christian-Muslim Religious Tolerance In Ethiopia Said Exemplary To World'*, Walta Information Centre, Addis Ababa, September 19, 2002 (ENA)

³⁰⁰ Dessallegn Rahmeto and Aklilu Kidanu, *supra* note 228

³⁰¹ A participant once said in a human rights workshop only God can change governments and people can do nothing about it. A facilitator, APAP

and the marginalized. Apparently however no systematic effort is observed in institutionalising the human rights element as a tool for social transformation in the everyday work of these institutions.

As far as human rights concerned, like the experiences of some Lutheran Churches³⁰², these religious and traditional institution in Ethiopia, too, can speak on behalf of the marginalized and the excluded by speaking directly to the media, by writing letters to the politicians, both collectively and individually, and by making use of their 'privileged access' to the decision makers. With one congregation a cross section of the population can be found political and economic leaders, scientists, as well as ordinary people, and even marginalized peoples are there. This implies that a certain human rights issue can be brought to the attention of decision makers both in formal way with in the congregation and in an informal way, in their personal encounter with the marginalized³⁰³

In Ethiopia, the Constitutional provision could however pose a problem when trying to use these religious institutions as a vehicle for change or for promotion and protection of human right. The FDRE Constitution stipulates that government and religion are separate.³⁰⁴ It also provides that religion should not interfere with the affair of the government. The latter statement could be wrongly interpreted by government agencies to mean that religious institutions should not involve in such activities whenever they find the interventions politically uncomfortable.

³⁰² Bernhardur Gudmundsson, 'The Protestant Churches', eds, Gudmundur Alfredsson, Jonas Grimheden, Bertram Gramcharan and Alfred de Zayas, 'International Monitoring Mechanisms', Kluwer Law International, 2001, p.910

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Article 11

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The World Conference on Human Rights (1993) demonstrated a worldwide consensus that human rights education is necessary for the realisation of other human rights. As discussed earlier, human rights education is particularly important for the poor, women, children and other marginalized groups to pull them out of their suffering as long as appropriate targets, strategies and methodologies are employed. As Amnesty International³⁰⁵ is asserting human rights education can help prevent violations, strengthens actions and campaigns, creates a space for dialogue and change, encourages respect and tolerance and integrates the principles of human rights into everyday life.

More clearly, from the human rights law perspective, the realisation of human rights basically has to do with the obligation of states. Indeed it is the articulation of this relationship between the state and its citizens that is lacking in countries like Ethiopia. Human rights education would then be a valuable tool to help people appreciate the scope and extent of the human rights obligation of the government in fulfilling their needs and interests. In other words, it would empower citizens to be conscious of what their right are in relation to what the state is obliged to do under domestic and international law.

As has been discussed, those NGOs and government agencies currently involved in human rights education in Ethiopia show some positive signs as well as certain drawbacks. Amongst the positive things the following could be highlighted;

- There is, relatively, a proliferation of human rights NGOs involved in human rights education work in the past few years.
- Though not intensive and comprehensive, human rights education is conducted covering various contents and targeting different groups
- Evaluation had helped some NGOs to make revisions on such issues as the content, targets, strategies, methods and approaches of human rights education.
- Coordinating interventions in human rights education with other activities that reinforce each other has been a creative outlet.
- There is always an attempt, in one organisation as yet, to evaluate and measure impact of human rights education programs.
- Though there is always a risk in sustaining human rights education activities, some of the organization's budget is growing every time.

³⁰⁵ See website: http://www.web.amnesty.org/web/web.nsf/pages/hre_home

Moreover, NGOs do not seem to be donor driven and are planning their overall programs relatively for longer period of time ensuring their sustainability.

- The commencement of civic education is highly appreciated. Though it may not be effective as it is now, it could develop in to an indispensable intervention in the future.
- Human rights NGOs are integrating other related interventions such as research, legal aid and lobbying thereby reinforcing the effectiveness of human rights education with in their own reach.

As far as drawbacks are concerned the following may be mentioned:

- Strong commitment seems to be lacking on the part of the government to be involved in human rights education in comprehensive and sustainable manner. Currently it is just a part time work. It seems very unlikely that the National Committee on human rights education will be established in Ethiopia.
- NGOs are proliferating and individuals are interested in joining them. The problem is however identifying whether or not this interest is due to real commitment to do the job. If there is no commitment, activists would be very much reluctant to come in conflict with the state as per the mandate of the organization they are working in. EWLA appears to be in a better position for it is taking up an issue that has a support from the government as it is engaged in more of ‘non-political’ interventions.
- At this moment human rights education interventions are sure only about transferring information and knowledge of human rights and not bringing about behavioural change.
- Participatory methodology is not being used by almost all actors, therefore making it doubtful as to whether human rights education would bring the desired effect in Ethiopia.
- Continuous effort is not witnessed on the part of NGOs in mobilizing the grassroots to change their future. As there are usually no close and sustainable follow-ups to workshops or trainings, the human rights knowledge is apparently dying away in the middle.
- Many have failed to effectively and sustainably use the potentials of religious and traditional institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, as communities in Ethiopia are deeply religious and

traditional. The different actors involved in human rights education seem to keep the status quo.

- There is no encouraging systematic collaboration among NGOs as well as with the government concerning human rights education.
- Until now only small number of peoples and areas are targeted. Effort should be made to reach more peoples as possible. There has not been any major focus particularly on the illiterate who are a majority in Ethiopia.

Accordingly, the following statements may be pointed out as recommendations:

- It appears that the establishment of the National Committee on Human Rights Education could never be a priority in Ethiopia at least at the moment. International pressures such as recommendations made by The UN Treaty Bodies on periodic reports may not be strong enough to mobilize for its establishment. Perhaps the role of NGOs should be maximized to lobby for its establishment as human rights education should be one of the priority area for it contributes for the realisation of human rights.
- Networking among NGOs particularly for the purpose of resource sharing, avoiding duplication of efforts and lobbying should be developed. It would also be a basis of solidarity among NGOs in the event of government harassment. Networking with international NGOs could help lobby the government whenever there is maltreatment
- Evaluation of impact always remains a challenge. The problem arises may be due to the fact that activities are not comprehensive or dispersed in terms of targeted individuals or groups and area of operation. Perhaps starting with a pilot project involving all peoples and actors could help to a certain extent. The experience of Argentina, India and Senegal in building sustainable human rights communities could be an experience that may be exploited for the purpose of measuring impact of programs.
- Emphasis should be made in developing the best of human rights education methodology in tune with the needs of particular target groups. In particular, since the majority of the Ethiopian population is illiterate, a methodology that would empower these section of the society is highly appreciated.
- As long as human rights education is part of a larger dimension of human rights work in a present political situation of Ethiopia it is highly demanding profession. It may go to the extent of risking one's liberty and

even life. Hence, the staff should always display strong commitment and be loyal to the organization's mandate, and, as a result, win the confidence and trust of their constituency.

- Actors involved in human rights education should target individuals at grass roots. These are people that are suffering from various types of human rights violations. And all educational activities should focus not on dissemination of information on human rights standards as an end in itself. It should also be a positive intervention in the lives of these people.
- Different actors involved in human rights education activity should be creative enough to use different local cultures traditions in the promotion and protection of human rights rather than immediately outlawing them which may not be a sustainable solution to human rights problems in the country.
- With more than sixty million peoples living in Ethiopia and the majority being illiterate, a handful of NGOs interventions and some government efforts will not be enough to reach all. Ethiopia, as it is rich with local traditional and community institutions, many more could be reached through them. Other relevant actors could be employed as a vehicle as well such as development NGOs, professional associations, trade unions etc.
- Civic education in schools should be taken seriously. To be effective, teachers themselves should be exposed to human rights education. They should also learn about methodologies that will enable them carry out human rights education lessons in participatory manner.

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