



“EQUALITY, FREEDOM AND JUSTICE”

A REALITY FOR ALL

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"Equality, freedom, and justice" a reality for all.

“... we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender...” – Winston Churchill

The above quote is an extract of the famous speech he delivered on June 4, 1940 during a pivotal moment of fighting back against Nazi aggression as a form of unwavering ‘hope’ and constant determinism to British forces and allies. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) arose from the horrified ashes of the Second World War (WWII). **The creation of this foundational document has helped create a normative framework for promoting non-violent measures, ensuring friendly, transparent, and diplomatic relations among member states, communities, and nation as a whole.**

I will get into the technical and non-technical elements of declaration through this essay and try to highlight both wheels of the cart. This will elaborate on advances, complexities, and possible improvements of the UDHR declaration through real-time examples. First, let’s take an emerging issue of refugees and asylum seekers. According to Article 14 of the UDHR states that, in case of persecution, everyone has the right to seek asylum and to enjoy asylum in other countries.¹ Many United Nations member nations have signed international treaties, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which define the rights and duties of refugees. Now, co-relating this with the ongoing Mediterranean refugee crises¹ (Jazeera, 2023b), the arrival of refugees bordering is not exempt from the dangerous sea journeys, the trade-off here is a ‘better life’ with ‘the journey’ as the means to reach that end. Here, violation of Article 5, the right to be free from

(Jazeera, 2023b); <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/29/more-than-2500-dead-missing-as-some-186000-cross-mediterranean-in-2023>

torture or subjected to cruel, barbaric, or degrading treatment is called upon question of interest. Whereas, a more brutal force of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar was deliberated under the basis of ‘ethnic cleansing’, which violates multiple articles of UDHR, such as the Right to Life, liberty, and Security (Article 3), the right to seek Asylum Article 14, etc. Aung San Sui Kyi, a human rights activist and de facto leader of Myanmar also faced criticism in her inaction towards the Rohingya crisis. Through these two cases, we can presume that good leadership takes a toll over time, along with the need for visionary but empathetic leadership is essential. The International Convention of Justice (ICJ) stems from the UNDR to be accountable and transparent in its speculation for proper interference and impartial judgment on serious critical matters as such. The role of international communities and formal diplomatic ties in legal actions can also be beneficiary to reaching at least a ‘ceasefire’ for a primal solution if not an optimal one.

Furthermore, the context of democracy varies among different countries and so does its intensity. Today, we as a global nation have progressed into democratic nation-states, each paved either through the bloodshed of war or a certain revolution that has altered the history of nation-state. Rooting from our own atrocities, we come together for world peace and building resilience. The establishment of Parliament in the decision-making process of the country is reflected in voting behavior within the nation. Today, women have the right to vote in 198 countries versus 91 countries in 1948. (UDHR, 2023). One of the most essential rights of civil and political conduct promotes freedom of expression, assembly, and association for a free and fair world. The irony that lies here even in the 21st century is in gender and equity of representation. Progress can be slow, but it is gradual. To date, women only represent 24% of national parliaments (UNDR, 2023) and higher leadership positions. To break this ‘glass ceiling’, one must go beyond the barrier rooted in systematic prejudice, stereotypes, and biases that limit upward mobility.

My last argument emphasizes the scientific conjunction of social parameters on development for the bridge to promote equity, freedom, and justice. Cognitive ability and early investments in long-term growth. These social determinants such as health and education are essential for developing cognitive abilities in an individual. These abilities are the foundation for learning, problem-solving, and intellectual, physical, and mental growth. It has direct relations to fostering critical thinking skills. Here, I try to incorporate important developmental parameters of the right to health and the right to education. Since 2008, the proportion of primary school-age children who are not in school has been stable at around 9% and slums house 880 million urban inhabitants worldwide. (UNHCR, 2023). The highlight here is in ‘importance of early investment’. Nutritional deficiency affects the health, cognitive ability, and holistic development of a child. Here, often people are entangled in a situation where the choice between food and non-food elements² such as health, education, security, livelihood, and necessities where people in absolute poverty are forced to prioritize critical basic needs, and the relative is estranged in a vicious cycle of social inequity. This extreme deprivation has long-term impacts on development and nation-building measures and need to be taken into full attention. This also adheres to the contrast in developed and developing nations as all needs to go together and no one chair fits all. Effective strategies, collaboration and coordination are essential to build an inclusive, equitable, and maintain equilibrium amongst communities.

Lastly, the ideals of the declaration can be examined by Eleanor Roosevelt (Chair of UDHR drafting committee), “Where after all do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world. (...) Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seek equal justice, equal opportunity and equal dignity without

² Development Initiatives, ‘Food poverty: global, regional and national’. March 2020.
< https://devinit.org/documents/709/Food_poverty_global_regional_and_national_factsheet.pdf>

discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.³” (UNDR, 2023)

Henceforth, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been a cornerstone document in the pursuit of worldwide equality, freedom, and justice. Communities, cities, states, and nations have achieved great progress toward these values, frequently by enacting legislative safeguards, educating their citizens, supporting grassroots movements, and engaging in international cooperation. However, the current problems and discrepancies highlight the continual need to recommit to these ideals. To make "equality, freedom, and justice" a reality for all, communities must continue to collaborate to address inequality, discrimination, and other human rights challenges, while also cultivating a dedication to justice, peace, and the rule of law.

³ UNDR, 2023; <https://www.standup4humanrights.org/layout/files/The-Universal-Declaration-of-Human-Rights/UDHR%20Facts%20and%20Figures.pdf>

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