



MEANING AND DEFINITIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

MUHAMMED KABEER CP

Assistant Professor of History

Hajee Karutha Rowther Howdia College, Uthamapalayam

II BA HISTORY

HUMAN RIGHTS

17UHIS41/17UHVS41

MEANING OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- **Norberto Bobbio** stated that “we now live in an age of rights. A right is a multidimensional dynamic concept, embracing almost all areas of life like social, cultural economic and political fields”.
- According to **Prof. H.J. Laski**, “Rights are those conditions of social life, without which, no man can be his best self”.
- **Prof Green** defines “a right as a power, claimed and recognized as contributory to common good”.

- Human rights are referred as a fundamental rights, basic rights, inherent right, natural rights and birth rights.
- Human rights are rights of exceptional importance and belong to every individual by virtue of being a human.
- These rights are necessary to ensure the dignity of every person as a human being irrespective of race, religion, language, caste, sex or any other reason.
- The concept of Human right is based on the notion of equality of human being.
- The features of human rights are they are universal incontrovertible and subjective.

- Human rights are universal means they belong to each of us **regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, age, religion, political conviction or type of government.**
- They are incontrovertible means they are **absolute and innate.**
- Human rights are subjective means **they are properties of individual subjects who possess them because of their capacity of rationality, agency and autonomy.**
- The notion of universality has been criticized for **its blindness towards the issues of cultural differences.**
- When human rights are guaranteed by a **written constitution they are known as fundamental rights because a written constitution is the fundamental law of the state.**

DEFINITIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- According to S. Kim, human rights are *"claims and demands essential to the protection of human life and the enhancement of human dignity, and should therefore enjoy full social and political sanctions"*.
- Subhash C Kashyap opined human rights are those *"fundamental rights to which every man inhabiting any part of the world should be deemed entitled by virtue of having been born a human being"*.
- Milne defined *"human rights are simply what every human beings owes to every other human being and as such represent universal moral obligation"*.
- According to Nickel, *"human rights are norms which are definite, high priority universal and existing and valid independently of recognition or implementation in the customs or legal system of particular countries"*.

- **The Protection of Human Rights Act 1993** states *“Human Rights mean rights relating to life liberty, equality and dignity of the individuals guaranteed by the constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India”*.
- **The United Nation Centre of Human Rights** defines Human Rights as *“those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings”*.
- **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights** which adopted on **1948**, defines human rights as *“rights derived from the inherent dignity of human person”*.