



11137CH19

19

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter the learner is able to —

- discuss the interface between responsibilities and rights.
- analyse one's own responsibilities towards self, family, community and the larger society.

19.1 INTRODUCTION

You must have read about rights and responsibilities of individuals in different contexts. Let us begin with a brief recapitulation.

All individuals have the right to life, liberty, security, equality and dignity. These rights are enshrined to every man, woman, youth and child irrespective of their caste, race, colour, sex, religion, nation or place of origin or habitat, rural-urban differences or socio-economic backgrounds. The rights are enforced, either by individual or collective force or through mutual negotiations and help in the form of written or unwritten social contracts.

Rights and freedom do not exist in a vacuum or by mere belief. All freely exercised rights and freedom are contingent on people recognising these rights and supporting their implementation. Mutual and reciprocal respect and recognition among human beings is crucial and remains the basic principle for the protection of all types of rights. Rights and responsibilities are corollary to each other.

“I learned from my illiterate but wise mother that all rights to be deserved and preserved come from duty well done” — Mahatma Gandhi.

Every right gives rise to a corresponding duty.

In the present times, we are becoming increasingly conscious about our rights, which is a positive development. Many non-government

ACTIVITY 1**Conduct a brainstorming session on the following thought**

“It has always been a mystery to me how men can feel themselves honoured by the humiliation of their fellow beings.”
– Mahatma Gandhi

organisations (NGOs) are involved in efforts to educate people about their rights and ways to assert them. However, as we become aware of our rights, at the same time we also need to become sensitive and concerned about our responsibilities.

Individual rights for adults should and are always accompanied by responsibilities. If one values one's own needs, interests, safety, feelings, wants, or the whole self and expects every part of her/his life worth caring for and protecting, She/he is expected to do the same for others. Where rights in general, and human rights in particular, are the resultant of certain essential basic human needs, responsibilities are sincere and committed efforts by an individual made for ensuring the protection of human rights of both, self and others. By fulfilling one's responsibilities properly one can ensure protection of one's own rights as a human being. These are the two sides of the same coin. For example, an adolescent has the responsibility to educate herself/himself and attend to the health of mind and body such that one's own quality of life is enhanced along with that of the family; thereby the adolescent is fulfilling responsibilities towards one's own self and also her/his family.

Although it is of utmost importance to assert one's rights, it is equally significant to ensure that in the process of doing so, one is not violating another's rights. For example, it is the right of every individual to celebrate a wedding or a festival with music. Yet, if the loud music from the “*band-baja*” late into the night is disturbing many people who live nearby, then it is violating their right to a noise-free environment during this time. Do you agree with this? Can you think of examples in which your own rights may be in conflict with another's rights? How can such situations be reconciled?

An important aspect of responsibility is also to question and intervene when one observes violation of another's right. For example, if you observe that a young girl walking down the street is being harassed by some boys and she is trying to protest, what would you do?

Study Figure 1 below and discuss the responsibilities that you have in this stage of your life.

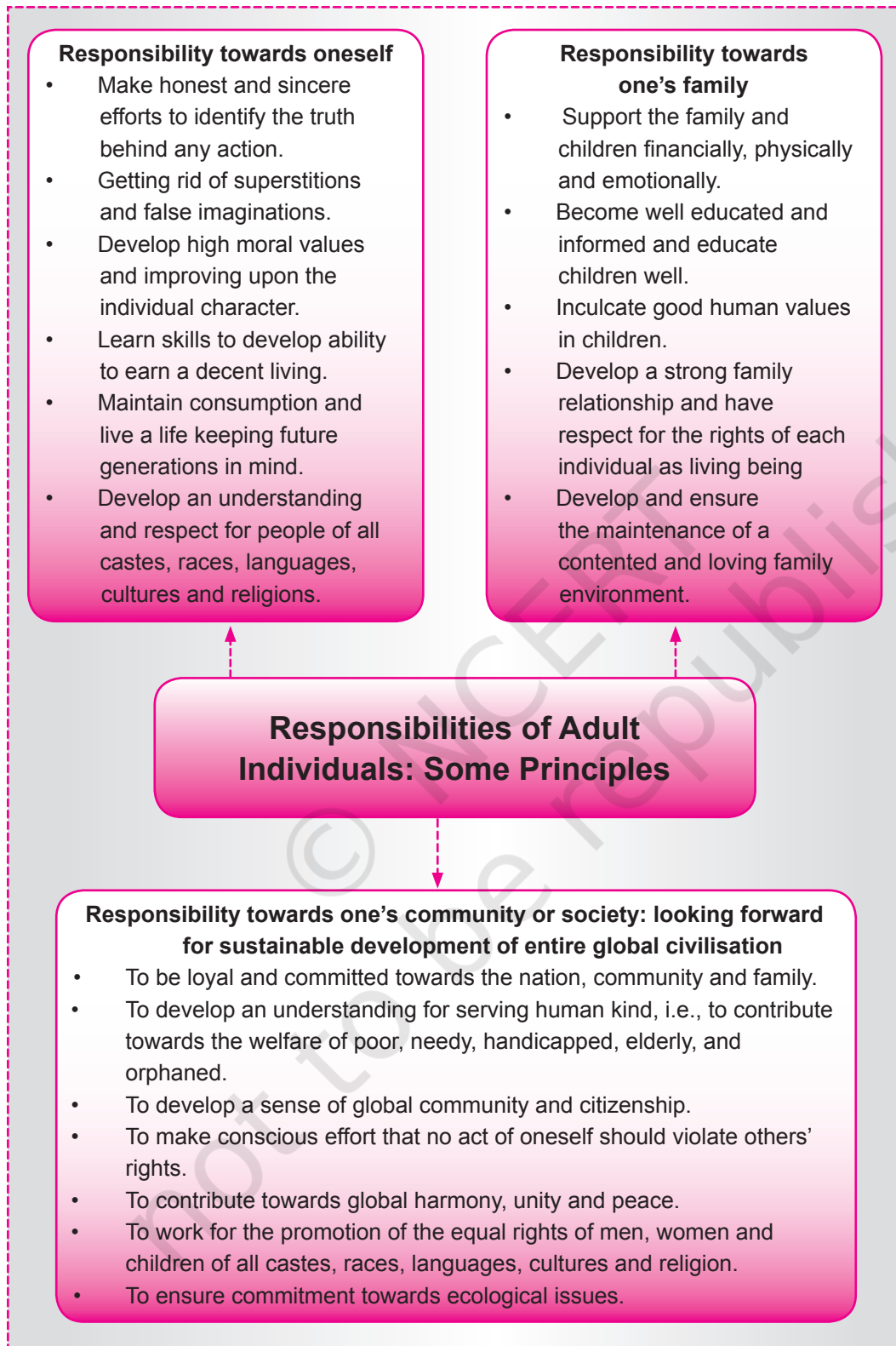


FIGURE 1: RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ADULT

19.2 DO RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS DIFFER FROM INDIVIDUAL TO INDIVIDUAL?

There is an extensive list of rights and their corresponding responsibilities in different combinations and permutations. Rights and responsibilities could be between nation states and international agencies, government and its citizens, employer and employee, teacher and student, parents and child, men and women, doctor and patient, consumer and producer or service provider, husband and wife and many more. In any relationship each has different sets of responsibilities. The same is true for rights. In a family, rights and responsibilities are played out in tandem. However, they are mediated by the cultural norms and beliefs, kinship, hierarchical relationships and gender roles of each individual. For example, the rights and responsibilities of an older brother will often be fundamentally different from that of a younger sister. Sometimes, it may also happen that cultural norms and beliefs could come into conflict with individual rights. For example, in Indian families there is the strong belief that children must seek parents' approval in selection of their marriage partner. But what if the parents disapprove of the partner that the adult daughter or son has selected? What should the girl or boy do in such a case? What about the right of an individual to select a partner of one's own choice?

ACTIVITY 2

Select any two individuals or groups who need to interact or work with each other on a regular basis, and outline their corresponding rights and responsibilities.

19.3 HOW TO PROTECT RIGHTS AND PROMOTE THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY?

We pass through different stages and situations in our life and accordingly our rights and responsibilities change. Newborns and infants obviously have no responsibilities but enjoy all rights of a human being. Responsibilities begin as the individual grows. However, it is necessary to give responsibilities to children from a very young age so that they learn its importance along with an assertion of their rights; with time, it would make them conscious about fulfilling their responsibilities as members of the family, community and society.

As we read in the chapter "Living and Working in a Global Society, in Part I of the book an individual's quality of life is influenced by the different ecological contexts including one's family, the neighbourhood or community and the society in which one grows and lives as well as other societies in

the global world. With advancement in communication technology, we are able to see and hear about the difficulties that people in different parts of our own country as well as other countries may experience. For example, in 2008 we saw how the floods in Bihar washed away entire villages leaving

ACTIVITY 3

Read the following situation and discuss —

“Pushpa is 15 years old. Her father is a labourer and her mother works as a domestic help in several houses. Both of them are out of the house for most part of the day. In the evening Pushpa goes to a house nearby for two hours to do some cleaning and ironing work. She wants to study but is unable to go to school since she is the eldest daughter in the family; hence during the day she needs to stay at home to look after her younger brother and sister”.

The teacher should guide the discussion on the following questions.

Questions

- Is helping the parents to earn a living for the family called child labour?
- Is there any violation of Pushpa's rights? Which rights are being violated?
- What about the responsibilities of Pushpa's parents?
- What about Pushpa's responsibilities towards her family?

many people homeless and destitute. During such natural calamities often there are requests for help in the form of money or clothes or food. Sometimes schools NGOs or even newspapers (e.g., Times of India) and news channels (e.g., NDTV) organise drives for help. What is our response to such initiatives? Do we have a responsibility to contribute in any way that we may be able to?

Key Terms

Rights, Responsibilities, Duties

■ REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. List any five responsibilities that you have as a member of your (a) family, (b) neighbourhood or community, and (c) society.
2. Explain the relationship between rights and responsibilities.

THE JOURNEY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

It covers thousands of years and draws upon religious, cultural, philosophical and legal developments throughout recorded history. Several ancient documents and later religions and philosophies included a variety of concepts that may be considered to be human rights. Much of modern human rights law and the basis of most modern interpretations of human rights can be traced back to relatively recent history.

Some of the notable documents and declarations among all are:

- *Cyrus Cylinder* of 539 BC, a declaration of intentions by the *Persian* emperor *Cyrus the Great* after his conquest of the *Neo-Babylonian Empire*.
- The *Edicts of Ashoka* issued by *Ashoka the Great* of *India* between 272-231 BC.
- The *Constitution of Medina* of 622 AD, drafted by *Muhammad* to mark a formal agreement between all of the significant tribes and families of *Yathrib* (later known as *Medina*), including *Muslims*, *Jews* and *Pagans*.
- The English *Magna Carta* of 1215 is particularly significant in the history of English law, and is hence significant in international law and constitutional law today.
- The *British Bill of Rights* (or “An Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Settling the Succession of the Crown”) of **1689** made illegal a range of oppressive governmental actions in the United Kingdom.
- Two major revolutions occurred during the 18th century, in the *United States* (1776) and in *France* (**1789**), leading to the adoption of the *United States Declaration of Independence* and the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* respectively.
- *The Virginia Declaration of Rights* of 1776 set up a number of fundamental rights and freedoms.
- Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen approved by the National Assembly of France, 26 August 1789.
- The establishment of the *International Committee of the Red Cross*, the *1864 Lieber Code* and the first of the *Geneva Conventions* in **1864** laid the foundations of *International Humanitarian Law* to be further developed following the two *World Wars*.
- *The League of Nations* was established in 1919 at the negotiations over the *Treaty of Versailles* following the end of *World War I*. The League’s goals included disarmament, preventing war through collective security, settling disputes between countries through negotiation, diplomacy and improving global welfare. Enshrined in its Charter was a mandate to promote many of the rights that were later included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
- At the 1945 *Yalta Conference*, the Allied Powers agreed to create a new body to supplant the League’s role. United Nations *Organisations Charter* in 1945 after the *World War-II*.
- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* document (UDHR) 1948 and *International Bill of Human Rights* including *International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* and *International Covenant of Social, Economic and Cultural rights (ICSECR)*.

■ PRACTICAL 19

Study of Adulthood

Theme: Study of one female and one male adult in the age range 35- 60 years with respect to

- (i) health and illness
- (ii) physical activity and time management
- (iii) diet behaviour
- (iv) coping with challenges
- (v) media availability and preferences

Tasks:

1. Identify a female and a male adult in the age range 35-60 years
2. Collect information with respect to the above aspects by asking them specific questions
3. Analyse similarities and differences in responses and assess whether there are differences in responses due to age or gender.

Conduct of the practical: After identifying the two persons (they could be persons in your family or neighbourhood), ask them the following questions.

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A. Questions related to health and illness

1. Have you had any health problem (s) or illness (es) in the past few years?
2. What treatment did you use? Did you seek medical help or did you use home remedies?
3. How did you manage the illness – by your self or with the support of family members or neighbours?
4. What do you do to keep yourself healthy?
5. Do you have health insurance?

B. Questions related to physical activity and management

1. Briefly describe your routine for the day (from the answer you get to this question, try to find how physically active the person is during the day)
2. What strategies do you use for accomplishing all the tasks that have to be done? Do you schedule specific activities for specific periods of the day? Do you combine activities of a similar nature and do them together (the answer will give you insights about how the person manages time)

C. Questions related to diet behaviour

1. What are the foods that you prefer to eat?
2. Are there any foods which you dislike?

3. In your family are there any foods avoided because of religious or social reasons?
4. What are the major influences on your food behaviour?

D. Questions related to coping with challenges

Each one of us faces one or the other challenging situation in our lives:

1. Can you state some challenging situation that you have had to face?
2. What emotions did you experience as you were passing through the situation?
3. How did you cope with this situation – were you alone in the situation or there were members of the family to help you cope?
4. Do you think that you could have responded differently than the way you did?

E. Questions related to media availability and preferences

1. Which media is available to you for reading/viewing – newspapers, radio, television, films?
2. Which media do you prefer and why?
3. What programmes or items do you like to watch/read in your preferred media?
4. When do you read/watch your preferred media?

Record your finding with respect to each of the above aspects using the following type of tables.

A. Health and illness

S.No.	Health problem/ illness	Treatment used	Self-management of illness/support of family or others	Measures to maintain health	Health Insurance
Adult woman					
Adult man					

B. Physical activity and time management

Physical activity and time management: Adult woman

Time (in hrs)	Activity

Physical activity and time management: Adult man

Time (in hrs)	Activity

Comment on the time management strategies used, based on the principles you have studied.

Adult woman

Adult man

C. Diet behaviour

S. No.	Foods preferred	Foods Disliked	Foods avoided due to religious or social reasons	Factors influencing food behaviour
Adult woman				
Adult man				

D. Coping with challenges

Describe in the following space the challenging situation faced by the two adults and their ways of coping

Adult woman

Adult man

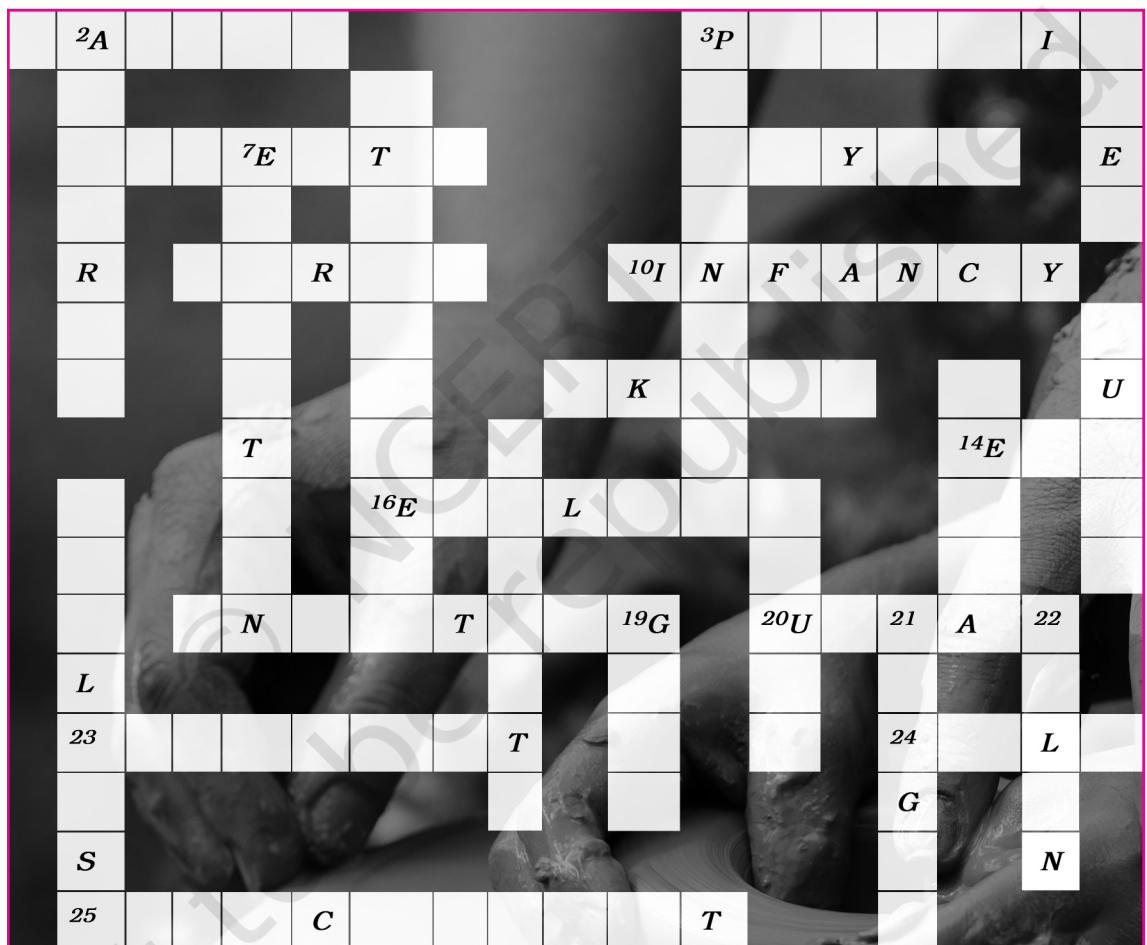
E. Media availability and preferences

S.No.	Media availability	Media preference	Programmes/items/ columns preferred	Time for watching/ reading media
Adult woman				
Adult man				

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Dear Student,

You have learnt several new terms and concepts in the preceding chapters. Now we shall play a game. This game will be fun as well as entertaining. You are required to read the clues presented on the next page and attempt to fill in the answers in the crossword puzzle given below. One has been done for you.



CLUES

ACROSS

1. A group consisting of parents and their children and/or other members
3. An essential nutrient consisting of amino acids
6. The period or age when a person first becomes capable of sexual reproduction
8. A regenerated semi-synthetic fibre
9. Of or pertaining to village life
10. The period of very early childhood
12. The ability or talent to do something based on practice or knowledge
14. A nourishing, protein rich food
16. A branch of study dealing with the relationship between persons and the environment
18. The act of forming a fabric by looping a yarn
20. Of or pertaining to city life
23. A substance providing nourishment
24. Viscous liquids made of vegetable or animal fat
25. A person's idea about himself or herself

DOWN

2. Clothing, especially outerwear
3. The process of bringing up children in a family
4. A requirement or necessity of a person
5. Sharing a special, emotional bond with another person
7. The act or process of imparting knowledge
11. A sweat foodstuff that provides quick energy
13. A means of communication, like TV, radio
15. The state of being in good health
17. A period between childhood and adulthood
19. The act of giving goods to another person as a token of affection, regard or ceremony
21. A kind of alternative fuel
22. A common synthetic fibre

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Answers

Across
1. Family, 3. Protein, 6. Puberty, 8. Rayon, 9. Rural, 10. Infancy, 12. Skill, 14. Egg, 16. Ecology, 18. Knitting, 20. Urban, 23. Nutrient, 24. Oils, 25. Self-concept

Down
2. Apparel, 3. Parenting, 4. Need, 5. Attachment, 7. Education, 11. Sugar, 13. Media, 15. Wellness, 17. Youth, 19. Gift, 21. Biogas, 22. Nylon

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