

Chapter 23. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Very Short Questions

Question 1: What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Answer: The Universal Declaration is the first international definition of the rights of man.

Question 2: When is the Human Rights Day celebrated?

Answer: The Human Rights Day is celebrated on 10th December every year since 1950.

Question 3: How many Articles are there in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Answer: There are 30 Articles including the Preamble in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Out of these Article 1 and 2 form the basis of all other rights.

Question 4: Which Articles deal with the civil and political rights?

Answer: Article 3 to 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights deals with the civil and political rights.

Question 5: Which year was declared to be the International Year of Human Rights?

Answer: 1968 was declared as the International Year of Human Rights.

Question 6: What did the Declaration of Human Rights affirm?

Answer: It affirms social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Question 7: Name two organizations, which fight for Human Rights.

Answer: The two organizations fighting for Human Rights are:
(i) Amnesty International (ii) U.N. Human Rights Commission.

Question 8: When did the UN General Assembly adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Answer: The UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10th December 1948.

Question 9: When is the International Day of Solidarity with struggling people of South Africa declared?

Answer: 26th June the day of uprising of SOWETO in 1976 was proclaimed by the UNO as the International Day of Solidarity with struggling people of South Africa.

Question 10: When was the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners celebrated by UNO?

Answer: 11th October 1976 was celebrated as the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners.

Question 11: Where was Apartheid followed upto 1994?

Answer: In the Republic of South Africa.

Short Questions – I

Question 1: What is the importance of Articles 1 and 2.

Answer: (i) These are very important because these lay great thrust on the equality of all human beings.

(ii) These are important because denial of these basic Human Rights creates conditions of social and political unrest. It sows the seeds of violence and conflict within and between societies and nations.

Question 2: Name any four Human Rights included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which have been incorporated in the Constitution of India.

Answer: (i) Rights of equality, (ii) Right to freedom, (iii) Right to constitutional remedies, (iv) Cultural and educational rights.

Question 3: How does the UN keep a check on violations of Human Rights by member States.

Answer: The UN Commission on Human Rights and its sub-commission on prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities meet every year and discuss about the complaints. The General Assembly may impose sanctions and economic blockade against the State which is violating the Human Rights.

Question 4: How has the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights influenced the Fundamental Rights contained in the Indian Constitution?

Answer: The first five Fundamental Rights contained in the Indian Constitution had been influenced by the Bill of Rights in the U.N. Charter. It has become obligatory for all member States of the United Nations to ensure these basic conditions to their citizens.

Question 5: Who was the first UN High Commissioner for Human Rights? When was he appointed and for what purpose?

Answer: The first UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was appointed on 14th February, 1994. He was Mr. Jose Ayala Lasso of Ecuador. He fought for the widespread discrimination against the world's women and children.

Question 6: What functions does the Centre of Human Rights perform?

Answer: The Centre assists the organs of United Nations in promotion and protection of human rights, carries out researches and publishes and disseminates information about human rights. It has different branches, assisting bodies to carry out the job. The communication branch processes communication concerning alleged human rights violations.

Question 7: What is meant by Apartheid?

Answer: The official policy of racial discrimination and segregation practiced against Non-Whites by the White Government of South Africa is called Apartheid. The basis of Apartheid is the claim of the Whites being superior to Non-Whites. It is incompatible with the UN Charter, treated as crime against humanity.

Question 8: With reference to Human Rights write any four Civil Rights.

Answer: Civil Rights:

- (i) All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- (ii) Freedom from torture or cruel inhuman treatment.
- (iii) Freedom from movement and the right to seek asylum.
- (iv) Freedom of peaceful Assembly and association.

Question 9: With reference to the Human Rights, write any two Civil Rights.

Answer: Cultural Rights:

- (i) The right to participate in the cultural life of the community.
- (ii) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interest resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic protection of which he is the author.

Question 10: Why was it necessary to bring about the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'?

Answer: This Declaration of rights has set a common standard of achievement for all people and Nations. Every individual and organ of the society keeping the ideals of this Declaration in mind shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedom by progressive measures undertaken either at national or international level.

Question 11: Where is the Centre for Human Rights? What do you know about its composition?

Answer: The Centre for Human Rights is located at Geneva, in Switzerland. It is headed by the Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights and five branches and the office of High Commissioner.

Short Questions – II

Question 1: Why was it necessary to bring about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Answer: During and before the World War II, the Fascist and Nazi rulers of Italy and Germany committed inhuman atrocities against the Jews and indulged in gross violation of fundamental rights and freedom of people under their subjugation. This led to a strong movement for the protection of Human Right. After the end of war, the UN Charter also affirmed its faith in the protection of fundamental Human Rights. In this background the UN General Assembly adopted the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' on 10th December, 1948.

Question 2: What is meant by the term 'Human Rights'?

Answer: Human Rights are those rights which every human being is entitled to enjoy. They are fundamental to one's welfare and are derived from the inherent dignity of human being. The French declaration of the rights of man 1789 described it as 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'. Thus the inalienable rights of human beings are life, liberty and happiness.

Question 3: How has the UN Charter dealt with the problem of Human Rights?

Answer: Though a separate Charter is not made on Human Rights in the UN Charter the specific mention to Human Rights have been made at various places. Article 1 of the UN Charter proclaims 'United Nations i§ to achieve international co-operation in promoting and encouraging respect for Human Rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.'

Question 4: When was the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' adopted?

Answer: The United Nations Commission on Human Rights prepared a draft on the general principles governing the human rights as a common standard of achievement for all people and nations. This declaration known as the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' the first of its kind were adopted by the General Assembly on 10th December, 1948.

Question 5: What do Articles 28 to 30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights deal with?

Answer: Articles 28 and 30 recognize every ones entitlement to a social and international order in which the human rights as proclaimed by the Declaration may be fully realized. They may be limited only for the purpose of securing respect and recognition of these rights and freedom of others. Thus, some duties and responsibilities are also laid down for individuals for their community.

Question 6: What do you understand by the 'Right to Protection' by law?

Answer: This right includes the right to recognition as a person before law, right to judicial remedy, freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention or exile, the right to a fair trial and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, the right to be presumed innocent unless proved guilty. Right to protection of law against attacks on freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence, honour and reputation.

Question 7: What is meant by Racial Discrimination?

Answer: Social Discrimination has been defined by Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) as 'any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition enjoyment of exercise, on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social cultural or any other field of public life.'

Question 8: With reference to Human Rights, Write any four economic Rights.

Answer: Economic Rights:

- (i) The right of social security.
- (ii) The right to work.
- (iii) The right to equal pay for equal work.
- (iv) The right to a standard of living, adequate for health and well being of oneself and of one's family.

Question 9: What did the Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination stand for?

Answer: The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was adopted by the General Assembly in 1963 to combat racism and Apartheid in the world with special emphasis in South Africa. It declared that discrimination between human beings on grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin was an offense to human dignity, a denial of Charter principles, a violation of the right proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and an obstruction in development of peaceful relations among people.

Question 10: What are the important conventions adopted by the General Assembly?

Answer: United Nations has done a great deal to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. Some of the important conventions adopted by the General Assembly were Conventions on Genocide (1948), Convention on Political Rights of Women (1952), Convention on Slavery (1956), Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (1965) and Convention on the Rights of Child (1989).

Question 11: When was the 'International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Dis-crimination' adopted and to what purpose?

Or

In 1963, the General Assembly adopted the 'UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. What did it affirm?

Answer: The General Assembly adopted the 'International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination' in December, 1965. The convention came into force in 1969 and as its name suggests called for an end to Racial Discrimination in all its forms. It was mandatory for the States who ratified it.

Question 12: State two steps taken by the UN for elimination of racial discrimination in South Africa.

Answer: The UN passed several resolutions banning Racial Discrimination. In 1974 the Assembly established an 18 member committee known as "Special Committee against Apartheid". It implemented resolutions of the UN as to the boycott of South Africa in the spheres of sports and culture in 1977. The International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa (Paris, May 1981) called for the imposition of sanctions against South Africa and international action to isolate her.

Question 13: State two steps taken by the Government of South Africa to bring down Apartheid.

Answer: The new President of South Africa, President F.W. De Clerk in 1989, realized that the policy of Apartheid had failed, and began a process of bringing down Apartheid. In June 1991 he scrapped one of the most hated Apartheid law—The Population Registration Act. The Group Areas Act which had set separate areas for the settlement of different races and the lands Act was also abolished. The President signed a "National Peace Accord" with the major political parties to create a right climate for negotiations.

Question 14: What do you know about Massacre at Sharpsville?

Answer: Massacre at Sharpville took place on 21st March, 1960 when South African police opened fire on peaceful demonstrators protesting against the requirement that all Africans carry 'reference books'. Consequently 69 persons died and 180 were injured. This incident brought the intervention of UNO the issue of Apartheid in South Africa, beckoned to do so, on the request of 29 African and Asian countries.

Question 15: When was the Declaration of the Rights of Child adopted? What did it stand for?

Answer: The Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted by the General Assembly in 1989. It affirmed the right of children to special protection, opportunity, facilities for a healthy normal development. These rights got legal binding with the adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child by the General Assembly in 1989. A committee was set up to implement and investigate violation of children's rights.

Question 16: What steps have been taken for protecting Women's Rights?

Answer: In 1979 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the General Assembly and was ratified by all countries. This has been the main instrument for protecting women's rights. Earlier a commission on the status of women was set up in 1946 to promote women's rights in political, economic, social and educational fields.

Question 17: Which commission was set up on the status of women. What are its main functions.

Answer: Commission on the Status of Women: It is a Commission which has 45 members and was set up in 1946 by UN Economic and Social Council. Its main functions are:

(i) To eliminate discrimination against women in areas like: education, employment,

health, marriage and family life.
(ii) To improve the status of girl child.

Question 18: Write a short note on Human Rights Committee.

Answer: Human Rights Committee: Human Rights Committee is there for the enforcement of Human Rights listed in the Conventional on Civil and Political Rights. The term of the Committee is four years and it has 18 members. Member nations have an obligation to submit report on the measures taken to give effect to Civil and Political Rights. A Conciliation Commission may be appointed if the matter which has been referred to the Committee is not resolved to -the satisfaction of both the parties. It is the duty of the member nations to extend all facilities to the Commission.

Question 19: Give three reasons for the importance of Human Rights today.

Answer: All the Universal Human Rights are important in their own way.
(i) Right to freedom of speech and expression enables a person to discuss freely for public and national well-being.
(ii) Right to have judicial remedy enables a citizen to move to any court if his rights are curtailed by the Government, any person or any other agency.
(iii) Right to vote freely and to take part in the Government of one's country ensures political rights to a citizen.

Question 20: With reference to organisation fighting for Human Rights, write short notes on the following UN Human Rights Commission.

Answer: UN Human Rights Commission: It was set up by the Economic and Social Council. The Commission held its first full fledged session in January, 1947. It had been given the task of drafting an International Bill of Human Rights. The bill drafted by the Commission was presented to the General Assembly which adopted it on December 10, 1948. The Commission has many working groups to investigate Human Rights problem in different countries.

Question 21: State one of the steps taken by the UNO for effective implementation of the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'.

Answer: For the effective implementation of the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' a Human Rights Commission was set in 1946 by the Economic Social Council. It submitted proposals, recommendations, made investigative reports on human rights issues through Economic Social Council to General Assembly.

Question 22: What functions are to be performed by the High Commissioner Office on Human Rights?

Answer: The High Commissioner for Human Rights is primarily responsible for human rights activities under the direction and authority of the United Nations Secretary General. Besides ensuring enjoyment of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, he has to enhance international co-operation for promotion and protection of human rights.

Long Questions

Question 1: What are the economic, social and cultural rights? Mention the Articles containing them?

Answer: Articles 22 to 27 deal with the economic, social and cultural rights. They are:

- (i) The right to social security.
- (ii) The right to work, the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to join and form trade unions.
- (iii) The right to rest and leisure.
- (iv) The right to a standard of living adequate for health and well being.
- (v) The right to education.
- (vi) The right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Question 2: What do Articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration of Human Rights state?

Answer: Article 1 of the Declaration states that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. There are certain rights of the individual which are inherent in his personality. Man is moral and rational being and this very state entitles him to the enjoyment of certain rights. Since these rights are derived from the inherent dignity of the human person, they should be available to all persons equally, everywhere and at all times.

Article 2 of the Declaration states that 'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status'. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the political, jurisdictional or international status country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, or self governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Question 3: What were the International Convention of Human Rights?

Answer: On 16th December 1966 the General Assembly adopted and opened for signatures, ratification and accession of three International Covenants on Human Rights:

- (i) International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.
- (ii) International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural rights.
- (iii) The optional protocol to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

Based on Universal Declaration of Human Rights the covenants were submitted to UN members for ratification after approved by General Assembly in 1976. They were ratified by 35 States and came into effect in 1976. The second protocol came into force in 1991. Together they constituted the International Bill of Human Rights. Both the covenants have force of law and are binding on ratifying countries.

Question 4: With reference to the Declaration of Human Rights, explain the importance of the Rights.

Answer: All the Universal Rights are important in their own way, and they should be understood in the historical context. For thousands of years in the history of human civilization and right till the signing of the Declaration, such rights were not available to very large sections of humanity in different parts of the world. Slavery was prevalent in the

Middle East, people were and still continue to be imprisoned without trial. Racial discrimination was practiced against the Black population in U.S.A., South Africa and many other countries of the world. Women did not have the right to vote even in some of the advanced European countries like Switzerland. Bonded labour still prevails in many parts of the world and the workers in socialist states do not have the right to form trade unions or go on strike.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights seek to remove all political and social inequalities and disabilities. They exercise a kind-of moral pressure on Governments to reform their laws in accordance with the principles laid down in those documents.

Question 5: Mention some of the important civil and political rights granted in the Declaration.

Answer: Some of the important civil and political rights granted in the declaration are:

- (i) Right to life, liberty and security.
- (ii) Freedom from slavery and servitude.
- (iii) Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- (iv) Right to protection under law and free access to it.
- (v) Freedom of movement, the right of asylum, the right to a nationality.
- (vi) The right to marry and found a family, the right to own property.
- (vii) Freedom of thought conscience and religion opinion and expression.
- (viii) Right to peaceful assembly and association.
- (ix) Participation in Government and public service.

Question 6: Mention any four political rights and social rights each, in context to the Human Rights.

Answer: Political Rights:

- (i) The right to take part in the government.
- (ii) The right to equal access to public services in his country.
- (iii) The right to a nationality.
- (iv) The right to seek asylum in other countries from persecution.

Social Rights:

- (i) Right to marry.
- (ii) Right to education.
- (iii) The education shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and racial groups.
- (iv) The family is entitled to full protection by society and the state.

Question 7: Write in brief about the Human Rights Commissions and its role.

Answer: National Commission on Human Rights: Many developing countries like India have set up a Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Court for better protection of Human Rights. In India, it was constituted in 1993. The main functions of the Commission are:

- (i) To inquire into complaints of violations of Human Rights.
- (ii) To review acts of terrorism that obstruct the enjoyment of Human Rights.
- (iii) To promote the research in the field of Human Rights.
- (iv) To encourage the efforts of non-Governmental Organisations working in the fields of

Human Rights.

(v) In India it has all the powers of a Civil Court and can summon, witnesses and receive evidence on affidavits.

Question 8: When the first High Commissioner was appointed. What are the main functions of High Commissioner?

Answer: High Commissioner for the Human Rights: This post was established in 1993. The first High Commissioner was appointed in 1994. He works under the authority of the Secretary General. His main functions are:

- (i) To ensure civil, political, social and other rights to all.
- (ii) To help the centre for Human Rights in its activities.
- (iii) To enhance international co-operation for promotion and protection of Human Rights.
- (iv) He also coordinates the work for all other UNO agencies working in the field of Human Rights.

Question 9: With reference to Human Rights Commission describe the role Amnesty International.

Answer: Amnesty International: Amnesty International is the world's largest voluntary organisation working for Human Rights. It has its headquarters in London. It is a non-political voluntary organisation founded by Peter Benenson. It was founded "to bring relief to individual victims of injustice." Its main objectives are:

- (i) To prepare reports and publicise Human Rights abuses.
- (ii) To work for the freedom of political prisoners.
- (iii) To work for a fair and open trial of such prisoners.
- (iv) To work for effective international agencies so that people may have the rights to freedom of thought and religion.
- (v) Prevention of torture and execution.

Question 10: State any two specific instances of human rights violations according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Answer: Instances of Human Rights Violations:

(i) South Africa: Apartheid

The policy of racial discrimination pursued in South Africa is called apartheid. The Blacks in South Africa has been subjected to violations of basic human rights in the all fields of life-political, economic and social. Despite UNO's resolutions, appeals and severe sanctions, racial policies continued until quite recently.

(ii) Afghanistan: For nearly two and a half decades, the 30 million Afghan population have suffered much more than any other people around the globe. Plunder, destruction and molestation were rampant until the Taliban gained control in 1994. But, they imposed an ideology of their own.

Women, especially educated women and intellectuals became their enemies. Flogging imprisonments were common for even minor violations of the Taliban's strict code of conduct. Despite the end of Taliban rule over Afghanistan by USA, there is still a shortage of food and employment. The Afghans have a long way to go before they can protect themselves from human rights violations.

Question 11: Point out some of the pressure tactics used by UNO with South Africa to give up the policy of Apartheid?

Answer: The Security Council adopted the following measures when the question of Massacre at Sharpeville at 21st March, 1960 was referred to it by 29 African and Asian countries:

- (i) It called upon the South African Government to abandon the policy of Apartheid.
- (ii) It formed a Trust Fund to provide relief to persons suffering under South Africa's repressive and discriminatory laws.
- (iii) 21st March was declared to be the International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination to commemorate the Sharpeville incident 1960.
- (iv) In 1967 the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa provided scholarships to black students of South Africa, Namibia and Southern Rhodesia for study and training abroad.
- (v) The General Assembly urged the States to terminate diplomatic and official relations economic and other co-operation with South Africa.
- (vi) On 30th November, 1973 International Convention on Suppression and Punishment of Crime of Apartheid was adopted by the General Assembly. The convention provided international responsibility against the crime of Apartheid.
- (vii) In 1974 General Assembly rejected South Africa's credentials and recommended exclusion of South Africa from participation in all international organisations, conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations as long as it continued its policy of Apartheid.
- (viii) 11th October, 1976 was declared to be Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners to condemn the shooting of demonstrators in Soweto in June 1976 which involved, killings of Africans including school children too.
- (ix) On 4th November, 1977 arms embargo against South Africa was made mandatory.
- (x) In December 1977 International Declaration against Apartheid was adopted in sports. This called on the States to cease sporting contacts with any country practicing Apartheid.

Question 12: Bring out the differences between Racial Discrimination and Apartheid.

Answer: Racial Discrimination means any distinction, exclusion or restriction based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition or enjoyment, on equal footing of human rights. Racial discrimination denies fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

Apartheid is a state imposed system of racial discrimination, practiced in South Africa. Under Apartheid, black or coloured South Africans, the overwhelming majority of the people in the country, were denied fundamental liberties and rights. They were not allowed to participate in the political life of the country and were subject to various repressive laws and regulations. There were separate townships, buses, coaches, trains, park benches, toilets, shops, hospitals, sports grounds, schools and even churches for each of the races. Any marriage between the whites and the non-whites was not allowed. In short the whites considered themselves the master race and the non-whites as inferior beings.

Question 13: Which organ of the UN fights for human Right? Explain.

Answer: The United Nations has created many specialized agencies for the implementation of the various programmes relating to human rights of the people of different regions of the world and of different sections of society like minorities, women and children.

The Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC] is an important organ of the UNO, set up in 1946, which checks the violation of the Universal Human Rights and tries to establish a free world for the world citizens to live.

The ECOSOC has established a special commission known as "Commission on Human Rights" which is responsible for submitting proposals, recommendations and investigation reports and human rights issues to the General Assembly. The Commission's headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. It bears complaints from one signatory state against another about the violation of the terms of the treaties. It has done a commendable job in:

- (i) Preventing arbitrary detention
- (ii) In eliminating racial discrimination
- (iii) Protecting the rights of women, children, minorities, disabled persons and workers.

Question 14: Discuss the role of Non-Government organisations.

Answer: Non-Governmental Organisations: To eliminate exploitation of workers, children and women proper co-ordination is required between Governmental and non-Governmental Organisations. non-Governmental Organisations have played a vital role in providing Human Rights to many citizens. Their main functions are:

- (i) To draw public attention to Human Rights abuses.
- (ii) To bring to light the cases of the bonded labourers, children exploitation and violence committed against women under trial.
- (iii) In developing countries like India many NGO's like PUCL (People Union for Civil Liberties) have been working to provide relief to many sufferers. It has brought many cases of Human Rights violation in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.
- (iv) Red Cross is world famous non-Governmental Organisation which provides relief to many sufferers.

Picture Based Questions

Question 1: Answer the following:

- (i) Identify the person in the picture given alongside.

(ii) With what movement this person was associated? Why he was arrested?



Answer: (i) Nelson Mandela

(ii) This person was associated with Apartheid (Racial Discrimination) movement. He was arrested because of his struggle to achieve freedom and equal rights for every South African.