The role of human rights education on the sustainable development process

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Abstract

The global community is always seeking the solutions and options that through them can increase and expand the development. One of the options proposed in this field is the human rights education that has been according to increase the knowledge and skills of human rights and due to its effect on information and skills of different stratum, it has potential ability to create change in the community, accept others and understand other nations and finally strengthen the sustainable development. The right on sustainable development is in the category of third generation of human rights and it is the resultant of exchanging the thoughts and ideas about development during long decades. When a community has been grown in its all dimensions, reaches to the sustainable development. Human rights education in the development procedure helps to realize the human rights completely and prevents from abuses and wastes of human rights which may occur. This article intends to study the role of the human rights education in the sustainable development process.

Keywords: education, human rights education, right on sustainable development, sustainable development.
Introduction

The history of relation between education and development has existed parallel to the creation of human and in parity manner, and everywhere we speak about human, development is also proposed, since human always think about excellence, growth and development and his final purpose is to access all development stages. The set of individual's experiences forms his life and determines his future and fate. The human's personality and finally his fate depend on his awareness and insight.

Since 1945 till now, the propagation and support of human rights have been as one of the most important concerns and main fields of the work of United Nations organization. According to this, the United Nations organization considers the education as one of the significant human rights and knows the human rights education as an important tool for propagation of human rights.

With regard to the importance of education in the amount of observance of human rights, United Nations organization announced the years of 1995 to 2004 as the decade of human rights education that through it causes to increase the global awareness of human rights and strengthen the global culture of human rights.

The international amnesty organization defines the human rights education as a plan in order to provide the knowledge and understanding about human rights and an attempt for introducing the human rights values in the formal and informal plans and education (international amnesty, 1999, page 7).

In the paragraph 73 of conference 1993 in Vienna, human rights education has been known necessary for strengthening the common mutual understanding, patience and peace between the communities.

General assembly of United Nations has defined the human rights education in this manner:

It is a comprehensive and complete process for the life period that by it, people in all levels of growth and development and in all classes of community learn the respect to the others' identity and methods and solutions of guarantee of this kind of respect in all communities (human rights commission, 2005).

Human rights education promotes its all sides namely from individual to international community to adopt strategies for defending from human rights and preventing from violation of them. Human rights education proposes an important issue which is the link between recognition and practice namely from recognition reaching to the practice, if acquaintance with human rights doesn’t lead to propagate and support it, it will have no benefit (Amir Arjmand, 1999, page 166). In the event that individuals want that the human rights principles to be observed in their life, they should learn to respect others' rights and defend from them.

The senior commissar of human rights of United Nations organization also has known the human rights education and creation of human rights culture as the key of propagation and support of human rights and he has reminded the importance of people's understanding and awareness of their rights. He has known the human rights education like a vaccination against
impatience, enmity and domestic conflicts of countries which causes the individuals' resistance for exerting their rights and others (Mehrpur, 1999, page 31).

Global culture of human rights is a long-term purpose which is accessible through creation of a comprehensive education system and targeted general information for all population groups especially women, children, minorities, native and disable persons including all education levels such as formal and informal (Baxi, 1997, page 149).

In the human rights education, only the knowledge and skills are not important, rather nurturing the attitudes and behaviors that for each individual provide the possibility of constructive participation with respect in the community is also important. This education should include a vast range of learning processes and activities to enable the children and adults to nourish their personality in the community individually or gregariously. UNESCO (1991) about this issue in the resolution No.49/184 of general assembly expresses:

«Human rights education include information more than provisions and it should provide a permanent proceeding that teaches the people to respect the others' dignity in all levels of development and in all social classes and it also should provide the tools and methods in order to guarantee this respect in all communities» (general assembly, 1994, page 49).

It seems that nowadays global community has become aware of the importance and important role of human rights education in creation of change in order to attain the awareness development well. This article seeks to respond to this question that whether human rights education can be effective on the sustainable development process or not and if it is effective, these effects will be in what form.

First part: the principles and concepts of sustainable development

With regard to this issue that in few recent decades, right on sustainable development has been from the most important rights that have the most relation with the peace and education of human rights, therefore in this part, we need to explain the development concepts, the right on it and development indexes.

Issue 1: the concept of development and the right on it

Development is an old idea but a modern and new project. Numerous disputes have been defined and explained for development. Development as the power for Westphalia era (after thirty-year war of European); development in the sense of political geography or poverty geopolitics for two-pivot order after second world war; globalization and anarchy inclined to the development and finally global development dispute (Movaseghi, 2011).

With formation and stabilization of the newly freed countries, the development right in 1970s and early 1980s was converted to one of the acute global issues (Ameri, 2002, page 169). Although about definition of development to transformation, dynamism and improvement, there is consensus between pundits. However there is no common idea about the issue of limits, borders or frames of this dynamism and improvement. Therefore, the following definition can be referred as the most complete definition.

Development means the improvement process with regard to a set of indexes, criteria or values, development is the improvement process in the scientific and technical principles of
production, improvement transformation in life level, work conditions and the manner of management of political-social-cultural institutes of each country fundamentally and in systematic and collection form beside each other.

Right on development is one of the third generation rights. Attempt for customariness of this right can be found in the introduction of United Nations charter which speaks about the fundamental rights of human and "social progress and better life conditions with more freedom". Article 55 of charter prescribes that United Nations will promote the social-economic development conditions. General assembly proposed the development right through resolution 32/132 of 1997 and mentioned it formally in the resolution 36/133 dated 14th December of 1981. Finally, assembly approved the manifesto of right on development through resolution 41/128 in December 1986. This manifesto knows the development right as a natural right that by it each individual and all nations have the participation right in the economic, social, cultural and political development procedure and enjoyment of it. Through this procedure, all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realized (Shayegan& et al, 2003, page 52). The right on development is the identification of justly enjoyment right of each human from material and spiritual facilities and sources including nourishment, education, hygiene, house, art, communications, freedom, security and all equipment and preliminaries that are the source of continuance of life and material and spiritual growth of human. Therefore, the right on development is accounted as inseparable part of human rights.

**Issue 2: kinds of development**

Development has passed from different dimensions that we mention the most important of them briefly.

**A: economic development:** it indicates a process that due to it, the real per capita income of a country is increased in long-term and during it, the productive capacities of the community with emphasis on expansion of applying modern scientific-technical achievements become more and constant economic growth of community and the improvements of welfare situation of its individuals arising from transformation of economic, social, political, scientific and cultural transformations of the community are created (Nazarpur, 1998). United Nations organization in the manifesto of the second decade of development in 1970 emphasized on this point that the development concept is a general and complex concept and it is not accounted merely as an economic affair and new concepts of development like political, social and cultural development are proposed (Leftwick, 2005, pages 66-69).

**B: political development:** some believe that the cause of underdevelopment of some countries despite of proper material facilities is the political underdevelopment of those countries and lack of creation of proper conditions for people's participation and existence of pervasive political despotism and lack of governance of law.

"Political development is the natural ability of a system for satisfying the people's needs. This system should be according to the public legitimacy and participation of people through social and political institutes like assembly election, parties, the press and low governance not individual" (Nazarpur, 1998, page 55).

**C: social development:** social development refers to the significant needs of human aligned with realization of human rights. The significant needs of human include the access to the...
education, hygienic services, nourishment, house, work and justly income distribution (Babran and Barmacci, 2002, page 29). The office of social-economic affairs of United Nations organization in a report defines the social development in this manner:

Social development considers the welfare of individuals and compatible function of societies. Social development includes attempts, issues, interests and development sectors and also social perspective for observing the human activity domains. Social perspective considers the individual in relation with community, sees various dimensions of human needs and distinguishes between purposes and tools accurately (United Nations, 2003, page 3).

D: cultural development: as it was proposed, economic growth for development is necessary but insufficient condition. Therefore in order to complete the development issue, the social progress concept was added to it and since it wasn’t recognized sufficient, thanks to the UNESCO’s activities, educational factor was also added to it, from this way the cultural dimension of development was recognized formally. Confirmation of cultural dimension relies on the psychological and moral effects of the mass culture (Marc Henry, 1995, pages 87-89).

The purpose of cultural development is to create proper material and spiritual conditions and facilities for the community's people in order to recognize their position and growth of knowledge and readiness for transformation and progress for all community's people.

E: human development: the apogee of issues and comments about development is manifested in human development. Human development is a process that during it the facilities of humans are expanded. The most significant facilities are: having long life with health, learning knowledge and enjoyment of proper life level, if these facilities aren’t provided, other facilities like political freedom, observance of human rights and maintenance of self-esteem and human greatness will not be achieved.

Human development is: «the process of expansion of human selections through providing long, healthy and creative life conditions for people» (internet base of the improvement plan of United Nations).

The human development concept places the human in the center of development models and not in its margin. This concept of development indicates that the main purpose of development is the real enfranchisement of human, namely improvement of the quality of humans' life (Grilyne, Kenali, 1998, pages 15-16).

F: sustainable development: the above issues are on the direction of present generation benefits a lot and emphasize on future generations welfare a little. In other words, economic activities may cause to destruct the environment, ecosystems and natural sources in the world level. The environmental problems arising from irregular industries have caused to propose the sustainable development issue instead of development.

In 1987, Brant land commission presented a definition of sustainable development that nowadays generally has been recognized formally and as a criterion, it is agreed by pundits:

«Sustainable development is a development that supplies the present needs of the world without threatening the ability of future generations in satisfying its needs». 
It can be said: «sustainable development isn’t a formed concept, rather it expresses the transformation process of mutual relation between economic-social and natural systems and its stages» (UNESCO, 2003).

The sustainable development approach as a solution for development in the final transformed conditions of 20th century is a multidimensional concept that in addition to the reduction of poverty, employment, expansion of material welfare level, education, morals, desired governance, presentation of optimum consumption models of hygienic services expansion has special attention to the protection of environment and reduction of superfluous and pollutant materials of ecosystem.

Second part: human rights education and sustainable development

In this part, at first we express the education effect on development and then we study the mutual effect of human rights education and sustainable development.

Issue 1: education effect on development

Education in all levels can change the future world and this affair is realized by making ready and equipping the individuals and societies with skills, views, awareness and valorization of life in a sustainable situation. Education for sustainable development is also an aspect of education that seeks to create balance between economic welfare, cultural traditions and consideration of natural sources of land. The necessity of such education is to make the people aware about a right that they or their children have on life in a manner that human rights of all people are supplied and the participation of all individuals and institutes in attaining this purpose should be attracted.

What factor can eliminate the incorrect cycle of conversion of poverty and debility to the vast and constant violation of human rights? It seems that development with regard to its role in reduction of poverty can help to break this cycle (Dayas, 1997, page 51). Culture is the main factor that gives identity to the human communities. «Values», «explanatory methods», «traditions» and «beliefs» are from the culture samples in the community. Culture is a set of symbols and senses which governs on a community in different frames and manifests the gregarious personality and intellectual life of the community; but the central core of this intellectual life is the special attitude existing in each community about human and his/her fundamental rights.

There is sustainable mutual action between education and culture. Education emanates from culture; but since the cultural models and senses basically are transferred through education, the culture element can be accounted as the education effect.

Therefore, education not only is a natural mechanism for transferring the culture, but also it is accounted as the strongest factor for cultural change or creation of development.

Manifesto of 1986 about development right knows the development phenomenon as a complex, comprehensive and dynamic process which has cultural, economic and political aspects and through it the welfare of all individuals and community are generally promoted constantly (public information ministration of United Nations organization, 1999, page 23). In this manifesto, development was recognized as an «inseparable human right» and the
individual was proposed as the axial issue of development and possessed rights and at the same time responsibilities for participation in development. Also this manifesto knows the governments as «the main responsible » for creating the conditions of realization of development right as the individual and also gregarious right. Also before it, the United Nations charter had expressed the development and propagation of global respect to the human rights and significant freedom as one of its purposes (article 55). Therefore, the charter with combining these two purposes in an article (article 55) and committing the governments emphasizes on the propagation of them (article 59) on complementary relations between human rights and development (Dayas, 1997, pages 52-53).

Paragraph 8 of global conference manifesto of human rights of Vienna 1993 also announces that development, respect to the human rights and significant freedoms depend on each other mutually and strengthen each other. Also in the millennium manifesto, the accompaniment between propagation of democracy and international understanding and recognition of human rights and development right has been referred as one of the human rights.

The report of 1994 of general secretary of United Nations has known development as one of the significant rights of human and it has accounted it as an important guarantee for realization of peace in the world and knows the lack of development as a factor for increasing the international stresses and shortage of welfare in communities and on the other hand, it accounts the realization of development impossible in the communities involved in military conflicts.

Different human rights documents emphasize on realization of human rights through and from inside the development. Development right has the potential power of integrating the human rights. Development right is a criterion for assessment of respecting to other human rights and facilitates the mutual reliance recognition and inseparable relations between different human rights and allows the individuals to participate in a development which is economically sustainable, politically free and socially just; because real sustainable development will be possible only when the political, economic and social rights of all people are respected completely (public information administration of United Nations organization, 1999, page 23). Such development makes possible the enablement and realization of human rights. On the other hand, human rights also provide a base for development and create principal frame and criterion for development that according to it, we can account responsible the individuals who undertake the development.

With regard to this issue that education has significant and important role in constancy and guarantee of real development, in this issue we study the effect of human rights education on sustainable development.

**Issue 2: the effect of human rights education on sustainable development**

Human rights education helps the people to find out the sustainable development is one of the human rights and therefore there are many purposes that for humanity future are more vital and important than continual and sustainable supply of life quality of present and future generations in a manner that the common heritage of humans, the planet in which live remains sustainable and is kept.
Human rights education with exerting the participative methods according to the public awareness and education of the community's people in any age and social situation not only amends the unpleasant effects remained from past experiences of development but also protects and supports the human in facing with dangers which threaten his/her future. Many messages of human rights education have direct effect on economic purposes. Sustainable development is according to three axes of community, environment and economy and education for sustainable development relates these three axes.

The purpose of development is human and the creation of a space in which all individuals can develop their potential abilities and have the selection power for managing their life in a manner that has value for them.

The purpose of human rights education in social dimension is to develop the individuals' capacity and ability in attempt and activity for achieving welfare in the community and also change, amend or develop the community's institutes in a manner that the human's needs in all levels are satisfied through procedure of promotion of relations between people and social-economic institutes and finally more humane community is created that satisfies the human's needs properly and justly and for attaining this purpose, human rights education with attracting the attention on investment on people's capabilities and nurturing the talents and humane forces capacity enables the individuals and community for participation in supplying this purpose (Talebpur, 2006, page 30).

By human rights education, this understanding will be created among all individuals such as beneficiaries of development projects, policy-makers and responsible persons that all human rights depend on each other and there is no transposition between the human rights kinds. Therefore, under the pretext of economic development, we shouldn’t waste the right of future generations in enjoyment of healthy environment. On the other hand, human rights education makes the individuals aware about consequences of humanity environment destruction and enables and makes them aware for compensating the damages imposed on environmental sources.

Therefore with considering the role of human rights education on propagating and understanding these rights, it can be concluded that human rights education has significant and undeniable role on the sustainable development process. Therefore, these effects can be summarized in 7 significant and general axes:

1-Human rights education controls the activities related to the development effectively, therefore the illegal and unreasonable development activities which instead of promotion of human rights cause to violate the m can be stopped and for lessening the humane, social and environmental damages, they can be designed again. For example, Narmada dam project in India was designed and its height was reduced with the purposes of lessening a surface which was placed under the water and also reducing the number of individuals that should be displaced.

2-Human rights education helps the development victims in their difficult fights for reparation, compensation of damages and justice. As if nowadays we witness different attempts of people all around the world in different dimensions that give information through internet and resist against violation of human rights and want from governments and global community to prevent from making decisions which lead to ignore these rights (Talebpur,
2006, pages 30-97). For example, several years fights of Bhopal victims have been successful in changing the public perception in the disaster of chemical material leakage. At first, this global industrial disaster was considered as an unpleasant incident but nowadays it is called as a case of the main and severe violation of human rights specifically.

3-Human rights education propagates deep understanding of development as «human conditions improvement» that this affair in turn will help to accelerate the development in retarded and developing countries. For example, the fishing communities around Laguna lake in Philippine were informed of the effects of severe reduction of water surface arising from the project of that region. Therefore, they caused the project to face with serious challenge and suggested new use of lake such as using of aqueous sources of it and consequently, the project kind was changed.

4-Human rights education can help to supply the participation in all stages of development process such as projects designing, management, control, reassessment and redesigning of them more effectively. For example, some plans can be provided and by using of this kind of education, the people can become aware of the effects arising from development processes and they can be promoted to participate. For example, non-governmental groups in Bangladesh provided educational plans to make aware and ready the people whom were exposed to the flood arising from project for participation in proper and opportune reaction in facing with it.

5-Human rights education can play effective role in accountability of agents and actors of development about observance of policies and the budgets related to the designs. For example, Arun group which is a group of non-governmental organizations in Nepal opposes with Arun project that constructs hydro-electrical dams for using of waters in lower part of Himalia Mountains and fights with it due to the project cost. This group believes that the project costs with a loan which belongs to it are equal to one-year budget of Nepal government (Dayas, 1997, pages 51-53).

6-Human rights education helps to compensate the losses and damages arising from exerting policies and development designs and also prevents from violation of human rights in the development proceeding. This education can help to compensate the historical damages arising from development on native people or it can fight with imbalanced priorities in the development. For example, Mr. Marcos, the president of Philippine had created a large heart center with so much cost, while in Philippine's villages, the health and significant and primary cares of hygiene weren’t considered.

7-Human rights education has significant role in propagation of sustainability logic. This education helps the individuals and governments to find out that the sustainable development is one of the humanity rights and all individuals regardless of color, language, gender, religion and belonging to a special country have indisputable right in enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights in the frame of development projects and the benefits obtained from it also depend on enforcement of all human rights.

Human rights beside development and security form the triple pillars of United Nations organization. According to the saying of Kofi Annan, development and security are interdependent to each other, and without human rights none of them can not be attained; (Zamani, 2006, page 314). And we can not conform to some authoritarian governments.
which chant the slogan of «today development; future human rights». Such discussion has been rejected in the international rights of human explicitly and obviously. In this field, human rights education helps the communities so that the guarantee of development and human rights not to be limited to the rich ones and poor people also achieve freedom and bread.

Therefore, we need education that can help individuals in planning and enforcing the development designs, identifying the dangerous designs, assessing the pressures and destructive effects arising from harmful designs and also it can enable in designing them, compensating the damage and distributing the designs benefits more justly. Therefore, today more than the past, the necessity of human rights education about development in order to stop the poverty cycle and replace it with enablement cycle is felt.

Conclusion

Human rights education is an effective institute in the field of sociability and internalization of human rights values and it influences on important phenomena and concepts like development. Development is a process which has different aspects; so that when a country has been developed in different dimensions, we can know it a developed country. Human rights education can be effective on the sustainable development process both directly and indirectly. With influencing on cultural growth, it is effective on development directly and with propagation of values and attitudes like greatness of human and equality of individuals and with presentation of skills which cause to enable the individual to adjudicate his right and support others' right, it has indirect effect on social-economic growth of community. Human rights education causes to increase the observance of respect to others' rights and possession right, observance of hygiene and like them that have significant effect on sustainable development. Absolutely, presenting this education to the effective and influential stratums of community can have much effect on development.

Therefore, sustainable development should change its direction toward realization of human rights and it should not seek the mere economic development. In short, the human rights should determine the intellectual field for development.

The past experiences and studies have indicated that there is direct and mutual relation between observance and education of human rights and development; so that lack of development in a community causes to increase the disputes and stresses in it and with lack of observance of human rights, we also cannot witness the development in a community.
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