

Are Child Rights Human Rights?

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What can be more fundamental than Human rights? As human beings living on this planet, one may assume that such a crucial understanding that as humans, we are entitled to certain fundamental rights and freedoms regardless of our nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, or any other status would be ingrained in us. Yet, we keep reading about wars, ethnic conflicts, famine, disasters, and murder -all blatant human rights violations- amongst an endless list of more gruesome things. Is it so difficult to accept that we as humans have dignity and the right to life that must be accepted by all regardless of the circumstances? The fact that Human rights are so critical to the very existence of us as humans has made it so that it gets reflected in every culture, constitution, and other legal documents. Different religions preach that one must not do harm to others and respect life. Human rights are typically protected by law and are enshrined in various international documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

And so children, just like any adult, also have certain fundamental rights by being humans and children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child ensures that children are provided with the necessary conditions for their physical, emotional, and intellectual development, as well as protection from harm and exploitation. But why do children's rights even matter? First of all, children are individuals, and according to the convention, a "child" is a person below the age of 18, unless the relevant laws recognize an earlier age of majority. They are dependent on an adult, be it their parents, immediate family, or even the State to nurture them so that they can reach their full potential. Since they are easy to influence and easily impressionable, and are highly vulnerable, it becomes important that we can allow them to grow in a safe and healthy ecosystem that seeks to bring out their true selves. Hence their views, feelings, and experiences must be taken into account before drafting any policy framework. And



since children are the future of society, their development, be it mental or physical, becomes important.

Moreover, protecting child rights contributes to building a more just and equitable society. When children's rights are violated or neglected, it can have long-term consequences for their well-being and society as a whole. War and conflict, childhood trauma, unhealthy lifestyle, etc... have a bearing on their life as an adult. Its impact on their productivity and overall life as independent adults can be debilitating at times. And so protecting child rights can help build a more just and equal society.

Given the above, there have been several international agreements such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which obligate parties to protect and promote the rights of children. Thus Child rights remain important for upholding humanitarian principles, ensuring a just society that ensures that everyone can reach their full potential. We must take care of the children of the present and learn from the mistakes we have committed against the children of the past so that the children of tomorrow have a safe and secure future.