

ACHIEVED 3rd PLACE IN HUMAN RIGHTS INTER SCHOOL ESSAYS COMEPETITION 2014

“RIGHTS ARE NOT THAT NEED TO BE GIVEN, BUT RATHER THAT WHICH CANNOT BE TAKEN AWAY”

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We all live in different places; we all have our differences whether it is race, religion or even our cultural traditions. We have our own distinguished ways as groups of people living in communities and as individual human beings. We all see ourselves as individuals with equal rights to live and grow, to have enough food to eat, clean water to drink, a safe place to sleep, to practice our faith, and to live fulfilling lives as members of our communities. Although there is something about us, something no matter what we do we cannot separate from, that one thing is that we are humans. Now being humans can mean a lot of things and one of those things mean that we are born with these rights. These rights are of most importance to each and every individual. Now these rights are not something which is to be handed to us by someone, but rather are fundamental aspects of our lives which cannot be taken away from us.

Although we are creative and thoughtful beings we sometimes fail to grasp some aspects of our lives, and sometimes where most of us fail to grasp is these fundamental aspects of life which are our rights. Sometimes, some of us believe that these rights which we are born with are to be given to us by some high and mighty person. Well of course it feels

more convenient these days to think like that, but in reality we must see that our rights are ours, they cannot be taken away from us, and neither can they be handed to us. The rights which define us as equals and individual human beings cannot simply be taken from us; it is a delusion that some members of our society prematurely imbedded into our minds. It may seem hard to believe this when we read something like this out of a plain paper, but just taking a few minutes of our time and actually thinking about it can prove it otherwise. We can now actually begin to understand that in all honesty that oppresses us the most is nothing more than these incorrect ideas and thoughts which are partly untrue, that we hide in the innards of our mentality. Saying that we have no rights or saying that our rights have been taken away from us is nothing less than an excuse, a way to actually feel a bit better about ourselves, or it can be a game of blaming which just isn't of any benefit.

History can tell a lot of stories, and one of those is the story of India, now one of the greatest advancing countries in the world, a sub-continent of vast beauty, a place of wondrous cultures and traditions. In the 1900, India was captured by the British Empire. When the Indians lost their freedom, they had to live the life of poverty, and back then the Britain's paid no interest that the Indians were also humans, they had no concern about the rights of the natives. It was like a dark age for the natives of India, an age filled with fear for the people of India. As they were treated like slaves, they were oppressed and forced to live a life of fear and bitterness, poverty and death. If not for something, the Indians would have been no more. What happened was something of a miracle, what happened was a rebellion. The Indians fought back. They fought back for their equality, their freedom, and ultimately their rights. In the end India won its own freedom. History states India won its Independence in the year 1947. The people of India had their rights. These rights, they weren't given to the Indians by someone, and they certainly couldn't be taken away from the people of India either. When East India Company exploited and exported the resources available for the Indians to exercise their rights, they fought against the oppressors to ensure Indians could live safely and healthily in their own land.

Here we see a strong example of what it means when rights can neither be given nor taken.

Through the ages we can see a lot of battles fought, a lot of wars, and a lot of sacrifices all for the sake of rights. What do you think we humans would be without certain rights? The answer is pretty much clear. We humans would be no less than primitive animals, where the strong rule, the weak die, and in a way at the brink of extinction. We can assure this would be the case, as there was a time in human history where women were once considered to be less than others, a time when they were thought to be a curse, a humiliation, a slave, in those times the true rights of women were subjugated to point where women were all but praying for a savior. Of course to stand on one's own feet and to fight needs bravery, courage and a strong will, which the women at that time in history hardly had, due to the ways they were being treated. Young females at the time were being buried alive and few girls would reach a mature age. Women were used to satisfy the needs of greedy and primitive thinking men, whom when bored of the woman would dispose of her in some gruesome way or another. This too was a dark era in human history. Although slowly but yet surely, some people stood up to this discrimination and abuse of women, and in due time after countless battles the persecution and abuse of women became less. Until the early 2000's a lot of women were made to believe they have no rights outside their marriage and no rights within a marriage, other than what the husband deemed necessary, but these rights were still there and some women fought for them and strived hard to get to the point where women can exercise rights enjoyed by men, to get an education, to learn skills and earn livelihoods outside of homes as men do. Some noticeable names from the history books of the women who fought for women rights in their own way are Susan B. Anthony, Alice Stone Blackwell, Sunitha Krishnan, Malala Yousafazi and Sophie Adlersparre. Those were but a few names, there are a lot of other women in the past who have fought for women's rights. What we must see here is that unless we take a stand, our rights can be exploited by the strong and influential at times. This doesn't mean our rights are being stolen, but rather it means that we ourselves

are seeing us less of an equal with others and oppressing our own selves, when in reality need to exercise our rights to their full potential. If not we could end up in some sad condition where extinction as a race could be so close as is like falling off while standing on an edge of a cliff.

We all are human, which means we are not perfect, and there really is no need for perfection in life, but striving to reach a perfection is really good motivation, depending on the cause the meaning behind everything changes. So what if we strive to become a “perfect” race? What would that really mean? These are but a few questions, and partly the answer is we all will know how to exercise our rights the correct and proper way, a way in which we do not undermine any other individuals’ rights. As said before time and time again rights are a fundamental part of each and every living being’s life. These are parts which cannot be taken away, or given to one individual, and it is crucial that we understand this well enough, because if we humans are to reach a better state of life we need to know and acknowledge certain things and rights which are also a part of the deal. We would also need to start fully respecting other people’s rights. As unlikely it may appear, a lot of us actually neglect the rights of others, sometimes because we are too full of pride, thinking we have more rights to the world’s resources than others, thinking we are better than the rest through birth into certain families or through holding certain kinds of jobs or by making us more superior through race and culture. Due to our ignorance and negligence of others rights we often can find ourselves actually being an oppressor, which is a very unfortunate thing to happen. We need to be aware of our own and other people’s rights and we should work against the oppression of others, stop the suffering caused due to this, and fight to express our full rights, rights which we were born with, rights which shall be with us till death, these rights which cannot be taken away from us. Oppression of the disabled, women, children, people of different faiths, races, people of poorer countries is a globally acknowledged issue, and we the youth must help people to understand that they should not be oppressed by people, rather they should know their rights and have the capability to use their rights to their true and correct extent, and that

they should also take a stand to protect those rights from getting belittled by others. We need to help them to have a voice, to speak out against oppression, subjugation and persecution.

To sum up it would be wise to learn of our rights, as in some cases some of us hardly know our rights. It's also best to get help if you are being oppressed, as it might be hard to stand alone, but with someone it's much easier, it is also true that the more that stand with you, the more powerful your resolve will be. Our rights are ours; we cannot succumb to our societies or our oppressors who leave behind an untrue statement to our rights. Our rights cannot be taken even by our leaders, employers, elders or family, and they surely cannot be given as a gift or an act of generosity by someone with power and influence over us. Finally, whether we stand alone or together we must have the righteousness to fend and protect our rights and let our rights shine their brightest leading us all to a better future. A future where there is no discrimination, based on a person's culture, race, religion, gender or income levels, where we realize and act on the understanding that with our rights lie responsibilities to enable others to have their rights to good health, education, a place to live and to earn a livelihood and to live free from abuse and violence.