

Mahatma Gandhi's Enduring Legacy: A Holistic Exploration of Human Rights in the Context of Social Reform, Equality, and Justice in Western and Indian Perspectives

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Introduction:

Human rights, a cornerstone of modern civilization, have evolved through the relentless struggle for existence, liberty, and freedom throughout human history. Rooted in the protection of individuals from state authority, the concept of human rights extends to creating societal conditions that allow each person to reach their fullest potential. As Scott Davidson notes, these rights impose limits on state actions and are inherent and inalienable to every individual, forming a crucial framework for civil society.

In the Western context, the genesis of human rights can be traced back to the United States Bill of Rights (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789). These documents, foundational to modern political organization, emphasized the centrality of rights. The term “human rights” itself was coined by Thomas Paine during the translation of the French Declaration. Subsequent centuries witnessed a global resurgence of the concept, culminating in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1966.

Human rights have transcended their initial focus on state atrocities, expanding to encompass economic and political rights. Recent discussions revolve around issues such as euthanasia, animal rights, and sexual choice, reflecting the evolving nature of human rights concerns.

The Indian context reveals a historical lineage of human rights that predates the UDHR. In ancient India, as evidenced in the Vedas, the concept of human rights was

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