

**BOSCO Bengaluru**

“Roots of Rights: The Family’s Role in Nurturing and

Protecting Children’s Rights”

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**“Roots of Rights: The Family’s Role in Nurturing and Protecting Children’s Rights”**

Human beings basically live in a society. Hence the famous saying in English ‘ Man by nature is a social animal’ is exemplified. The family is often regarded as the bedrock of society, shaping the values, beliefs,

and behaviours of each generation. In the sphere of children’s rights, the family plays an unparalleled role as the first institution responsible for nurturing, educating, and protecting children. As former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan once said, “There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is

protected, that their lives are free from fear and want, and that they grow up in peace.” Indeed, families bear the primary responsibility to ensure that children not only survive but also thrive with dignity, respect, and

the opportunity to reach their potential.

The first lessons a child adopts is from home.The family is the first environment where a child learns about their rights and responsibilities. The values instilled within the family shape children’s understanding of

fairness, equality, respect, and kindness. By teaching these values, families lay the groundwork for a child’s understanding of their own rights and the importance of respecting the rights of others.

For instance, when parents encourage open communication within the family, they foster a safe space where children feel valued and listened to. This experience of being heard and respected can be the first encounter a child has with the right to expression and dignity. By allowing children to make choices and express

opinions—whether it’s as simple as choosing their clothes or voicing their favourite subjects in school— families empower children to assert themselves in safe, respectful ways.

A primary role of the family is to create a safe and nurturing environment where children feel protected from harm. Children’s rights to safety, health, and emotional well-being are fundamentally protected within the

family. Research shows that children raised in a secure and supportive family environment tend to grow up more confident, resilient, and equipped to face challenges. For instance, parents who foster strong emotional bonds by showing affection and providing consistent care help their children develop a strong sense of

security and self-worth.

Moreover, when families prioritize health and well-being, they support children’s right to survival and development. This can be seen when parents make informed choices about their children’s healthcare,

education, and diet, directly contributing to their physical growth and mental development. Families that

prioritize open conversations around mental health, for example, help children understand their own emotional needs and build resilience against external pressure.

Education is a fundamental right that families play a crucial role in promoting. Families that value and prioritize education empower children to realize their potential. When parents or guardians actively engage with their child’s schooling—by helping with homework, fostering curiosity, or instilling the importance of learning—they set a foundation that extends beyond academic achievements to life skills and independence. Nelson Mandela captured this beautifully when he said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

An example of this empowerment can be seen in families that encourage daughters to pursue education equally with sons, challenging stereotypes and promoting gender equality. Such families teach children about their right to equal opportunities and prepare them to advocate for themselves in broader society.

A family that practices fairness and justice within its daily interactions with children instills a deep sense of these values. By involving children in discussions around household responsibilities, financial choices, or decisions impacting family members, parents provide children with an understanding of fairness and

equality. These interactions serve as practical lessons in justice, helping children appreciate both their rights and the responsibilities they carry toward others.

For instance, families that practice forgiveness and understanding in handling disputes teach children about

the importance of conflict resolution. When children observe their parents discussing and settling differences respectfully, they learn that justice is not about power or dominance but about fairness, empathy, and

dialogue. These values become essential in shaping their perspectives on social justice and responsibility.

Despite the vital role families play, challenges like poverty, cultural practices, and lack of

awareness can hinder the effective promotion of children’s rights. For example, in families facing financial hardship, basic needs like education and healthcare may be compromised, affecting the child’s right to

development. Families grappling with such challenges may struggle to provide the optimal support and protection children need.

Furthermore, cultural practices and societal expectations sometimes influence how families perceive children’s rights. In communities where traditional roles are rigidly defined, families might prioritize obedience over expression, inadvertently stifling a child’s voice. Addressing these challenges requires collective support from communities, policymakers, and social services to ensure that all families are equipped to fulfill their role as protectors of children’s rights.

The family, as the primary unit of society, bears the immense responsibility of nurturing the well-being and rights of children. By fostering a supportive, secure, and inclusive environment, families lay the foundation for children to grow up as confident individuals who respect their rights and those of others. Families where children lack love and care feel insecure in life. As Eleanor Roosevelt wisely noted, “In the long run, we

shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.” Families are the first place where children learn to make responsible

choices and embrace their rights, and it is this powerful role that shapes the very fabric of society.

In promoting children’s rights, families not only safeguard their children’s futures but also contribute to a society built on justice, compassion, and respect. By empowering families with resources and knowledge, society can ensure that each child’s right to safety, dignity, and opportunity is upheld, creating a brighter future for generations to come.