IR Assignment
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Human Rights
(Realists vs Idealists)

Human rights are the basic freedoms and entitlements of all human beings irrespective of their race, gender, nationality, or religion. These rights are, in fact, the bedrock of justice, dignity, and equality in society. From the very dawn of human history, human rights have been praised in some societies and violated in others, setting the trend of society's growth. Human rights debates can be generally classified into two major schools of thought: the realist and the idealistic perspective. The realists usually focus more on pragmatic considerations and tend to dwell more on "what is", whereas idealists focus on moral values and are inclined more towards "what should be". Both sides present insights into how nations could protect and advance human rights in this world of conflicting interest.

This discussion provides both angles in more detail, assesses the current challenges of this international landscape of human rights, and proposes some recommendations that could help bridge the gap between realism and idealism.

Main Theme

The realist school views human rights with a harsher and often more strategic eye. Realists believe that the nation's interest and sovereignty of the state should be more valuable than abstract moral principles. This approach would say that geopolitical factors, power politics, and political and economic interest in stability would often be at odds with the implementation of human rights. Then, a realist analysis would conclude that human rights violations within other states are largely domestic matters and that interference should be limited to those areas where it may be in the national interest of the interfering state.

In many ways, realists point out that interventions in the name of human rights often end with disastrous results, protracted wars, regional destabilization, and worsening humanitarian catastrophes. In case, international interventions in Iraq and Libya-though initiated on human rights-grounds left the regions in long-term instability and suffering for the local population. The whole world as of now is suffering the consequences of those interventions. According to realists, a more cautious approach should be one based on diplomacy and respect for sovereignty.

Idealists will support the world where dignity is placed at the forefront while political or economical interests are on the backside. In such a way they highlight international cooperation, law and morality as protection tools of the human rights along with bringing on record those violators. According to idealists, human rights should not be compromised even if they seem to conflict with the short-term interests of a state. Idealists argue that human rights should be put above the religious, cultural or geographical laws and should be applied the same to all humans.

Successful cooperation at the international level in issues of human rights is, among others, provided in the form of negotiations that led to the establishment of the ICC and other UN treaties that have added more to female rights, protection of children, and rights for those with disabilities. Idealists often use success stories to show that prioritizing human rights is essential for lasting peace, stability, and development.

Though these visions are contrasting, the two streams of thought converge on the idea that violations of human rights should be corrected. Both the points of views are in the favour of human beings, in the sense that both fight for basic human rights. Political oppression, gender-based violence, racial discrimination, and deprivation of fundamental rights are still rife. The US being the prime example where they pride themselves on being the champions of human rights all while violating even the basic rights of human beings in other countries. By vaging wars in the name of WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction) and Bio-Weapons the US has often justified interventions that have resulted in widespread destruction, loss of civilian lives, and long-term regional instability. These actions, carried out under the guise of safeguarding global security and promoting democracy, have frequently undermined the very human rights they claim to protect, leading to criticism from both international observers and human rights advocates.

Current Issues
The human rights issues the world is currently facing are a little challenging. A few of them are as follows:

- **Authoritarianism :** Outside the region, many states have been criticized as authoritarian in tendencies with oppression of dissent and suppression of free speech and freedom. Realists are of the view that any kind of outside interference is only going to fuel the fire while idealists are on their knees and pleading for international intervention and sanctions in keeping these rulers on their toes.
- **Income gap and economic disparity :** The income gap between the rich and the poor is bringing social fragmentation and human dignity into a crisis. Idealists would want policies in favor of social justice and equitable distribution of resources while realists keep on questioning how this economic step will affect the nation's interests.

- **Climate Change and Environmental Rights** : The right to a clean and healthy environment is fast becoming a universal human right. True realists place industrial and economic growth more important, while idealists take a moral imperative view of preserving the planet for the future generation.
- **Technological advancements and privacy concerns :** Technological progress has entered the aspect of surveillance, misuse of personal data, and loss of privacy. While realists would believe that national security required surveillance, idealists would go in favor of individual freedoms and privacy rights.

The Way Forward

The way to strike a balance between a realist and an idealistic approach to human rights is through a pragmatic balanced approach. Policies by governments shall be formulated that maintain the cause of human rights while keeping in mind national interests and geopolitical realities. The following steps can be taken in order to ensure basic human rights :

- **Legislate legal frameworks :** The governments should ratify and domesticate the international human rights treaties such that their policies are adjusted domestically to mean that laws adopted are in conformance with the international standards.
- **Education and sensitization :** Education through school and community program should introduce education on human rights, which is going to give people the skills to be enlightened and aware about the issues that will create respect and accountability.
- **International Cooperation :** Both realists and idealists can work together on supporting multilateral organizations that can be involved in the facilitation of dialogue and provide technical assistance to countries dealing with human rights challenges.
- **Technology :** Technology opens new channels for human rights monitoring and advocacy. Data privacy protection and the prevention of cyber threats, however, need to be protected.
- **Diplomatic Engagement :** Realists can engage by encouraging diplomatic means to end human rights violations and to establish stability and long-term peace.
- **Accountability Mechanisms :** There are independent bodies that are supposed to investigate and deal with violation cases of human rights, thereby ensuring justice.

Conclusion

Human rights form the skeleton of a justly and equitably society. The fact that differences between the realists and idealists exist between approaches does not make one more precious than the other. The realists remind us of the pragmatism considerations and the idealists remind us of the moral imperatives underlying human rights. In this balance, we can seek that future which safeguards dignity and equality for all.

Cooperation, education, and the will to adapt to changing dynamics in the rest of the world would be the way forward. Human rights are important for peace and development but also the preservation of our shared humanity.