

**Teachers' understandings and
practices in teaching human rights
concepts in Pakistani schools**

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, Parvez Ahmed Pirzado, declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Education, in the School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Social Science at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEPAM	Academy of Educational Planning and Management
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAT	Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CCPR	Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CEDAW	United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DCAR	Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment & Research
DFID	Department for International Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
HDR	Human Development Report
HDI	Human Development Index
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
HRE	Human Rights Education
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ILO	International Labour Organization
LEAPS	Learning and Educational Achievement in Punjab Schools
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SEMIS	Sindh Education Management Information System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPDC	Social Policy and Development Centre

UK	United Kingdom
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDHRET	United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
USAID	US Agency for International Development

ABSTRACT

Education plays an important role in the development of any country. It is considered one of the major contributors for developing success at local, national, and global levels. Human rights education (HRE) offers awareness about human rights and presents a way of sharing information among students, parents, and the community at large to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to understand and combat violations of human rights. The literature suggests that if children receive a good quality education embedded with human rights concepts and principles, they can become responsible citizens and promote human rights when they become adults.

Pakistan ranks at the lowest end of human development index in the world. Its performance is low on many human development indicators, including education. Pakistan is signatory to a number of international human rights conventions and thus has pledged to protect the rights of citizens. However, the situation of human rights in Pakistan is worrisome, as the major international human rights reports present long lists of human rights violations in the country. The state of education in Pakistan is also considered poor in terms of both access and quality. The teaching of human rights is not formally included in the Pakistani school curricula, and there is lack of research on HRE in Pakistan.

This doctoral thesis explores the opportunities and barriers regarding teaching human rights concepts within three different school systems in Pakistan. The study comprised an in-depth study using a qualitative research approach. It investigated the understandings of teachers and other stakeholders about human rights, their perceptions about the place of human rights within the existing school curriculum and human rights teaching practices through Social Studies and Islamic Studies subjects in a range of schools. The research focused on 24 teachers in 12 schools in a variety of settings in different regions of Sindh province, Pakistan – government and non-government schools, boys', girls' and co-educational schools, and rural and urban schools. To study the phenomenon of teaching human rights in schools, data collection methods comprised content analysis of school curriculum and textbooks, classroom observations of Social Studies and Islamic Studies lessons, and in-depth interviews with teachers and other education stakeholders, such as

policy makers, education researchers, university teachers and government officials.

A variety of data collected was analysed through the use of layers of analysis. Two frameworks i.e., first: curriculum intent, implementation and experience at the horizontal level, and second: learning for, through and about human rights at the vertical level were used. The use of elements from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was cross-cutting in this study.

The study found that there is gap between policy and practice regarding teaching human rights at the school level and there exist more barriers than opportunities in delivering human rights education at the school level. However, the availability of human rights content in the core policy documents including Pakistan's constitution, education policy and curriculum and teachers and headteachers' willingness to teach human rights at the school level offers a way forward to taking this important but neglected area to attention of the policy makers in Pakistan.

Based on the findings, recommendations for improved practices of teaching human rights in schools are formulated and presented. This thesis also suggests that further research around the human rights education in Pakistan is required. The study adds new knowledge about the practices of teaching human rights concepts in Pakistani schools, provides implications for policy makers and education practitioners, and sets the ground for future research. Hence, this study will be pivotal in addressing the important but neglected area of HRE in Pakistani schools.