

## **Human Rights in Pakistani Elite School History Textbooks: Constructions, Constraints, and Conceptions**

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### **Abstract**

*Citizenship education aspires to engender in people active, informed citizens committed to a better society. The rise of rights-based transformative citizenship education has necessitated reading curriculum materials through a human rights lens. This qualitative content analysis of Punjab province's elite private schools' Grade 6-8 History textbooks ascertains inclusions of rights-based citizenship with respect to identity recognition, equal assessment, anti-discrimination, and equity measures. The study found a dominant discourse on global historical examples of human rights violations, rather than current issues and localized youth mobilization. Critical discourse on state, elite accountability, structural constraints, and equity advancement was restricted. Students lacked opportunities to situate themselves as rights-advocates and articulate policy/social action plans to transform cultural-institutional impediments to social justice. More pragmatic conceptions aligning human rights frameworks with citizenship education are needed to engage youth for diversifying-localizing-democratizing their polities.*

**Keywords:** *Citizenship Education, Human Rights, History Textbooks, Content Analysis, Pakistan, Elite Schools*

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### **1. Introduction**

Citizenship education aims to nurture active and responsible citizens who contribute to the development and wellbeing of society. It not only imparts knowledge about the history, culture, laws, and political systems but also develops civic virtues like respect, care, responsibility, participation and contribution (Carretero, 2017). Over the past few decades, human rights education has emerged as a key dimension of citizenship education. It focuses on disseminating the knowledge, values, beliefs, and behaviours required for nurturing a rights-respecting society (Osler & Starkey, 2010). However, introducing human rights education has remained a complex and controversial endeavour in many contexts (Bajaj, 2017).

Textbooks play a vital role in orienting young minds towards responsible citizenship aligned with human rights values. As the mandated curriculum, textbooks communicate what knowledge and perspectives are legitimate in a society (Apple & Christian-Smith, 2017). However, constructing

national identity and patriotism often takes primacy in textbook content which overshadows acknowledgment and promotion of diversity and human rights. Particularly in post-colonial contexts like Pakistan with ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity, nation building agendas shape curriculum and textbooks in ways that exclude and 'otherize' minorities while normalizing the dominant group's privilege (Saigol, 2012). This results not only in sustaining inter-group hierarchies, stereotypes and conflicts but also weakening of citizenship rights.

In Pakistan, citizenship education reflecting democratic ethos and human rights has struggled to find space in an ideological education system centred on constructing a homogeneous national identity and ideals of Muslim nationalism (Durrani & Dunne, 2010). School textbooks have been critiqued for promoting militarism and marshalling history for political purposes (Nayyar & Salim, 2003; Osler & Starkey, 2010). They are seen to embody religious chauvinism, gender-bias and anti-minority perspectives apart from endorsing military rule and Jihad and valorising war and violence (Rosser, 2003). This curtails students' abilities to comprehend alternative viewpoints, appreciate diversity and cultivate civic dispositions. While madrassah's textbooks openly promote violence and militancy the narratives and perspectives dominant in public schools also constrain dialogue on issues like equal rights, social justice, and peace.

As the elite schools in Pakistan mostly use international textbooks, it would be meaningful to explore if their curriculum helps counterbalance the citizenship education deficiencies in local textbooks. Schools following international curricula like IB claim to have a balanced world-oriented curriculum which equips youth with knowledge and skills aligned with ideals of democracy, diversity, justice and conflict-resolution (IBO, 2012). However, practically implemented curricula may not always fully embody the philosophical foundations claimed (Resnik, 2012). This necessitates empirical investigation of the enacted curriculum and textbooks which shape students' learning. The perspectives and knowledge students imbibe about human rights and equitable, just, and peaceful societies from their textbook's merits in-depth analysis to gauge curriculum orientation and citizenship education provided in elite schools.

This paper presents findings from a qualitative content analysis of History textbooks used in elite private schools in Pakistan's Punjab province, focusing on Grade 6-8. It specifically examines how citizenship rights are constructed in these textbooks following the framework by Gagnon and Pagé (1999) encompassing fundamental, political, socio-economic and cultural rights. The key questions addressed are:

What narratives, perspectives, and discourses on programs/measures for protection of rights can be identified in these textbooks?

To what extent do the textbooks orient students towards comprehension and valuation of human rights along with socio-political agency for safeguarding these rights?

Given elite schools' privilege and power in shaping future leaders, investigating perspectives on citizenship and rights in their textbooks can offer vital insights into the citizenship education provided and its implications. The paper is organized as follows: First the background and context of the study is elaborated focusing on significance of textbooks, citizenship education issues and elite schools in Pakistan. Next, the conceptual framework, research design and methodology are explicated. This is followed by the analysis of how citizenship rights are constructed across textbooks. Finally, implications are discussed in terms of perspectives communicated, issues illuminated and obscured along with conclusion and recommendations.

## **2. Literature Review**

Citizenship education aims to nurture active, informed, and responsible citizens committed to the betterment of society (UNESCO, 2015). However, perspectives on what constitutes ideal

citizenship and how it should be cultivated through education vary across contexts. Civic education frameworks in established democracies emphasize realization of universal human rights, celebration of diversity and inclusive political participation (Kymlicka, 2003; Osler & Starkey, 2010). In contrast, citizenship education in transitional or developing societies focuses more on national identity building, cultural transmission and loyalty instillation aligned with agendas of stability and regime legitimacy (Kennedy, 2012; Quaynor, 2015). Implications for minority groups and democratic citizenship emerge from the nation-building vs. rights and recognition dilemma in citizenship education (Kiwan, 2007).

In the wake of critiques of traditional, passive citizenship education as well as influences of critical pedagogy and cosmopolitan perspectives, the 21st century has seen the ascendance of transformative citizenship education prioritizing social justice, diversity and youth agency (Banks, 2017; Peterson et al., 2016). Human rights education forms the ethical core of this reconceptualized citizenship education which spotlights equality, social responsibility and collective action for a just world (Osler (Osler & Starkey, 2010; Tibbitts, 2017). This signals the need to analyse citizenship education curricula and materials through a human rights lens.

Textbooks play an influential role in transmitting dominant societal ideologies and shaping students' citizenship perspectives and attitudes towards rights and diversity (Pingel, 2010). However textbook analyses reveal that narratives of depoliticized loyalty towards authority often eclipse inclusive, critical and activist citizenship aligned with human rights (Kennedy, 2012; Terra & Bromley, 2012). Textbooks struggle to keep pace with sociopolitical change and mirror curricular rhetoric rather than provide students analytical frameworks to comprehend complex, controversial issues (Porat, 2004). This illuminates the need for ongoing analyses of textbooks from transformative citizenship education and social justice vantage points.

In contexts marked by ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity like Pakistan, traditional conceptions of uniform citizenship preclude minority rights essential for democracy and social cohesion. Here textbooks become sites for identity construction through inclusion or exclusion of particular language, cultural referents and historical narratives (Saigol, 2012). Analyses confirm use of textbooks for marshalling history to validate military rule and religious nationalism in Pakistan while perpetrating gender and religious stereotyping (Durrani & Dunne, 2010; Rosser, 2003). Such perspectives engender inter-group misunderstanding and conflict rather than empathy, mutual respect and critical socio-political literacy central to democratic citizenship (Nayyar & Salim, 2003).

Elite schools in developing countries like Pakistan predominantly use international curricula and textbooks which profess contemporary, egalitarian citizenship education ideals (Bunnell, 2020). However, there is a dearth of empirical analyses regarding enacted elite school curricula and what perspectives around citizenship and rights get communicated. Whether elite students experience cosmopolitan citizenship education nurturing diversity, inclusion, human rights and global mindedness requires investigation (Goren & Yemini, 2017). This study analyses History textbooks used in elite Pakistani schools through a human rights lens to ascertain their potential for transformative citizenship education focused on equity and social justice.

First, education about human rights informs students about the norms, principles, and beliefs that strengthen citizenship rights and about mechanisms needed to safeguard these rights. Second, education through human rights focuses on providing education in such a way that the rights of all teachers and students are protected. Third, education for human rights incorporates allowing persons to appreciate and exercise their rights and to acknowledge and support the rights of others. It raises the question of the equality of citizens in terms of the rights acknowledged for all

individuals and programs and measures executed to deal with socio-economic inequalities and support fair access to social and institutional assets.

To teach human rights, participatory and transformative methodologies are more successful than deductive methods. Learners should be exposed to democratic experiences in their schools and classrooms that signify different identities and cultures and could help them to internalize HR values and behaviours (Tibbitts, 2017).

Human rights education is also a part of the charter of the UN and its body. UNESCO decided to facilitate learning of human rights around the globe by stating that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms should be part of education.

### **3. Conceptual Framework**

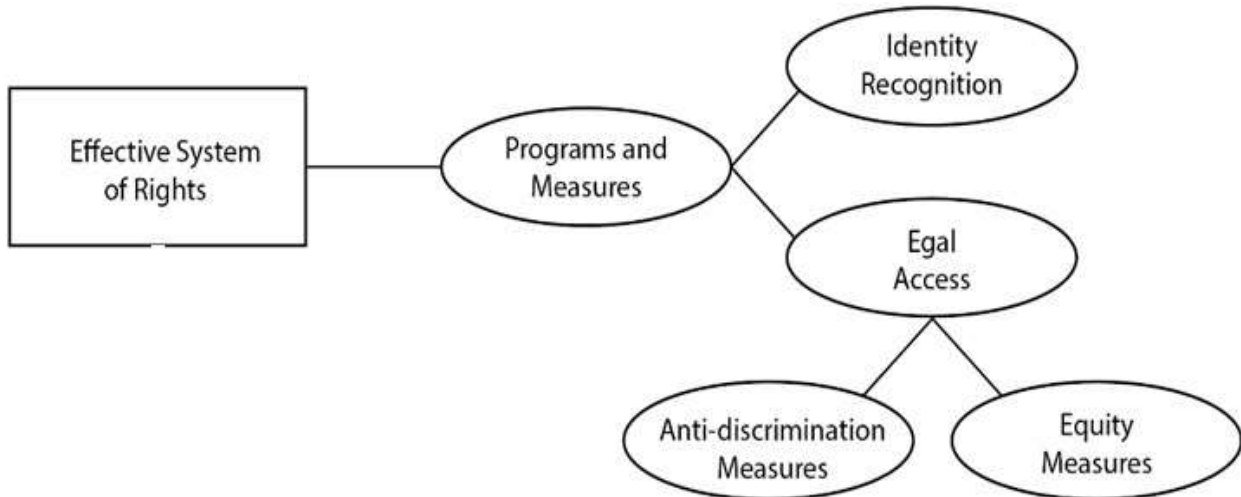
#### **3.1. Citizenship rights**

The conceptual framework deployed is Gagnon and Pagé (1999) citizenship model encompassing rights and diversity-related programs and measures. Rights include fundamental, political, socioeconomic, and cultural while programs/measures refer to identity recognition, equal assessment, antidiscrimination, and equity promoting initiatives.

As learning to live together remains in the limelight of citizenship education, it stresses the need for agreement on certain common principles. Although traditionally, schools were inclined to transfer some agreed-upon principles for a dominant social, cultural, and political system to students to form unity and a cohesive nation-state. At present, along with the focus on national identity, schools are seeking to promote principles that acknowledge human rights and foster the celebration of diversity. The aim is to equip students with the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality, and solidarity. As a result, human rights now serve as the main ingredient of citizenship education. Broadly it includes three perspectives:

An effective system of rights ensures anti-discrimination actions to support social justice and equal entrance to politics and socio-economic standards for all factions of the public. Encouraging dialogues to address the status of social justice and other conflicting issues in society is one important element of teaching the concept of democratic citizenship and peacebuilding.

This paper selectively draws on the results of a doctoral project completed by the first author in which she examined the above books of elite schools using Gagnon and Pagé (1999) framework for Citizenship Analysis. The framework proposed two micro components of rights and programs and measures under the head of Effective System of Rights. Rights are further elaborated in terms of fundamental rights, political rights, social rights, and cultural rights. Programs and measures include identity recognition, equal assessment, anti-discrimination measures, and equity measures. This paper reports only on the micro-component of programs and measures of that latter framework and its micro-components. The framework proposes that there are several mechanisms embodying socio-economic measures that aim to promote equal access. The first form, which are anti-discrimination measures, consists of programmes designed to combat discrimination based on criteria such as race, sex, age, etc. The second are equity measures that aim to correct discrimination in its systemic and involuntary aspects, by focusing on specific groups (equal-opportunity programs). In addition, the state recognizes the specificity of people's characteristics (identity), by distinguishing between citizens, even while respecting their right to be members of a group (Gagnon & Pagé, 1999).



**Figure 1: Effective system of rights and its micro-components adapted from Gagnon and Page (1999).**

**4. Methods**

This paper analyses how citizenship rights were represented and constructed in Grade 6 to 8 elite school History textbooks. Qualitative Content Analysis was used which is a qualitative research method. What distinguished it from other qualitative research designs is that it allows researcher to apply both inductive and deductive category application.

Under the head of the interpretive paradigm, an in-depth analysis of History textbooks regarding the given framework of citizenship education was conducted through qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is defined as a systematic method for assessing and evaluating documents and necessitates that the information is analysed, examined, or interpreted to produce meaning, gain insight, and foster empirical knowledge (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Qualitative content analysis is a process for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data (Schreier et al., 2020).

The main feature of qualitative content analysis is that the phrases or keywords of the text are grouped into smaller content categories. The chunks of the data are successively allocated to different categories (Mayring, 2019). These categories are derived deductively from the previous theories or literature review or are inductively extracted from the selected text itself. Both inductive and deductive approaches can be used together as they are not mutually exclusive (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In the present study, both inductive and deductive approaches were used. The study begins with the analysis by employing a pre-existing framework and categorizing the data into that framework which is an instance of deduction. When some coded portions of the text failed to fit in the pre-existing category new category was inductively produced to adjust them. The following is the list o the books used in this analysis process.

**Table 1: List of books Selected for Qualitative Content Analysis**

School	Class	Subject	Book	Writer	Publisher
Lahore Grammar School	6	History	History in Focus Book 1	Teresa Crompton	Peak Publication
	7	History	My World History		Pearson

	8	History	The History and Culture of Pakistan	Nigel Kelly	Cambridge
Beacon House TNS	6	History	My World History		Pearson
	7	History	My World History		Pearson
	8	History	History by Concepts	Jo Thomas Keely Rogers	Hodder Education
			IB Skills Individuals and Society	Sally Hirsch Thomas Triller	IB Publishing
New Lands	6	History	Individual and Societies Book 1	Paul Grace	Hodder Education
	7	History	Individual and Societies Book 2	Paul Grace	Hodder Education
	8	History	The History and Culture of Pakistan Pakistan-A Historical and Contemporary Look	Nigel Kelly Bajwa FN	Cambridge
Atchison High School	6	History	Oxford History for Pakistan Book 1	Peter Moss	Oxford
	7&8	History	Pakistan History, Culture and Government	Nigel Smith	Oxford
LACAS	6	History	Understanding History Book 1	Ismat Riaz	Oxford
	7	History	Understanding History Book 2	Ismat Riaz	Oxford
	8	History	Understanding History Book 3	Ismat Riaz	Oxford University Press

## 5. Analysis

### 5.1. Programs and measures

All the books talked more about violations of human rights in history and less about programs and measures that are taken to implement fundamental rights. The books published for Pakistani students narrate the steps taken in early civilizations and the Indo-Pak subcontinent by kings regarding socio-economic and cultural rights along with fundamental rights. Two kings from the Ottoman Empire were also mentioned in the books, which focused on implementing justice and ensuring religious rights. Concerning Pakistan, few statements regarding human rights that were ensured by the constitution of Pakistan or spoken by Quaid-e-Azam were mentioned in the books. After that, in seven decades, no noteworthy step regarding human rights was taken to be mentioned in the books.

IB books mostly narrated the history of certain treaties to ensure basic human rights. These treaties came into existence after long wars and thousands of casualties. In foreign published books, the case of the Reform Act in England, which ensured certain rights to the working class, was explained in detail. It was also stated that it was a result of long protests. Moreover, the books also talked about a few Western philosophers and their views regarding human rights. Concerning the twenty-first century, most of the time, programs and measures taken by international organizations focused on basic human rights. Steps taken in history for anti-discrimination measures or ensuring equity or equality in resource distribution or identity recognition were hardly mentioned. The composition of the findings related to citizenship rights in books is presented in the following section.

Programs and measures to protect human rights have also been a part of early civilizations. The most prominent of them is the law of code developed by Babylonian King Hammurabi.

“Hammurabi’s code records 282 laws that were enacted in the region at the time, including the law ‘an eye for an eye.’ Many of the laws provided very harsh punishments if broken but also introduced the concept of innocent until proven guilty, an important feature of modern legal systems.” (IS, p. 71)

Another significant measure to protect human rights taken by Athens was:

“All people, whether rich or poor, were treated as equals by the law. Athens had law courts but no lawyers. There was no judge, and the defendants - people accused of crimes - were judged by a jury of more than 200 men. There were no lawyers, and the defendants spoke for themselves. They were timed by a water clock - they had to stop speaking when all the water had run out.” (HIF, p. 75)

As Rome was one of the most advanced civilizations of its time, it also worked to provide justice to its people (MWH, p. 317). As human civilization grew complex, the need to justify human rights became more important. Other than programs and measures taken to ensure human rights in early civilizations, actions taken by the kings in the Indo-Pak subcontinent were also mentioned in the books published for Pakistani students.

After the period of early civilization, the most acknowledged king to practice human rights was Afghan Sultan Sher Shah. To ensure the socio-economic rights and welfare of his subjects, “Sher Shah reformed the currency and police, and judicial and military departments”; later, these reforms were also adopted by Akbar (UH7, p. 35). Sher Shah also “conciliated his Hindu subjects by giving them justice and a fair land revenue settlement.” His “far-sightedness” was appreciated, as he took an interest “in building public utilities such as communal kitchens (Langar-i-Fuqra), alms-houses, gardens, hospitals, and mastabas (libraries) and madrasas (schools). At the “village level, the panchayat system continued, and the Patwari and Chaukidar were responsible for law and order” (UH7, p. 35).

The credit for safeguarding justice was also given to Mughal Kings Akbar and Jahangir in most of the books. It was stated that laws in Akbar’s rule were “people-friendly and fair to Muslims and Hindus alike,” and “Jahangir’s sense of justice for all is evident from the chain of justice he put up in Agra. Any person who wished to voice his grievance could pull the chain and gain an audience with the emperor” (UH7, p. 47). The writers explained in detail that fairness of law and socio-economic rights, which stand as the hallmark of the Mughal era, were:

“Qazis and Muftis, known for their understanding and study of law and its fair application, were appointed. The government also provided funds (madad-i-mash) for deserving people of four types: scholars; saints/mystics; illiterate, weak, and poor people; and uneducated people of noble birth who could not earn their living. These welfare measures were continued by

Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The Mughal emperors, from Akbar to Aurangzeb, spent five to six hours daily meeting people and dealing with state business in the Diwan-i-Aam, where common people, as well as ambassadors, governors, victorious military commanders and also prisoners, were presented.” (UH7, p. 66)

The promotion of the arts and literature during the Mughal era could not have been possible without the programs and measures taken to ensure educational rights. “The Aeen-i-Akbari quotes that there were 52 universities in and around Thatta in Sindh during Jahangir’s time. As one historian, Rawlinson, comments, ‘the high degree of culture in Mughal India was largely the result of the excellent system of education’” (UH7, p. 68).

Along with the Mughal kings, one of the books also mentioned programs and measures taken by the two kings of the Ottoman Empire: Mehmet II and Suleiman. It was mentioned that “Suleiman is known not only for his conquests but as a lawgiver (qanoon): he was a just king, and along with the Sharia laws of the Ottoman Empire, he made a legal system which was to last for three hundred years” (UH7, p. 23). Furthermore, to ensure religious rights, “Mehmet II allowed his subjects religious freedom, provided they were obedient to his rule.” After the subjugation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1463, “Mehmet issued a firman (court order/declaration) to the Bosnian Franciscans, granting them the freedom to move freely within the Empire, worship in their churches and monasteries, and practice their religion free from any persecution” (UH7, p. 22). The books also emphasized that religious rights were also granted to Jews as they “were also welcomed into the Ottoman Empire and allowed to follow their religion” (UH7, p. 22).

Informing students regarding steps taken to ensure human rights or the need to work on human rights was not the priority of the textbooks published for Pakistani students. Information regarding treaties and human rights organizations of which Pakistan is a signatory was mentioned under a “token” category. In one place, the agreement between India and Pakistan to solve the problems of migrants across the border was mentioned (PHCL, p. 201). The step was taken because migration was causing great violence on both sides that was against basic human rights. The book for O levels informed its students about the principles of democracy in the constitution of Pakistan, ensuring freedom, fairness, patience, and justice as articulated by Islam. However, these points remained only under the heading “Constitution of Pakistan.” Students were not informed about the mechanism needed or adopted to further enact these rights or any institutions that work for these rights. The following points were mentioned in the book: “Adequate provision shall be made for the minorities to freely profess and practice their religions and develop their cultures” and “Wherein shall be guaranteed fundamental rights including equality of status, of opportunity and before the law, social, economic, and political justice, and freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship and association, subject to the law and public morality” (PHCG, p. 129).

Moreover, all the books of O level mentioned the following quote from Quid-e-Azam that serves as a measure for the protection of religious and cultural rights in Pakistan. The only leader portrayed who emphasized citizenship rights was Quaid-e-Azam. The struggle of any other leader for human rights after Quaid-e-Azam was mentioned as a political agenda through sweeping statements only.

“You are free; you are free to go to your temples. You are free to go to your mosques or any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste, or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the state. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State.” (UH8, p. 47)

The books also informed students that the few steps taken by some politicians to ensure human rights and relax the sufferings of the masses were ineffective because either they were not in the



interest of the upper crust or turned out to facilitate the privileged class only. It was recounted that Bhutto's economic strategies failed because "vested interests, such as business owners and landowners, were completely against his economic policies" (PHCG, p. 160), and "the law was designed to eliminate corruption (or misconduct in any public office). But it allowed the ruling elite to remove those whom it did not approve of" (THCP, p. 121). Furthermore, it was also mentioned that when Bhutto introduced administrative reforms to hire professionals for the state to improve economic policies, "political appointments were made where patronage was more important than merit or seniority" (PHCL, p. 179).

The books published for IB students mentioned programs and measures to ensure socioeconomic and religious rights in history. It narrates the steps taken by the Japanese in the form of the Charter Oath, which states that "from now on, promotion to the highest positions in society was open to all - not just those in the privileged classes" (HBC, p. 20). The history of the Peace of Westphalia, which finally ended the war in 1648 and "allowed people to practice their religion in private, even if it differed from the king's religion" (MWH, p. 754), was explained in complete detail.

The books informed that "at the beginning of the 1800s, children in industrialized countries did not have to attend school," but because "new jobs in business, science, and technology require education, reformers urged that public schools be created to teach children to read and write" (MWH, p. 918). Other programs and measures taken during and after the industrial revolution, World War I, and World War II were also mentioned in the books published for IB students. It was mentioned that to help the children working in industries, the Factory Act in 1833 was passed in Britain, and by the 1900s, "governments in Europe and the United States had begun passing laws to protect child workers, their education, and health."

As had happened after the First World War, governments intervened to improve public health even after the Second World War. It was delivered that "In Britain, a government commission was set up during the war, in 1942, to offer benefits for all people after the war. The resulting Beveridge Report recommended that a welfare state should be set up which would provide free health care, education, housing, and employment after the war" (HBC, p. 105).

One of the most substantial steps to ensure human rights in history was the development of the Atlantic Charter (PHCG, p. 96) and Treaty of Versailles (HBC, p. 164), which led to the birth of the League of Nations, that

"Involved supporting the development of countries through promoting the rights of minority groups and increasing access to education, water supplies, and health services. It was felt that by providing services that supported these needs, it would reduce the chance of conflict." (IS3, p. 65)

IB books also talked about the contribution of different philosophers in promoting the concept of human rights. It penned that as the Enlightenment progressed, several voices, including those of two philosophers, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau, proposed alternatives to the idea of absolutism.

"Locke believed in the importance of certain rights, including the right to life, freedom, and to own property. Locke, therefore, saw the need for more responsible governments and monarchs to ensure that people received a fair deal. Locke praised the importance of equality. He also believed that people have natural rights, or rights that belong to all people from birth. These natural rights include the right to life, liberty, and property." (MWH, p. 865)

Rousseau took these ideas even further, proposing that "people were good at heart and that they were corrupted by society." Rousseau famously remarked, "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains" (IS2, p. 8). The book History by Concepts also mentioned liberalism and its role in

promoting human rights. “Liberalism first became a political movement in the seventeenth century. In general, liberals believe in democracy and free and fair elections. They believe in the rights of the individual and the right to own private property” (HBC, p. 131).

The books informed students about one of the most significant steps to ensure human rights after the First World War. The League of Nations was established, and its works involved “encouraging the progress of countries through advocating the rights of minority groups and improving the approach to schooling, water resources, and health facilities.” It was also assumed that “offering essential services that supported these demands would lessen the possibility of conflict” (HBC, p. 64). One of the authors of IB books penned that “it set out to encourage peace by safeguarding religious and ethnic minorities, maintaining health programs and tracing arms dealing, all of which looked essential in the development of a just and peaceful society” (HBC, p. 63).

At the end of the decade of the 1940s, the world was on the road to recovery from the extremes of the Second World War. It was after the death of millions of people after the world war that humanity realized the need to work and concentrate on the promotion of basic rights of people, improvement in living conditions, cooperation, and peace. As a result, the United Nations (UN) was created: “The UN is an international organization committed to promoting peace, tolerance, and cooperation among people across the world.” The books informed students that the UN presented a statement in 1948 known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is “viewed by many as a foundation for how people should expect to be treated across the world. Subsequently, it is often referred to when considering the topic of human rights” (IS1, p. 28).

The students of the International Baccalaureate were also informed that human rights issues could be solved with the help of global interaction and the international community. “Access to resources and equality of opportunities can help societies to develop to become fairer places, but this is often dependent on global interactions. (IS1, p. 163) and “some people think that we should consider ourselves to be citizens of a global community. They believe that we are responsible for supporting human rights and equality for all people around the world” (MWH, p. 27).

Books explicitly talk about programs and measures taken by UNICEF, one of the allied bodies of the UN, to ensure children’s rights. “Multiple organizations are working to raise awareness of the conditions facing children around the world. The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), for instance, is committed to working to improve human rights and conditions for children globally” (IS1, p.30).

Human rights, as an important issue to deal with, was presented in the book Individual and Society, Book 1. It answers the question “What are Human rights?” with the following picture (IS1, p. 28). All four proponents were non-Muslims, developing the implication that Muslim leaders lack advocacy for human rights.

Coming from the global level to the national level, mostly the example of the United States was mentioned:

“Most democratic governments act to protect individual rights and the common good. In the United States, the government follows basic democratic principles. At the same time, the majority may not take away the basic rights and freedoms of minority groups or individuals. In other words, the government must balance majority rule with minority rights.” (MWH, p. 24)

It explains the mechanism of protection of human rights in the USA:

“Americans’ basic rights are protected by the Bill of Rights, a part of the U.S. Constitution. The Bill of Rights and other laws protect rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of

religion. If the government violates these rights, citizens can fight injustice in court. For the most part, these rights are also guaranteed to noncitizens.” (MWH, p. 26)

The explanation of the principles of the American Constitution and details of its Bill of Rights are mentioned in the book *My World History* (MWH, p. 872). Moreover, the book *History by Concepts* explains the detailed story of The Freedom Charter passed to protect fundamental rights in South Africa (HBC, p. 271).

The above section highlights how citizenship rights are presented to students at elite schools. It was observed that violation of human rights was normalized, and a passive attitude of victims was often pictured. Religious leaders and ruling elites had their justification for the violation of human rights, for which they were hardly held accountable. Cultural superiority and economic gains were the prominent motives for the violation of citizenship rights. The books highlighted that curbing political rights to maintain the status quo was important. The most cited right was the freedom of speech or freedom of expression.

Moreover, recent conflicts that resulted in a violation of human rights were not presented. The topic remained more globalized and less localized. The books developed the connotation that human rights are championed by the UN and its allied bodies around the globe. Violation of human rights remained in the limelight compared to the programs and measures adopted to solve or avoid the issues. Students’ abilities and attitudes that may help to nurture peace and solve HR issues were not focused on. The concept of citizenship rights was muted after 1947 in the books published for Pakistani students. The elite students were kept ignorant and indifferent about the status, policies, and mechanisms to solve the human rights issue.

## **6. Discussion**

The analysis reveals certain predominant discourses and perspectives around citizenship rights discernible in the elite school History textbooks. Fundamentally, rights protections and violations are constructed more as a global, historical phenomenon than a contemporary local challenge requiring youth mobilization (Osler & Starkey, 2010). Textbooks appear to treat human rights as an established endpoint secured through international conventions, charters and interventions rather than an unfinished, context-specific struggle needing proactive citizenship (Bajaj, 2017). While touching upon some key movements and turning points in global rights expansion, the narratives lack linkage with students’ contemporary environments and lives. Mechanisms for comprehension of ongoing rights infringements and youth participation towards safeguarding equal rights and diversity domestically remain muted (Banks, 2017).

Moreover, rights violations are rationalized through discourses of cultural superiority, national interests and economic incentives underpinning power hierarchies. Resistance arises predominantly from subjected minority groups whose prolonged sacrifice and suffering eventually evokes change (Tibbitts, 2017). The agency and accountability of privileged groups and power holders for recognizing rights formally through legislation versus translating principles into substantive equitable policies and practices seems obscured (Bellino, 2014). Critical perspectives on prevailing governance, policy and social systems obstructing rights garner limited space (Barton, 2020). Recent local conflicts highlighting citizenship and minority rights also find no voice in the textbooks (Davies, 2018). Overall citizenship education from a human rights vantage-point reflecting on structures, interests and agencies advancing or hindering rights materializes only partially.

The key actors spotlighted across narratives are marginalized identity groups struggling for rights, UN organizations granting recognition and western philosophers advocating universal principles. The state and political and economic elite implicitly benefit from infringements and make token

gestures only when movements gather overwhelming traction. Minimally are ruling groups depicted as proactively safeguarding citizenship rights and socioeconomic justice as part of good governance committed to public welfare (Osler & Starkey, 2010). Space for youth to locate themselves within these dynamics as emerging change-makers appears constrained (Barton, 2020). While global milestones, charters and conventions are elaborated, socio-political pathways for students to further rights domestically through critical awareness, collective action and human solidarity-building find scarce visibility (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Essentially the textbooks transmit a disconnected discourse where human rights stand as ethical imperatives secured globally through higher moral realizations and principally for oppressed groups (Bromley, 2011). However, translating universal rights and egalitarian principles into practical policies geared towards eliminating discrimination and inequities remains positioned as challenging local power hierarchies rather than the integral duty of a democratic welfare state (Starkey, 2012). The misalignment between global rights frameworks and realities on the ground persists, especially with regard to advancing substantive citizenship of marginalized collectives. The educative possibilities to unpack perspectives and contradictions that impede local rights advancement seem limited by the mostly pathological framing where violations are seen mostly as due to ignorance or vested interest than structures sustaining inter-group privileges (Cárdenas, 2005).

The remedial conceptions proposed seem similarly aligned. Results are achieved primarily when violated people leverage prohibition if not human rights rhetoric and occupation deserving causes, abreast impassioned leaders/reformers, expose feature violation of principle. Fewer tracks to transformation are represented by State-backed programs with accent on socio-economic uplift, anti-discrimination, and cultural enrichment of minorities. Where State interventions are considered, the recommendation is heavily qualified regarding co-option by elite interests, failures due to red tape and façades on human rights that lack much depth and consistency for wholesome impact. Balanced assessment avoids romanticizing institutional tinkering and struggles to present system-embedded solutions that can be represented by leadership committed to equitable development through youth empowerment (Goren & Yemini, 2017).

According to the citizenship education aimed at supporting active, rights-based civic engagement, the textbooks have some constraints. They have more cases of power relations and bounded violations in the history as the information provided to students, then provide methods or abilities for student to widely practice rights and difference in society (Bajaj et al., 2016). The textbooks do not establish civic literacy which enables students, at least in the local context, to structurally critique barriers to substantive equality and social justice.

## **7. Conclusion**

The history textbooks of elite schools predominantly construct an understanding of human rights as moral standards through highlighting predominantly through presenting historical narratives of freedoms curtailed, injustices redressed, movements of change and crises, and principled foreign interventions such as the two world wars, which students should comprehend as rights violations and abuses. Then, they highlight the social control mechanisms and power arrangements underpinning the violations by dictatorships and oligarchies which the rules of international society in these historical moments could and did overrule, and which international society continues to address in selective and exemplary cases nowadays.

No doubt the textbooks inspire students with such accounts. But they suggest little for social activists-in-waiting how to actually change policy, publicize campaigns, and build coalitions, or take other steps to influence real power, to reprogram the mindsets and institutions of culture which

equal citizenship demands. If educating citizens for transformative engagement in a locale is the mission, established and emergent citizenship education is best suited to the task when it comprehends and promulgates practical knowledge about how to make hegemonic thought systems and institutional arrangements.

The analysed elite school history textbooks predominantly focus on human rights as moral benchmarks, primarily through historical accounts that highlight marginalization and conflicts resolved by principled global interventions. These textbooks encourage students to comprehend rights violations and critique the power structures and social control mechanisms that underpin them. However, they fall short of exposing the systemic issues and vested interests that enable such scenarios, particularly within the context of modern-day Pakistan. While the textbooks provide inspiration, they offer limited guidance to young aspiring change-makers on practical strategies for advocating policy reforms, pursuing public interest litigation, conducting awareness campaigns, building coalitions, and engaging in various forms of civic and political activism to transform cultural mindsets and institutional practices that are at odds with substantive equal citizenship.

The citizenship education curricula, hence, require grounding in more grassroots, pragmatic conceptions of rights transformations in which young people participate, lead and act collectively, if they are to prepare empowered critical thinkers committed to local change.

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