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Elite School Students' Perceptions of Human Rights: An Interview Study

* Arjumand Rauf, PhD Scholar

** Dr. Yaar Muhammad, Assistant Professor (Corresponding Author)

*** Dr. Ayesha Saleem, Lecturer
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Abstract

Since independence, Pakistan has been struggling to deal with its two focal phenomena. One is the culture of elite governance whereby precious chosen few can influence all societal and administrative segments of the country, and the second related to the issues in the realization of human rights. The realization of fundamental, social, cultural, and political rights depends upon how the ruling elites perceive it. Keeping in view the scenario, this qualitative study was set to explore the perceptions of elite students regarding status and issues in the realization of human rights in Pakistan. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five purposely selected students from elite schools. Thematic analysis revealed that most students have a superficial understanding of human rights. Though they believed that hierarchies, corruption, religious extremism, and nepotism should come to an end for the beginning of a just society, their discourse held class interest. Transparency, accountability, and good governance were not stressed. A society with equal human rights requires participation by elites which is characterized by a greater sense of social justice, humanity, responsibility, and accountability.
Keywords: Human Rights, Elites, Fundamental Rights, Social Rights, Political Rights, Cultural Rights

Introduction

The notion of human rights is as old as human civilization itself, and in recent decades, it has emerged as an important affair to be discussed in education around the globe (Hung, 2012). The realization of human rights is a must for nurturing a just and empathetic society. It teaches to be a participant of a pluralistic society with tolerance, human dignity, equality, and solidarity (Osanloo, 2009), all of which is a dire need of the masses in Pakistan today. But being the victim of elitism (Shoukat, Gomez, & Cheong, 2017), Pakistan conjures class segregation into "Elites who are few and have power and the masses that are many but without power and power decides who gets what, how, and when" (Sim, 2012). The realization of human rights depends on how elites contemplate it because they are the ones in a society who occupy key positions of power, influence and set the direction for the whole community (Sim, 2012). keeping in view the importance of human rights and the role of elites in Pakistan, the present study is set to explore the perceptions of elite students concerning human rights because the views of these students regarding the concept of human rights and responsibilities are an aperture into how Pakistan is likely to evolve (Lall, 2014).

Literature review

Though progressive in nature, the evolution of the doctrine of human rights has never been a linear one. With time, its transition has traveled with the mighty marvels of the world, whether it is theocratic to democratic, egalitarian to pluralistic, capitalism to communism, or liberalism to conservatism. Nonetheless, it was after the death of forty to fifty million humans in world war II (Graham, 2020) that humanity came up with the first universal declaration of fundamental rights, which is now an officially recognized instrument that enshrined basic human values (Roberts, 2015). With time, the International covenant on civil and political rights and international covenant of economic, cultural, and social rights were also established. The prime motive of these agreements was assumed to secure fundamental, cultural, political, economic, and social rights of people (Gill, 2019). The focus of the present study is limited to fundamental, cultural, political, and social rights, which

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*   Department of Education, University of Management and Technology, Lahore
**   Department of Education, University of Management and Technology, Lahore
***Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore

come under the head of civic rights (Gagnon & Pagé, 1999a).

Universal declaration of fundamental rights states that human rights are about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead creative lives by ensuring the dignity and worth of the human person and promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom (Roberts, 2015). These fundamental rights refer to the rights that people have by their human nature. They are also labeled as human rights, the rights that are accepted and guarded by human rights commissions or constitutions. These human rights are based on shared values of dignity, justice, fair-mindedness, and equality (Gagnon & Pagé, 1999b). Social rights are conventionally understood as rights to the meeting of basic needs that are essential for human welfare. They incorporate a safeguard against poverty, not the provision of a life in luxury (Mantouvalou, 2010). These rights include the right to an adequate standard of living which encompasses the right to foodstuff, clothing, housing, water, and sanitation; the right to work and to just and favorable conditions of work and the right to collective action; the right to the highest attainable standard of health; the right to education; the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress (Hunt, 2017). Cultural rights are associated with the protection of collective identity characterized by a distinct culture. It also includes the right to enjoy one's own culture and contribute to the cultural life of the group (Boyle & Hughes, 2018). Moreover, political rights refer to the right to vote and take part in political activities and services without any discrimination (Hunt, 2017). The rights of political participation include the rights to vote, to stand for political office, to engage in public political discussion, to organize a political party, and of political assembly (Miller, 2015).

Human rights in Pakistan

Islamic ideology served as a foundation for the creation of Pakistan, but it is also home to many other religious, social, cultural, and regional ideologies. These multilayered philosophies and ideologies of human rights have, at times, heightened clashes and bred a culture of tension among different sectors of Pakistan. However, Pakistan has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and has also affirmed other core treaties of international human rights. Fundamental rights are too enshrined by the 1973 constitution of Pakistan; the government has also approved many other human rights treaties like the National Commission for human rights, the Pakistan panel code, and the hudood ordinance.

However, most of these laws became the victim of a political and cultural attack or were rejected by religious and cultural minorities as unfavorable (Malik, 2002). Also, at the same time, the government maintains a skeptical stance toward several key human rights elements, which are somehow considered antithetical to Islamic ideology. Whereas the human rights bestowed by the true Islamic ideology were also not realized. The real Islamic perspective in Pakistan has been hijacked by a group of people who use religion to diverse ends, to secure political positions and territorial influence, drive out corrosive western influence, involve in class warfare, recompence perceived injustices, and even overturn the state in pursuit of a purer Islamic order (Haider, 2013). Radical practices in the name of religion, such as brainwashing and sectarian killings, are creating intolerance, whereas traditional Islamic values such as integrity, freedom, and human rights are lost somewhere and seen by conservatives as incompatible with the modernist school of thought (Sadruddin, 2017). Consequently, Pakistan never got a chance to shine at Human rights indexes, the negative ramifications of which are to be faced by future generations of different classes.

Keeping in view the above situation, it is not surprising that research studies conducted to show the efforts to equip our future generation with the importance and understanding of the concept of human rights leave us disillusioned. Naseer (2012) states that Pakistan has failed to develop energetic and well-informed citizens who can bring about a positive change concerning social rights and responsibilities. Bilal and Malik (2014) claimed that even after sixty years of independence, Pakistan could not establish an education system to cater to the needs of human rights and civic responsibilities. Rights and roles of the minorities and cultural diversity could not get enough space in the curriculum and textbooks (Dean, 2005). Faria and Dean (2011) pointed out that children conveyed their concern about being deprived of basic human rights. Muhammad and Brett (2017, 2019, 2020) extended that the textbooks, policy documents, and curriculum are insensitive towards the cultural and ethnic diversity of the state. Mumtaz (2019) claimed that education for conflict resolution and human rights can help Pakistan overcome the issues of multiculturalism. Pirzado (2019) shared his concern that due to ill management, shortage of resources, and unclear goals, there is a lack of supportive

attitude concerning human rights in Pakistani schools. The political debates failed to bring any compelling results in legitimizing civic rights pedagogies (Tehseem, Bokhari, & Zulfiqar, 2020). There is a dearth of courses, activities, and conferences regarding human rights in our educational institutions (Naeem, Gul, Asghar, & Zafar, 2019). The lack of will, shortage of resources, and proper management for human rights education may have serious consequences such as the declining of tolerance, empathetic attitude, and widening of the gap in social classes (Kaukab, 2012).

Pakistan owned its social class structure from its colonial masters, and yet even after seven decades of independence, it is a crucial phenomenon for understanding the socio-political and geostrategic landscape of Pakistan. The oligarchical control in Pakistan cannot be seen through rose-colored glasses because they are committed to an arduous struggle to shape the country according to their ideological underpinnings (Shoukat et al., 2017). These power dynamics in Pakistan are responsible for resource allocation and decision-making, which has far-reaching implications for the masses (Ahmed, 2017).

The focus of the current study is the students at the elite schools, the aristocracy of Pakistan, who can influence all spheres of society and governance. Elite characteristics have a strong imprint on nations' mass culture (Welzel, 2002). Therefore, it is desirable to investigate how the young elites of society perceive human rights. Furthermore, they have better opportunities to raise their voice for transformation in society (Naseer, 2012) whereas, there is little room left for the multitudes to understand and act upon the concept of human or civic rights after suffering from the worries of livelihood and to fulfill the basic needs of survival. Where elites set the direction, they move with the flow.

Pakistan is also a signatory of many national and international treaties of human rights organizations. It has social, cultural, religious, and regional diversities to deal with. It cannot afford to become oblivious to the fact that fourth-generation warfare has been imposed. Globalization and the knowledge age have driven the market forces to another level. We need a justice-oriented and solution-oriented social capital that is well informed and well equipped to encounter all these facts. We must have an insight into the mindset of the generation who will most probably lead our country in the future in a certain direction. Keeping in view the above situation, the present study is set to investigate:

(1)   How do students at elite schools perceive human rights?
(2)   What are the students' perceptions regarding the realization of human rights?

Methods

The purpose of understanding students' perceptions regarding human rights and their realization in Pakistan was achieved by using a semi-structured interview design (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Cosgrove, Corrie, & Wolever, 2021) underpinned by an interpretive approach (Crotty, 1998). This design assumes that reality is socially constructed, dynamic and multiplex as the phenomenon of human rights is an evolving concept and its scope and periphery differ because of the different socio-economic and political structure of various countries (Kamruzzaman & Das, 2016).

Five students were purposely (Denieffe, 2020; Campbell et al., 2020) selected from elite schools of Lahore. The selection criteria for the elite school was that they were privately owned, very expensive, and based in a posh area (Ramazan, 2015). Also, the income group in these schools represents less than 1% of the families in Pakistan (Gardezi, 1991; Qadeer, 2006). These educational institutions cost more (than public schools) per student per year and have used English rather than Urdu or any other language as a medium of instruction (Rahman, 2004). Those students from O-level second year and third year were selected who have attempted the exam of social studies because civic rights are one of the main aims of the mandated subject of social studies in secondary schools, and the learning outcomes of social studies refer to constitutional rights (De Kort, 2017). Social studies include history and geography also, which reflects current policy discourses, emphasizing community cohesion and the agenda for human rights (Faas, 2011). It was expected that the subject might have given the orientation of the concerned topics concerning Pakistan (Muhammad & Brett, 2020; Khokhar & Muhammad, 2020). Also, students of this class fall under the age range when he/she develops a sense of civic rights and responsibility (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, & Agrusti, 2016).

Relevant literature was used as a guide for the development of a semi-structured interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Keeping in view the literature, open-ended questions were asked.

Probing questions were also used when required(Seidman, 2019). The interview protocol consisted of questions regarding what students' beliefs are social, cultural, political, and fundamental rights, what is their status in Pakistan, who is responsible, and how they think the current situation could be improved. After having students' consent, the interviews were conducted. Informed consent, no harm to the participant, anonymity, and other ethical considerations were also followed.

Interviews were transcribed, and *NVivo 12* was then used for the coding process (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). The transcribed interviews were read several times to facilitate open and then pattern coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020; Saldaña, 2021). Based on the patterns, all the results in each category were synthesized into integrated results (Miles et al., 2020). To validate the results, member checking was also done (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Findings

The findings of the interview conducted with the students at elite schools to get insight regarding their perceptions of human rights are presented in this section.

Students' perceptions regarding fundamental rights

Students were asked to share their views about what fundamental rights are and what fundamental rights are provided in the constitution of Pakistan. The semi-structured interview was also designed to grab a glimpse of what they knew about the international treaties and NGOs working for human rights, what they believed about the status of fundamental rights, who was responsible, and how these rights could be further realized in our society. All the students agreed that the status of fundamental rights is not appreciable in Pakistan, and several factors were held responsible for this. Lack of education was considered as one of the biggest hurdles in the realization of human rights. Lack of the will of leaders and the high population were also mentioned as obstacles. Students suggested that the status of education should be improved, and leaders must be made willing to bring the desired change in society.

All five students agreed that freedom of speech is included in the fundamental rights. A student mentioned, "They may be the right to express their opinion regarding politics, regarding any other aspect of life there should be freedom of speech" (Participant 5). The findings of the interview data also reveal that most of the students believed that "the fundamental rights consist of all the basic human rights, housing, shelter, education and food" (Participant 2). However, their understanding of fundamental rights was limited to "access to health care, access to shelter, access to food, protection of property, and the right of ownership" (Participant 3). However, students were of the view that when it comes to fundamental rights, "there should be no discrimination based on the gender, culture and race or religion" (Participant 3).

Regarding the fundamental rights provided by the constitution of Pakistan, most of the students claimed that they did not have enough information. However, they were confident that the right to get an education, good health, and practicing your religion and, most importantly, the right to freedom of speech are included in the constitution. A student reported, "Freedom of expression, right to practice your religion, right to education, I think these are the rights given by the constitution of Pakistan. If there are others, I don't know about them" (Participant 1). Another student mentioned that "I believe that the fundamental rights being provided in the constitution of Pakistan are the right to speak, right to education, right to health care. I believe these are the fundamental rights" (Participant 3). Moreover, one student elaborated, "In the constitution, we have a particular section for the fundamental rights of the citizens of Pakistan all of which articles are concerned with the fundamental rights, for example, Article 9 which is basically for the security of a person, article 10 which says you cannot arrest a person without informing him the reason for which he is accused or found guilty, we also have article 11 perhaps which forbids slavery and article 19 is a freedom of speech and article 25 perhaps gives the basic right of education for all the country" (Participant 4).

Except for one student, all others were able to mention international treaties or NGOs working for human rights in Pakistan. A sub-theme delineating students' suspicion about NGOs as foreign-funded with hidden agendas was also evident in data. Tashkent deceleration, Waziristan accord, Southeast Asia treaty, universal declaration of human rights, convention of the elimination of the discrimination against women, the international covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Kashaf foundation were mentioned by the students. However, a student also mentions that "Pakistan is a signatory of these treaties and as far as in paperwork and seriousness of treaties, this cannot guarantee the fundamental rights of the people, but when we look at their current situation again due

to dirty politics, we do not see these rights being implemented or any big improvement that was supposed to" (Participant 4). However, another student held the view regarding local NGOs, "They are trying to do what they can as much as they can do, they have a positive impact on the human rights in Pakistan and on the development of Pakistan" (Participant 5). A student also claimed, "I have heard and read that most NGOs are foreign-funded with hidden agendas" (Participant 1).

All the students were of the view that the present status of fundamental rights is not satisfactory in Pakistan. Most of the students believed that, among many other factors it was lack of education that was responsible for the poor status of fundamental rights in Pakistan. A student highlighted this point, "The first thing is that most people are not educated in Pakistan. They do not know what fundamental rights they have. How can they fight to have it?" (Participant 1). Another student added the role of political leaders responsible for this situation: "Yes, fundamental rights in Pakistan are not given particularly because of lack education but also due to the dirty politics of the political leaders" (Participant 4). One student argued, "Well, a lot of reasons…The final and the most important thing I know is that Pakistan is financially backward. And the backwardness of the people in Pakistan, especially in villages and rural areas, is the main reason" (Participant 2).

Most of the students were of the view that fundamental rights could not be achieved until or unless we improve the status of our education. A student was assured that "Raising awareness through education is the only possible way" (Participant 2). Another student added, "As far as our curriculum is concerned, a proper chapter regarding fundamental rights must be included in our syllabus from primary school onwards. This will greatly educate people who are studying in government schools to understand their rights and the rights of others and how could they help others to get their fundamental rights" (Participant 4). One student held the view that first, leaders of the society should be willing to improve the situation. He explained, "They are in a high position because of our support. They should try to serve the country with the full will and full spirit. Also, they must try to understand the importance of rights; they should include them in education" (Participant 4).

Students' perceptions regarding political rights

Students' understanding of political rights was mostly limited to the "right to vote." All the students were of the view that influential people were more privileged in terms of political rights. Diversity of opinion was observed concerning the political rights of minorities. Some were of the view that we should be careful in giving political rights to minorities. Others believed that the political participation of minorities is important for Pakistan to flourish. Students suggested the use of social media and a need to improve the status of education for better realization of political rights.

Besides the freedom to vote, freedom of expression was also considered an important political right by most of the students. Students also elaborated that in pursuing these rights, one should not face any kind of discrimination. "Political rights are the rights to express your political opinions or viewpoint on any other expectations of the country, and if you want to support a party or form a party, you should not face any problem. I think political rights are like this basically" (Participant 5). Another student shared, "I believe that the political rights means that the people should have the right to vote in the election and they should also be given the right to protest or right to challenge the government if they believe that the government is doing something wrong" (Participant 3).

Along with the concerns regarding the poor status of political rights, students also pointed out the factors for this disappointing situation. Most students were of the view that it was the ruling class or elites responsible for the situation. A student shared, "Yes, nobody is given political rights, and no eligible person is given political rights, and these rights reside with the official people who have strong relationships with the three major influential institutions of Pakistan, which are an army, judiciary, and government and tend to enjoy the higher status in the society and tend to enjoy all the political rights in the society. Moreover, I would just like to say yes, the ruling elite is the reason why people do not get political rights" (Participant 4). He also added that "if you are man, son of influential people and belong to a religion which is more accepted in Pakistan, which is Islam, then you tend to enjoy more political rights" (Participant 4). One student was of the view, "This dates back to history because of the monarchies the hierarchies exist" (Participant 2). Another student expressed his view that it is the foreign agenda being carried out by our politicians: "Decisions are made somewhere else. They (politicians) are dictated like politicians are just front figures. Something else is going on at the back end" (Participant 1).

Diversity of opinion was observed when students were asked to share their beliefs about the provision of political rights to minorities. One student explicitly said, "Minorities should be given political rights according to the ratio. It also depends on the minority; for example, if we talk about Qadianis, it is dangerous for security and can be a national threat. It can also be a threat to Islam if we give them more seats and control over us" (Participant 1). Another student believed, "It may initiate a civil war" (Participant 2). One student was of the view that "Muslim extremists in our country would never let this happen" (Participant 3). On further questioning regarding how without getting political rights, minorities would be able to get other fundamental, social, or cultural rights. Answer was given "we have an obligation, we have to give them their rights it may have different consequences later, but we must give them we cannot proceed further in life if we do not give them—but without giving political rights" (Participant 2). In contrast to this, a student asserted, "Well, I do not believe that it would harm the unity of Pakistan. Rather, it will enable social and political cooperation and collaboration" (Participant 5). Another student added,

> I think as you bring more people from the minorities of Pakistan to the front line, it will help us induce tolerance in our culture. It will, in turn, help us in uniting the nation more. It will help us to grow as a nation. Our relation and the overall outlook of Pakistan in the international community will also be enhanced. Our image will greatly be affected positively if we include minorities in our frontline (Participant 4).

When questioned, different measures were suggested by the students to improve the status of political rights in Pakistan. Most of the students were of the view that apart from good government, educating people or raising awareness is a must for the realization of political rights. A participant highlighted, "I would just like to say that if we would educate the people and we try to break the hierarchy by raising our voices, it will introduce a better political scenario in Pakistan" (Participant 4). Another student amplified this point, "The most major aspect of this is a good government supporting political rights. Political rights should be given to everyone equally and not based on race, religion, and color. Firstly, a good government is necessary to ensure that this happens. Secondly, education, we need to make sure that people are aware of the political rights" (Participant 3). The use of social media was also suggested by one of the students: "through social media platform and use of technological advancement we can improve the situation" (Participant 2).

Students' perceptions regarding social rights

Students claimed that the status of social rights was not appreciable at all, and again the upper crust is in a better position as compared to the masses. Lack of awareness among people and corruption and nepotism was mentioned as some of the main reasons for the poor status of social rights. The protest, March, and use of social media platforms were suggested to raise awareness for improvement in social rights. Most of the students also agreed that the status of social rights goes parallel with political rights.

It was observed that, to some degree, students were confused between social rights and fundamental rights. Students believed regarding social right was that "when social rights are concerned, I believe social rights are as fundamental rights. They are not the rights that are ensured by the constitution. One single person cannot take ownership of social rights. It is to be taken by society. The society themselves is responsible for social rights" (Participant 4). Also, another student added, "They are like you have the right of good living, right of education, right of health care and right of security" (Participant 5). Another student commented, "Social rights are freedom of speech, good living, and health care etc. — basic rights in the society" (Participant 2).

Regarding the status of social rights, all the students agreed that only the upper class is in a far better position. A student expressed, "It's not very good. Many people are deprived of social rights in Pakistan. Most people do not know what social rights they have" (Participant 1). A student argued, "I believe the privileged and the elite class are in a better position in social rights. The elite and privilege always get the benefit. They are ahead of the minorities or masses, so I believe that the privilege has more social rights" (Participant 2).

Lack of awareness among masses and insensitivity of the ruling elite was considered liable for the present status of social rights as in "I would not blame one person or phenomenon. I believe the whole history of segregation and leaders' hierarchies, monarchies corruption, and to some extent, even slavery has helped in shaping the present condition" (Participant 2). The reason for this poor status was also expressed in a way; the government does not own its responsibility. The upper class,

to safeguard their interests, did tend to retain all the rights with them. Also, I would like to quote an approach to sociology which is called the Marxist approach. Something like this is going this because the ruling end is trying to subjugate all the people who are under them" (Participant 4). A student mentions that "I would say it is because of the ignorance of Pakistanis. Mass population is not well-educated" (Participant 1).

Students were also asked whether social rights in Pakistan could be achieved without getting political rights. One student was not able to make connections within both. However, all the other four students strongly agreed that social rights in Pakistan could not be achieved without getting political rights. A participant unfolded,

No, not at all. When we get politically strong, our influence will increase as well, and when we have our influence, we will get political rights. We could make a positive impact in our society as far as social rights are concerned. So, yes, political rights are highly required for providing social rights. (Participant 4)

A variety of moves were suggested by the students for better realization of social rights. Most of which were focused on raising awareness and status of education, using social media platforms, and allowing room for freedom of speech. One participant claimed, "Freedom of speech ensures social rights to some extent" (Participant 3). Another was of the view that "the answer is quite straightforward. First political rights must be ensured by educating the masses. And raising our voices to break the hierarchy is a must" (Participant 4). A student signified the role of social media,

Awareness, protests, and social media platforms are important in this regard. For example, nowadays, we have an issue of feminism because females are now aware that they are not equipped as males, and they are on a social media platform, and they are writing stories, articles, voice messages, blogs, and personal experiences. People are expressing their concerns about society. (Participant 2)

Two participants emphasized the role of celebrities and youth: "What we can do is we can ask other rich countries and people who are influential to talk more about social rights. Also, influential people like a politician and celebrities can create a difference" (Participant 5). The student further added, "I believe that the information of the youth is very important. When a youth starts initiative, and then that should be supported by the government, and they should empower the youth" (Participant 5).

Students' perception regarding cultural rights

Along with a good understanding of cultural rights, students were of the view that we need to be more tolerant of the diversity of the state. Confusion of religion with culture and steps taken by Zia ul Haq were considered as most responsible for the poor realization of cultural rights. Some students claimed that government has nothing to do with cultural rights; it is an individual duty to accept others, whereas other students claim that law and order should be maintained, and a broad view of religions should be promoted by religious leaders.

All the students demonstrated a good understanding of cultural rights. A student shared, "I believe cultural rights are the basic rights which means that one should be free to maintain or display its cultural identity regardless of the race, gender and ethnicity or the culture in which they are living" (Participant 3). Another student added, "Cultural rights are the freedom of practicing one heritage, race, and religion etc." (Participant 2).

Regarding the issues faced in Pakistan concerning the realization of cultural rights, the most dominant perspective apart from lack of tolerance was the confusion between religion and culture. A student shared, "People mix religion with culture, and then they say it is a part of their religion" (Participant 1). Another student added, "The thing is that religion is a part of the culture, but people often confuse culture with religion. I would like to quote a movie which I have recently watched, 'In The Name of God.' In that, a very wonderful thing was pointed out that culture and religion are two different things. You must not try to interrelate them" (Participant 4). Yet another student underscored, "People do not have the tolerance for hearing others whatever the religion may be, whatever the cast maybe we are at the brink of breaking point" (Participant 5).

Regarding the status of cultural rights in Pakistan, a student asserted, "Pakistan has a whole blast of cultural rights, and if someone from other culture comes, they are rejected. Pakistan is a Muslim majority country; the other religions are looked down upon" (Participant 2). Another student

added, "I believe that regardless of religion, the masses do not respect each other. It is due to the stigmatization they have indulged" (Participant 3).

Steps taken by General Zia ul Haq were explicitly mentioned by the students as the root cause for this cultural intolerance. "I believe that these issues would not have been in Pakistan without the steps taken by the Zia ul Haq. So, I believe that when Zia ul Haq introduced the ordinance or Islamic law the future governments started facing the problems of culture rights" (Participant 3). Another student contributed, "He played a big role in creating this situation—the bringing of Islamization in power and the sharia law. Yes, we should observe the Islamic laws, so what if there are people of a different religion or people have a different opinion or a different way of life" (Participant 5). On the other hand, a student also blamed religious leaders for this intolerance as

> Cultural rights are not given to people because of the intolerance in our country, not because of the higher officials but the religious leaders or preachers who tend to forget that every religion is a religion of peace and forget the message and tend to enforce war at every single incident. (Participant, 4).

All the students agreed that deprivation of cultural rights affects the social and political scenario of Pakistan. The student asserted, "When culture rights are not given, obviously unrest approaches in this society. Violence breeds violence" (Participant 3). Students also shared the recent example of the Hazara community "Yes, the recent incident of Hazara region is one of the examples, government and opposition both were trying to use it to benefit their party" (Participant 1). A student was of the view, "I am from Punjab, and if I am not given cultural rights, I would become mad at the government and would protest it, which will cause social and political unrest" (Participant 2). A student also raised the point, "It has a direct role with the political and social landscape. You weaken your internal defense, and then the external factors will start exploiting your country. It is like once the crack will appear, and your enemies will broaden it to destroy you. Also, it has a political effect. It may lead to intercommunal violence, and there will be no development" (Participant 5). A student also claimed that "over provision" of cultural rights also has a negative effect on the social and political scenario. He elaborated "

> Recently the party of Khadim Hussain Rizvi, a party made by a religious extremist from a majority group, was more equipped with religious sentiments and, using it politically, brought the whole country to a standstill condition. He stopped a country of 220 million. Imagine thinking about the point of extremism. All your political parties, your security institutions were incapable; why didn't they take any action? Because all know that if you try to snub them, they will explode at any moment. Religious extremism or intolerance has been built up to a dangerous level. (Participant 5)

When asked about how the provision of cultural rights can be improved, a student claimed, "It is not the government's job; it is our job to accept others. Government has nothing to do with it. We can use the social media platform so that cross-culture collaboration can take place. Talk shows, television songs, and music can play a big part. Poetry, movies, articles have a lot of effect on people's psychology (Participant 2). Another student added, "All extremist or fundamentalist in their identity should come to an end. We should not fight this with the sword but with the tongue to soften the hearts of the people, and this will improve their actions as well, and society will become a better place to live" (Participant 4). At the same time, another was of the view that the government should introduce diversity programs like giving information about different cultures. A broad view of Islam should be conveyed, and syllabus should mention that you have these cultural rights and when you do this and that, you break the laws, mention Islamic laws of tolerance and towards the state and rights of minorities" (Participant 1). One student elaborated the role of courts as "courts and law and order should be strengthened to decide and pass the judgment regarding these situations" (Participant 5).

Discussion & Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that student's knowledge of fundamental rights and the constitution of Pakistan was limited to, most importantly, freedom of expression or freedom of opinion and then to food, shelter, clothing, and education. Fundamental rights like the right to life, the right to security, the right to physical integrity, the right to privacy and the right to equality, the right to a fair trial, the right to business, trade, etc., were not mentioned. The student showed a moderate degree of confidence towards the effectiveness of international treaties and NGOs as due to some peculiar

political osmosis; their basic agenda of human rights is left behind. They claimed that issues of poor education and ill-will of the leaders should be sorted out for the better status of fundamental rights. Students found it difficult to differentiate between fundamental rights and social rights. They mentioned basic social rights but social pathologies which includes extrajudicial executions, police torture, terrorism, acid attacks, women burned or beaten, honor killing, forced marriages, Karo Kari, child labor, threats to journalist, unlawful and target killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, harassment of families, violence against refugees and worker, internally displaced persons were not mentioned by any student (Rashid & Watoo, 2020).

Along with illiteracy, corruption and nepotism were blamed for the poor status of social rights, whereas an increase in charity works, different forms of protest, and the use of social media were suggested as a remedy. No exception in the status of political rights was mentioned by the students. Hierarchies and elites tend to enjoy political rights, which were mostly limited to the right to vote. Whereas it also includes participation in decision-making processes or engaging in public political decisions (Mahmood, Sohail, Mushtaq, & Rizvi, 2014). To balance the status of political rights, education was stressed upon along with the use of social media and the participation of youth. Students believed that the unfortunate condition of cultural right was mainly due to religious preachers who failed to deliver the lesson of tolerance and peace and were further fortified by the religious policies of Zia-ul Haq. The solution lies in delivering the lesson of tolerance, conveying a broad view of Islam, and strengthening civil courts and law and order.

The territory under the name of Pakistan is enriched with social, cultural, religious, and regional diversity. To embrace these diversities, the first step is the realization of human rights without any discrimination. The picture of the poor status of human rights is clear to the elite students. As the recent literature regarding human rights in Pakistan informs that the authorities continued to intensify their crackdown on the right to freedom of expression, enforced disappearances remained prevalent with no one held accountable for them, the government failed to uphold its commitments to legislate against torture to women and children, parliament blocked attempts to restrict child marriage, religious minorities continued to be prosecuted under blasphemy laws and attacked by non-state actors, pollution reached hazardous levels in major cities, posing risks to people's rights to health, life and, in the case of children, education (Rashid & Watoo, 2020).

To solve these issues, students came up with certain suggestions such as improving the literacy rate, maintaining law and order, fighting against nepotism, and strengthening civil courts etc. All these steps require top-down policies more than bottom-up initiatives. There is a remote chance that the people who are deprived of the necessity of food and shelter will come up to solve these issues. The complex and convoluted phenomenon of human rights cannot simply be achieved by working on one segment of society. Rather, it requires a synergy within all the elements of society. The initiative is to be taken by the elites themselves as they are those actors within the organization who are qualified by "the rules of the game" (Tracey & Stott, 2017). And if the capacity of power elites is shaped by skill and strong will, patronage, and social responsibility to work for the interest of the state, the outcomes are strong implicit networks that can hit the goal (Bajwa & Ansari, 2018). Students also recommended the use of social media, acknowledging diversity, appreciating tolerance, and giving charity. Although they are honorable deeds, they are an insufficient response to the challenges "to build a democratic society based on justice and equality" in a situation of widening income gaps because such participation rarely confronts the status quo (Sim, 2012). Notions of transparency, accountability, and good governance were not much stressed upon for the realization of human rights.

The findings of the research suggest that for the realization of human rights in Pakistan, we need social innovation that is characterized by participatory masses and responsible elites who are more inclusive in policy and practice and respect constitutional supremacy. This can be done by aligning curriculum, textbooks, and teaching practices with human rights education and strengthen law and order. The findings also guide us that further research could be conducted regarding the role of social media in human rights, why students believe freedom of expression or freedom of speech is the most important human right, or how the masses can play their role to end hierarchies and corruption prevailing in the society. The role of religious fundamentalism and extremism in the realization of cultural and social rights can also be questioned.

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