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Human Rights Education in The Curriculum of 7th Grade: A Textbook Analysis of PSEB Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the Human Rights Education (HRE) within the Grade 7th textbook of Social Science prescribed by the Punjab School Education Board (PSEB) for the academic session 2024–25. It followed the Evaluative and Descriptive Research design and it employed percentage analysis to measure the proportion of content devoted to fundamental human rights across the 21 chapters of the textbook. The findings reveal that only 9.7% of the total content explicitly addresses human rights, with greater emphasis on economic and freedom-related rights such as the Right to Honest and Productive Means of Earning (2.03%), Freedom of Religion (1.62%), and Right to Freedom (1.21%). Moderate attention is given to cultural rights and protection from discrimination, while crucial rights such as justice, child labour, health and well-being, and basic necessities are entirely absent. This uneven representation underscores significant curricular gaps and lack of alignment with both international HRE frameworks and national educational priorities. This study highlights the urgent need for curriculum restructuring, integration of neglected rights, cross-disciplinary teaching approaches, and teacher training in HRE pedagogy. Supplementary resources and community-based learning are recommended to bridge existing gaps. Ultimately, the research emphasizes that strengthening HRE at the middle-school level is vital for nurturing socially responsible, tolerant, and active citizens capable of upholding constitutional values and contributing to a just and democratic society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a landmark reform in India's Education system, setting a vision for transforming schools into spaces that cultivate not only academic knowledge but also values, ethics, and citizenship skills (Ministry of Education, 2020). Among its guiding principles, NEP 2020 emphasizes "developing the character, ethical and constitutional values, empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect

for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice". These elements are deeply intertwined with the aims of Human Rights Education (HRE), which seeks to equip learners with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to uphold human dignity, equality, and social justice. This Policy explicitly calls for integrating constitutional values and fundamental rights into all levels of schooling, not as an isolated subject but across the curriculum. The policy

aligns with India's constitutional mandateparticularly the Fundamental Rights (Part III) and Fundamental Duties (Article 51A) and with India's commitments under international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011).

Human Rights Education, as defined by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), is about learning the content of rights, developing the values and attitudes that uphold them, and acquiring the skills to promote and defend them in everyday life (OHCHR, 2012). In India, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 and the newer NCF for School Education (2023) reinforce the importance of teaching democratic values, tolerance, respect for diversity, and participation in civic life. NEP 2020 bridges these frameworks by recommending that ethical and constitutional education be woven into textbooks, classroom activities, and school culture. However, studies of Indian textbooks have shown that while themes of rights and duties often appear in civics or social science content, they are sometimes presented in a descriptive and exam-oriented manner, without engaging learners in critical thinking, empathy, or action-based projects (Bajaj, 2011; Tibbitts, 2017). This creates a gap between the policy intent and the classroom reality, making textbook analysis a vital tool to assess how HRE principles are being translated into actual learning materials.

The Punjab School Education Board (PSEB) is responsible for designing, publishing, and distributing textbooks for all state schools. Its Social Science curriculum for Grade 7 covers themes such as governance, democracy, history, geography, and community life: subjects naturally connected to HRE objectives (Bromley, Meyer& Ramirez,2016). Grade 7 is particularly significant because learners at this stage are transitioning from concrete to more abstract thinking, becoming more socially aware, and developing their sense of justice, fairness, and civic responsibility.

A textbook analysis at this level can therefore provide insights into:

- 1. Content Representation: How explicitly do textbooks address human rights concepts such as equality, dignity, non-discrimination, and participation?
- **2. Pedagogical Approach**: Are there activities or narratives that encourage discussion, critical thinking, and empathy, or is the material purely factual?
- **3.** Cultural and Local Relevance: Are examples and case studies connected to learners' real-life experiences in Punjab?

Textbooks are more than just learning aidsin many Indian classrooms, they are the primary curriculum delivery tool (Bromley et al., 2016). They influence not only what students learn but also howthey perceive social issues. A well-designed textbook can help students connect constitutional ideals and human rights principles with practical, everyday situations, thus fostering active citizenship. Conversely, textbooks that omit or dilute these concepts risk leaving learners with a superficial

understanding of rights and responsibilities. By conducting a systematic content analysis of PSEB Grade 7 textbooks, this study will examine both quantitative dimensions (e.g., frequency of rights-related terms) and qualitative aspects (e.g., narrative tone, diversity in representation, participatory activities). This approach allows for identifying gaps, biases, and strengths in the curriculum's approach to human rights.In the NEP 2020 era, where values-based education is a national priority, assessing actual curriculum resources becomes critical. Findings from this study will contribute to understanding the implementation gap between policy vision and classroom practice in Punjab's schools. This is particularly relevant for policymakers, curriculum developers, and teacher educators aiming to localize HRE without compromising on its universal principles.By grounding the analysis in NEP 2020's reform agenda and linking it to both national constitutional ideals and international human rights frameworks, this study seeks to offer evidence-based recommendations for making Human Rights Education a lived reality for young learners in Punjab.

Rationale of the Study

Any research must include a thorough assessment of the relevant literature since it covers all prior studies on the specific variables under investigation and lays the foundation forfuture research. This section offers an in-depth analysis of relevant literature, including research papers on the implementation of Human Rights Education in School Curriculum which deals with textbook analysis of PSEB schoolsvery effectively. Human Rights Education (HRE) has gained increasing prominence as a core element of school curricula globally. The launch of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) by the United Nations in 2005 marked a significant milestone in this movement. Its first phase (2005–2009) emphasized integrating HRE into primary and secondary school systems through curriculum reforms, teacher training, and the development of participatory pedagogies (OHCHR, 2005). Subsequent phases continued to reinforce these priorities, with the fourth phase (2020–2024) focusing on youth engagement, equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion (OHCHR, 2020). The recently initiated fifth phase (2025-2029) extends this vision by promoting digital-era competencies alongside human rights values in school education (United Nations Digital Library, 2025). Parallel efforts by UNESCO and OSCE/ODIHR have produced practical guidelines for embedding HRE within formal schooling, advocating for approaches that move beyond rote learning to critical inquiry, dialogue, and student participation (UNESCO, 2006; OSCE/ODIHR, 2012).

In India, the policy discourse around HRE was significantly shaped by the National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF-2005), which recognized "Education for Peace" as a crosscutting theme and explicitly linked it to human rights, democratic citizenship, and constitutional values (NCERT, 2005). The NCF stressed that HRE should permeate all subjects rather than be confined to standalone lessons, and that classroom processes must encourage discussion, respect for diversity, and active problem-solving (NCERT, 2006). The

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) further reinforced these goals, calling for the integration of constitutional values, ethics, empathy, and respect for diversity into all stages of schooling (Ministry of Education, 2020). Complementing these policy frameworks, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has consistently promoted HRE initiatives, commissioning research, producing curricular resources, and advocating for its inclusion in state and national syllabi (NHRC, 2019). At the middle-school level, civics and social science curricula have been key vehicles for transmitting human rights content. It covers themes such as equality, governance, gender and work, media, and market relations, all of which are closely tied to rights and citizenship education. While these topics are not always labelled explicitly as "human rights," researchers have noted that their framing and associated activities can reflect or fail to reflect HRE principles such as participation, representation, and critical thinking (Bajaj et al., 2018). International research also highlights the importance of representation in textbook content, ensuring visibility of groups marginalized and challenging stereotypes (OSCE/ODIHR, 2012). Between 2000 and 2025, therefore, a consistent pattern emerges: strong policy commitments and international guidance exist for integrating HRE, but implementation at the state level often varies widely. The alignment (or misalignment) between policy directives like NCF-2005 and NEP-2020 and the actual content, pedagogy, and assessment methods in textbooks remains a critical area of research. This gap underscores the importance of analysing PSEB's Grade-7 Social Science textbook to assess whether it effectively promotes the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions envisaged in both national and global HRE frameworks.

In sum, the 2000-2025 body of work converges on a clear pattern: robust global frameworks and standards for Human Rights Education (HRE) existmost notably the UN's WPHRE (Phases I-IV and now V) alongside UNESCO and OSCE/ODIHR guidance advocating whole-school approaches and participatory pedagogyyet enactment in classrooms remains uneven (OHCHR, 2005, 2020; United Nations Digital Library, 2025; UNESCO, 2006; OSCE/ODIHR, 2012). In India, NCF-2005 and NEP-2020 embed constitutional values and HRE principles across subjects and emphasize discussion, inclusion, and experiential learning, while NHRC initiatives have supported diffusion; however, middle-school materials often translate these aims inconsistently (NCERT, 2005, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2020; NHRC, 2019). Studies of civics/social sciencealigned to themes like equality, governance, gender, media, and marketsshow that textbooks can advance rights learning but frequently default to recall, underrepresent marginalized groups, and provide limited pathways for student participation and critical media literacy (Bajaj et al., 2018; OSCE/ODIHR, 2012). Against this backdrop, a focused textbook analysis of PSEB's Grade-7 Social Science is both necessary and timely: by coding coverage/accuracy of rights, representation, participatory tasks, critical-inquiry opportunities, and assessment, the study can benchmark alignment with national policy and global HRE standards, surface concrete revision needs, and identify leverage points for teacher support and curriculum improvement (NCERT, 2005, 2006; OHCHR, 2005, 2020; United Nations Digital Library, 2025).

Statement of the Problem

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM OF 7^{TH} GRADE: A TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS OF PSEB SCHOOLS

Delimitations of the Study

The present study is confined to evaluating the Grade 7 Social Studies curriculum prescribed by the Punjab School Education Board (PSEB) for the academic session 2024–25.

Research Questions

- 1) Which subject imparts the Human Rights Education in school level?
- 2) What is the course content of Human Rights Education imparted at School level by Punjab School Education Board (PSEB)?
- 3) Which recommendations and interventions should be provided to facilitate to adapt Human Rights Education in School Curriculum of Social Science for 7th grade students?

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To analyse the subject that impart Human Rights Education in schools.
- 4) To analyse the course content of Human Rights Education imparted at School level by Punjab School Education Board (PSEB)?
- 2) To recommend the policy changes or interventions that can facilitate the wider adoption of Human Rights Education in School Curriculum of Social Science for 7th grade students

Tools to be used in the study

PSEB Book of Social Science to be used by the investigator to evaluate the results of the study.

Research Methodology

This research falls under the Evaluative descriptive study. The requisite data has been collected from the book of Social Science of 7th class prescribed by Punjab School Education Board (PSEB)

Statistical techniques

Percentage analysis was used by the investigator to analyze the results of the study.

Results and Discussions

The investigator has personally examined and scrutinised the text book of the Social Science used in the PSEB schools, and analysed the same for provision for Human Rights Education. The table are as following:

Table I: Showing The Content of Social Sciencethat Deals with Specific Fundamental Human Rights

Sr. No	Name of the class	Book Name	Total no. of Chapters	Name of Chapters that deals with Human Rights Education (12)
1.	7 th	Social Science (2024-25) (PSEB)	21	1. Environment 2. Human Environment: Settlements, Means of Transport and Communication 3. India and the World (Who, Where and How) 4. New Kings and Kingdoms (A.D. 700-1200) 5. Monumental Architecture 6. Towns, Traders and Craftsman 7. Religious Developments 8. The Development of Regional Cultures 9. Democracy and Equality 10. Democracy-Representative Institution. 11. State Government 12. Media and Democracy

Table: II Showing the List of Chapters That Deals with Specific Fundamental Human Rights

Sr No.	Name of the Chanter	Fundamental Human Rights that deal with the chapters of Social Science along with their Page
	Name of the Chapter	Number
1.	Environment	Right to Honest and Productive Means of Earning (7)
2.	Human Environment: Settlements, Means of Transport and Communication	Right to Honest and Productive Means of Earning (62 and 63)
3.	India and the World (Who, Where and How)	Right to Freedom of Religion (76, 78 and 79), Cultural Rights (79, 80 & 81) & Right to Freedom of Religion (79)
4.	New Kings and Kingdoms (A.D. 700-1200)	Right to Freedom of Religion (87), Right to Work (89)
5.	Monumental Architecture	Cultural Rights (154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161 & 162) & Right to Freedom of Religion (154, 155,156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161 & 162)
6.	Towns, Traders and Craftsman	Right to Work (158, 159 160, 161, 162), Right to Honest and Productive Means of Earning (158, 159 160, 161, 162),
7.	Religious Developments	Right to Religion (176-188)
8.	The Development of Regional Cultures	Cultural Rights (190-196)
9.	Democracy and Equality	Right to Freedom (203, 204, 205, 206, 207), Right to Equal Pay (207), Right to Freedom of Information and Expression (207, 208), Right to Equality (208), Right to Freedom (208), Right against Racial Discrimination (208), Right to Education (203-206)
10.	Democracy-Representative Institutions	Right to Freedom (211), Right to Freedom of Information and Expression (211), Right against Racial Discrimination (212, 215), Right to Equality (212, 213)
11.	State Government	Right to Honest and Productive Means of Earning (229, 230, 231)
12.	Media and Democracy	Right to Freedom of Information and Expression (235, 237, 244), Right to Freedom (236), Right for Peaceful Assembly and Association (236), Right to Honest and Productive Means of Earning (239, 240), Equal Rights for Women (241)

From the list of topics in each book, percentage of chapters which include topics related to Human Rights out of total chapters of the book, was calculated the percentage for each subject, of 7th grade of the PSEB Board respectively was

calculated. The table of the average of percentage has given below:

TABLE: III Showing the Percentage of All Fundamental Human Rights in Text Book of Social Science According to Academic Session (2024-25)

	% age Number of Chapters deals with HR
Fundamental Human Rights	2Total Pages of the book
	Syllabus of 7 th grade according to Academic Session 2024-2025
Right to Freedom of Religion	1.62
Cultural Rights	0.81
Right to Basic Necessities	
Right to Justice	
Right Against Racial Discrimination	0.81
Right to Education	0.40
Right to the People to Resist Oppression	
Right to Equal Pay (Non-Exploitation)	0.40
Equal Right for women	0.40
Right to Work	0.81
Right to Honest and Productive Means of Earning	2.03
Right to Marriage and Family	
Freedom of Information and Expression	0.81
Right About Social and International Order	
Right for Standard of living, Adequate for Health and Well Being	
Right for Peaceful Assembly and Association	
Right Against Child Labour	
Right to Equality	0.40
Right to Freedom	1.21
Total Coverage of Content, which deals with Human Rights Education	9.7

Main conclusions from Table III:

The table outlines the percentage coverage of various fundamental human rights in the PSEB textbook of Social Science, for 7th grade as per the based on the syllabus of 2024-25 academic session. Detailed interpretation of each Fundamental Human Rights is given below.

• Right to Freedom of Religion (1.62%)

The textbook devotes about 1.62% of its total content to this right, which is a relatively strong representation compared to other rights. This shows that the curriculum places noticeable importance on the idea that every individual is free to practice, profess, and propagate the religion of their choice. India is a pluralistic society; it ensures that young learners develop respect and tolerance for all religions.

• Cultural Rights (0.81%)

At **0.81%**, cultural rights receive a modest but meaningful share of the content. This shows that the curriculum encourages children to value traditions, languages, art, and heritage. Though less than 1% coverage may appear small, it still highlights the importance of preserving cultural identity in a diverse country like India.

• Right to Basic Necessities (0%)

The curriculum does not explicitly devote content to this right at Grade 7th. Statistically, this indicates that essential survival rights such as food, water, shelter, and clothing are either assumed as background knowledge or reserved for higher classes where development and welfare are studied in detail.

• Right to Justice (0%)

No direct content is given to this right. Statistically, this shows that the concept of justice, legal systems, and courts is not considered in Grade 7th. Instead, students are only introduced to fairness and equality in simpler terms.

• Right Against Racial Discrimination (0.81%)

With **0.81% coverage**, this right is acknowledged, but not in depth. Statistically, this demonstrates an attempt to make students aware that discrimination based on caste, race, or colour is harmful. However, the relatively small percentage shows that this is only an introduction and not a detailed study.

• Right to Education (0.40%)

Although education is a constitutional right for all children, the textbook gives it only **0.40% coverage**. Statistically, this very low representation suggests that while the right is introduced, it is not yet explored in depth. This is surprising since education is central to child development and empowerment.

• Right to the People to Resist Oppression (0%)

This right does not appear in the Grade 7thtextbook. Statistically, its absence reflects the curriculum's choice to introduce such ideas indirectly through freedom struggle lessons rather than as an explicit human right at this level.

• Right to Equal Pay / Non-Exploitation (0.40%)

At 0.40%, this right receives only minimal attention. The content briefly touches on the importance of fairness in wages and avoiding exploitation. Statistically, this indicates that while the right is introduced early, it is not yet treated as a major theme in the curriculum.

• Equal Rights for Women (0.40%)

This right also receives **0.40% coverage**, showing a small but important attempt to highlight gender equality. Statistically, this representation is minimal but ensures that children at an early stage begin to understand the value of women's empowerment and equal participation in society.

• Right to Work (0.81%)

With **0.81% of the content**, this right is presented in the context of occupations and livelihoods. Statistically, this shows that economic rights are introduced to help students value dignity of labour and the importance of employment in building a self-reliant society.

• Right to Honest and Productive Means of Earning (2.03%)

This right has the **highest coverage (2.03%)** in the textbook. Statistically, this indicates a strong curricular focus on work ethics, productivity, and fair economic practices. The high percentage reflects the importance placed on developing values of honesty, self-reliance, and contribution to society through meaningful work.

• Right to Marriage and Family (0%)

This right is not covered at all in Grade 7th. Statistically, its absence suggests that family and marriage rights are not considered appropriate for children at this stage and are left for later classes.

• Freedom of Information and Expression (0.81%)

At 0.81%, this right is moderately covered. Statistically, this indicates that while students are introduced to the importance of free speech and expression, the content is limited. It ensures that children start appreciating democracy and communication but do not yet go into deeper political or legal aspects.

• Right to Social and International Order (0%)

This right is absent, meaning students are not taught explicitly about global citizenship or international human rights order at this stage. Statistically, this reflects the curriculum's decision to focus more on national rather than international perspectives for younger learners.

Right to Standard of Living, Adequate for Health and Well-being (0%)

No content is directly assigned to this right. Statistically, this shows a gap in early exposure to health-related human rights, though related themes like sanitation and welfare may appear indirectly.

• Right to Peaceful Assembly and Association (0%)

This right is also absent. Statistically, this suggests that while collective action and association are important democratic rights, they are introduced in higher grades when students can grasp political processes more fully.

• Right Against Child Labour (0%)

Surprisingly, this right is not covered in Grade 7th despite being highly relevant to children. Statistically, this absence shows a missed opportunity to make children aware of their protection from exploitation.

• Right to Equality (0.40%)

With **0.40% coverage**, this right is minimally present. Statistically, this reflects that equality is touched upon in the curriculum but not yet studied in depth. It ensures that students understand the basic idea of equal status and opportunities.

• Right to Freedom (1.21%)

This right gets 1.21% of the content, making it one of the better-represented rights. Statistically, this indicates that the textbook gives notable importance to personal liberty, civic participation, and democratic values, helping children appreciate the concept of living with dignity and freedom.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the statistical analysis of the Grade 7th Social Science textbook of academic session 2024-25 reveals that Human Rights are introduced but their overall representation is limited to only 9.7% of the total content, with greater emphasis on economic and freedom-related rights such as the Right to Honest and Productive Means of Earning (2.03%), Freedom of Religion (1.62%), and Right to Freedom (1.21%). Moderate attention is given to cultural rights and non-discrimination, whereas crucial rights like Right to Justice, Right Against Child Labour, Right to Health and Well-being, and Right to Basic Necessities are absent, reflecting significant curricular gaps. This suggests that to frame the curriculum according to the all-Human Rights, where studentsto familiarize with the principles of equality, freedom, and dignity, there is a need for broader and more balanced integration of all fundamental human rights to nurture comprehensive awareness and responsible citizenship from an early stage.

Educational Implications of the Study

The statistical review of Grade 7th Social Science textbooks reveals that only 9.7% of the total content deals with human rights, and the distribution is uneven, with some rights such as freedom of religion, equality, and economic rights receiving modest coverage, while others such as justice, child labour, and health remain absent. This uneven representation has several educational implications that need to be addressed to ensure balanced and meaningful human rights education.

1. The findings suggest a strong need to restructure and enrich the curriculum to include a wider range of human rights. While economic and freedom-related rights are covered, social rights (health, child labour, justice) are underrepresented. A balanced curriculum would ensure that students develop a holistic understanding of rights and not a skewed perspective that emphasizes some areas while neglecting others.

- 2. Since textbooks alone devote limited space to human rights, teachers must take an active role in supplementing content. Methods such as storytelling, case studies, debates, role plays, and simulations can make abstract rights more concrete. For instance, while discussing freedom, teachers can introduce role plays about freedom of speech, or while discussing equality, they can use real-world examples of discrimination and reform.
- 3. Human rights are not just about knowledge but also about attitudes and values. Therefore, the educational implication is that schools must promote value-based learning that emphasizes respect, dignity, tolerance, and responsibility. Classroom discussions on everyday issues like fairness, honesty, or respecting diversity can help students internalize rights as part of their ethical framework.
- 4. Human rights need not be restricted only to Social Science. Teachers of languages, science, and arts can integrate rights-based perspectives into their lessons. For example, literature classes can highlight themes of equality and justice, while science can connect with the right to health and environment. This cross-curricular approach ensures deeper and continuous reinforcement.
- 5. Limited textbook coverage can be compensated by cultivating critical awareness. Teachers should encourage students to question, reflect, and analyse situations of inequality or injustice in their surroundings. For example, a classroom discussion on child labour, even if not in the textbook, can raise awareness and empathy. Such practices promote critical citizenship education.
- 6. Students can be engaged in community-based projects that bring human rights learning into real life. Visits to community centres, awareness campaigns on education or health, or participation in peace-building activities can reinforce theoretical learning. This makes human rights education experiential and practical rather than purely academic.
- 7. For meaningful implementation, teachers themselves need to be trained in human rights education. Professional development workshops should equip teachers with pedagogical tools, classroom activities, and resources to teach human rights effectively, especially where textbook content is insufficient.
- 8. The absence of rights such as justice, basic necessities, child labour, and health in Grade 6 implies that educators must bridge these gaps through supplementary materials. This may include using government documents (like the Indian Constitution or child rights charters), multimedia resources, or NGO-prepared learning kits. Bridging such gaps ensures children gain exposure to essential rights at an early age.

9. The ultimate educational implication of human rights education is the creation of responsible and active citizens. Even if only a small portion of the curriculum explicitly deals with rights, schools must ensure that students practice democratic behaviour in daily school liferespecting rules, participating in discussions, resolving conflicts fairly, and working cooperatively.

The statistical analysis highlights that human rights education in Grade 7this limited and uneven, which calls for stronger curricular balance, innovative pedagogy, and active teacher involvement. Schools should integrate knowledge, values, skills, and practice of rights across subjects and co-curricular activities, ensuring that students not only learn about rights but also live them in daily life. By doing so, education will fulfil its role in shaping socially aware, tolerant, and responsible citizens who can contribute to a just and democratic society.

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