

The Citizens Archive Pakistan: A Case Study on Human Rights Education

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HUMAN RIGHTS CONSTITUTE a complex issue in Pakistan. With an extremely large, diverse and economically disenfranchised population, human rights are often ignored in pursuit of basic survival. Although successive governments have enacted various measures to improve human rights awareness and counter violations that may occur, such violations remain. (Khan, 2012)

Courts and law enforcement authorities suffer from lack of funds, political interference and massive backlogs of trial cases leading to lengthy delays. Pakistan's status as an Islamic democracy also means that the legal system is made up of a mixture of both Islamic, and secular colonial laws which means that the interpretation of whether human rights violations are occurring is often on a case-to-case basis. Most observers and citizens generally agree that Pakistan's legal code and system is largely concerned with crime and national security, and less with the protection of individual or community rights. As a result a multitude of human rights violations occur with frightening regularity in Pakistan, ranging from the trampling of rights related to free speech and assembly, sectarian and religious intolerance, discrimination against minorities, illegal detention and enforced disappearances. (Human Rights Commission Pakistan, 2013)

Empowering the Community with Human Rights Education

The Citizens Archive of Pakistan (CAP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to cultural and historic assets preservation and operates in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. It seeks to educate the community, foster an awareness of the nation's history, and instill pride in Pakistani citizens about their heritage.

CAP focuses on the tradition of oral storytelling in Pakistan, emphasizing the importance of such narratives in a dialogue on national identity. It

has three main goals: to preserve and provide access to its archive; to build and support educational programs; and to develop educational products based on the testimonies collected.

It shares Pakistan's stories through educational outreach programs that aim to change perceptions among schoolchildren to prevent abuses from occurring, improve critical thinking and inculcate a culture where future generations have a greater awareness of the rights they are entitled to and respect the rights of others.

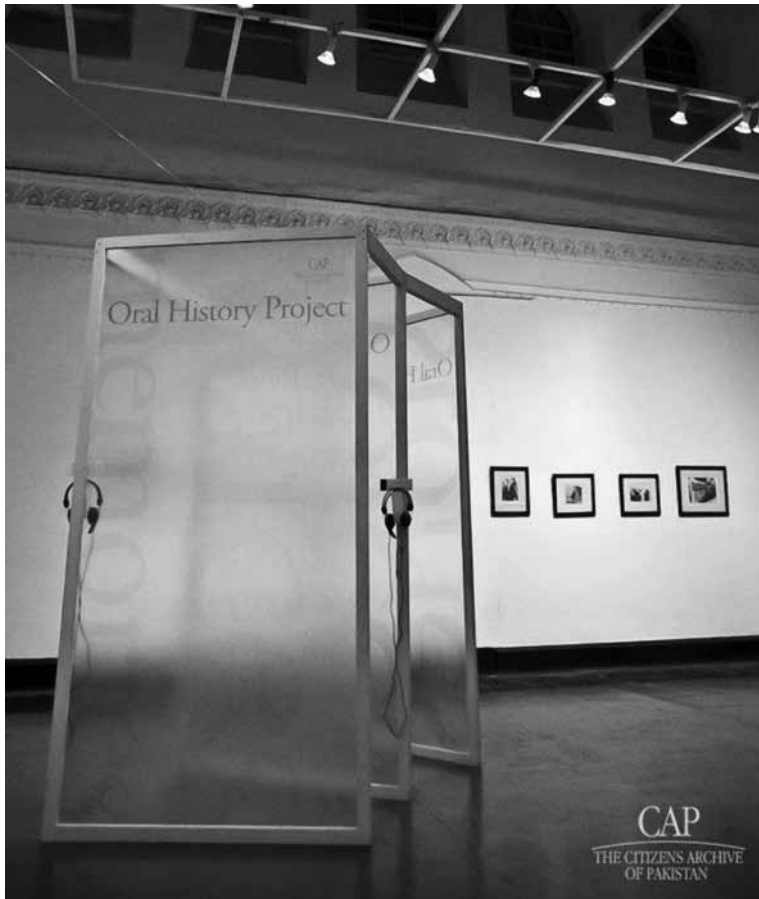
Programs

Our vision is to develop CAP as the foremost museum and heritage center of Pakistani history, photography, culture, literature, and historical documentation demonstrating the strength and spirit of Pakistan from the perspective of a citizen. Each exhibit and gallery will tell important stories about the country and provide an engaging and thought-provoking window into the nation's past, present, and future. We firmly believe that it is only through access to an unbiased version of history and introspection that a culture can be created where individual and community rights are not only recognized but also respected.

To achieve this objective, CAP launched its flagship Oral History Project (OHP). The stories emerging from OHP, the secrets behind old photographs and the personal experiences of our nation's rich and varied people feeds the material used in the School Outreach Tours lessons, the Shanaakht Festival, and several exhibitions. The OHP concentrates on collecting narratives from people about significant events in their lives during the early days of Pakistan, providing an alternative perspective to historical literature. The OHP works with different communities in Pakistan under sub-projects such as the Minority Project to educate the masses on contributions to Pakistan by members of minority communities thereby encouraging a greater respect for minority rights. The Minority Project also aims to archive and preserve various records such as letters, newspapers, refugee cards, official correspondences, and passports.

Promoting tolerance and acceptance of an individual's rights to religious and cultural freedoms is a central theme of CAP's Minority Project. Interviews are conducted with members of minorities about what it is like to be a member of minority in Pakistan, and religious and cultural festi-

vals are covered to highlight and promote cultural and religious diversity. This is especially important in a country where minority rights are regularly trampled upon, with discrimination and sectarian violence tragically on the rise. CAP seeks to foster a greater understanding and respect for cultural and religious diversity, and regularly disseminates archived material including interviews and photographs through podcasts, social media, newsletters and direct access to the archive upon request. Researchers, historians and writers regularly use materials from the Minority Project archives for their work. A notable example is journalist Haroon Khalid's ethnographic study on minorities in Pakistan *White Trail* (2013), which drew heavily from the Minority Project archives.





Holi celebration in Karachi (March 2013)

In line with CAP's belief that history and culture belong to everyone and should be accessible to all citizens, various free of cost, bilingual, multi-media exhibitions are organized every year in order to accommodate people from all walks of life. Some of these exhibitions include: Shanaakht Festival (Identity Festival); Birth of Pakistan; Dekho Pakistan (See Pakistan); This is My Story; Dialogue with Pakistan; State of Being so Divided; and Exchange for Change Exhibition. These exhibitions seek to educate the community as a whole, encourage honest introspection and critical analysis of one's surroundings, foster an awareness of individual rights, and inspire citizens to recognize and respect these rights.

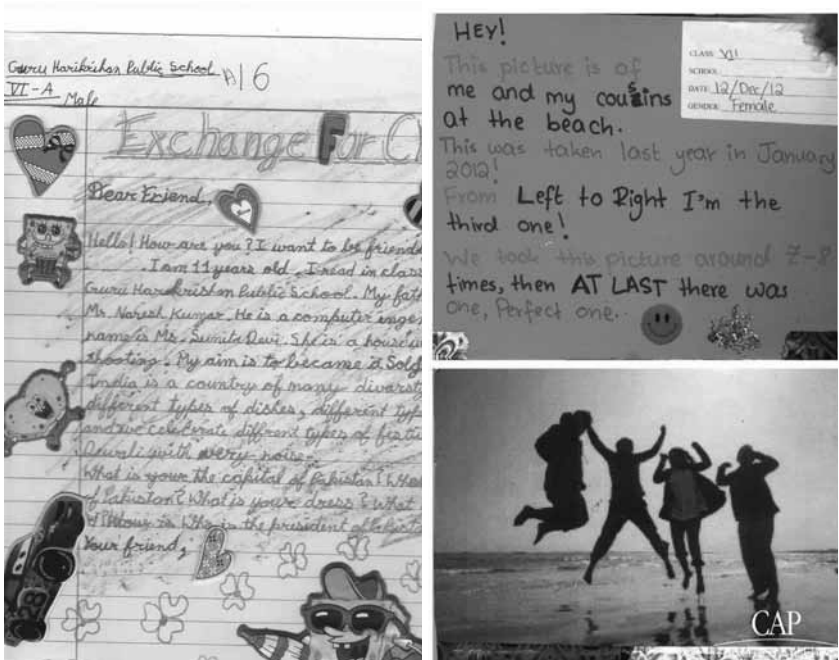
CAP launched the Exchange for Change (EFC) project in 2010 in an attempt to challenge stereotypes, encourage tolerance and a more inclusive attitude and discourage negative perceptions. EFC is an exciting initiative by CAP that aims at improving relationships between Pakistan and India through cultural exchanges and people-to-people diplomacy.

By initiating a dialogue this program seeks to help students across both borders realize that a civilized, mutually beneficial and friendly discourse is not just possible but sustainable too. Through cross-culture communication, students can have a clearer understanding of their own history, culture and lifestyles as well as of their peers. CAP believes that such interaction will

in turn lead to a positive change and eliminate cultural misconceptions and inter-generational conflict. A sustained exchange of letters, postcards, pictures, artwork and videos encourages children to form their own opinions, and the exhibitions of materials from these exchanges draw massive crowds, leading to the hope that such instances of people-to-people diplomacy will influence the community at large.

The EFC exhibition showcases materials collected throughout the project, including letters written by Pakistani and Indian students to their counterparts, picture postcards, oral histories of the students' grandparents and video exchanges. Participating schools, the media, parents of the students, and the community at large are invited to these exhibitions, to ensure a wider dissemination of the material collected and further promote cross cultural interaction and acceptance.





Exchanges between Indian and Pakistani students (2012-2013)

Similarly CAP's 2011 'State of Being so Divided' exhibition aimed to increase greater understanding of a period of widespread human rights violations and illuminate some of the events and personalities that shaped that time. An interactive timeline recorded the arduous train journey from Delhi to Lahore in 1947 and the beginnings of the new state of Pakistan. Videos, photographs, objects, advertisements and oral histories took visitors through the 1950s and 1960s in Pakistan and ended with another partition and the birth of the state of Bangladesh.

All the images and oral histories used in the exhibition were from CAP's archives, with a wide cross section of society invited to experience the exhibition in Lahore. The aim of holding free of cost, bilingual, multi-media exhibitions on a regular basis is to accommodate people from all walks of life, and informally educate the community about the past, encourage introspection, and increase awareness of individual rights in the hope that this will lead to a more tolerant and empowered society.



To date, CAP has digitized more than fifty thousand photographs from private and public collections. Its photography archive is open to researchers, students and universities. The archive contains comprehensive images

of cultural and social events of the Indian sub-continent from 1930 till present times and is one of the most extensive in Pakistan, offering one of the greatest selections of photography.

Empowering Students with Human Rights Education: The Human Rights Modules

In line with the mission to share heritage and culture on a mass scale, CAP uses information from its archive to influence future generations. Through CAP Outreach Tours Program, educational programs for low-income schools and colleges are held. The program is currently reaching out to over 8,000 students in Karachi and Lahore and the curriculum includes history, geography, and English Language with a strong focus on inculcating independent and critical thinking skills, and changing preconceived perceptions that may be held about minority groups, gender roles and Pakistan's creation.

CAP's lesson plans exceed the perimeter of basic knowledge and information. The lesson plans focus on History, Geography, English Language, and more importantly on character building with the introduction of subjects such as conflict resolution, gender issues, and minority rights. Aside from motivating each individual child, the emphasis is on encouraging communities towards thinking logically and promoting equal gender parity through the use of film, spoken word, and photography. With visual rendering as the foremost tool, various projects are designed to encourage the youth to think critically and humanely.

The College Outreach Tour (COT) workshops utilize materials from CAP's archive, promote civic sense, tolerance, democracy, constitutional rights, and invoke critical thinking as well as an understanding of the country's history and heritage. The program is bilingual and includes research-based interactive activities designed to inculcate a broader vision of Pakistan.

The modules developed by the COT curriculum development team focus on educating students about human rights and the importance of being entitled to and respecting these rights. The module titled "Human Rights" consists of three two-hour-long workshops that are carried out by our teachers in Karachi and Lahore. The techniques that these workshops employ range from multimedia presentations and handouts that introduce students to the basic concepts of human rights to activities and case studies that solicit responses from students to facilitate meaningful discussions about the subject

matter. Furthermore, because the modules are available both in English and Urdu, they vastly increased our reach by making them available to schools that cater to various backgrounds. See Annexes for modules and materials used in COT workshops.

What We've Learned

Before the workshops, the students were asked to describe what the term “human rights” entails, to which CAP teachers received very vague answers. Some students considered human rights to be so insignificant that they said they had “other issues” to worry about while some seemed to believe that such a category of rights did not exist. In a country like Pakistan, where human rights are trampled by violence, social injustice, and economic inequality, it barely comes as a surprise that human rights appear to be a completely new concept to these young adult college students.

However, these responses did not represent the students’ curiosity about the concept. Once the team provided them with a formal definition of human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the students began to come up with their own lists of examples of rights that should be included under the umbrella of human rights.

As the discussion continued, personal stories emerged, which were the special yardstick that helped CAP measure the success and impact of its human rights education module. Upon learning that the right to marry according to one’s will was a human right recognized by the United Nations, one student reflected that he had forcibly been engaged to a cousin by his parents against his choice. Using the critical thinking abilities that have been inculcated through the curriculum, he said that the cultural and societal barriers in place in Pakistan have led to the usurping of human rights in the country.

Another one of the rights that the students seemed to be unaware of was the right to a free and fair trial for criminals. The teachers cited a particularly gruesome example of vigilante or mob justice in Pakistan – known as the Sialkot Lynching Case – in which two young boys, who were alleged to be robbers, were hung upside down and lynched to death by a mob. Using the basic concept of trial-for-all, the students brought up extrajudicial killings as an example of human rights violation, citing the incident where a

young boy who was shot to death in Karachi by a law enforcement official who claimed that the boy was a robber.

Interestingly, students linked abuse of power to human rights violations with the powerful in Pakistan exploiting their advantage over the poor and the helpless. Some students, mostly young men, said that their right to get involved in political activity was trampled regularly by political parties' student wings that wielded significant influence over university and college administrations, and forced students to attend the speeches of their leaders in order to show 'street strength'. If the students refused, they were threatened and sometimes physically harmed.

Changes in Opinion

Following the workshops, the students were asked to fill out feedback forms that asked questions to assess how they felt about key issues in light of the universal definition of human rights. 90 percent of the respondents believed that human rights violations were common in Pakistan, while a whopping 98 percent said that they believed that human rights awareness could promote peace and stability in the country.

There was also a meaningful discussion in the module on whether democratic governments or military regimes had better human rights records. As a result, 14 percent of the students said that human rights were granted only in military-governed countries but 78 percent of the students opposed that belief. 60 percent of the participants maintained that democratic states were more likely to endorse and preserve human rights.

When asked who they felt was responsible for ensuring human rights in the country, 56 percent of the students noted it was the responsibility of the government, 16 percent said society, 6 percent said religion, and 4 percent said rights need to and should be demanded. In response to the subjective questions, the students gave varied answers. When asked about the purpose of human rights, 38 percent believed the purposes was to provide justice for all citizens of the world, 14 percent said to provide security, 13 percent thought it was to provide equal opportunities for all, whereas 4 percent said to ensure peace of mind for all.

Perhaps the most encouraging statistic from the survey was that 93 percent of students recognized that the existence of human rights could promote peace and prosperity whereas their absence would lead to an unhappy

and disenfranchised population. This change signaled that the students had gained a greater understanding of the value of a society that respects individual rights through the content presented by the workshops.

Outlook on Major Issues

The section of the workshop that allowed students to reflect on their own experiences had a profound impact on the students' beliefs. 69 percent of those surveyed after the workshop felt that killing a human being without following the law was unjustified. Furthermore, 77 percent of the students felt that the law must not be taken into one's own hands, but 2 percent of the students noted that in a country like Pakistan where crime was rampant and law enforcement was weak, one must be able to defend him or herself even if it meant breaking the law. When asked specifically about extrajudicial killings, 85 percent of the students said that they thought that this practice did nothing to promote peace in the community.

Much of the module's content allowed for close examination of human rights issues prevalent in Pakistan, and it was evident that students had the chance to internalize those ideas with regards to their own experiences. On the subject of human trafficking, 80 percent of the students believed that it was one of Pakistan's biggest human rights problems. Bonded labor was another topic that was featured prominently in the workshop and the following survey showed that 75 percent of the students believed that bonded labor was modern-day slavery. This is in contrast to 37 percent that did not think that slavery existed in Pakistan. Moreover, 53 percent of the students were aware that there were two million bonded laborers in Pakistan.

When asked if underage children should be working in bangle industries, carpet weaving or tanneries or not, 56 percent of the students believed that it should be outlawed and instead these children should be in school. 15 percent believed that children were forced to work because their families owe money to their landlords, whereas 13 percent said that even if these children worked the government was responsible for devising policies to protect their rights. On the same line, 4 percent of the students felt that labor unions should amalgamate their resources to fight for the rights of child workers.

Female Empowerment and Minority Rights

One of the key changes that the Outreach Tour programs aim to cultivate is the shift from set ideas about gender roles and preferences. As a result of the workshop, 78 percent of the students believed that women and other marginalized groups tended to suffer greater apathy towards violations of their human rights. Nearly 85 percent of the students said that women must be allowed to contribute to the workforce. It was further heartening to see that of the proportion of students who supported women's right to work, 78 percent were young girls who said that they would like to pursue a career.

It was observed in the survey from another module on gender that an overwhelming 100 percent of respondents felt honor killings (*karokari*) were unjustified. This number was a striking increase of 73 percent from the baseline survey conducted before the module was taught. Such numbers help us gauge the significant and positive changes in attitudes that occur in response to the information and ideas presented in our workshops.

Religious tolerance, particularly towards minority groups who live in Pakistan, is also one of the major objectives of the Outreach Tours' curriculum. When asked if they thought Muslims had the right to kill a Muslim or non-Muslim who was deemed to have offended Islamic sensibilities, 92 percent of the students said they did not. 45 percent of the students also did not favor discrimination towards religious minorities while 45 percent of the students said that the law must treat Muslims and non-Muslims equally.

In addition, 93 percent of the students surveyed also agreed that all individuals regardless of caste, creed, ethnicity, gender or religion were entitled to basic human rights. This was a major increase from 69 percent from the baseline survey. It was also observed that 81 percent of the respondents from the post-feedback survey conducted after teaching the 'Minorities' module felt that nobody should be denied employment because they were part of a minority, up 29 percent from the baseline survey.

It is also worth noting that the concept of stereotypes garnered a strong response from students, with many of them pledging at the end of the session never to judge people based simply on their appearance or cultural prescription.

Future Prospects

Owing to the response received through the Outreach Tour programs, CAP recognizes a significant space for further development of educational policy in Pakistan. Not only does CAP hope to expand its network and increase the number of students benefiting from the Outreach Tours, but it also hopes to instil important values in the Pakistani youth, such as greater respect for human rights. Moreover, CAP hopes to influence curriculum development in the country so that more students in the country can develop a sense of social responsibility toward their communities and are equipped with tools to better their lives and the country as a whole.

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Haroon Khalid. 2013. *A White Trail*. New Delhi: Westland Ltd.

Annex A

Sample Materials

College Outreach Tours (COT) Workshop 3.2 “Human Rights” Homework assignment.
COT Module 3.1 Handout. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
COT Module 7 “Minorities” Handout. *Soldier Bazaar Temple Razed in Hurried Operation*. The Express Tribune. 2nd December 2012.

1. College Outreach Tours (COT) Workshop 3.2 “Human Rights”

Activity: Chits in the Hat

Options for Group leaders:

1. Minority
2. Sindhi woman displaced by floods
3. 8-year old son of a bonded kiln worker
4. Rich Muslim businessman
5. Minority sect like Shia, Bori or Ismaili

You are to discuss with your group members and evaluate the human rights temperature of the group that you belong to. Write down all the factors that affect your group. You may also suggest ways to overcome your difficulties and resolve any problems that you may face due to human rights violations.

Consider the following factors in your analysis in order to determine the human rights temperature in your society:

- Freedom to practice your religion
- Freedom of movement
- Freedom of employment
- Freedom to security of life and property
- Freedom to acquire education
- Freedom to acquire medical services
- Fair wages
- Behavior with employees
- Stereotypes
- Freedom of marriage
- Freedom of opinion and expression

- Freedom of peaceful assembly
- Limitation of working hours in proportion to wages
- Respect for private life, honor and reputation
- Freedom to have property
- Freedom to govern or participate in public service
- Preservation and practice of culture and traditions.

Homework Assignment

2. COT Module 3.1 Handout

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948, was the result of the experience of the Second World War. With the end of that war, and the creation of the United Nations, the international community vowed never again to allow atrocities like those of that conflict to happen again. World leaders decided to complement the United Nations Charter with a road map to guarantee the rights of every individual everywhere.

(Text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected

by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

(Following is simplified list of the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

1. We Are All Born Free & Equal. We are all born free. We all have our own thoughts and ideas. We should all be treated in the same way.

2. Don't Discriminate. These rights belong to everybody, whatever our differences.

3. The Right to Life. We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.

4. No Slavery. Nobody has any right to make us a slave. We cannot make anyone our slave.

5. No Torture. Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.

6. You Have Rights No Matter Where You Go. I am a person just like you!

7. We're All Equal Before the Law. The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly.

8. Your Human Rights are Protected by Law. We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.

9. No Unfair Detainment. Nobody has the right to put us in prison without good reason and keep us there, or to send us away from our country.

10. The Right to Trial. If we are put on trial this should be in public. The people who

try us should not let anyone tell them what to do.

11. **We're Always Innocent Till Proven Guilty.** Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it is proven. When people say we did a bad thing we have the right to show it is not true.

12. **The Right to Privacy.** Nobody should try to harm our good name. Nobody has the right to come into our home, open our letters, or bother us or our family without a good reason.

13. **Freedom to Move.** We all have the right to go where we want in our own country and to travel as we wish.

14. **The Right to Seek a Safe Place to Live.** If we are frightened of being badly treated in our own country, we all have the right to run away to another country to be safe.

15. **Right to a Nationality.** We all have the right to belong to a country.

16. **Marriage and Family.** Every grown-up has the right to marry and have a family if they want to. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, and when they are separated.

17. **The Right to Your Own Things.** Everyone has the right to own things or share them. Nobody should take our things from us without a good reason.

18. **Freedom of Thought.** We all have the right to believe in what we want to believe, to have a religion, or to change it if we want.

19. **Freedom of Expression.** We all have the right to make up our own minds, to think what we like, to say what we think, and to share our ideas with other people.

20. **The Right to Public Assembly.** We all have the right to meet our friends and to work together in peace to defend our rights. Nobody can make us join a group if we don't want to.

21. **The Right to Democracy.** We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. Every grown-up should be allowed to choose his or her own leaders.

22. **Social Security.** We all have the right to affordable housing, medicine, education, and childcare, enough money to live on and medical help if we are ill or old.

23. **Workers' Rights.** Every grown-up has the right to do a job, to a fair wage for his or her work, and to join a trade union.

24. **The Right to Play.** We all have the right to rest from work and to relax.

25. **Food and Shelter for All.** We all have the right to a good life. Mothers and children, people who are old, unemployed or disabled, and all people have the right to be cared for.

26. **The Right to Education.** Education is a right. Primary school should be free. We should learn about the United Nations and how to get on with others. Our parents can choose what we learn.

27. **Copyright.** Copyright is a special law that protects one's own artistic creations and

writings; others cannot make copies without permission. We all have the right to our own way of life and to enjoy the good things that art, science and learning bring.

28. A Fair and Free World. There must be proper order so we can all enjoy rights and freedoms in our own country and all over the world.

29. Responsibility. We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.

30. No One Can Take Away Your Human Rights.

Human Rights

3. COT Module 7 “Minorities” Handout Soldier Bazaar temple razed in hurried operation

KARACHI:

In a hurried operation on Saturday, a builder demolished a century-old temple in Soldier Bazaar while the Sindh High Court was hearing a petition seeking a stay order. Apart from razing down the pre-partition Shri Rama Pir Mandir, the private builder also demolished three or four houses located next to it. Nearly 40 people became homeless as a result.

“They destroyed our mandir [place of worship] and humiliated our gods,” said an angry Prakash, pointing towards the huge debris of concrete, stones and walls of the temple. The demolishing team did place the statues of four Hindu deities on the side but the residents accused them of taking away their gold jewellery and crowns. Pointing to the bruises on his arms, Lakshman said that, “they hit me with their guns when I tried to stop them. I told them to kill me instead of destroying our holy place.”

Banwri recalled that the demolition teams arrived around 11 in the morning. She was preparing breakfast when she heard the thundering noise of a bulldozer. She rushed outside, only to receive instructions to bring her bed, cupboard and other essential items outside the house. “I watched my house go down in just minutes and I couldn’t do anything.”

She added that, during the demolition, the area was cordoned off by the police and Rangers with tents put up all around. Outsiders were not allowed to enter, she added. Saveeta was among those 40 people who lost her house. “The dowry that I had given to my daughter for her wedding is all buried here,” she said with tears. With her husband out of station, she and her three children would be spending the night under the open sky.

There are around 150 Hindus in the neighbourhood and nearly four families live in each of the houses that were destroyed, according to an elderly resident, Kaali Das.

“People were living in cramped houses, separated only by curtains. Over here, we live like animals,” he said, adding that some of these houses were as high as three storeys.

Angered by the builders’ actions, the crowd demanded the government arrange tickets to India for them. “If you don’t want us, we will go to India,” screamed a woman. Another man added that, “our temple is as sacred to us as your mosque is to you.”

For their part, the police denied the existence of the temple completely. The police maintained that they had orders to remove the encroachments. DSP Pervaiz Iqbal of Nabi Buksh police station said, “There was no temple there. There were just Hindu gods present inside the houses and we made sure that they were safe.”

The people were given plenty of time to remove their belongings out of the house, he said. “We did not injure anyone. In fact those people threw stones on us and our SHO Abid Hussain Shah was injured.”

The residents managed, however, to fish out a plaque of the temple from under the debris. Maharaj Badri, who lived inside the temple, also denied that the land was encroached upon. “Our ancestors have been living here way since independence. We are not encroachers,” he said.

Military Lands and Cantonment director Zeenat Ahmed insisted that the temple was “untouched” and denied that it was demolished. The operation was against illegal occupants, she said, adding that temples are old grant property (evacuee property).

“The builder had possession of the place since years and these people were encroachers, and encroachers have no religion,” she added.

Published in *The Express Tribune*, 2 December 2012.