

Human Rights Education Pedagogy in Taipei Primary Schools: Perspective of an Outsider

Anamika*

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION is an emerging field, and it is all encompassing in nature. It addresses the developmental aspects of an individual in totality. It builds on cognition, attitude towards and skills required for establishing respect for human rights in a society. Human rights education contributes towards developing the ability to think and act critically. The social and humane skills inculcated by human rights education play a crucial role in assessing the circumstances of conflicts and possibilities of resolution. Human rights education helps establish harmony and unity in diversity. In a nutshell, human rights education helps individuals to feel the importance of human rights, internalize human rights values, integrate them into their way of life, and give a sense of responsibility for respecting and defending the rights of others.

A major responsibility of promoting awareness about human rights, developing pro human rights attitude and inculcating skills to protect and prevent human rights violation lies with primary school teachers. The teacher is the link between the curriculum and the students. No curriculum can attain its objectives unless the teacher is transacting the content of human rights as well as building on it by creating a human rights culture within as well as outside the classroom.¹ The development of human rights values, attitudes and skills cannot be an outcome of a mere transmission of the knowledge of the content of human rights, related regulations or legal texts or international conventions. For this, teaching must involve and establish a link with the daily life experiences of students and teachers. The present paper is aimed towards discussing the pedagogy of human rights education with a

*Ms. Anamika, PhD, is currently teaching at the Department of Elementary Education, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi. She wishes to thank Professor Taso-Ling Fong, Professor Tung-Liao Cheng, Professor Pei-Ying Chen, Professor Mei-Ying Tang, Professor Chia-Fan Lin and Professor Mab Huang for their critical comments, suggestions and constant help extended to the author during her stay in Taipei.

focus on the teacher as the main human agency involved in the educational process.

Human Rights Education in Taiwan

Human rights education in Taiwan received impetus when the process of democratization accelerated with the political reforms introduced by Lee Teng-hui from 1988 onwards. It culminated when Taiwan adhered to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (UNDHRE) in 1997. The United Nations declared the Decade for Human Rights Education spanning the years from 1995 to 2004. UNDHRE led various initiatives to promote human rights education in different parts of the world, sometimes independently and sometimes in collaboration with the United Nations. Taiwan was a little late in joining the decade program but it gradually speeded up its efforts to catch up with other nations. The government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academicians joined hands and consequently various international seminars, workshops, and training programs on human rights education came into being. There was a provision in the government policy which empowered school administrators to further develop human rights education in their school systems. As a result of this policy, a lot more freedom was given to the schools in developing human rights education. Following this some schools started teaching human rights as an independent but co-curricular subject. Realizing the vitality of human rights education, schools widened the scope of human rights by making it an integral part of their school curriculum as well as culture. The Taiwanese scholars expressed their unshakable faith in human rights culture and persistently contributed through their writings, teaching and training to interns as well as in-service teachers in creating and promoting the human rights culture based school tradition in Taiwan.²

Following are the major initiatives and institutions involved in the development of human rights education in Taiwan.

a. Workshop on Human Rights Education

In November 1997, Professor Meiying Tang of Taipei Municipal University of Education organized the Workshop on Human Rights Education funded by the Taipei Bureau of Education. The Workshop was planned on a weekly basis (usually on Friday afternoons so that teachers

could attend it after the school). Thirty teachers from primary and lower secondary schools either voluntarily or on the recommendation of their Principals attended the Workshop. The Workshop covered a wide range of topics including concepts and history of human rights, child rights, constitutional protection of human rights, and planning and revision of teaching materials.

A separate session in the Workshop was convened for the planning and revision of teaching materials. Fifteen teachers from primary and lower secondary schools formed four groups that performed different assignments ranging from translation of international documents into simple Mandarin to compilation and revision of teaching materials. One of the groups focused on the development of materials and activities from case studies drawn from their observations of students' experiences in schools³ The Department of Education, Taipei Municipal University of Education subsequently published *A Handbook on Human Rights Education* prepared by the group in accordance with Nine-Year Universal Compulsory Education to integrate human rights education into the curriculum.

In 1998, the Yang Ming University Crusades organized an "Education Camp for Lower Secondary School Students". The purpose of the conference was to spread the concept of human rights to villages and other remote areas. The issues addressed by the conference included smoking, drinking, chewing betel nut and taking drugs.⁴

b. National and International Conferences

In late 1998, the Ministry of Education, Chang Fo-Chuan Center for the Study of Human Rights of Soochow University, Taipei Municipal Teachers College and National Yang-Ming University jointly organized the International Conference on Human Rights Education in Taipei with the participation of educators from the U.S.A., Europe and the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center in Osaka, Japan In December 2009, a two-day International Conference on Civics and Human Rights Education in Asia that took place at Taipei Municipal University of Education addressed various issues pertaining to human rights education and its relationship with citizenship education in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan. University scholars presented in the conference the theoretical framework of human rights education, while teachers from primary schools presented their class-

room experiences and the results of their action research on human rights education.

c. Human Rights Education Policy

The Ministry of Education (MOE) issued in 2003 a blueprint in the form of a report on human rights education promotion and development. The report has seven parts, of which four are discussed below. The first part discusses the need to promote human rights education. In this, then President Chen Shui-bian's commitment to promotion of human rights in Taiwan was reiterated. There was also an urgency to improve the human rights situation in Taiwan and change the perception of the world regarding human rights violations at home. How education could play a vital role in the promotion of human rights and lay the foundation for human rights culture was discussed.

The second part defines human rights education and delineates five principles on which it is founded. The five underlying principles of human rights education are:

1. Ability to espouse one's rights: the individual clearly knows what one's rights are in a variety of social settings, and having sufficient social skills and abilities, stands up for [one's] rights.
2. Willingness to espouse one's own rights: aside from knowing one's own rights and standing up for them, one must have sufficient motivation to push oneself to fight for those rights.
3. Ability to respect others' rights: the individual clearly knows the rights of others in a variety of social settings and accepts others' rights to espouse their rights.
4. Willingness to respect that others advocate their rights: the individual has the sufficient motivation to accept other people's advocacy of their rights.
5. Concern for a society's political, economic and cultural development that gradually tends towards social justice: the individual knows, is capable, and willing to care about all aspects of a society's political, economic and cultural development, so that it may gradually move in the direction of social justice.⁵

According to the report, knowledge, ability, willingness and responsibility are the four domains crucial for the success of human rights educa-

tion. They all work collectively. It is apparent that the absence of any of these would result in either partial or non-attainment of desired or expected results of human rights education.

The third part provides guidelines for the MOE, i.e., what can the ministry do? In the answer to this question, the MOU outlined the following targets for itself: establish a human rights education promotional working group, conduct workshops for human rights educators, establish a human rights education guidance group and a human rights education resource center, and prepare guidelines for conducting evaluation of human rights education. Many of them have been implemented by the MOE but it ought to be an ongoing task. For instance, workshop for human rights educators is not a one-time affair. It needs to be organized on a regular basis. It is a never-ending process just as the role the MOE has to be continuing also.

The fourth part is on expectations from the schools. There are many suggestions on what schools should do such as creation of a human rights education school environment including both hardware and software facilities, introducing human rights education into the school curriculum and evaluation of the schools' own human rights status.

In 1998, the cumulative effect of all these initiatives was MOE's decision to introduce human rights in the Grade I-IX Integrated Curriculum for Primary and Lower Secondary School Education. The integrated curriculum had two components: seven main learning areas and ten basic skills:

Main learning area:

Languages: Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, aboriginal languages and English; Health and physical education including sex education; Social studies including history, geography, civics, economics, law, and human rights; Arts: music, visual arts, and performing arts; Mathematics; Science: biology, physics, chemistry, earth science, environmental science, and life and information sciences; General activities: [use of] computers, club activities, scouting, outdoor activities, and home economics.⁶

Basic skills:

Understand self, and develop one's potential; Appreciation, expression, and creation; Life and career planning; Lifelong learning; Expression, communication, and sharing; Respect, compassion, and group cooperation; Cultural learning, international understanding; Planning, organization, and implementa-

tion; Use of science, technology, and information; Self-directed exploration and research; Independent thought and problem solving.⁷

The seventeen learning areas and basic skills together formed the integrated curriculum for nine years. In other words, from grade I all the above-mentioned learning areas and skills were to be taught and developed and every successive stage would advance it further. All nine stages were interconnected and not to be skipped. It was expected that the nine-year integrated curriculum would broaden the spectrum of learning. Incorporation of human rights as part of social studies learning area illustrates the widening scope of the curriculum.

The promotion of human rights education was ensured not only by incorporating it into the social studies learning area but also by making it part of extracurricular activities. The MOE urged schools to make human rights an integral part of their campus activities. For MOE, human rights and human rights education concepts are defined as follows:

[Human rights] are inherent rights and freedoms, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social class. They are not subject to deprivation or violation on the part of any society or government; the opportunity for individual expression must even be positively provided in order to respect individual dignity and seek the perfect life. Therefore, in actuality [human rights education] is concerned with education as to the dignity of humanity, which helps us understand the basic physiological, psychological and spiritual conditions that we must enjoy...“that which makes us human.”⁸

The MOE's interpretation of the concept of human rights and human rights education is in accordance with Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The thrust of human rights education is on human dignity that cannot be degraded by any authority. In other words, the purpose of human rights education is to sensitize and familiarize students about issues of human rights and encourage them to actively participate in restoration of human rights if they are violated in any form.

d. Human Rights Education Committee of MOE

The Human Rights Education Committee of MOE, established in April 2001, was chaired by the Education Minister and with twenty-four members from different areas including scholars, experts, NGO and human rights activists. In 2001, the Committee formed four sub-committees: 1) research, development and evaluation; 2) teacher education and curriculum planning; 3) social promotion and publicity; 4) campus environment. A study called "Guidelines for Evaluation in Each School Level" was commissioned to Professor Fong Chao-lin of National Chengchi University. Professor Lin Chia-fan of National Taiwan Normal University was assigned a project called "Campus Regulations vs. Students' Rights and Responsibilities: Perspective from a Study of Legal Cases in the US and Taiwan".

The Committee prepared guidelines to promote and protect human rights education and human rights respectively. It was committed to improving the school campus environment by making it conducive to human rights education. It also took initiative to conduct new researches in the field of human rights. Entrusted with the responsibilities of curriculum development and training in human rights education, it was also expected to cooperate and collaborate with international human rights education agencies. The Committee sought directions from international institutions in the arena of human rights education.

e. Center for Law Related Education, Judicial Reform Foundation

Despite political reforms, old social and cultural contentions hindered the practice of democracy in Taiwan. Three institutions - Chung Hwa Rotary Education Foundation, Taipei Bar Association and Judicial Reform Foundation - joined hands to combat this situation and promote democracy down to the grassroots level. In May 2003, they initiated a project called the Planting Seeds of Law-Related Education in Taiwan (PASLRT). Their goal was to develop a new kind of law-related education in place of old dogmatic pedagogies with the purpose of preparing enlightened and responsible citizens committed to democratic principles in theory as well as in practice.

The Foundation was highly inspired by the efforts of the Center for Civic Education (U.S.A.). The Center for Civic Education had developed a series for K-2 and 3-6 grades called "Foundations of Democracy: Authority, Privacy, Responsibility and Justice." The human rights literature for primary school children attempts to provide functional as well as theoretical

aspects of human rights to the young learners. There are four illustrated books on Authority: *Orb and Effy Learn about Authority*, on Privacy: *Jessica Fish Learns about Privacy*, on Responsibility: *The Zookeeper Learns about Responsibility*, and on Justice: *Fair Bears Learn about Justice*. In December 2006, the PASLRT translated the series into Mandarin and published fifteen thousand copies for K-2 grades and ten thousand copies for grades 3-6. The PASLRT trained two hundred forty-eight lawyers to help and introduce teachers to the Foundations of Democracy Series. PASLRT developed, adapted and replaced American laws into Taiwanese ones for 7-9 and 10-12 grades materials.

f. Taiwan Association for Human Rights

The Taiwan Association for Human Rights (TAHR) was founded on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 1984 to highlight the goal and purpose behind the establishment of the organization. In the beginning, TAHR's primary concern was to protect and promote the Taiwanese people's civil and political rights, mainly by freeing political prisoners and advocating scrapping of political blacklist (Taiwan Association for Human Rights, 2008). TAHR is truly committed to furthering the cause of human rights. It is fighting on behalf of all people regardless of class, race, gender, religion or nationality. It provides enormous help to protect the human rights of foreigners, most likely to be violated in the case of foreign labor from the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. TAHR also ventures into human rights education by organizing human rights training sessions and volunteer training programs, issues Online Human Rights Weekly, publishes *Human Rights Quarterly* and *Annual Human Rights Report*, translates and publishes international publications on human rights into Mandarin, and organizes film festivals to promote human rights.

g. Chang Fo-Chuan Center for the Study of Human Rights

In December 2000, the Chang Fo-Chuan Center for the Study of Human Rights was established at Soochow University. The Center is named after Chang Fo-Chuan who was a political scientist well known for his work on human rights theory and history. The purpose of the Center was to facilitate the development of a human rights culture by encouraging research in human rights, peace and development, training teachers, developing human rights materials for primary and lower secondary schools; to train

human rights NGO workers; and to promote international exchange.⁹ The Center was involved in various activities pertaining to human rights and human rights education. For the first time in the history of human rights in Taiwan, it organized an “International Conference on National Human Rights Commissions”. The Conference was in line with other initiatives to fulfill a pending demand to create a National Human Rights Commission of Taiwan. Apart from organizing seminars, the Center also offers courses in human rights, peace and development with the help of experts in the field of human rights.

Study on Human Rights Education Pedagogy

a. Rationale for the Study

Human rights education is growing its roots and branches in Taiwan. More and more primary schools are joining the league of institutions where human rights education is an integral part of school curriculum and culture. Not much documentation and discussion is available on human rights education at this level. This study is an attempt to throw light on how human rights education is promoted and practiced at the primary school level by impassionate Taiwanese teachers. The premise of the study is that the pedagogical beliefs and praxis of a teacher are central to the successful implementation of human rights education at the primary school level. Researches have shown that inculcation of human rights should begin as early as possible.¹⁰ The role of the teacher in human rights education is paramount and needs to be perused as much as possible. This study attempts to document and share the findings of a research conducted to probe the role of primary school teachers in promoting human rights culture among adolescents that the wider academia can ponder and reflect upon. It also throws light on the praxis of the human rights educator.

b. Sample of the Study

The study involved three sixth grade teachers in Taipei. Their pseudonyms are Miss Zhang, Miss Ma and Miss Xie. The data for the research were collected from these primary school teachers. The information is directly attained from the subjects with help of interviews and classroom observations and formed the basis of the present study.

c. Research Methodology

The study employs critical qualitative research method, one of several genres of inquiry into non-quantifiable features of social research.¹¹ The basic premise of criticalist scholars is that inequality, oppression, and unequal power relations are the main features of all societies whether they are hidden or apparent. Hence, the purpose of critical qualitative research is not only to expose such disparities but also ensure social change through unbiased research. The application of critical qualitative research to study the pedagogy of human rights education can yield rich dividends.

In critical qualitative research, critical epistemology is used as a conceptual tool to conduct inquiry. Critical epistemology provides the principles for conducting valid inquiries into any area of human experience,¹² including the present one in which it provides the framework for a better understanding of the problem, conduct valid research, analyze data and produce effective results. A valid research is based on validity claim. Validity claim entails, first, the procedure followed to come to a claim, and, second, the acceptance of it by a certain social or cultural group. Carspecken categorized validity claims into three sets: objective, subjective and normative. The objective category includes existing things and events that are directly accessible to all; for example, classroom observation notes, recording or videotaping. The subjective category includes feelings, desires, intentions and states of mind that are directly accessible only to the subject-actor. The observer does not have a direct access to these and has to rely almost entirely on versions received from the subject. There is always a possibility that the whole picture is not presented by the subject. In the normative category, value claims play an important role.¹³ Value claims are a subset of normative truth claims because these are concerned with what is good, bad, right, and wrong, but include also ideas about what is proper, and what is appropriate; that is, what behaviors ought to be exhibited in which circumstances.¹⁴ The normative category includes consensus about an activity or event whether it is proper and appropriate. As claims, they impose on others by tacitly insisting that the other should conform to a certain convention. In the academic world, there is a broad agreement among scholars over value-based norms. In a nutshell, objective category denotes “the world”, subjective category indicates “my world” and normative category implies “our world.” On the basis of the three validity claims categories, five stages have evolved in critical qualitative research: (1) compiling primary record, (2) preliminary

reconstructive analysis, (3) dialogical data generation, (4) describing system relations, and (5) system relations as explanations of findings.¹⁵ These stages are flexible and circular in nature, and carry the possibilities of frequent referring back to the earlier or later stages while conducting research. The research questions have been substantiated with many more questions asked during interviews as well as in informal conversations with interviewees.¹⁶

Stage I: Compiling Primary Record

For the present research the primary data came from interviews, while the data generated by observations were used to substantiate and validate the findings of the primary data. The research began with an introduction with the teachers. The introductory interview was meant to probe their personal backgrounds as well as reasons for choosing the teaching profession. It is premised that those teachers who come into teaching profession by choice are more enthusiastic about innovation in their teaching practices and they enjoy their work more. On teaching of human rights, apart from commitment to them (human rights), it is also necessary for a teacher to enjoy her profession from the bottom of her heart.¹⁷ Interviews with the subjects of this study provided an opportunity to fathom the depth of the teachers' feelings, values and belief systems. It provided insight into the cultural background of the teachers. It also helped in reading the psyche of the teachers to the extent that one possibly could. I developed rapport with the teachers as well as a relationship of trust. As a result, I was able to establish a smooth line of communication with them. We were engaged in continuous dialogue around human rights and human rights education. It is important to mention that the subjects of this research were very comfortable with the questions that were put forward. Their answers were not one-liners; they were elaborating their statements, opinions and arguments as well as offering clarifications. An excerpt from Ms. Xie's¹⁸ interview illustrates the point:

There is very little material on human rights teaching available in Chinese. Almost everything on human rights is in English. This makes human rights very "alien" to Taiwanese teachers. There are two reasons to call it "alien". First it was never a part of Taiwanese culture, being born in western societies. Second, the literature pertaining to it is primarily available in English and European languages. There are a few attempts to translate the available content into Chinese. Some authors are writing on human rights in Chinese but it is not enough. I think

if adequate material on human rights can be made available in Chinese to the teachers this problem can be solved. As it comes down to us from the West, the examples, events, situations, and incidents mentioned in the literature are alien to us. I also try to correlate and contextualize human rights concepts, issues, and incidents to Taiwanese conditions. It is difficult but a challenging enterprise.

The above quotation is an excerpt from the interview transcript of Ms. Xie on the question of the problem she faces while teaching human rights in her classroom. She gave elaborate answers with reasons and explanations on the efforts she was putting to overcome the problems. The interview transcript served as primary record because it provided categories, patterns and themes for analysis. The importance of these interviews made careful transcription absolutely necessary.

The second level of the compilation of the primary record was of observation. By observing these teachers I tried to see whether they were practicing in the classrooms or not the values and ethos mentioned in the interviews. In stage one of the present study, various tools, such as intensive field notes (with all the details), observations, audio and video recording (with the permission of the teacher) were simultaneously used. The details of the context of all classroom observations and interviews were recorded in advance. Sometimes the context of observations and interviews was different from the previous meeting. The change was either subtle or significant. Such minor or major contextual changes are required to be incorporated in the compilation of primary record. These changes affected the teachers' pedagogic practices.

Stage II: Preliminary Reconstructive Analysis

Once a substantial amount of thick observation records was available, the process of inferring and reconstructing meanings out of them began. This deduction was inter-subjective in nature because inferences were based on the observer assuming the position of the subject and the third person (other than observer and observed). Taking various positions was not an easy task. I was aware of the moments when my personal point of view was influencing the analysis. I formulated a wide horizon of meaning field on the selected sections of transcription. The selection of main sections from transcription was based purely on research questions that I was interested in. At another level of reconstruction, I took into account the normative

factors that made these meanings possible. All social acts derive their meanings from the background sets of rules.¹⁹ In other words, normative factors provide validity and reasons (i.e., why certain meaning has been derived) to the reconstructed meanings. Stage II provided the foundation for the next stage of analysis when the subjects were also involved to further clarify the preliminary reconstruction.

Stage III: Dialogical Data Generation

In stage three, I involved the subject into the analysis process by giving her an opportunity to reflect on the various issues and meanings constructed in stage two. This was a more democratic process of analysis because the subjects had a voice in it. There are no fixed rules or time for the beginning of stage three. It primarily depends on the researcher and her sense of judgment. When the researcher is certain about the thickness of primary record, the third stage begins automatically. Without enough and firm grounding in the primary record, the third stage cannot be started. This stage not only generates dialogical data with the help of preliminary informal interviews and discussions but also provides conviction for the method on which research is conducted.

Stage IV: Describing System Relations

In the context of the present study, system relations denote the relationship between teaching and the teacher's cultural background. The subjects of this study are primary school teachers, who come from a wider social set up that functions in a micro school site, and who embodied beliefs, values, opinions and ideas about issues that are culture specific. When they enter the classroom, they do not put these aside and transform themselves into a different being. For example, if a teacher has strong opinions about race, gender, and class these will be reflected in her classroom teaching as well, overtly or covertly. Thus, the researcher needs to examine the full cultural settings of her subjects. To fully reconstruct the culture of the subjects, I spent time with the subject outside the classroom, in teacher's lounge, in assembly, etc. In one instance, the parent of her student came to the school to talk to her. I requested the teacher to permit me to sit and observe the meeting. The teacher allowed me to be a silent observer during the discussion. The session helped me to gather information about communication and problem solving skills of the teacher as well as values she believed in. After

they finished the discussion and reached a solution on how to deal with the problem, their conversation became informal. Interestingly, the informal talk gave glimpses of the social background and lifestyle of the teacher. She was speaking about her childhood experience. She told the parent how her parents especially her father was too sensitive toward his children. "He always handled the situation calmly. He believed in communication instead of imposing authority." She made it clear to the parent that by being strict with her son she could not eradicate the problem. She said her father could only win over his children with love and understanding. She thus suggested to the parent to be patient with the child and establish a line of communication first.

This was an example of how the teacher's family background guided her decision-making process. She was endorsing the ethos and practices she had experienced in her childhood and found to be favorable to the health of parent-child relationship. In this instance, the nature of the solution offered showed that she was trying to change the conventional authoritarian attitude of parents towards their child that sought solution in discipline and punishment. For her, the integrity of the child was important and for this reason she did not want the mother to do anything which would make the child feel culpable or guilty.

Stage V: System Relations as Explanations of Findings

This stage explains findings in the wider context of society. No qualitative study can be restricted to the classroom or the school. Since the present study is concerned with teachers and their pedagogy of human rights education, at this stage it would be relevant to ask the question whether or not there can be a general theory of pedagogy of human rights education that can be applied to various settings, first to understand its undercurrents and second to make its implications in a particular context more effective.

Research Setting

The primary school selected was located in Taipei County. The school had around three thousand students. The number of students in the school had started decreasing due to demographic change, a sharp decrease in the number of children in Taiwan. To make up for the shortfall, the school was working to attract students from distant places. Competition for students

among schools had ensured that they had something extra to offer to attract parents. This school was also not untouched by the problem of competition. In response, it had come up with a new idea of citizenship and human rights education. The aim of introducing citizenship and human rights education was to prepare good and just citizens for Taiwan in the future. The other notable features of the school life were sports and music. The aim of the school was to let students decide what they would like to do. "We try to let their creativity unfold. We believe every student has a special ability and our effort is to develop every student's special ability fully."²⁰ The school was getting funds from Taipei County Government. The infrastructure of the school was very good. Every classroom was equipped with a computer, video projector, LCD (liquid crystal display) screen, microphone, speakers, a small library (apart from the main library), comfortable desks and chairs, and other basic amenities.

The keystone of an institution is the head. The smooth functioning of any institution depends on the capacity, ability and leadership skills of the head. The principal of this school was a man of deeds. He was doing every possible effort ranging from infrastructural development to introduction of new courses (human rights education, citizenship education) to the development of teachers' potential through in-service training to giving them freedom to create and innovate in their respective fields. A very remarkable initiative started in his leadership was collaboration between the school and the community.²¹ More than a hundred parents were serving as volunteers, helping the school in various ways, such as helping students of the school in crossing the busy road in front of the school; parents taking classes when teachers were busy attending meetings; telling stories to the students; helping the school in preparing skits and other programs; and providing educational help to weak students of the school.

Grade six, the site of my research, consisted of twenty-five students. At the time I started my fieldwork, the teacher was teaching a theme on privacy. Thus, the observation was based on the delivery of the topic of privacy taught in the context of human rights and citizenship education. It took seven weeks to complete the theme. The topic had both theoretical and practical components. After discussing the issue of privacy in theory, a practical activity was conducted called public hearing. In the public hearing, students played different roles such as teachers, students, parents, officials, member of the police, member of an NGO and human rights activist. The audience

consisted of representatives from the community, parents and personnel of the Ministry of Education. The public hearing raised the issues of privacy from the perspective of human rights. It was a very enriching experience not only for students but also for everyone present there.

Pedagogy of Human Rights Education and Educators

The teachers represented in this study had their own definition of human rights that do not cover all elements of human rights espoused by the UDHR such as human dignity or equality. Zhang believed that human rights should be the basic principle of the code of conduct for teachers, students, administrators and all other members of a society. Ma said that, "Human rights are for human dignity what oxygen is for human existence." Human rights are necessary for the survival of any democratic society. Xie thought that human rights were vital to human existence and always came with responsibilities. All the three teachers perceived human rights differently according to their beliefs and value system.

Characteristics of Human Rights Educators

During this study the following characteristics were observed generally in all three teachers. These were: critical thinking, commitment and belief in human rights, belief in efficacy of human rights education, belief in democratic communication instead of giving instruction, zeal of a learner, facilitator not controller, observer, activist, ability to handle challenges, patience, and tolerance. Some of the characteristics were dominant in some teachers but all the characteristics were present in different degrees.

Now the crucial question is whether these qualities are specific to human rights educators or are they likewise present in other teachers. Answering this question is a bit difficult and the present study did not undertake a probe on this matter. But my own experience as a student and a teacher at a primary school offers some insights on the issue. Teachers who do not believe in human rights and do not practice them are not capable of respecting children's rights as human beings. Their classes tend to be more authoritative than democratic. They will seldom allow critical thinking to be a part of their pedagogy because it curtails their power and puts a question mark on their classroom behavior. Their classes are always quiet; in the

name of discipline, no discussion is required or allowed because the teacher's words are final.

Educators' Perception of Pedagogy for Human Rights Education

This is a subjective category and thus deals with the values, beliefs, attitudes, and ideals of teachers. Zhang argued that human rights education should be started from the very beginning of schooling. It should be sown early like a seed so that it could gradually grow into a plant. To create a culture of human rights in a society it is important that human rights education be introduced as early as possible. Zhang further substantiated this argument by stressing that human rights education was not only meant for students but for teachers as well. She found the concept of human rights education very abstract and imbued with legal precepts that require an understanding that can only be acquired by training. Ma believed that human rights education created a culture of respect not only for those who came from the same culture but for those also who were from other cultures, ethnicities, societies, or countries. Human rights education was also meant to destroy misconceptions that students form at home and bring to the schools as a matter of fact. Xie was extremely positive and optimistic about enculturation of human rights in a society with the help of human rights education. For her it was a never-ending process that had the potential to change the mindset of people in a society. In a nutshell, human rights education creates a culture that is founded on human dignity and also weakens and demolishes that culture which ignores or humiliates the dignity of an individual.

Human Rights Education Pedagogy in Praxis

The three teachers of the present study employed in different degrees various teaching-learning approaches and models. Their selection of the teaching-learning approaches and models relied on their perception of human rights and human rights education and their pedagogic beliefs and practices. Zhang believed in how to think, not in what to think. She did not believe in dominating the teaching-learning process. She denounced the traditional role of a teacher as an instructor. She provided with the required basic facts and information regarding the theme that was being discussed in the classroom. Her pedagogy of human rights education was based on re-

constructionist approach where the process of thinking was important. This approach perceives a phenomenon from a critical perspective. In addition, she based her pedagogy on accountability model too. It is a model founded on the legal approach and prepares the students to deal with human rights violations legally. In practicing the accountability model, Zhang's husband helped her. He was a law graduate and had a good understanding of the legal aspects of human rights. He would accompany Zhang in her classroom and make a presentation of law-related matters. Zhang's pedagogy also had an element of international standards and institutions approach. In this approach, the international human rights standards (mainly those adopted by the UN) are being followed. Zhang's human rights education pedagogy was always a process in the making and she visited websites of the UN to seek materials for teaching human rights.

Ma's human rights education pedagogy developed in phases. She started with environmental education and gradually moved to human rights education issues discussed in Social Studies. Later, she realized that Social Studies' classes were not enough to deal with human rights education. To fill this lacuna she integrated human rights education into her whole curriculum. With the integration, human rights education had no specific time or subject in the curriculum. Human rights concepts circulated throughout her curriculum from bottom up and top down as blood in the veins. Ma's human rights education pedagogy was based on transformational model that emphasized activism. Ma herself was a human rights activist. She always included documentaries or films that depicted activism of the lead character.

The "alien nature" of human rights shaped Xie's pedagogy. Her human rights education pedagogy heavily relied on multimedia to give human rights education a concrete as well as local touch. Her human rights education pedagogy also followed the historical approach, which studied human rights in historical context. History became the foundation of human rights education insofar as human rights were derived from and defined out of the lived history of human beings.²² Xie screened movies such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *The Color Purple*. These films have a historical background as well as lived experiences of an individual. Her human rights education pedagogy was based on value awareness model, which required teachers to engage their students through different forms of media to inculcate interest in human rights and human rights education.

Human Rights Education Content

In Taipei, the human rights education is done using Social Studies textbooks and content themes in co-curricular subjects. The themes include privacy, justice, democracy, authority, human world, family and raising boy and girl, society and country's responsibilities, global village culture, scientific revolution, industrial revolution, modern science and technology, science and technology management, united world, environmental problems, and international organizations such as Red Cross, UN, World Trade Organization (WTO), World Health Organization (WHO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). There were also themes on international law, institutions and environmental issues. The focus of the curriculum is in tune with the ideals of human rights education. Teachers directly teach these themes. Some other contents not prescribed in the curriculum but taught by human rights teachers consist generally of skills and attitudes, such as critical thinking, tolerance, patience, activism, problem solving skills and better communication skills. These skills are considered very important in the practice of human rights in society.

Problems and Challenges Faced

The teachers in the present study expressed the problems and obstacles they have experienced. Zhang showed utmost concern over the issue of the teacher as human rights violator. She also thought that a significant number of teachers in Taiwan were - knowingly or unknowingly - human rights violators. They were violating human rights in various ways. They were imbued with a sense of authority over students. They expected their students to follow them without questioning their authority. Zhang saw the Taiwanese examination system as the greatest violator of human rights, especially child rights. Education psychology has reached a level of maturity but it is still unable to convince people that every individual is different and has special abilities. If those abilities are recognized at the right time and developed in the right direction, the individual can attain greater success. On the contrary, every parent wants her/his child to become not less than a doctor, engineer or scientist. To attain these goals, the hurdle of examination has to be crossed. The realization of these cherished dreams depends on how efficiently and ruthlessly the examinations have to be passed by the students.

Another problem in implementing human rights education is availability of materials on human rights in the Mandarin language. It has been further accentuated by insufficient training of teachers in the area of human rights education. In Zhang's opinion, human rights concepts are not alien to teachers but how to teach them to primary students is altogether a different story unless they are thoroughly trained in it.

Ma was not very happy with whatever progress Taiwanese society had made. Improvement in economic arena had raised living standards but failed to bring ethical, moral, humane, judicious, and equality-based standards to the society. It had filled the income gap among the masses but failed to narrow down the gulf of gender inequality, class, race (aborigines vs. Hakka, Hoklo and Han), and color bar. On the other hand, the society was legitimizing them by endorsing them in various subtle ways. Ma held that teaching human rights is like waging war against the whole society's mentality that is weakening the ground for human rights. Ma saw the Taiwanese education system as an eyesore for human rights and human rights education since it was not in accordance with human rights at all. First of all, it was a teacher-centric system where teachers spoke and students listened. Second, there was no scope for innovation insofar as a teacher had to follow the curriculum mechanically. Insofar as human rights education is all about innovation, it is not a subject to mug up facts and regurgitate in the exams. Human rights education promotes a culture that questions the education system itself for not being human rights-friendly. The pressure of examination on students is increasing at an unprecedented speed. Another impediment is the absence of a comprehensive evaluation system of primary school teachers in Taiwan. Ma said, "In Taiwan, lots of teachers do not teach properly and nobody goes and check on them but they know what they are doing and still go on with that." When the general evaluation system is so feeble one can imagine what could be the situation of evaluation of human rights education.

Xie felt that Taiwanese parents were over protective of their children. This tendency affected the development of children in many ways. Taiwanese children are indeed highly dependent on their parents for every small or big thing. The parents took decisions for them regarding all matters. Xie asserted that the overprotective behavior of Taiwanese parents did not go well with the idea of human rights. When students learn about human rights they complain that none, other than their parents, has encroached upon their rights. Xie also felt that human rights education was a fairly recent

phenomenon in the Taiwanese educational arena. Being in its initial stage, human rights education is bound to be dependent on the outside world for various things ranging from subject material on human rights for teaching to how to teach them in a classroom situation.

Possibility of a Theory of Pedagogy of Human Rights Education

In social research the context plays an important role.²³ As far as the findings of the present research are concerned, they indicate that social context is actually quite important. For instance, in Taipei, teaching of human rights in English is not possible and the human rights content has to be translated into Mandarin. In addition, the examples used in English literature have to be reinforced with local examples because every example has a cultural and social context. Students would better understand those examples that are directly coming from their social and cultural milieu because they would be already familiar with the background. Successful implementation of human rights education, therefore, requires contextualization.

The eight principles of human rights are human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, universality, interdependence, indivisibility, inalienability, and responsibility. These principles provide a ground for general pedagogy of human rights education. These principles are the same everywhere and need to be practiced and upheld. For instance, human dignity is not different from that of a Taiwanese individual to that of an American or European individual for that matter. So, these principles can become a beckon light for human rights educators to guide their pedagogical beliefs, values and practices. In addition to the human rights principles, UDHR is another standard that needs to be followed by every nation.²⁴ The pedagogy of human rights education has certain approaches and models that present themselves as standard approaches and models. The beauty of these approaches and models is that they can be applied by any human rights educator in any context because they are guided by international human rights standards. In addition to that there are some skills and attitudes, such as critical thinking, commitment and strong belief in human rights, belief in efficacy of human rights education, belief in democratic communication, patience, tolerance, responsibility, and strength to fight for one's as well as others' human rights. These are applicable in any context because relationships are guided by power structure and herein lies a great possibility of violation of human

rights. Thus, it is conceivable to have a general pedagogy of human rights education that can be applied in any context.

System Relations as Explanations of Findings

This section explains the findings in the research on the wider context of society. No qualitative study can be restricted to classroom or the school. Since the present study is concerned with teachers and their pedagogy of human rights education, at this stage it would be relevant to ask the question on how external systems support or constrain the purpose, agenda, and cause of human rights education at the level of policy, content, pedagogic beliefs and practices.

Governmental Support/Constrain

In the case of Taiwan, the announcement to adhere to the UN Decade for Human Rights Education was part of an initiative to join the UN. By this act of the Taiwanese government, Taiwan was sending the message that it followed UN regulations, and accepted the importance of this international organization. All this constituted a subtle indication of its willingness to join the UN as a member-state. It is interesting to note that it was during the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) rule that Taiwan organized its efforts to promote Taiwan. Thus, the DPP's ideology is more in coherence with the idea of human rights. Ever since the Kuomintang (KMT) government came to power in 2008 human rights education projects have either slowed down or stopped.

NGOs and INGOs Role

International NGOs (INGOs) are nonprofit organizations with international perspective on development, education and human rights. They generally operate from Western nations. On the other hand, NGOs or domestic organizations function within a nation. Some are truly "grassroots" organizations.²⁵ Orlin notes that NGOs are the "Human Rights Gatekeepers" and rely on the human rights theory for legitimacy.²⁶ Boli and Thomas (1997) argued that INGOs form a "world culture."²⁷ They identified the principles of universalism, individualism, rationalist voluntaristic authority,²⁸ rational progress, and world citizenship as the central elements of "world culture."²⁹ These principles of INGOs are consistent with human rights, human rights

education and human rights culture. Hence, INGOS and NGOs play the role of catalysts in propagating human rights culture by promoting “world culture.” The goal of human rights culture is achieved especially through educational instruments and means, i.e., human rights education. In the case of Taiwan, NGOs are supporting the cause of human rights and human rights education because it matches with their purpose and ideology.

Teacher’s Authority and Power Relations

All relations are mediated by power.³⁰ The powerful tend to assert authority over those who are subordinate. In other words, there is a hierarchy of structures bound with power relations to dominate the downtrodden. In the education system the hierarchy goes like this: Minister of Education, education secretary, education officer, principal, vice-principal, teacher, and student. On this ladder, teachers and students are at the lowest level. The teacher has authority to wield only inside the classroom. In turn, classrooms also become the place for teachers to vent out their frustrations, and examples of this can be seen everywhere. But the present study found that this system relations was not reproduced in the classrooms of human rights educators. Human rights educators had a different relationship with their students. Their relationship with the students was almost on an equal plane. Human rights educators of this study did not believe in exercising their authority over children. They respected students’ rights as individuals. Zhang believed that a successful pedagogy of human rights education depended on the nature of interaction between the teacher and the students. Ma treated her students as responsible individuals. Xie advocated that a friendly, democratic, and trustworthy relationship between the teacher and the student was the need of the time.

Conclusion and Recommendations

When it becomes a program, hopelessness paralyzes us, immobilizes us. We succumb to fatalism, and then it becomes impossible to muster the strength we absolutely need for a fierce struggle that will re-create the world. I am hopeful, not out of mere stubbornness, but out of an existential concrete imperative. I do not mean that, because I am hopeful, I attribute to this hope of mine the power to transform reality all by itself, so that I set out for the fray without taking account of concrete, material data, declaring, “My hope is enough!” No, my hope is necessary,

but it is not enough. Alone, it does not win. But without it, my struggle will be weak and wobbly. We need critical hope the way a fish needs unpolluted water.³¹

The contemporary world is scarred with human rights violations. Exploitation of the downtrodden is rampant at all levels, individual, social, economic, cultural, and political. This dismal scenario may lead to hopelessness, but the pedagogy of human rights shows us a ray of hope reminiscent of what Paolo Freire mentioned above. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights purports to establish a human rights-based culture. Human rights education is an instrument for achieving empowerment that prepares the ground for human rights culture in a society. To bring the “hope” closer to reality, it is necessary to have a properly carved out educational program and passionate efforts on the part of those involved in this program. Carter and Osler have argued that it is only through education, both experiential and cognitive, that human rights education would be achieved.³² The community of teachers would undoubtedly play the most important role in the program of human rights education. A curriculum is only as powerful as the teacher using it.³³ Thus, it is not the content of human rights but the pedagogy of a teacher that will determine the efficacy of human rights education and promotion of human rights. This chapter concludes the present work with the “hope” shown by Freire that the reality would be transformed and the teaching community along with their students would restore degraded human dignity. The chapter also presents some recommendations to realize the hope to have a human rights-based culture.

Teacher as an Agency of Human Rights Education

Best (1991) stated that defending and promoting human rights education is largely a matter of education and it depends on the attitudes and efforts of teachers.³⁴ A human rights educator must be endowed with, or develop, abilities, values and beliefs that are essential for teaching human rights. A human rights educator must have a firm belief in the necessity and efficacy of human rights for bringing social transformation. A teacher must practice human rights in the classroom as well as outside of it. A human rights educator must see social disparities, inequalities, and discrepancies from a critical perspective. The critical perspective on issues prepares the ground for human rights implementation. Without the critical perspective, one cannot see the rationale behind things and the way they exist. For in-

stance, the presence of stark economic disparities is not God-given but a human-made situation and hence not sacrosanct. The critical perspective proposes that if it is human-made it can be changed. Thus, it is imperative for a human rights educator to analyze social conditions critically and instill the same ability among the students as well.

Institutionalization of Human Rights Education

During the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, the field was institutionalized through development of an internationally framed and produced curriculum and methodology supported by various governmental and nongovernmental human rights centers.³⁵ Institutionalization of human rights as a culture is not possible until national governments take up the issue seriously. In the beginning, the Taiwanese government showed a keen interest and devised a policy pertaining to human rights education. Unfortunately, now the government is largely silent about human rights education. It is extremely important to shake the indifference of governments so that they fulfilled their duties.

The UN is contributing to human rights education endeavor in many ways but the process is very slow and it does not reach all countries. Taiwan is not a member of the UN and due to this she does not have access to many human rights education resources, experts, or emoluments of the UN. Taiwan is working hard to curb human rights violations and to promote human rights education. Keeping this into consideration, the UN should provide its assistance and expertise for furtherance of human rights and human rights education in Taiwan. The UN announced the Decade for Human Rights Education in 1994 that led many countries to think about introducing human rights education in their school curriculum. The decade had certainly produced significant results in the realm of human rights education. The UN has to urgently think of practical interventions to mobilize and rejuvenate the slowing down of efforts in various parts of the world on human rights education.

After UN it is the INGOs and NGOs that should be looked at for reviving the spirit of promoting human rights education at rapid pace. It is true that whatever life human rights education program has is largely due to the interest shown by INGOs and NGOs. In Taiwan these organizations are contributing to the cause of human rights and human rights education. By providing resource materials, translating English sources into Chinese,

providing assistance in human rights education training for teachers, and spreading awareness among the masses, the NGOs in Taiwan are working in the direction of institutionalization of human rights and human rights education. This is an example that could be followed by other nations.

NGOs have tremendous potential, a wider base, direct contact with people, and can establish relations with the schools too. Human rights education program has to be implemented by these organizations. Amnesty International is working for human rights zealously. It has programs related to human rights education that need to be expanded further. It has online resource materials for teaching human rights but they have to be purchased. Amnesty International would have to think about it and make at least some resources if not all available for free.

Another segment of the society that can improve human rights education is academicians. Academicians tend to shift the emphasis from outcomes to the values that create and inform the outcomes.³⁶ They contribute in expanding the knowledge base of human rights education. They are working on almost every aspect of human rights education from theories to teaching methodologies; from approaches to models, problems, challenges, etc. Their work is scholarly but technical. If these scholars can communicate in a language and style that could be fully grasped by human rights educators it would produce better results. This would ensure that their work is used smoothly in the classrooms. This would enhance their contribution to the world of human rights education exponentially.

Importance of Training in Human Rights Education

Magendzo is of the opinion that many teachers not only lack the knowledge of international and national human rights instruments and institutions, they are also unprepared emotionally, pedagogically and culturally to teach human rights.³⁷ The biggest challenge in front of human rights education is to ensure proper and quality training in human rights education for prospective and in-service teachers. There is no program for this in Taiwan, only some training programs or workshops are being organized as sporadic efforts by NGOs or teacher educators in Taiwanese universities. The teacher is instrumental in human rights education and until she/he is trained for teaching human rights successful translation of human rights education is not possible. Sebaly prescribed that incorporation of human rights education in teacher preparation program will certainly help the teachers in incul-

cating human rights perspectives and skills among their students.³⁸ Teacher education colleges and institutes have to prepare a comprehensive blue print of training in human rights education. Incorporating concepts, themes, and issues of human rights into training syllabus is easier compared to the main challenge of providing these trainees practical or field experience. For this, the teacher training institutions need to liaise with NGOs in their areas and arrange for fieldwork. Association with NGOs would provide future teachers an exposure to ways of addressing human rights violations including providing comfort and justice to the victims. In addition, they have to carry the zeal forward into their classrooms and further to the society along with their students. It is a long drawn and difficult process, sometimes disheartening and tiring, but human rights educators must not compromise with their commitment to human rights.

Endnotes

¹Paolo Freire (1998) strongly put forward the view that teaching is a human act and the role of the teacher is more than transferring knowledge of the subject matter.

²For a discussion on this point, see articles on human rights education in Taiwan published in the various volumes of *Human Rights Education in Asia-Pacific*, available at www.hurights.or.jp/archives/asia-pacific/.

³Mei-Ying Tang, "Human Rights Education in Taiwan: The Experience of the Workshops for School Teachers," in *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools*, vol. 2, 1999/March, page 163.

⁴Mab Huang, "Human Rights in Taiwan: Current Situation and Future Challenges," in *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools*, vol. 9, 2006/March, page 76.

⁵Ministry of Education, "Human Rights Education: Promotion and Cultivation," (Taipei: Ministry of Education, 2003), page 9.

⁶Huang, op. cit, page 74.

⁷President Li cited in C.P. Chou and A.H. Ho, "Schooling in Taiwan," in G.A. Postiglione and J. Tan, *Going to School in East Asia* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), pages 344-377.

⁸Ministry of Education, op.cit, pages, 15-16.

⁹Huang, op.cit, page 76.

¹⁰B.A. Reardon, *Educating for human dignity: Learning about rights and responsibilities* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

¹¹See P.F. Carspecken, *Critical Ethnography in Education* (New York: Routledge, 1996), page 3.

¹²Ibid., page 8.

¹³Norms and values are distinct but internally connected.

¹⁴Carspecken, op.cit, page 82.

¹⁵Philip F. Carspecken, and Michael.W. Apple, "Critical Qualitative Research, Theory, Method, and Practice," in M. LeCompte, W. Millroy and J. Preissley, *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education* (San Diego, CA: Academic, 1992). For latest discussion see Carspecken, op. cit, page 84.

¹⁶Informal conversations generally centered on the various aspects of the research and were also documented.

¹⁷Nancy Flowers, "What is Human Rights Education?," text can be found on www.hrea.org/pubs/HREA=Research-in-HRE-Papers_issue1.pdf

¹⁸The surnames used in the paper are pseudonyms.

¹⁹Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1979).

²⁰Inputs from a person in charge of in-service teacher education and curriculum development in the school.

²¹I found that this is increasingly becoming a common practice in Taiwanese schools.

²²See Reardon, op. cit., page 8.

²³Carspecken, op.cit, page 35.

²⁴Judith Torney-Purta, "Human Rights and Education Viewed in a Comparative Framework: Synthesis and Conclusions," in Norma Bernstein Tarrow, *Human Rights and Education* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987), page, 224.

²⁵Hartmut Scharfe, *Education in Ancient India* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), page 70.

²⁶T. S. Orlin, *On Human Rights Education* (Utica, NY: Utica College, 1998), page 1.

²⁷John Boli and George M. Thomas, "World culture in the world polity: A century of international non-governmental organization," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 62(2), 171.

²⁸Rational Voluntaristic Authority is a model which holds that INGOs attempt to organize the world on the issue of human rights with the help of democratic processes such as debate.

²⁹Ibid., page 171.

³⁰Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1979), passim.

³¹Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Continuum, 1994), page 2.

³²Charlotte Carter and Audrey Osler, "Human Rights, Identities and Conflict Management: A Study of School Culture as Experienced through Classroom Relationships," *Cambridge Journal of Education*, vol. 30(3), 2000, 355.

³³Felisa Tibbitts, *Literature review on outcomes of school-based programs related to "Learning To Live Together,"* (UNESCO: International Bureau of Education, 2005).

³⁴Francine Best, "Human Rights Education and Teacher Training," in Hugh Starkey, *The Challenge of Human Rights Education* (London: Cassell, Council of Europe, 1991), page 140.

³⁵Sharon Sliwinski, "Thinking without banisters: Toward a compassionate inquiry into human rights education," *Educational Theory*, vol. 55(2), 2005, 221.

³⁶Flowers, op.cit, page 8.

³⁷Magendzo, op.cit, page 140.

³⁸Kim Sebaly, "Education about Human Rights: Teacher Preparation," in Norma Bernstein Tarrow, *Human Rights and Education* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987), page 207.