

"The Intersection of Human Rights and Education: Challenges and Opportunities"

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ABSTRACT

Overview: This study explored the intricate relationship between human rights and education, delving into the challenges and opportunities that arise at their intersection. It begins by elucidating the fundamental connection between education and the realization of human rights, emphasizing education's role in fostering informed citizenship, promoting equality, and empowering individuals to exercise their rights.

Body of Knowledge: The study examined the multifaceted challenges encountered in ensuring that education systems worldwide uphold human rights standards, including issues such as discrimination, inadequate access, curriculum bias, and the suppression of dissenting voices. Furthermore, it highlighted the intersectional nature of these challenges, particularly affecting marginalized communities such as minorities, girls, and persons with disabilities.

Methods: The study population comprised general citizens, teachers, officials from DEBS office, officials from HRC, and the pupils from selected schools in Lusaka district. A sample composed of 200 respondents who were selected using purposive and simple random sampling technique. Interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data. This study used descriptive analysis to analyze the data. Qualitative and Quantitative techniques of data analysis were used, and data was presented on the analytical tools such as tables, figures and charts.

Results: Despite the obstacles that come with exercising human rights, the study also identified various opportunities for advancing human rights through education. These include the integration of human rights education into formal curricula, the promotion of inclusive and diverse learning environments, and the leveraging of technology for broader access to quality education.

Recommendation: Government and stakeholders should work towards creating educational systems that not only transmit knowledge but also foster a culture of respect for human dignity, equality, and justice.

Keywords: Discrimination, Education, Human rights, Policy, and Social justice.

INTRODUCTION

The intersection of human rights and education represents a fundamental nexus where societal values, principles, and aspirations converge. Education serves as a cornerstone for the realization and preservation of human rights, functioning not only as a means of imparting knowledge and skills but also as a catalyst for fostering critical thinking, empathy, and social responsibility. At its core, education is intrinsically linked to the promotion and protection of human rights, as it empowers individuals to exercise their rights, advocate for justice, and challenge systemic inequalities. Additionally, education is the process of facilitating learning, knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits of a group of people are transferred to other people, through storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, or research (Chanda, 2023). Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also educate themselves in a process called autodidactic learning. Conversely, human rights principles inform and shape education policies and practices, ensuring inclusivity,

non-discrimination, and equal access to learning opportunities for all, irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, or socio-economic status. However, the intersection of human rights and education is not without challenges. In many parts of the world, disparities in educational access and quality persist, depriving millions of individuals of their fundamental right to education. Moreover, education systems may perpetuate social injustices and reinforce discriminatory attitudes and practices, undermining the realization of human rights (CAMFED, 2014). Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates human rights principles into educational curricula, promotes diversity and cultural sensitivity, and fosters partnerships between governments, civil society, and international organizations to advance educational equity and social justice. Ultimately, the intersection of human rights and education embodies the collective commitment to building inclusive, equitable, and rights-respecting societies where every individual can fulfill their potential and contribute to the common good.

Furthermore, the intersection of human rights and education represents a critical juncture where the principles of dignity, equality, and empowerment converge with the transformative potential of learning. Challenges arise in ensuring universal access to quality education, particularly in marginalized communities where discrimination, poverty, and conflict obstruct learning opportunities. Discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or disability often denies individuals their right to education, perpetuating cycles of inequality and exclusion. Chanda et al (2023) gives an examples of a national policy of re-entry which the government of Zambia has put in a place as a national strategy plan to address Zambia's child marriage rates, which are among the highest in the world. The plan recognizes that encouraging adolescent mothers to return to school lessens the likelihood that they will marry before age 18, but this strategy can't succeed unless schools carry it out. For many years, Zambian girls were obliged to leave school permanently if they became pregnant. In 1997, the Government of the Republic of Zambia introduced the Re-entry Policy that requires all schools to grant girls maternity leave and readmit them to facilitate girls' education (Ibid, 2023).

Moreover, inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, and curriculum biases hinder the realization of inclusive education systems (Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 2018). Yet, within these challenges lie opportunities for progress. By prioritizing human rights within educational frameworks, societies can foster environments that nurture diversity, promote tolerance, and cultivate critical thinking. Integrating human rights education into curricula can empower learners to become active agents of change, advocating for justice and equality in their communities. Embracing innovative technologies and inclusive teaching methodologies can also expand access to education, bridging gaps and reaching marginalized populations. Ultimately, by recognizing education as both a fundamental human right and a catalyst for social transformation, societies can navigate the intersection of human rights and education to build more inclusive and equitable futures.

(Chanda (2024) alluded that education is the key to the doors of success for most of people in Africa and the world at large. Without education people cannot productively, care for their health, sustainability and protect themselves. Education is a tool which has to do with the imparting of knowledge and skills to the learners in order to equip them for personal and national development, (Ministry of Education, 2017). At any level, education is expected to influence behavior of those who experience it. According to MoE (2015), one of the government's goals of the education system is to produce a learner capable of maintaining and observing discipline and hard work as the cornerstones on personal and national development. It is for this reason that Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number two aimed at achieving universal primary education. The government's vision for education is to have quality education for national development (FAWE, 2015).

In the same vein, Global Sustainable Development Goal (GSDG) number four aims at ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning (Sifuniso, 2016). This however makes the purpose of the Zambian education to focus on the development of individual personality in order for one to fit in the society contributing to the country's productivity. To this end, discipline is paramount and it has to be maintained. Chanda et al (2023a) says that pupils portray different types of indiscipline behavior among which include the following acts: boycotting lessons, watching and practicing pornography, lies telling, violence,

dishonesty, disobedient to teachers, prefects, and school administration, rapping school/classmates, alcohol consumption, and confronting. The critical tool used in the transformation of individuals in particular and society in general. Secondary education in Zambia is meant to prepare the learners for valuable living conditions within the society and training for further education. In order to live a valuable life within any given community and contribute towards the social, economic, and political development of the nation, the appropriate skills, values, attitudes, knowledge, and competencies must be impacted by the individual. Chanda (2023) defines a dropout as a pupil who was enrolled in the beginning of the school year and has left before the end of the school year, and was not enrolled elsewhere. The percentage of pupils who drop out of school in most urban and rural areas of Zambia is on the increase. These pupils cultivate and demonstrate deviant behaviors and may never fulfill their potential and in the long run, they become burdens to society. According to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (2008) about 14 million girls under the age of 18 marry each year in the world. One in every 5 girls in the developing world is married by the age of 18 and one in nine girls marries before they reach the age of 15. In countries like Niger, Chad, Mali, Bangladesh, Guinea and the Central African Republic (CAR) the rate of early marriages is 60 percent and over. Child brides are particularly prevalent in South Asia (46 per cent) and in sub-Saharan Africa (38 per cent) (Chanda, et al, 2023b).

According to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), children world-wide lack information on their rights as a result, they are denied their highest standard of living which does not prepare them well for the future. They are deprived of their rights as enshrined in the CRC. Some of these pertinent rights include access to basic needs like food, shelter, clean water, adequate sanitation, good education, and necessary health services. They experience hunger, malnutrition, sickness and diseases. They are vulnerable to many forms of child abuse that include sexual abuse, prostitution, exploitation, labour, neglect and beating (CAMFED, 2014).

FAWEZA (2010), estimate that millions of children in developing countries between the ages of five and fourteen work illegally in industries such as agriculture, mining, domestic services and prostitution. It is further estimated that 120 million of these children are forced into child labour.

Subsequently, they are denied access to education which is widely regarded as one of many fundamental rights of every child, regardless of sex, religion, race, or ethnicity. Chitondo & Chanda (2023) says that ethnic diversity is the existence of people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds or identities. A report which was published by CHIN indicates that Zambian children are no exception to these staggering statistics regarding the endemic and pandemic nature of child rights violations against children. It is argued that this gave rise to the country in signing the CRC in September 1990 and ratifying it in December 1991. Having consented to this instrument, it pledged to recognize, observe and to fulfill children's rights by working for the common good and general welfare of all children and ensure that every child was treated fairly and provided with balanced support. However, the report indicates that despite this commitment, statistics still show that the majority of Zambian children who constitute slightly over fifty percent of the population continue to live below the poverty datum line and lack knowledge on their rights which are crucial to their upbringing.

It is argued that the low level of child rights awareness among children is exacerbated by a number of factors. Some of which include the combination of weak implementation mechanisms and operationalization of child rights related policies and programmes by the government; the reduction in socio economic capacities of families and the community at large to care for children; the existence and practice of certain traditions and customs that tend to negatively affect children and the defective teaching methods on child rights in schools. According to Nkoshla et al (2013), he argues that a moral and competent society is one that respects and upholds the rights of its children by investing its best resources and hopes in the success of its children by teaching them their rights and responsibilities at the early stage. Such children end up being morally and intellectually upright with necessary skills and knowledge for the overall development of the country.

The banning of corporal punishment was initiated by parents and care givers in Sweden 60 years ago, of which in 1979, Sweden was the first to make it illegal to strike a child as a form of discipline, and has since spread to many other countries. The negative impacts of corporal punishment on children led to its abolition in 2003 in all Zambian schools, (Gladwell, 2013). Thereafter, teachers were expected to use alternative measures that are no corporal to instill and maintain pupil discipline in schools despite the government not providing guidance on alternatives to corporal punishment at the time of its abolishment, (Phiri, 2012). The act left educators in a dilemma in as far as identifying the alternative modes of discipline to use and how to use them so that they are not in conflict with the law (Hyman, 2018). Studies show that, as a result of banning corporal punishment in schools, teaching has become a stressful and challenging profession and that teachers are demotivated by not having proper means of punishing pupils that misbehave in school and feel hopeless and helpless.

However, current studies done in Zambia have shown that pupil discipline in Zambian secondary schools is pathetic (Phiri, 2012) affirms that “the step taken by the Republic of Zambia to abolish corporal punishment in all schools created serious disciplinary issues in Zambian schools. There is an information gap among the educators in schools in Zambia on the alternative’s modes of discipline with regards to those that are not in conflict with human rights and how the very alternative modes ought to be applied. It was not known how the alternative modes of discipline to corporal punishment on pupil discipline could have contributed to the scourge. It is in this view that the present study endeavored to evaluate the alternative modes of discipline to corporal punishment educators in Government Secondary Schools use to instill discipline in pupils.

Chanda et al (2023a) added that pupils’ indiscipline has been a source of worry for schools, parents, and other stakeholders concerned with the education of children. The problem of indiscipline in schools has been characterized as serious case in most schools since the abolishment of corporal punishment thereby negatively affecting student learning (Leigh, 2009). This problem manifests itself in a variety of ways which include late coming, smoking, vandalism, examination malpractice, abusive language, sexual affairs, disobedience, theft, intimidation and general violence (Marias, 2010). Additionally, gender based violence has also been seen to be one of the indiscipline cases in secondary schools. Chanda (2023) explained that gender based violence (GBV) can include physical, sexual, psychological, or other forms of violence. Many forms of violence constitute GBV, among others; physical assault or abuse as a form of GBV. Physical assault can be understood to include any behavior which causes actual physical harm to the victim, is designed to do so. According to MoE (2007) schools are established with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to those who go through them, and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performance. Chanda et al (2023c) added that these days ‘pupils are so engrossed in social media that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theaters, it has been observed that some students are always busy ping, 2going, or Facebooking, while lectures are on. Times that ought to be channeled towards learning, academic research, and innovating have been crushed by the passion for meeting new friends online and most times busy discussing trivial issues.

In the past corporal punishment was implored as a tool to curb students’ misdemeanors in Zambian schools as it was adopted and permissible in the education system mainly in secondary schools during the colonial days (MoE, 2015). Zambia issued a gazette notice for the abolishment of corporal punishment which was enacted into statutory instrument 10 of 2003 to bring juvenile justice in line with the International Human Rights Instruments of which according to article 37 of the United Nations Conventions on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that “no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment”. Furthermore, the African Charter on Rights and Welfare of Children has equally condemned the use of corporal punishment in schools.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Inclusive education and its implications have been under scrutiny especially with children who are in rural areas during the past years. Today, the Zambian society has become concerned about ensuring the educational rights of all children, regardless of the severity of school. Chanda (2023) says that the academic

performances in most secondary schools in Zambia have drastically gone down in recent years and a lot of factors have been attributed to this. However, challenges and opportunities revolves around the complexities inherent in integrating human rights principles effectively within educational systems. This study therefore delves into the challenges educators face in promoting a comprehensive understanding of human rights while navigating diverse cultural contexts and political landscapes. The study aims to explore how educational policies and practices can either uphold or hinder human rights objectives, highlighting the need for innovative approaches to curriculum development, teacher training, and institutional frameworks. By addressing this statement problem, the study seeks to uncover opportunities for fostering inclusive and rights-based education that empowers individuals to become active global citizens committed to promoting and protecting human rights.

1.3. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the intersection of human rights and education: challenges and opportunities in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district in Zambia.

1.4. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- Examine the intersection of human rights and education: challenges and opportunities in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district, Zambia.
- Evaluate strategies put in place for human rights to enhance inclusive education in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district, Zambia.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in the principles of operant conditioning theory, as elucidated by Skinner in 1958. Operant conditioning, a cornerstone of behavioral theory, posits that learning occurs through the modification of observable behaviors. According to this framework, alterations in behavior are precipitated by an individual's responses to stimuli present in their environment (Feldman, 2019). Thus, Skinner asserts that operant conditioning serves as a potent tool for behavior regulation. In the context of this study, the study directed its attention primarily towards the concept of punishment within operant conditioning. Punishment, as a mechanism of behavior modification, involves the application of aversive consequences in response to undesirable behavior. Through exploring the dynamics of punishment within the framework of operant conditioning, the study aims to deepen our understanding of how behavior can be influenced and controlled. By examining the effectiveness and implications of punishment strategies, the research contributes to the broader discourse on behavior management and intervention techniques. The aforementioned theoretical framework offers valuable insights into methods for managing and influencing the behavior of learners or children by parents, educators, and school administrators. While the discussion primarily centers on the application of punishment, it's important to recognize that alternative disciplinary approaches, such as counseling, can also play a pivotal role in fostering the development of valuable skills, knowledge, and ethical values among children.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The study delves into a critical area where two fundamental aspects of societal progress converge. Its significance lies in shedding light on the intricate relationship between human rights and education, illuminating how the advancement of one invariably influences the other. By exploring the challenges and opportunities at this intersection, the study offers invaluable insights into fostering inclusive, equitable, and rights-respecting educational systems globally. Understanding these dynamics is essential for policymakers, educators, and advocates alike, as it provides a framework for crafting policies and practices that uphold human dignity, promote social justice, and cultivate environments conducive to learning and empowerment for all individuals, regardless

of background or circumstance. This study thus serves as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue and action aimed at realizing the transformative potential of education as a catalyst for realizing human rights and fostering a more just and equitable society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study Design

Descriptive survey design was used in this study. Borg and Gall (1989), states that descriptive study regulates and reports the way things are and generally involves assessing attitudes, opinions towards individuals, organizations and procedures. This method described the current status of Human rights in schools and also enabled the researcher to collect data in order to answer questions about the human rights challenges and opportunities in education.

2.2. Research Site

This study was conducted in Lusaka district, the capital city of Zambia in 6 selected secondary schools from which the participants were selected for the study.

2.3. Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study population comprised general citizens, teachers, officials from DEBS office, officials from human rights commission (HRC), and the pupils from selected schools in Lusaka district giving a total of two thousand(2000). The sample size involved a total of 200 respondents which included 58 general citizens, 18 teachers, 3 coming from each selected school. 2 officials from DEBS office, 2 officials from HRC and 120 pupils, 20 coming from each selected school. The study used both purposive and simple random sampling on different participants.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed qualitatively as the semi structured interviews schedules were used as data collection instruments. Thematic approach was used, where data analysis started with categorizing of themes from the semi structured interview schedules to structured ones. The data gathered was analyzed according to the themes of the study and the order of the research objectives. Data generated from the questionnaires was analyzed manually by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 26) and Microsoft Excel (Version 16). Frequency tables, charts and graphs were also used to analyze the data.

2.5. Ethical Issues

permission from the Council Chairperson and the District Education Board for Lusaka District was sought in carrying out this study. The study avoided pressuring respondents to take part in the research. Instead, permission, consents, and assents were obtained from respondents involved in the research and the research topic was strategically selected to ensure that there was no harm whatsoever to the research respondents. In this research, the study was fully conscious of the need to abide by the ethical rules of respecting the privacy of individuals taking part in the research. Interviews were not conducted on one-to-one basis; instead, participants were grouped and identified using their titles. In the same way, all the respondents of the research were to remain unidentified to the public as all their valuable views, opinions and perceptions were only known by the researcher for use only in the research and participant's identities will forever remain hidden.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following findings and discussions were presented according to set research objectives:

3.1. The Intersection of Human Rights and Education: Challenges and Opportunities

3.1.1 Challenges

The education system in Zambia existed as long as the human societies lived. This is so because education is supposed to be seen as a condition for human survival. It is the means whereby one generation transmits the wisdom, knowledge and experience which prepares the next generation for life. The type of education that existed is referred to as traditional and was essentially practical in nature to enable the individual to play a useful role in society (Chanda, 2024). Data collected from the respondents indicated that access to education stands as a significant challenge at the intersection of human rights and education. While education is widely recognized as a fundamental human right, disparities in access persist globally. Factors such as socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, disability, and geographic location often determine an individual's ability to obtain quality education (Anderson, 2019). Discrimination, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient resources further exacerbate these inequalities. Addressing access to education requires a multifaceted approach, including policy reforms, investment in infrastructure, and the promotion of inclusive practices. By ensuring equitable access to education, societies can empower individuals to fulfill their potential, contribute to economic development, and uphold the principles of human rights for all. Officials from DEBS office also noted that the quality of education presents a critical challenge at the intersection of human rights and education. Access to education is a fundamental human right, recognized globally as essential for individual development and societal progress. However, merely ensuring access is not enough; the quality of education is equally crucial. In many regions, disparities in educational quality persist, affecting marginalized communities disproportionately. Sifuniso (2016) explains that substandard education deprives individuals of the skills and knowledge necessary for meaningful participation in society, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. Poor quality education not only violates the right to education itself but also undermines the realization of other human rights, such as the right to work, health, and participation in cultural life. Addressing this challenge requires not only improving infrastructure and resources but also focusing on pedagogical approaches, teacher training, and curriculum development to ensure that education equips individuals with the necessary competencies to fully exercise their human rights and contribute to sustainable development.

Another set of respondents who are teachers explained that discrimination and exclusion pose significant challenges at the intersection of human rights and education. When individuals are discriminated against based on their race, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, or other factors, it directly hampers their access to quality education. This finding agrees with Eloundou (2014) who says that discriminatory practices can manifest in various forms, including unequal treatment, bullying, lack of resources, and limited educational opportunities. Exclusion exacerbates these challenges by marginalizing certain groups and denying them the chance to fully participate in educational settings. This perpetuates cycles of inequality and inhibits the realization of fundamental human rights, such as the right to education. To address these challenges effectively, comprehensive strategies are required, encompassing legal frameworks, policy reforms, inclusive curricula, and proactive measures to combat prejudice and promote diversity within educational institutions. Only through concerted efforts to eliminate discrimination and foster inclusivity can the full potential of human rights in education be realized.

People from the community also pointed out that violence and conflict pose significant challenges to the intersection of human rights and education, creating barriers that impede the realization of both. In contexts marred by violence, such as war zones, areas of civil unrest, or communities plagued by crime, the right to education is often compromised (Chanda, 2023). Schools become targets for attacks, teachers and students face intimidation or harm, and educational infrastructure is destroyed, disrupting learning opportunities. Additionally, violence and conflict can foster environments of fear and trauma, hindering students' ability to concentrate and engage in learning activities. Moreover, the perpetuation of violence can lead to the violation of

fundamental human rights, including the right to life, security, and freedom from discrimination. In such environments, efforts to uphold the principles of human rights within education systems become increasingly challenging, as the immediate focus often shifts to ensuring safety and survival. Addressing violence and conflict is thus essential for safeguarding both human rights and educational access, requiring comprehensive strategies that prioritize peace building, conflict resolution, and the protection of vulnerable populations, particularly children and educators.

Moving on, officials from HRC said that inadequate legal protection poses a significant challenge at the intersection of human rights and education. When legal frameworks fail to adequately safeguard individuals' rights to education, especially vulnerable groups such as minorities, girls, and those with disabilities, it perpetuates systemic inequalities (Shumba et al, 2012). Without robust legal protections, marginalized communities may face discrimination, exclusion, and barriers to accessing quality education (Johnson, 2009). This undermines the fundamental human right to education, as enshrined in international conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Inadequate legal protection not only deprives individuals of opportunities for personal and socio-economic development but also undermines efforts to achieve broader societal goals of equality and social justice. To address this challenge, it is imperative to strengthen legal frameworks, ensure their effective implementation, and promote accountability mechanisms to uphold human rights in education for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances.

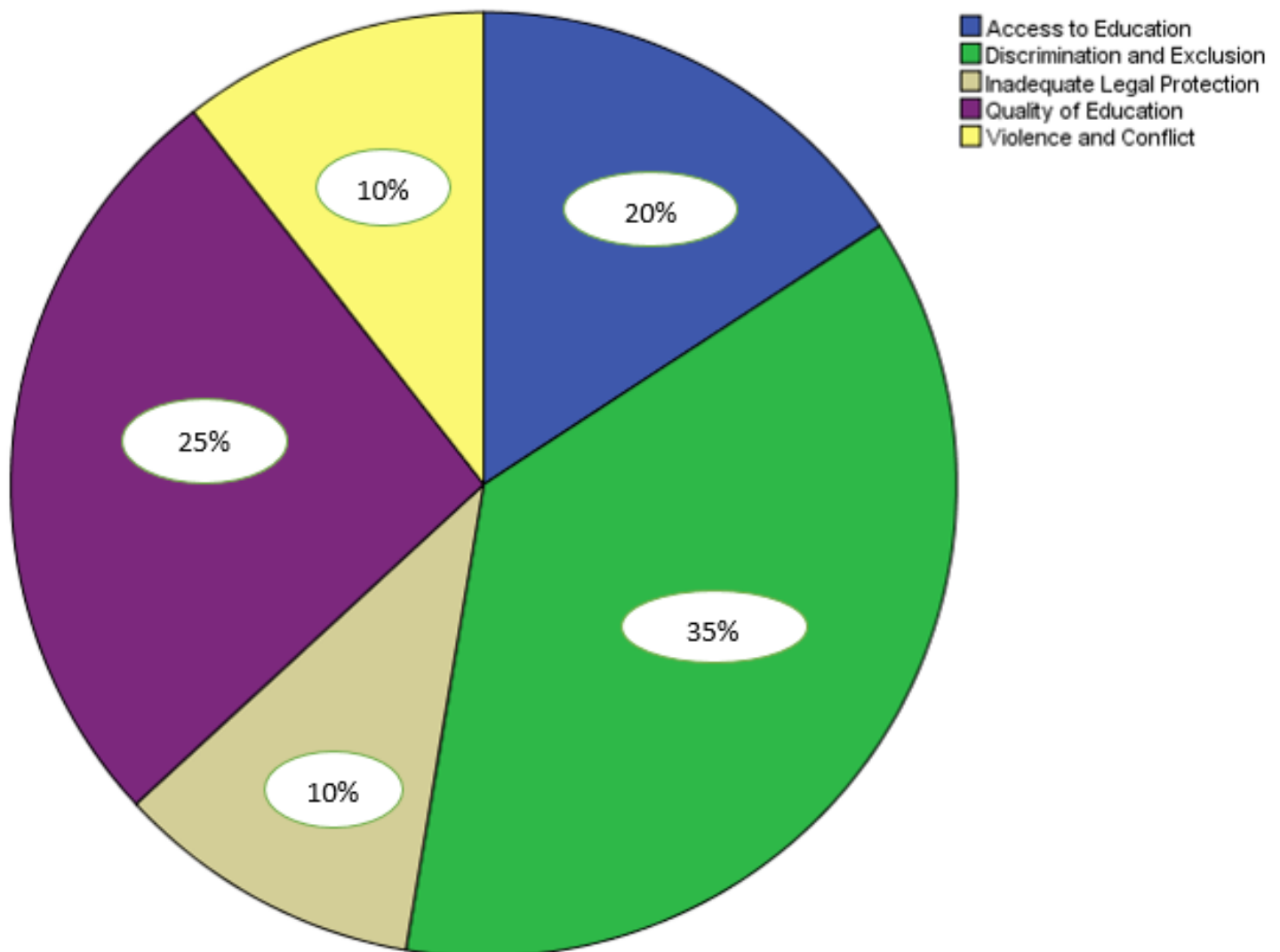


Figure 1: Challenges on the Intersection of Human Rights and Education

3.1.2 Opportunities

According to research findings, it was observed that empowerment and social change present a pivotal opportunity at the intersection of human rights and education. Chanda (2023) says that education serves as a cornerstone for empowering individuals, enabling them to understand their rights, challenge injustice, and advocate for societal change. Through education, individuals gain the knowledge and skills necessary to critically analyze social structures and inequalities, fostering a sense of agency and empowerment. By promoting human rights within educational curricula and practices, institutions can cultivate a culture of respect, dignity, and inclusivity, laying the foundation for broader social change. Moreover, empowered individuals are better equipped to address systemic injustices and advocate for marginalized communities, thereby catalyzing transformative social movements. Thus, the synergy between empowerment, education, and human rights offers a powerful framework for promoting social change and advancing justice on a global scale. Pupils narrated that capacity building and sustainable development offer a compelling opportunity at the intersection of human rights and education. Through capacity building initiatives, communities can empower individuals with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to advocate for their rights effectively. By fostering a culture of education, particularly focusing on human rights education, societies can ensure that individuals are equipped with the awareness and tools to address systemic inequalities and injustices. Sustainable development initiatives further complement this approach by emphasizing long-term solutions that prioritize social, economic, and environmental well-being (FAWEZA, 2010). By integrating human rights principles into education systems within sustainable development frameworks, societies can cultivate a generation of informed citizens committed to promoting and protecting human rights for all. This symbiotic relationship between capacity building, sustainable development, human rights, and education not only fosters individual empowerment but also contributes to the collective advancement of societies towards a more just, equitable, and sustainable future.

Moving on, DEBS officials noted that the promotion of equality and inclusion represents a pivotal opportunity at the intersection of human rights and education. By prioritizing these principles within educational frameworks, societies can foster environments that honor the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals, regardless of background or identity. Embracing diversity not only enriches learning experiences but also cultivates empathy, understanding, and respect among students and educators alike. Integrating human rights education into curricula empowers learners to recognize and challenge discrimination, bias, and injustice, fostering a culture of inclusivity and social responsibility. Moreover, by nurturing inclusive learning environments, educational institutions play a crucial role in dismantling systemic barriers to equality and advancing a more just and equitable society (Martinez, 2020). This synergy between human rights and education underscores the transformative potential of education as a catalyst for social change and the realization of fundamental rights for all. Additionally, officials from HRC observed that the advancement of human rights education presents a crucial opportunity at the intersection of human rights and education. By integrating human rights principles, values, and knowledge into educational curricula at all levels, societies can foster a culture of respect, tolerance, and equality from an early age. Human rights education not only equips individuals with the awareness and understanding of their rights but also empowers them to recognize and challenge injustices in their communities. Furthermore, it promotes critical thinking, empathy, and social responsibility, laying the foundation for active citizenship and meaningful engagement in democratic processes. Through inclusive and participatory approaches, human rights education can address systemic inequalities, discrimination, and violence, ultimately contributing to the creation of more just, peaceful, and equitable societies.

Teachers explained that peace building and conflict resolution represent a crucial juncture where the realms of human rights and education converge. In this intersection, initiatives aimed at fostering peace and resolving conflicts can serve as opportunities to advance both human rights principles and educational goals. By integrating human rights education into peace building efforts, individuals and communities can gain a deeper understanding of their rights and responsibilities, fostering a culture of respect, tolerance, and inclusivity.

Conversely, education plays a pivotal role in promoting peace by addressing underlying causes of conflicts, such as discrimination, inequality, and ignorance (Chanda, 2023). Through educational programs that emphasize empathy, critical thinking, and conflict resolution skills, communities can develop the capacity to peacefully manage differences and build more resilient societies. Thus, the synergy between peace building, conflict resolution, human rights, and education offers a transformative path towards sustainable peace and social justice.

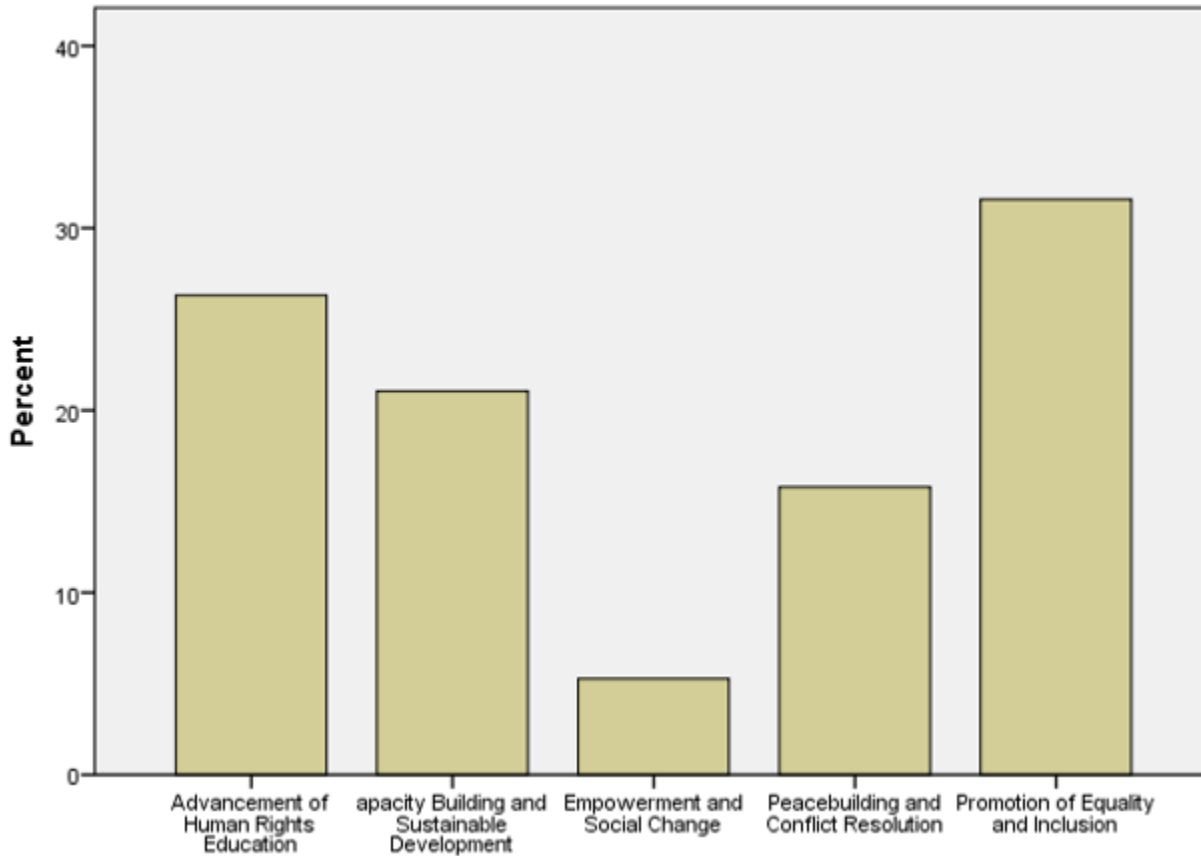


Figure 2: Opportunities on the Intersection of Human Rights and Education

3.2. Strategies Put in Place for Human Rights to Enhance Inclusive Education

The findings indicated that enhancing inclusive education through the promotion of human rights requires a multifaceted approach that addresses various aspects of education policy, practice, and societal attitudes. Teachers explained that teacher training and capacity building serve as pivotal strategies at the intersection of human rights and education. This was supported by Groes-Green (2014) who said that by equipping educators with comprehensive training on human rights principles and their integration into the educational framework, societies foster a culture of respect, tolerance, and equality from an early age. Such training empowers teachers to cultivate inclusive classrooms where diversity is celebrated, discrimination is challenged, and students are encouraged to critically engage with human rights issues. Moreover, capacity building initiatives ensure that educators possess the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively address human rights violations within educational settings, thereby safeguarding the rights and dignity of all learners. Through ongoing professional development and support, teachers become catalysts for social change, nurturing a generation of informed and empathetic global citizens committed to upholding human rights values in their communities and beyond (Jorgensen, 2017). DEBS officials added that accessible infrastructure and resources are foundational elements in addressing the intersection of human rights and education. Ensuring that educational facilities, materials, and technologies are readily available and adapted to accommodate diverse needs promotes inclusive learning environments. This strategy aligns with the principles of human rights by guaranteeing equal opportunities for

education regardless of physical ability, socioeconomic status, or geographical location. Accessible infrastructure encompasses physical structures designed to be inclusive, such as ramps, elevators, and sensory-friendly classrooms. Additionally, providing resources in multiple formats, including digital and alternative formats like Braille or audio, enhances accessibility for individuals with disabilities. By prioritizing accessible infrastructure and resources, societies affirm their commitment to upholding the fundamental human right to education for all, fostering equitable participation and empowerment.

Community members also pointed out that promotion of diversity and inclusion within education serves as a powerful strategy at the intersection of human rights and education. Embracing diversity not only fosters a sense of belonging but also enriches the educational experience by exposing individuals to a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds (Chitondo & Chanda, 2023). By actively promoting diversity and inclusion, educational institutions uphold fundamental human rights principles, such as equality and non-discrimination, ensuring that every individual has equal access to education regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status. This approach not only cultivates a more tolerant and respectful society but also equips students with the necessary skills to thrive in diverse workplaces and communities. Moreover, by integrating diverse perspectives into curricula and educational materials, institutions can challenge stereotypes and promote cross-cultural understanding, further advancing the cause of human rights globally. In essence, prioritizing diversity and inclusion within education is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic investment in building a more equitable and harmonious world.

Furthermore, officials from HRC suggested that parent and community engagement serves as a vital strategy at the intersection of human rights and education, fostering a collaborative environment where all stakeholders actively participate in ensuring the fulfillment of every individual's right to education. By involving parents and the broader community in educational processes, such as decision-making, curriculum development, and school governance, a more inclusive and equitable learning environment is established. This engagement promotes respect for diverse perspectives, cultures, and identities, aligning with the principles of human rights by recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of each person. Furthermore, when parents and communities are actively engaged, they can advocate for policies and practices that uphold human rights standards within educational institutions, contributing to the promotion of equality, non-discrimination, and access to quality education for all individuals, regardless of background or circumstance. Ultimately, parent and community engagement serves as a powerful mechanism for advancing the realization of human rights in education, promoting social justice and empowerment within communities (Mwansa, 2017). The respondents added that anti-discrimination measures stand as a pivotal strategy at the intersection of human rights and education, serving as a cornerstone for fostering inclusive learning environments. By implementing policies that prohibit discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or any other characteristic, educational institutions can ensure equitable access to education for all individuals. These measures not only uphold fundamental human rights principles but also cultivate an atmosphere where diversity is celebrated and respected. Through curriculum development that incorporates diverse perspectives and histories, coupled with training programs for educators on cultural sensitivity and inclusion, anti-discrimination measures actively promote a more just and tolerant society. Furthermore, such initiatives empower marginalized groups, enabling them to fully participate in the educational process and contribute meaningfully to society. In essence, anti-discrimination measures in education serve as catalysts for societal progress, fostering environments where every individual can thrive irrespective of their background or identity.

Moving on, the study noted that international cooperation and support play a pivotal role in addressing the intersection of human rights and education. By fostering partnerships between nations, organizations, and stakeholders, this strategy aims to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights within educational systems worldwide. Through collaborative efforts, resources can be pooled to tackle systemic issues such as discrimination, inequality, and barriers to access education (Rodriguez, 2019). This approach facilitates the exchange of best practices, expertise, and innovations to enhance educational frameworks that uphold human rights principles. Moreover, international cooperation fosters solidarity among nations in advancing inclusive

and equitable education for all, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. By working together, countries can leverage their collective strengths to confront challenges and build a more just and rights-respecting educational landscape on a global scale.

Likewise, monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) serves as a crucial strategy at the intersection of human rights and education, ensuring accountability, effectiveness, and the fulfillment of rights-based approaches in educational initiatives. Smith(2022) says that by systematically tracking and assessing the implementation of educational policies and programs, M&E mechanisms can identify areas where human rights principles, such as access to education, nondiscrimination, and quality learning, are upheld or compromised. Through data collection, analysis, and stakeholder engagement, M&E processes facilitate evidence-based decision-making, enabling policymakers, educators, and advocates to address gaps, allocate resources effectively, and enhance educational outcomes while safeguarding human rights. Additionally, M&E fosters transparency, participation, and empowerment within education systems, empowering marginalized communities to voice their concerns and hold duty-bearers accountable for their obligations to provide inclusive and equitable education for all. Ultimately, integrating robust M&E frameworks into education systems is fundamental to advancing the realization of human rights, promoting social justice, and fostering inclusive societies. Moreover, the study found that through targeted legal frameworks and policy initiatives, governments can uphold fundamental human rights principles within educational systems. These efforts encompass ensuring equitable access to education for all individuals regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or disability. Legislation can establish anti-discrimination laws, mandate inclusive curricula, and provide resources for marginalized communities. Mutombu & Mumbuna (2010) narrates that policy reforms can address issues such as child labor, forced marriage, and access to quality education for refugees and internally displaced persons, aligning education practices with human rights standards. Furthermore, legislative measures can protect academic freedom and the rights of educators, fostering environments conducive to critical thinking and intellectual exploration. By enshrining human rights principles into law and policy, societies can promote educational systems that empower individuals, cultivate social justice, and contribute to sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the intersection of human rights and education presents both challenges and opportunities for global development. While the recognition of education as a fundamental human right is a positive step, ensuring equitable access to quality education remains a significant challenge, particularly for marginalized communities and in conflict-affected regions. Additionally, issues such as discrimination, violence, and inadequate resources continue to hinder progress in realizing the right to education for all. However, addressing these challenges presents opportunities to foster inclusive societies, empower individuals, and drive sustainable development. Key strategies to enhance the positive effects of human rights on education were identified, including curriculum integration, teacher training, community engagement, inclusive learning environments, and digital resources. The findings stress the practical application of human rights education, the pivotal role of teacher training, the significance of community engagement, and the importance of inclusive policies. The study emphasizes continuous improvement, targeted interventions, and a holistic approach integrating various strategies for a more informed, empowered, and inclusive educational environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are actions that should be taken on the basis of the findings of this study:

- The Ministry of Education and stakeholders to emphasize the need for ongoing assessment and improvement of human rights education initiatives to adapt to evolving needs and challenges.
- The Human Rights Commission to foster partnerships between educational institutions, civil society organizations, and government agencies to promote human rights education initiatives.

- Government should ensure that the education systems actively promote human rights values, principles, and practices.
- The Higher Education Authority need to integrate human rights education into teacher training programs. Teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively integrate human rights concepts into their teaching practices.
- Government to ensure equal access to the benefits of human rights education for all students, addressing any disparities in empowerment and understanding.
- The Ministry of Education to prioritize continuous training and mentorship programs for educators to enhance the effectiveness of human rights education.

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