



**Empowerment of Learners for Societal
Change through Revitalized Human Rights
Education in Kuwait**

Dr. Athari Eid Alazmi

**Ph.D, Foundation of Education, College of
Education, University of Toledo, Oh.**

United States of America

**Empowerment of Learners for Societal Change through
Revitalized Human Rights Education in Kuwait**

Athari Eid Alazmi

**Ph.D, Foundation of Education, College of Education,
University of Toledo, Oh. United States of America**

Email: omessa18@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT:

This research aimed to address the existing knowledge gap in human rights education (HRE) in Kuwait by advocating a precise transformative curriculum guided by the integration of Freirean principles of critical pedagogy. This approach empowered learners for social change and justice within the Kuwaiti context. The research emphasized the importance of promoting human dignity and self-respect through human rights education as a channel to uphold dignity, achieve peace, and human flourishing, in alignment with ethical principles and evolving societal needs. The research sought to instill problem-solving skills, critical thinking abilities, and a strong understanding of human rights through critical teaching methods to enable students to bring about societal transformation. The hypothesis posited that integrating critical educational approaches could empower learners and facilitate social change. The research findings underscored the central role of human rights education in affirming human dignity, enhancing respect, and encouraging active participation in societal transformation. The research highlighted the need for transformative teaching methods that empower learners to critically engage with their reality, identify social issues, and take proactive steps toward creating a just society. The research contributed to advancing human rights education, deepening the understanding of human dignity, and fostering positive social change within Kuwaiti society.

Keywords: Empowerment, Societal Change, Revitalized, Human Rights



تمكين المتعلمين من أجل التغيير المجتمعي من خلال تنشيط التثقيف في مجال حقوق الإنسان في الكويت

عذاري عيد العازمي

دكتوراه تخصص فلسفه تربويه، قسم أصول التربية، كلية التربية، جامعة توليدو،
الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.

البريد الإلكتروني: omessa18@hotmail.com

مستخلص:

هدف البحث الحالي إلى تناول الفجوة المعرفية السائدة في تعليم حقوق الإنسان في الكويت (HRE) من خلال الدعوة إلى منهج تحويلي دقيق، مسترشداً بدمج مبادئ أصول التدريس الفريرية Freirean، من خلال تمكين المتعلمين من التغيير الاجتماعي والعدالة بدولة الكويت، وتؤكد الدراسة على أهمية تعزيز كرامة الإنسان واحترام الذات، حيث يكون التثقيف في مجال حقوق الإنسان بمثابة قناة للحفاظ على الكرامة وتحقيق السلام وازدهار الإنسان، تماشياً مع المبادئ الأخلاقية والاحتياجات المجتمعية المتطورة، ويهدف التعليم إلى غرس مهارات حل المشكلات، وقدرات التفكير النقدي، والفهم القوي لحقوق الإنسان، ويتعمق سؤال البحث في كيفية تعليم حقوق الإنسان من خلال طرق التدريس النقدية لتمكين الطلاب من إحداث التحول المجتمعي، تفترض الفرضية أن دمج النهج التربوي النقدي يمكن أن يمكن المتعلمين ويسهل التغيير الاجتماعي، وتؤكد نتائج البحث على الدور المحوري للتربية على حقوق الإنسان في تأكيد كرامة الإنسان، وتعزيز الاحترام، وتشجيع المشاركة الفعالة في التحول المجتمعي، كما تؤكد الدراسة على الحاجة إلى طرق تدريس تحويلية تمكن المتعلمين من التعامل بشكل نقدي مع واقعهم، والتعرف على القضايا الاجتماعية، واتخاذ خطوات استباقية نحو إنشاء مجتمع عادل، وفي نهاية المطاف، يساهم هذا البحث في النهوض بالتثقيف في مجال حقوق الإنسان، وتعميق فهم الكرامة الإنسانية، وتحفيز التغيير الاجتماعي الإيجابي داخل المجتمع الكويتي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التمكين، التغيير المجتمعي، التنشيط، حقوق الإنسان.

Introduction

This century had witnessed a rapid change in different social, political, and economic aspects of societies. Along with these changes, new rules and laws were set for people as a step to organize the new societies. As a result, frustration spread among citizens who did not understand their rights, duties, and roles in the new era. That confusion led to the denial of rights for some people and created unjust systems.

Education is the way to provide people with knowledge, skills, values, and tools they need to live a just and dignified life. Educators understood that there is a need for a new system that connects education with society and helps people to realize their rights. A good education enables learners to appreciate the value of liberty and to acquire the tools to change the system towards one that assures their human rights (HRs) (Vogelfanger, 2021).

That need translated in the existence of Human Rights Education (HRE) in 1994. HRE informs learners about their basic rights through reflective methods that affirm respect for the dignity of all. HRs are considered the cornerstone of stability in any society. They protect the basic dignity inherent in all human beings and provide a voice that speaks for those who struggle for their liberation and suffer from injustice and inequality (Ramcharan, 2002). Learning about HRs confirms the values of human dignity and respect by helping people to realize their power and potential in their communities. The inclusion of HRs in the educational system, where they become transformed into reality, can enhance the understanding and preservation of these rights. Teaching about HRs, Human Rights Education (HRE), provides knowledge and awareness needed to meet that goal. However, schools need to incorporate a social critical transformative pedagogy within HRE classes as an effective educational framework. Introducing learners to critical thinking would be a powerful way for teaching about HRs and bring in the change. Therefore, HRE has the potential to provide learners with knowledge and enthusiasm to realize their rights and inherit dignity (Blanchet-Cohen, & Grégoire-Labrecque, 2022).

HRE has a key role in promoting the idea of social change, respect for human dignity, and realizing social justice. The new generation needs to understand their HRs in a democratic way and become able to demonstrate their freedoms. HRE provides opportunity for learners to fulfill their human potential by accelerating their



capacity of human dignity and self-respect. Knowledge about HRs and feelings of self-worth provide and maintain the ideas of fairness and freedom. To reach its goals, HRE should comprise a critical pedagogy to increase learners' motivation for social change (Andreopoulos, 2002). The critical approach produces *conscientization*, awakening people and educating them about their rights. Also, HRE should be relevant to learners' social context and actual realities. Learners need to be able to identify their existing social problems. Critical reflection is crucial to realize and diminish social and political problems, and to achieve social transformation. Therefore, HRE within a critical framework offers possibilities to learners and widens their aspirations to change their ideas and beliefs about what they are capable of to act in their community with new social roles as activists and advocates for social change (Keet, 2015).

A good HRs educational theory should lead to the understanding of principles of justice, freedom, and human dignity to end suffering that marginalized endure. injustice and Suffering were the strongest motivation behind many critical theorists, such as Freire, Du Bois, Horace Mann and many others who witnessed suffering in the early twentieth century, to insist on their insight about education and critical aspects in general. Developing a critical theory and tie it to education was an act of some of those theorist who looked at human suffering as the concern of education, "Indeed, the very origins of criticality - the tradition that lays the groundwork for critical pedagogy and is concerned with power and its oppression of human beings and regulation of the social order - are grounded on this concern with human suffering" (McLaren, 2007, p.19). Critical pedagogy sees society as one that is divided by unequal power relations.

Critical pedagogy gained an international interest among scholars with the 1967 publication of Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and its English translation in 1970 (McLaren, 2007, p.12). Freire believed in liberating people from previously colonized countries through his philosophy and practice of critical pedagogy. His goal was to eliminate illiteracy among marginalized groups to help them go over injustices. He devoted his life to serving in improving the living conditions of oppressed people. One major contribution Freire had made to the pedagogy was his discussion about critical consciousness, a consciousness beyond understanding which leads to

action (Freire, 1970). Critical pedagogy works within educational institutions to raise questions about inequalities of power, opportunity, and belief systems in societies. These false myths become internalized in a society “to the point where individuals and groups abandon the very aspiration to question or change their lot in life” (Gruenewald 2003, p. 50). The philosophy was first described by Paulo Freire and has since been developed and used by many scholars such as Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren. Critical pedagogy is not a narrow set of practices but a continuous moral project that provides learners with the ability to develop a social awareness of freedom. This pedagogy connects classroom learning with the experiences and histories of the learners. By doing this, it allows learners to understand that with knowledge comes power (Giroux, et al, 1989).

HRs educators need a good understanding on different viewpoints about HRs and HRE. Teaching HRs should not become shallow in teaching about rights human beings entitled only, but it should put more emphasis on how HRE is being taught. Therefore, the critical based framework helps to understand the pedagogical aspect of HRE that facilitates HRs teachers in their teaching practices. Also, this framework works as a base for observing how HRE objectives can be achieved and in classrooms’ procedures. By promoting a more thorough understanding of HRE and its obstacles, educators will make more accurate and efficient decisions about HRE in a way that leads to social change. Integrating a critical framework in HRE is vital to the local and global ideas of human dignity, morality, and HRs. The critical framework can help in contextualizing and understanding the relationship between HRE and social change as presented in the research purpose and question. Particularly, how to perceive and understand HRs and HRE in terms of power and with relation to people and society. HRE needs to be explained through understanding the various societal problems that exist in society as well as understanding different HRs provisions and violations. There are few studies about relating HRE to critical pedagogy and social change which can be frustrating to educators about how to include HRs perspectives in the teaching and learning processes. Therefore, research concerning HRE through the critical aspects of Freirean theory should be done (Bajaj, 2011).

Critical pedagogy is considered a teaching approach that helps learners to question and challenge beliefs and practices that dominate a society. It is a theory and practice of helping learners to achieve



critical consciousness about different social and political aspects. In other words, critical pedagogy is a radical approach to education that attempts to transform oppressive structures in society by using both democratic and activist methods to teaching and learning (Freire 1970, 1985; Shor 1987). Moreover, critical pedagogy connects social and political change directly to education. The idea of teaching change is central to pedagogy. An important defining feature of critical pedagogy is its emphasis on the emancipatory potential of education (Shor, 1992). It attempts to understand teaching practices in the context of social and political goals and aims to foster critical awareness in learners for those goals to be achieved. Giroux (1993) explains that:

“Critical pedagogy initiates an inquiry into the relationship between cultural work, authority, and the securing of particular cultural practices, and as a mode of cultural politics takes as an object of study the relationship between the possibilities for social agency expressed in a range of human capacities and the social forms that often constrain or enable them.” (p.18)

Freire and many leaders of the critical pedagogy insist that education “is always political,” and that educators and students should become “transformative intellectuals” (Giroux, 1988), “cultural workers” (Freire, 1985) capable of identifying the injustices and inequalities of an “often oppressive world” (Gruenewald 2003). For Freire (1970), critical pedagogy begins with recognizing that human beings, learners, exist in a cultural context and “they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it” (p. 90). Furthermore, critical pedagogy is concerned with the idea of a just society in which people have political, economic, and cultural control of their lives. For people to control their lives and transform their conditions, critical pedagogy works through liberating and emancipating oppressed people. Empowering people and enabling social change is contingent upon criticizing schools’ systems in capitalist societies (McLaren 2003; Shor 1992). The major concern of critical pedagogy is to transform oppressed people and to move them away from being objects of education to become subjects of their own autonomy and emancipation (Shor, 1992).

Freire's work with oppressed people led him to use the "conscientização" technique which is a process of becoming aware of social and political flaws and injustices. Freire (1974) mentioned that "to acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands; it is to communicate graphically" (p.43). In this case, "conscientização" means to both understand and act against the oppressive elements of the sociopolitical conditions. According to Freire (1970) consciousness is necessary to liberate people's minds because unconsciousness may produce injustice and increase hegemony of the oppressor. Uneducated people or "mis-educated" only see things as they are or as they should be because they are not aware of reality. By doing this, they may serve the oppressor who gets advantage from their ignorance. Education, as many educators believe, is a way out of poverty and suffering because knowledge is a power for those who have it. But if schools continue to embrace the banking concept in education, learners will not realize their ability to act against unfair ideologies. This is why Freire (1996) encouraged educators to liberate their learners and to take a "radical stance on the defense of the legitimate interests of the human person" (p.115).

A successful education system should resist forms of capitalist reproduction and enable social change by promoting the ability to reverse domination. As Michael Apple (2004) claims, the capitalist system does not completely determine the educational outcomes, which means that most schools sustain a level of autonomy that allows for some degree of "resistance, contestation, and lived culture" (p. 28). This includes theories, practices (praxis), values, and an educational culture that would criticize the capitalist hegemony (McLaren 2003; Shor 1992). As significant parts of critical pedagogy, dialogue, critique, and praxis should be facilitated and introduced to learners in the educational process. These core elements of critical pedagogy are lacking in the traditional HRE classroom. HRs educators need to understand each of those essential elements and expand using them within their teaching techniques. First, dialogue which refers to the active participation and discussion between educators and learners to reach some analysis about the subject being presented. As Freire (1970) claims, a "culture of silence" needs to be penetrated in a way that learners gain a sense of empowerment. When dialogue is directed toward a critical examination of actual learners' experiences, it will



lead to the encouragement of liberation. Dialogue is not about increasing learners' participation in the classroom but also to develop a critical social consciousness among them. The use of dialogue in classroom means to limit educator talk and encourages learner voice (Shor, 1992). As Freire (1970) puts it, dialogue "is the encounter between men, mediated by the world in order to name the world" (P. 69). He also adds that "only the dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education" (P. 73).

Shor (1992) suggests that there should be an environment of equality for dialogue to be liberating which means creating balance between educators' authority and learners' participation. Next, critique that can be understood as a systematic analysis of both self and society with focus on inequality, oppression, and domination (Braa & Callero, 2006). Enabling learners to form insights of their society and critique its position within HRs regulations is a crucial step in a transformational HRE. An effective HRE should include an examination for the surrounding social and political problems that inhibit learners' fulfilment of their HRs. Critical thinking ability raises learners' level of knowledge and judgment ability for different forms of control exist in society. Last, praxis refers to the actual application of knowledge and connects critical reflection to action.

Freire's (1970) concept of "Praxis" had transformed traditional instructional practices as he defined praxis as "the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (p. 91). Praxis takes the HRE curriculum beyond classrooms to the process of transformation into society. From a critical pedagogical perspective, praxis emphasizes collective efforts at social transformation to confront systems of power in society. Using praxis, educators required to critique power systems and facilitate discourse in the classroom, "knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (Freire, 1970, p. 72). For Freire (1970), schools should be the space where students would be encouraged to investigate and question different social conditions.

According to Giroux (2004) critical pedagogy emphasizes critical “reflexivity” in a way that narrows the gap between learning and everyday life experience. The way critical pedagogy works in education is in connecting power with knowledge, and “extending democratic rights and identities by using the resources of history” (p. 34). Praxis as Freire suggests, leads to critical consciousness through a critical reflection process called “concientización” (Freire, 2001). This process helps both educators and learners to examine the roles of power relations and has been viewed as “one of the most dynamic and controversial educational schools of thought of the past 30 years” (Fischman & McLaren, 2005, p. 426). Incorporating these elements of critical pedagogy into HRE is significant but it also hard to have them equally introduced in the course, and it can be challenging as well, especially when faced with the institutional restrictions of many schools (Braa & Callero, 2006). Thus, critical pedagogy incorporates an active learning process that leads to knowledge about the oppressive nature of a society and encourages liberation and social change.

Critical pedagogy implies that the existing society can be imperfect and, therefore, education’s main purpose should be to convert that existing society into a new one where equality, freedom, and empowerment exist (McKernan, 2013). Culture, also, can be accused of reproducing bias and oppression but schools can play a partner in this action as well. Changing the existing power structures is not easy without a constructed knowledge on how to think and find solutions, how to understand the effects of dehumanizing and refuse it, and how to make change and accept its consequences. This can be achieved through incorporating critical pedagogy in the HRE. Critical thinking should be a leading principle in HRE to help learners to explore their world and focus on recognizing their identities to reach their individual and social goals. Education about social justice or teaching about injustice is not enough to create action toward the change. This is why HRE aims to produce a generation that can take action for their concerns and fight for their rights and freedoms.

An effective HRE enhances learners’ critical thinking ability and awakens their consciousness which are essential ideals in the critical pedagogy’s philosophy. Critical pedagogy develops and strengths learners’ abilities to decide for themselves based on knowledge and allows them to direct their life according to the goals they set for themselves. By this way, learners feel confident that they



are an important part of the educational process and a main character of its outcomes. In addition, critical pedagogy aims to empower learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and inspire them to strive for a better life. The purpose of education, for critical theorists, is to make marginalized learners aware of their positions in society, and their rights as human beings. This awareness is initial as the first stage that leads to empowerment “critical understanding leads to critical action” (Freire, 1974, p.40). An education that does not address the needs of victims of injustice and oppression fails to produce balance in the power relations in society and leads to more suffering for the victims (McLaren, 2007). Therefore, introducing HRE for learners will benefit everyone, especially those who are marginalized to know about their rights and their role in society.

Giroux (1998) indicates that education should make learners “critically thinking citizens” who can take role in a democratic life. Also, Giroux (1997) suggests integrating critical pedagogy in schooling because critical understanding empowers learners to develop self-formation that led to liberation. He asserts that higher education should engage in political education by “teaching students to take risks, challenge those with power, honor critical traditions, and be reflective about how authority is used in the classroom” (p. 265). Furthermore, Giroux insists on educators’ responsibility to enable students to become “cultural producers” who can rewrite their experiences and perceptions and understand how to question the authoritarian power of the classroom. Freire (1985) asserts, critical pedagogy encourages learners to function as active agents in their own education by developing critical consciousness. This process helps learners to develop the ability to evaluate the validity, fairness, and authority within their educational and daily life situations because “teaching that does not emerge from the experience of learning cannot be learned by anyone” (Freire, 1985, p. 30). Freire’s influential method stems from drawing directly from his students’ lived experiences. A major argument for critical pedagogy is the belief that educational systems are political (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1997; Shor, 1992).

As Giroux (1992) claims, critical pedagogy is crucial in that it helps learners to engage in social criticism to create a “public sphere” where they can exercise power over their own lives. Pedagogy, according to Giroux (2004), must always be contextually defined,

“allowing it to respond specifically to the conditions, formations, and problems that arise in various sites in which education takes place” (P.18). The contradictions in learners’ lives experiences should be exposed in the classroom. Giroux (1993) explains how critical pedagogy is concerned about the articulation of knowledge to social effects and went further to show educators’ responsibility to encourage critical reflection and moral and civic agency for their learners. Learners need to recognize how dominant ideologies and beliefs may work against their own interests. By doing this, the development of a “counterculture” where oppositional values, attitudes, and behaviors will be promoted (Braa & Callero, 2006). Advocates of critical pedagogy support the “construction of a counter hegemony” as a major aspect in the theory. In order for critical pedagogy to be successful in countering hegemony, educators have to offer an open and equal environment for their learners. Also, they should engage in deep self-reflection about their position and authority in the classroom.

Giroux (1993) insists on “the necessity for critical pedagogues to be attentive to the ethical dimensions of their own practice” (p.19). Integrating pedagogy in a classroom indicates that educators should refuse limiting their teaching to traditional matters of technique and method but to be open to diverse conditions and views to question the unequal relations of power and ideologies. Education has the power to change social inequality by nurturing a generation with power that can enable them to do something differently and take positive and constructive action. This educational stance is one that HRs educators should strive for as the moral purpose of their subject and education in general.

Furthermore, relating HRE to critical pedagogy’s theory as a theoretical framework will promote the principles of human dignity and democracy. This study and through critical lenses, can encourage the process of social justice and diminish inequality. The chosen framework emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and communication skills that are essential to informed citizens in their struggle for justice and freedom. Also, it challenges learners to seek better and deep understanding for HRE values and the meaning of dignity. Learners need to see the relation between HRs and peace, and how does that reflect on their life both individually and socially. Moreover, the critical aspects of the theory support learners to translate the doctrines of HRE into reality that should promote their feelings of self-respect and self-worth. This prevents human rights



abuses, combats discrimination, promotes equality, and enhances people's participation in decision-making processes. Without critical thinking ability, it is hard for learners to comprehend the complex forces that create domination, and how to abolish these powers. Thus, the critical framework affirms on teaching HRs critically to provide analysis and solution to cultural and structural injustice in general and in Kuwait specifically so it can be minimized and avoided (Osler, 2015).

A critical HRE should be shaped in a way that makes learners discuss different societal and moral dilemmas. HRE within a critical pedagogy instill learners with critical thinking ability and skill of critique that create empowering values which can lead to a more equitable and just society. It is Freire's method of using queries in learning as part of his mind liberation teaching technique. Teachers, as Freire (1974) suggests, should give learners a chance to share the power and have a voice in their classrooms so they can contribute to their welfare. HRs educators need to facilitate a critical reflection and dialogue in their teaching strategies so that learners identify the existing social problems, "Transformation of the world implies a dialectic between the two actions: denouncing the process of dehumanization and announcing the dream of a new society." (Freire, 1996).

Also, using dialogue, as critical pedagogy suggests, helps learners to engage with various classroom practices and decision making to establish democratic and empowering ethics. Freire (1970) claims that it is the educators' responsibility to assist learners to share their ideas, opinions, and feedbacks about different issues in their learning journey, "an educator must be a partner of the learners in his relations with them" (p. 44). He opposes the concept of "banking education" which only involves narration by the educator and limits teacher-learner dialogue. In contrast, Freire promotes the "problem-posing education" which encourages critical thinking and reflection among learners. Moreover, adapting critical pedagogy in teaching HRs assures learners engagement and participation in their learning as active members which, in turn, leads to higher achievement of the outcomes and greater respect for HRs. Freire (1970) insists that "To alienate men from their own decision making is to change them into objects" (p. 59).

A significant aspect of critical pedagogy is that it suggests an essential need for social transformation based on the value of human dignity and equality. HRE is not about providing knowledge about HRs only, but empowering learners with agency to be active participants in changing the conditions that prevent them from reaching their goals. This is why a critical and transformational form of HRE is crucial. Critical and transformational HRE empowers future citizens to transform laws, social norms, and power relations such that everyone can flourish in equal dignity and freedom. Reardon (2015) states that transformation and social change are the main purpose of education. HRE and critical pedagogy work hand in hand to cultivate the transformative agency within learners. The transformational process should introduce learners to see the gaps between rights and realities. Also, Reardon claims that Freire's theories and practices considered the most effective concepts and methodologies for peace learning and HRE. She believes that critical reflection, dialogue, and inquiry lead learners to reveal and eliminate various problems they might face in daily life experiences. HRE needs to be changed into a holism, transformative, and critical learning framework to reach its objectives. HRE should be integrated with Freirean pedagogy to become critical and transformational because awareness and critical thinking are supportive agents in critical pedagogy. Therefore, critical pedagogy involves the cultivation of transformation capacity to move social realities of oppression to liberation and empowerment.

In Kuwait, educational system is traditional, overly strict and emphasizes on repetitive lectures and memorization which prevents learners from realizing the right meaning of education. This kind of educational ideal inhibits the outcomes of HRE and violates learners' humanity. Learners in Kuwait public schools need to understand their HRs and feel their human dignity through an effective HRE. Kuwaiti learners should understand that some of the existent social norms represent and sustain HRs violations and justify it by making it look and feel natural or right (Galtung). In 2006 the HRE subject was introduced to Kuwait national curriculum as a three-year program that was reduced later to a one-year course for senior class only. The textbook called, Constitution and Human rights (CHR), which discusses the Kuwaiti constitution and some information about Islamic and international HRs. Unfortunately, CHR textbook does not cover all HRs articles and does not integrate a clear philosophy for teaching HRs. Also, the CHR course was introduced to learners using traditional teaching methods that lack active participation and



discussion. The social studies teachers who teach CHR did not get training or workshops to teach the program. This can be minimized by engaging in an effective pedagogy that helps to recognize the principles and values of HRE besides offering the needed training for CHR educators. Integrating the critical pedagogy within CHR class is the premise for change towards social change and justice.

HRE has a key role in the acceleration of social change and promoting respect for human dignity and social justice. Rawls (1971) concept of “reciprocity principle” asserts mutual respect among people as equal and free agents. Learners will not understand how respecting oneself and others would be appreciated and beneficial for all society members without learning about it. He also talked about how people should be autonomous citizens who “possess fundamental reasoning skills” (p, 102). He said that people need to develop reasoning skills to become active citizens in a civil society. These skills should be provided equally for all as Rawls stated, “Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought” (p, 3). These skills could be promoted through schooling and by using democratic principles in teaching. The critical pedagogy enhances learners’ ability to reasoning and thinking critically about different issues that may face them in their life. Therefore, gaining knowledge and skills through HRE and within critical pedagogy teaches learners the principles of equality and justice.

HRE should be taught to learners to achieve peace and social justice in society. This asserts the deep meaning of HRs and the reason behind teaching about them. Education in Kuwait is affected by the different political, sociocultural, and religious beliefs. HRE in Kuwait has been affected by these beliefs and by the various individual philosophical views for educators and policy makers. HRE learners face a frustration moment of conflicts between what they learn and what they see in reality. These elements revolving around HRE prevent any chance for an effective education. Educational institutions in Kuwait should work towards changing the educational policies that might produce more inequalities among different social classes. Cultural violence is another problem that serves to hinder or suppress victims’ response toward the undemocratic act and provides justifications to hurt each other while being rewarded for doing so. Moreover, authoritarian schools’ administrations and educators make

an obstacle in front of influential HRE in Kuwait. HRE in Kuwait need a significant vision to integrate a critical thinking pedagogy in order to reach the positive outcomes of course. The critical approach produces conscientization that is about awakening people and educating them about their rights. Learners need to strengthen their beliefs about the importance of social change, and how they got the ability to make that change happen. A HR curriculum must be a student-centered one that is built upon critical content and democratic dialogic climate. It should inspire learners to involve themselves in self-reflection and shared participation processes by confronting existing social conditions. This process is similar to Freire's conception of praxis that connects theory and practice (Osler, 2015).

The status of HRs and democracy in any society depends on the values people hold within that society. Values of respect and dignity are usually formed from the methods of social upbringing that exist in those societies. The process of building values for HRs within a community needs a clear examination of the reality of that community and the methods of socialization it approves for that purpose. The way people are treated, and the way youths are raised in a community put a great demand on scholars to explore the connections between HRs principles, local ideologies, and education within that community. That connection is usually combined with tension, especially with cultural and religious practices. In Kuwait, tensions are extended into the educational system. Kuwait is a constitutional emirate with a hereditary Amir, a selected cabinet of ministers headed by the prime minister, and an elected 50-seat parliament. Kuwait legislation framework is set by both the constitution, originated from the French constitution, and Islam. Educational reforms in Kuwait have followed the neo-liberal pattern of standardized testing and market-driven training (Bertsch, & Warner-Soderholm, 2013).

The constitution and Human rights (CHR)

Teaching HRs in Kuwait can be found only in the 12th grade curriculum as a module of the social studies class. The textbook called (The constitution and Human rights) which talks about the Kuwaiti constitution and a general information about international HRs with some regard to some HRs in Islam. Also, it includes some information about the different international organizations that are dedicated to promoting human rights such as UNESCO and the Security Council. The chapter describes some items of the HRs articles from the



perspective of national law, Islam, and Kuwait Constitution. These rights covered in the CHR are:

- Right to freedom and equality
- Right to Life
- The prohibition of torture
- Freedom of belief
- Freedom of speech
- Right to education
- Women's rights
- Children's Rights
- Political rights

Unfortunately, HRE in senior's textbook does not fully cover all HRs articles and principles or standards and does not integrate an effective pedagogy for teaching HRs. In the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (2013), under respect for the views of the child, the United Nations committee wrote about the importance of introducing a "sustained public education, awareness-raising and social mobilization programs" (article 42) in schools.

Al-Nakib (2012) stated that Kuwait had introduced an educational module to the high schools' curriculum called the Constitution and Human Rights (CHR) in 2006. The CHR program was based on the principles of the universality of human rights and the values of the Kuwaiti constitution. It started as a three-years program but was later reduced to a one-year course. Al-Nakib (2012) conducted a three-year research about the CHR program; its goals, content, organization, teacher training, and its cancellation from grades 10 and 11. She selected a public high school for the study focusing on the concepts of human rights, citizenship and democracy using a qualitative case study that involved observations, interviews and student research workshops. Al- Nakib said that the class was added to the curriculum once a week, and teachers were given rigid timetable to ensure they work towards the exams, "leaving little room for teacher and student input or action that would help to develop the skills of democratic participation that were an intended goal of the module"

(p.104). Also, she claimed that the CHR textbook, which represented Islam, Kuwait constitution, and international HRs, created tensions, “the lack of discussion on these tensions and the lack of questions raised about them in the module’s goals, textbooks and timetables suggests that this was perhaps not the way such thinking was intended to occur” (p.104), which resulted in the limitation of the program for senior class only. Al-Nakib found that the students who took the three-year CHR module were “knowledgeable, articulate and challenging in their demands. Their voices revealed an intense sense of agency and confidence” (p.110).

Critique of HRE in Kuwait

HRE should be delivered to learners in an effective way that encourages their participation in a critical thinking process and supports their understanding of existing social problems (Apple, 2004). In the UN Economic and Social Council (UNESCO, 2013) report for Kuwait, it states, “The Committee regrets that human rights have not been included in school curricula at all levels of education in the State party” (article 29). It is the educators’ role to assist learners to envision what is possible beyond what already exists within their social structure. This is why CHR educators were not able to reach the expected goals of the class. They used traditional educational methods and worked on rigid timetables to cover the textbook material which made it impossible for influential learning. In a matter of fact, there is no special program in teachers’ preparation programs for HRE in Kuwait. Kuwait College of Education does not require HRE for undergraduates’ courses and does not offer training for in-service teachers to teach HRs (Al-Nakib, 2011).

Also, there are no training or workshops for both pre-service and in-service HRs teachers in Kuwait. Kuwait educational system need to work towards effective HRE by providing a good preparation teacher program and adopting a new and practical application in both content and procedure of the curriculum. Teaching HRE for HR educators should move its focus from what would be taught, onto how it would be taught. Most HR educators use outdated teaching techniques that do not encourage participation and critical thinking from learners. HR educators need to possess a concrete understanding of human rights principles and values so they can deliver them for their learners. The way in which the educators perceive the meaning of HRs is another pressing item in teaching HRE. Hence, HR educators’ perception of the subject is fundamental for their role in transmitting



that knowledge to their learners. Ensuring a successful translation of HRE into practice depends on educators' understanding of HRE visions and implementations.

The adoption of HRE in schools need a solid foundation of a HRs culture into the institution's environment and curriculum. Most Kuwait public schools do not promote a HRE learning environment that is free from all forms of discrimination. Also, there should be a sense of a unique HRE classroom that promotes the growth of human rights and empowerment. Alrumaidi (2010) had conducted a study on 883 Kuwaiti students about democratic, Kuwait constitution, and HRs principles. He found that only half of the sample knew about these aspects,

In this context, it is possible to infer a significant decline in the level of human rights education in the Kuwaiti school, and that this situation takes an undesirable character. It is a relative ignorance, but it is fundamental and dangerous in the level of students' awareness of human rights and commissions. So that this ignorance applies to the Kuwaiti constitution. (p. 188)

Alrumaidi found that there is little knowledge about democracy and HRs in Kuwaiti high schools. He uncovered that most learners look at schools as lacking democratic practices because of the authoritarian structures. Moreover, the study shows that the outcomes of the HRE class did not produce the expected results. It did not move learners beyond reciting and memorizing some of the HR's articles. CHR educators introduce the constitution and UDHR items then ask learners to memorize them without presenting any activity that involves critique or application on social realities. Learners focus on the subject matters for exams purposes but unsure of the deep meaning of the HRs values. Learners need to understand their rights and recognize their importance by integrating a critical thinking approach for teaching HRE. HRE in Kuwait fails to relate HRs values and principles to learners' real-life experiences. There is a suffering from the weak connection between what is being taught in classrooms and what is already there in society. Learners should become radical critics of the existing social structures by identifying the harms they experience and by formulating alternatives and transformative strategies to realize those alternatives (Al-Nakib, 2012). HRE class will not reach its goals if learners' rights and tensions are not

addressed and if schools continue the authoritarian structures. In order to a successful HRE in Kuwait, a sustainable and effective strategy should be incorporate into the educational system.

Struggles of HRE in Kuwait

Bajaj (2011) explained how HRE should be seen as a tool for raising learners' awareness of their rights which will create knowledgeable citizens. The three years program had promoted a democratic education within an authoritarian school system and helped learners to develop agencies and question the status quo. Such skills are needed in order for learners to take action toward a social change movement for a better just society. Reducing CHR module in Kuwait into one year moved back the controlled authoritarian educational system that endorses obedience at the expense of autonomy. It replaced active citizens with passive ones who depend on the State for their dreams. Creating an environment that supports HRs needs more than self-governed leaders (Snauwaert, 2011). There is a need for a supportive HRE that equips citizens with confidence to invoke social change. A good HRE program have the potential for creating a powerful generation that can lead a social change movement in Kuwait. CHR program in Kuwait does not address a specific pedagogy or teaching methodology in any depth. It falls under a general knowledge type of HRE that concerned with socialization and the delivery of HRs content to learners. Taking action is not explicitly encouraged as a goal for the program. CHR program in Kuwait public schools reflects the "banking approach" for Freire. Also, it can be described as a traditional education for HRs in which there is a distance between educator and learners and where memorization is common and required. Learners are not given opportunities on their own learning, lack of participation, open discussion, critical reflection, and power encouragement. This approach HRE produces is an incomplete and potentially inadequate method that does not comprise changes in beliefs and behaviors of learners.

HRE and Challenges in Kuwait

HRE may differ in approach, definition, and anticipated outcomes based on both life realities of a given place and positions of power and authority. The way HRE is being introduced in public schools in a third world country varies from that in elite private one in a democratic developed country. Sadly, some countries oppose incorporating an effective HRE within government schools because of



“rising demands related to justice from those educated about human rights” (Bajaj, 2011. p, 488). Also, many scholars in education have mentioned that the form of HRE integrated into government schools and textbooks may be quite different than the originally conceptualized one. (Bajaj, 2011) asserts that “by the time human rights content gets incorporated into textbooks, it may be altered such that it loses its activist-oriented approach” (p, 489). HRE is presented in a way that separates HRs from the struggles that lead to their formation; struggles that have achieved greater respect for rights. Unfortunately, HRE in many educational systems has been missing its ultimate goal as Reardon (2009) states that “In the names of more urgent public priorities such as national security, human rights fall by the policy wayside” (p, 5). These processes of adjustment and modification created a variation among HRE programs around the globe.

Improving the level of people’s lives cannot be done without improving the right conditions that protect civil, democratic, and HRs for those people (Snauwaert, 2011). Citizens of Kuwait need to live those rights and incorporate them into their lifestyle rather than a mere political structure. Embracing a social culture that nurtures individuals to uphold HRs leads to a nation that protects and respects humankind (Bajaj, 2008). According to Al-Nakib (2011) the interrelation between democratic principles, citizenship, and HRs in Kuwait are undeniable. HRs educators need to direct their teaching procedure towards developing a more democratic space in order to increase their learners’ consciousness about their rights. Kuwait educational system does not support a culture of HRs or HRE. Studying in public schools, which are sponsored by the government, depends on the legal status of individual citizenship. With a population of non-Kuwaiti that exceeds Kuwaiti citizens and pay for their education in private schools, confirms that the right to education in Kuwait is not equally ensured for everyone. This creates contradictions about HRs concepts for learners. They feel frustration about what they learn in HRE classroom and what is there in reality. Another struggle for HRE in Kuwait is the differentiation among curricula and methods of teaching depending in schools’ regions and administrations. There is no agreement among different administration departments on a national curriculum for HRE but a combination of textbooks with various goals and timetables. Another thing, Kuwait HRE curriculum lack some essential terms such

as reform, radical, and active that considered critical words for any HRE program (Al-Nakib, 2011). Furthermore, topics of HRs and HRs in Islam, which might have a slight conflict, are not introduced to learners clearly within an open, free to ask atmosphere. Thus, HRE in Kuwait faces obstacles that hinder learners from understanding the real meaning of HRs and the reason behind studying about them.

Connecting HRE to peace and violence studies is fundamental for the understanding the whole picture of HRs studies. Kuwait educational institutions, k-12 and collages do not offer a peace education course. Unluckily, most educational institutions in Kuwait compel the limited voice and choice for learners and expect compliance. For example, the listed grading criteria, attendance policies, lesson plans, established assignments, and paper rubrics are all fixed without an explanation for the learner. Actually, these practices determine the good learner, the one who is following the rules and never questions them which reproduce more weak learners. On the other hand, HRE is being taught with no clear and affective pedagogy. Social studies teachers who are teaching the HRs course did not get guidance and were not certified for teaching it. Without connecting HRE to a well-structured pedagogy, the class will remain lacking meaning. Guiding learners to realize the relationship of cultural, political, and moral factors affect HRs a needs critical pedagogy. Also, an influential pedagogy is contingent upon educators' comprehension of the significance of the relationship between HRE and critical pedagogy. The failure of integrating HRE to most educational levels in Kuwait had widen the gap in front of feeling of the importance of HRs as it is not at the core of the educational vision. This lack of interest in HRE considered problematic to a major constitutional right in Kuwait that assert the importance of accessing a quality education to all citizens (Al-Nakib, 2011). Educational institutions in Kuwait should facilitate concrete strategies for teaching HRs using appropriate pedagogy, structures, and plans. They need to focus on teachers' training for HRE and develop better textbooks and instructional approaches. Clear educational and instructional plans in teaching HRE enable both educators and learners to realize the meaning behind HRE.

Argument for a Critical Approach to Human Rights Education

Many scholars viewed education as the vehicle for social change. Dewey (1916) had a vision for education that is participatory and democratic, Counts (1932) called for building a new social order,



Brameld (1956) specified that there should be a school system where democracy and controversial topics are discussed freely between learners and their teachers, Freire (1970) aspired for a critical pedagogy, and many other scholars who strived to change the educational systems to empower marginalized people and challenge inequitable social arrangements in order to create a more just world.

HRs educators need to apply pedagogies that help learners to engage in critical thinking about different issues and concerns within their society. Critical pedagogues can support marginalized groups of learners who are excluded from social, economic, and political possibilities by showing them their real potential. HRs educators should incorporate a dialogic critical pedagogy to reach the goal of social change and authoritarianism reduction. Critical reflection included in critical pedagogy is a significant aspect of a holistic and transformative framework for peace and HRE (Ruggunan, & Spiller, 2014).

Introducing HRE to learners within a critical pedagogy raise learners' awareness about HRs issues in their society. Educational institutions should support a teaching and learning technique that give learners the right to express themselves, their ideas, and their uniqueness by embracing ideas of critical pedagogy and support the practice and implementation of the HRs premise. This kind of practice can lead to providing a society with activists who are able to function on social change. Thus, HRE should be directed to work within and towards people's vision of the desirable society and what they understand and define as a good life (Tibbitts, & Kirchschräger, 2010).

It has been argued that the interpretation of the meaning of human rights is the starting premise of the argument for a critical approach to human rights education (HRE), for the basic nature and meaning of the subject being taught, its logical structure, determines the conception of the educational process to the learning of that subject. In the case of HRE it is the nature of human rights—human rights are justified claims and thus the human rights bearer is a claim maker--that should logically determine the nature of HRE. It has been argued that the establishment and enactment of human rights as justified claims *empowers* the claim maker; HRs bestow *agency* upon citizens. If the purpose of human rights is empowerment and agency, then capacities of critical thinking and critical consciousness are

necessary for HRs empowerment. It has been argued that critical pedagogy, including the elements of critique, dialogue, praxis, and problem-posing, is the most compelling approach and should be adopted as pedagogical approach to HRE (Zembylas, & Keet, 2019).

Application in Kuwait

Educational goals and practices consider the moral and political aspects of society and should be organized for its prosperity. Justice and democracy are especially important components for any free country that seeks to improve citizens' life and elevate their public good. Kuwait is a just democratic country that respect HRs principles that is based on the value of human dignity. Creating and maintaining a just society depends on creating an educational system that values the principles of HRs and human dignity. Respect for the dignity and HRs should be reflected on Kuwait educational systems in order to install values of integrity and self-respect. Teaching HRs has been a demand for Kuwait schools to deliver and ensure the fundamental values, practices, and beliefs of both HRs and dignity. A good CHR should be built on efficient and reachable goals that support learners' development morally and politically to value their HRs and dignity. Education provides people with knowledge about their rights and helps them to narrow the gaps that destroy their public good. The value of HRE is that it prepares learners to live in a just society by helping them to recognize their rights and understand the value of freedom. One fundamental objective of HRE is the formation of empowered citizens who have knowledge, skills and attitudes required for promoting HRs. A citizen who knows and values HRs is more able to actively participate in solving community problems, respects others' rights, is fully aware of their responsibilities, and is ready to support the idea of HRs and liberties.

Research Statement of Purpose

This research addresses the issues of HRE in Kuwait. The purpose of this study is to emphasize the importance of a critical transformational approach to HRE. I intend to explore in what ways a critical conception of Freirean pedagogy can inform the theory of human rights education to empower learners for social change and social justice within the Kuwaiti context. Human rights educators need to support the feelings of human dignity and self-respect in each learner. Human dignity is based on self-worth and sanctity which entitles people to claim their rights. Al-Daraweesh and Snauwaert

(2015) state that, “One of the ultimate goals of human rights and human rights education is the preservation of human dignity” (p. 196). Reardon (2015) looks at human dignity as the primary subject for peace and human flourishing. She suggests a vision of a universal moral inclusion “a vision in which all human beings are accorded respect for their fundamental human dignity” (p. 2). Human dignity affirms the basis for equal rights and fair opportunities for cherished life and human flourishing. Feelings of dignity and self-respect lead citizens to participate effectively in the development of their country. Moreover, human dignity is the focus when articulating claims for HRs and is the basis for the fulfillment of justice and peace. Thus, learners need a good HRE that informs them about their basic rights through exploring their actual realities, and through reflective methods that affirm respect for the dignity for all.

The purpose of education should be aligned with the ethical principles of society and the changing needs of it as well. A good education considers learners’ needs to recognize their rights as humans and help them to reach their full potential. Learners need to understand their rights and how to deal with different problems that may encounter their realization of their rights. They need to develop explanation and analyzing capabilities toward diverse issues and interpret them through their individual views based on the cultural values and beliefs. Learners need a critical thinking ability to strengthen their beliefs about the importance of social change, and how to make that change happen. This is why schools have to develop learner’s knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are necessary for that reason. It is schools’ responsibility to work toward establishing solid and safe ground for teaching students about their human rights (HRs) and social justice in addition to raising their awareness about the need for social change.

HRE should incorporate a praxis-theory relation that can be translated into reality. This integration between praxis and theory is what empowers learners by providing them with the ability to take an active role in transforming their social reality, “In this process, the learner is given an ownership over tools, means, and the end of the educational process” (Al-Daraweesh and Snauwaert, 2015, p. 184). Hence, Human Rights Education (HRE) aims to accomplish social

change by helping learners to understand the importance of their human rights in order to ensure respect and happiness for all.

Research Question

In what ways can the theory of critical pedagogy inform the theory of human rights education to empower students for social change and social justice within the Kuwaiti context?

Research Hypothesis

I expect that this study will promote my idea that integrating a critical approach to HRE will provide the anticipated results of empowerment and social change. The philosophical problem addressed in this research is how to improve HRE in Kuwait educational curriculum. Students in Kuwait are not receiving an influential HRE by the meaning of leading to empowerment for social change. This study is significant because promoting peace and justice requires finding common ground and reaching a mutual understanding. A critical, transformational human rights education is one means to achieve that. However, despite the importance of human rights education and the historical significance of peace and justice in Kuwait, there has not been any philosophical studies of the role of a critical, transformational approach to human rights education in Kuwait.

In many countries, HRE fails to achieve informed learners who can take informed actions toward injustice and social change. HRE could not foster learner's awareness about social inequalities and conflicts. Likewise, current HRE classes do not help students to engage in queries about some unquestionable issues like parental authority or authority of the male over the female. This approach to HRE that does not encourage learners' critical thinking fails to deliver its message. This failure is the result of ignoring learners' ability to both critical thinking and questioning the status quo. Therefore, by engaging in a critical and transformative pedagogy, learners will become able to recognize social problems in their realities and act towards changing them to make their society a better place for all.

Significance of the Study

Human rights studies are usually connected to peace studies. The existence of human rights was a result of an occurred violence in order to sustain peace that Galtung (1990) defined as the absence of violence. In order to eliminate repression, people need fair laws and



just systems that assure their rights, freedom, and dignity. True principles of HRs include freedom from the power of coerced consensus or manipulated attitudes. Moreover, Galtung showed the harmful effects on people and societies because of some ideological beliefs that justify authoritarianism and oppression. Furthermore, Galtung (1969) explained that violence can be related to the mental, the somatic, and the structure of the society, “violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations” (p. 168). Social injustice is one face of violence that legitimizes power dominations through religion, language, and ideology.

In Kuwait, prominent beliefs can be reproduced uncritically across generations. Culture makes us see inequality and repression as normal or natural as Galtung (1969) stated because of the narrow and restrictive understanding of violence. This creates struggle among many segments of society and press the need for reconceptualization of the pedagogical approach in teaching HRs. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) mentioned young people’s rights, including the right to participate in decisions that concern them (Article 12). It was expanded to include a recommendation from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights that human rights education for children should include encouragement to take action to defend human rights and prevent human rights abuses (United Nations, 1989). HRs articles create challenges to education to interfere both social and political spheres and encounter the distinction between learners’ rights and laws and ideologies of society. Different structural powers in Kuwait lead to what Galtung (1990) defined as cultural violence. The problem with cultural violence is that it considers those who are oppressed as aggressors when they try to get their rights because no one should break the cultural norms. The symbolic rules and notions that guide people in their daily life routines considered normal or “commonsense” that make people live in a hegemonic culture but unable to see the greater picture of humanity. In relation to education, social norms and ideologies in Kuwait are fixed and should be accepted by everyone even if they were unfair. They are permanent in a way that people find hard to be changed. Changing a norm or a tradition that stayed for a long time makes people feel afraid of disrupting society. This is why any social change or transformation

process is slow and takes more time to reach results. Public schools in Kuwait work as instruments to transmit the culture for the new generation which reproduce the struggles.

Learners who live in a strict culture and engage in rigorous traditions find it hard to know or realize their human rights. Unfair ideologies or disciplinary methods considered a cultural domination that threatens the feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. The coercive methods of socialization that are repressive make young people comply to adults, which produces weak adults in terms of asking for their rights and respect from authority figures. Interaction between adults and children that takes a hierarchy style, where obedience and command move from top-down on basis of threat, punishment, and humiliation, creates feelings of fear, guilt, and anxiety. Dictatorial relationships that are based on submission and pressure rather than communication and respect, are incompatible with all values of good living and human rights, which may lead to anger and violence. These ways of social education destroy human rights values such as respect, dignity, and freedom. This is why an effective HRE empowers individuals to take part in promoting human rights movements and claim their rights.

Methodology of the Study

Critical pedagogy serves the purpose of human liberation through consciousness and self-reflection. With this in mind, it differs from scientific theories that understand knowledge as an objectified product. McKernan (2013) defines critical pedagogy as follows:

...Critical pedagogy is a movement involving relationships of teaching and learning so that learners gain a critical self-consciousness and social awareness and take appropriate action against oppressive forces. This idea is central to Freire's notion of "conscientization" or the coming to personal critical consciousness. (p.425)

The critical framework provides strength to my concept of making HRE effective and influential. This theoretical framework sheds light on social injustices and emphasizes transformational objectives in a quest to create a better society. Critical pedagogy looks at education as a power that should be controlled to change society and diminish its injustice. Moreover, this theoretical framework revolves around the concept of understanding HRE from a critical perspective.



With roots in Marxist and neo-Marxist critical theory, critical pedagogy represents a transformational educational response to institutional and ideological domination, especially under capitalism (Gruenewald 2003). Critical pedagogy was brought to the educational context by Paulo Freire (1921-1997), a native of Brazil and one of the most influential philosophers of education of the twentieth century. Freire had contributed to both theoretical and practical development of the theory. In addition to Freire, scholars such as Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, and Donald Macedo have contributed to enriching it.

Findings of the Study

Learning about HRs confirms the values of human dignity and respect by helping people to realize their power and potential in their communities. The inclusion of HRs in the educational system, where they become transformed into reality, can enhance the understanding and preservation of these rights. Schools are considered the place where students learn about their rights and how to improve their society to achieve democracy and social justice. Teaching about HRs or HRE provides the needed knowledge and awareness to meet that goal. Schools need to incorporate socially critical transformative pedagogy within HRE classes as an effective educational framework. Introducing learners to critical thinking would be a powerful way for teaching about HRs and bring in the change. HRE should include an examination of the elements in society that impede the realization of human rights. Social change is needed to combat inequality and injustice. Social injustice serves to hinder or suppress victim's response toward the unfair act and provides people with justifications to hurt and destroy each other while being rewarded for doing so. In Kuwait, HRE exist in high school senior class and not being introduced to other school' levels. HRE curriculum in Kuwait needs a significant vision to integrate a critical pedagogical approach in order to reach the positive outcomes of the subject. Critical thinking assists learners to develop new understandings of themselves, their society, and the world. Effective implementation of HRE investigates the existing social issues using critical pedagogy as a framework. However, there is a need for transformational educators who introduce their learners to the best practices for HRE. There should be teacher preparation programs to assist educators in providing HRE effectively through applying critical pedagogy. Learning about HRs confirms the

values of human dignity and respect by helping people to realize their power and potential in their communities. Relating HRE to critical pedagogy makes a significant difference in learners' perceptions about HRs. This perception is crucial to assist learners in protecting their rights and those of others. HRE within a critical pedagogic framework enables learners to uncover their realities, shared values, problems, and aspirations in their communities. HRE has a key role in the acceleration of social change and promoting respect for human dignity and social justice.

In Kuwait, educational institutions distribute knowledge and promote the processes of social development. CHR is being introduced to learners for the purpose of understanding HRs in general and Kuwait constitution in specific. There should be a critical approach to CHR in Kuwait public schools because learners need to understand how important it is to know about their rights. CHR educators should understand how their role and their teaching methods affect their learners' conception about the subject. Some educators force their rules and demand the learners to act within these rules which assert negative values about democracy and freedom. They should respect their learners' human dignity and freedom. Also, CHR educators need to recognize how to make their teaching meaningful and beneficial for their learners. CHR curriculum should lead the process of social change to fair and just society where HRs are provided equally for everyone. Different philosophers direct their speech to educators who should work to create real-world learning and help learners to understand different social issues. Learners learn through meaningful engagement and applications of critical pedagogy that encourages critical thinking ability. CHR educators need to involve learners in active learning process by discussing Kuwait society's problems to help them understand their life and become able to make the change.

Recommendations of the Study:

To further empower learners and promote societal change through human rights education (HRE) in Kuwait, it is recommended emphasizing the integration of critical pedagogy into HRE curriculum and teaching practices. Moreover, teacher training programs should prioritize equipping educators with the skills to employ critical thinking techniques, discussions, and real-world problem-solving activities in their HRE lessons. This approach will actively engage students in the exploration of human rights issues, fostering deeper understanding and critical analysis.



It is recommended developing a comprehensive assessment framework to evaluate the effectiveness of HRE programs in Kuwait. This framework should include both quantitative and qualitative measures to assess changes in students' attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge related to human rights. Longitudinal studies, on the other hand, could track the long-term impact of HRE on students' active participation in promoting societal change and upholding human rights values.

Encouraging greater community engagement and partnerships in the implementation of HRE initiatives is of paramount importance. Collaboration with local organizations, civil society, and parents to create a supportive ecosystem for human rights education. These partnerships can facilitate the sharing of resources, expertise, and best practices, enriching the overall impact of HRE in Kuwaiti society.

Suggestions for Further Research:

Based on the research findings, the following research topics are suggested to be further researched by the future researchers.

- 1 Assessing the impact of inclusive education on human rights education in Kuwait.
- 2 Investigating educator teaching approaches in Kuwaiti human rights education.
- 3 Exploring the role of human rights education in developing social change and equity in Kuwaiti society.
- 4 A comprehensive analysis of availability, relevance, and accessibility in Kuwait's human rights education curriculum.

References

- Al-Daraweesh, F., & Snauwaert, D. T. (2015). Human Rights Education Beyond Universalism and Relativism: A Relational Hermeneutic for Global Justice. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Al-Nakib, R. (2012) Human Rights, Education for Democratic Citizenship, and International Organizations: findings from a Kuwaiti UNESCO ASP net school, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 12(1), 97-116.
- Al-Nakib. R. (2015) Education and Democratic Development in Kuwait: Citizens in Waiting.
- Andreopoulos, G. (2002). Human rights education and training for professionals. *International Review of Education*, 48, 239-249.
- Apple, M. W. (2004). Ideology and Curriculum. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Baja, M. (2011). Teaching to Transform, Transforming to Teach: Exploring the Role of Teachers in Human Rights Education in India. *Educational Research* 53 (2):207-221.
- Bajaj, M. (2011). Human rights education: Ideology, location, and approaches. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 481-508.
- Bertsch, A., & Warner-Soderholm, G. (2013). Exploring societal cultural values and human rights and development. *SAGE Open*, 3(3), 2158244013502988.
- Blanchet-Cohen, N., & Grégoire-Labrecque, G. (2022). The Transformative Potential of Human Rights Education for Youth Engagement in the Community. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 30(2), 356-377.
- Braa, D., & Callero, P. (2006). Critical Pedagogy and Classroom Praxis. *Teaching Sociology*, 34(4), 357-369. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/20058509
- Counts, G.S. (1978). *Dare the school build a new social order?* Carbondale, IL: South Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Macmillan.



-
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.
- Freire, P. (1974). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: culture, power, and liberation*. South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey.
- Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. New York: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural Violence. *Journal of Peace Research* 27 (3):291-305.
- Giroux, H. (1993). Disturbing the Peace: Writing in the Cultural Studies Classroom. *College Literature*, 20(2), 13-26. Retrieved from www.jstor.org
- Giroux, H. (2001). Pedagogy of the Depressed: Beyond the New Politics of Cynicism. *College Literature*, 28(3), 1-32. Retrieved from www.jstor.org
- Giroux, H. (2004). Critical Pedagogy and the Postmodern/Modern Divide: Towards a Pedagogy of Democratization. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 31(1), 31-47. Retrieved from www.jstor.org
- Giroux, H. (2011). *On Critical Pedagogy*. Bloomsbury.
- Giroux, H. A., McLaren, P. L., McLaren, P., & Peter, M. (Eds.). (1989). *Critical pedagogy, the state, and cultural struggle*. Suny Press.
- Gruenewald, D. A. (2003). The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place. *Educational Researcher*, 32(4), 3-12.
- James A. McKernan (2013) *The Origins of Critical Theory in Education: Fabian Socialism as Social Reconstructionism in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, *British Journal of Educational Studies*. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com>

- Keet, A. (2015). It is time: Critical human rights education in an age of counter-hegemonic distrust. *Education as Change*, 19(3), 46-64.
- McLaren, P., & Kincheloe, J. L. (2007). *Critical pedagogy: Where are we now?* New York: Peter Lang.
- Osler, A. (2015). Human rights education, postcolonial scholarship, and action for social justice. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 43(2), 244-274.
- Ramcharan, B. G. (2002). Human rights and human security. In *Human Rights and Human Security* (pp. 7-20). Brill Nijhoff.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Reardon, B. A. (2009). Human Rights Learning: Pedagogies and Politics of Peace. UNESCO Chair for Peace Education Master Conference, University of Puerto Rico.
- Reardon, B. A. (2010). *Educating for Human Dignity: Learning About Rights and Responsibilities*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Reardon, B. A., & Snauwaert, D. T. (2015). *Betty A. Reardon: A pioneer in education for peace and human rights*. London: Springer.
- Ruggunan, S., & Spiller, D. (2014). Critical pedagogy for teaching HRM in the context of social change. *African Journal of Business Ethics*, 8(1).
- Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: critical teaching for social change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Snauwaert, D. T. (2011). Social justice and the philosophical foundations of critical peace education: Exploring Nussbaum, Sen, and Freire. *Journal of Peace Education*, 8 (3), 315-331.
- Tibbitts, F., & Kirchschräger, P. G. (2010). Perspectives of research on human rights education. *Journal of human rights education*, 2(1), 8-29.
- United Nations Human Rights Office of The High Commissioner. *Empowerment, Inclusion, Equality: Accelerating sustainable development with human rights*. Retrieved from www.ohchr.org.



-
- Vogelfanger, A. (2021). Education in Human Rights: Changing the Way We Think and How We Feel. In *International perspectives in social justice programs at the institutional and community levels* (Vol. 37, pp. 13-27). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Zembylas, M., & Keet, A. (2019). *Critical Human Rights Education*. Springer.