

Higher education students' awareness towards the Human Rights dimensions in relation to nature of residence, Levels of education, stream and age group

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Abstract

The present study explores the level of higher education student's awareness towards human rights dimensions regarding documents, concepts & principles, situations involving human rights violations. In addition to that, compare the difference in higher education student's awareness towards human rights dimensions with regards to the nature of residence, levels of education, academic stream and age level. To achieve the objective normative survey research design was adopted. Data was collected using the Human Rights awareness Test" developed and standardized by Vishal Sood & Arti Anand, (2012) from 200 higher education students pursuing courses in university were selected using simple random sampling. Descriptive and differential statistics were used to analyze the data. The result revealed there is a significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of residence, nature of qualification and age level but not on stream of study.

Keywords: Human Rights, Higher Education students, Documents, Concepts and Principles, Situations.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings cannot live in isolation. But with the new and updated inventions and technologies, it is seen that unconsciously modern humans are proceeding towards isolation. Our society which used to be egalitarian is now becoming egocentric slowly and here will start the violation of other's rights. These violations may result in loss of property, life, peace, etc. Every human being should be aware of his or her basic rights. Education is universally considered as one of the powerful instruments to inculcate human rights values.

In the English language, the term 'right' has two meanings: one is moral and the other is political. In the moral sense, 'right' is what is

right to do from a moral perspective and the 'right' is the right from the legal perspective. The term 'human rights' is held by all human beings irrespective of their caste, color, language, creed, sex, religion, etc. Human rights are universal. Human rights are earned by every human being by birth. It is equal for everyone. Education is an important instrument to promote and help to treat all-human beings with equal respect and justice.

National Educational Policy of India (1986) highlighted and suggested different ways to achieve equality with the help of the education system also recommends redesigning the curriculum in such a way which will help in removing the gender biasness and bringing change in the status of the women. National

Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) developed the Teacher Education Curriculum in such a way so that the teachers themselves should first understand the values of justice, equality and secularism”- NPE (1986)

The Constitution of India was drafted in 1949 which came into force from 26th January, 1950. It consists of 395 articles. It ensures social, economic and political justice; equality of status and opportunity; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; unity and integrity of the nation among all the citizens of India.

The seven fundamental rights which are recognized by the constitution are as follows:

- The right to equality
- The right to freedom
- The right to freedom from exploitation
- The right to freedom of religion
- Cultural and educational rights
- The right to constitutional remedies
- The right to property

Among all the agencies of bringing awareness among the masses about human rights, education is the most powerful instrument in bringing the required social change and spreading the awareness among the people. Education plays an important role in making children aware of human rights in a more effective way.

On the occasion of Human Rights Day on 10th of December 2004, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO, defines “Human Rights Education is all about acquiring not only knowledge but also skills and the ability to apply them; it is about developing values, attitudes and behavior that uphold human rights but also about taking action to defend and promote them. It involves about human rights through the practice of human rights”. The more people will know about their own rights and the more they respect others rights, the chances will be better for the human beings to live together peacefully. When everyone will

be educated about human rights only then we can prevent human rights violations and conflicts among the people.

Literature Review

Few literature reviews conducted to understand the awareness related to human rights which supports the present researches are presented below:

Kandpal and Pawar (2021) found the human rights awareness level among the female teacher-trainees was 53.75% and male teacher-trainees was 46.25%. Females residing in rural areas belonging to the arts stream who are unmarried postgraduate level teacher-trainees were found to be more aware of human rights. The level of awareness based on the nature of residence was found that 66.25% was rural and 33.75% was urban. Suryakant (2021) found engineering students showed less human rights awareness, engineering students from rural areas showed more awareness compared to urban engineering students. Suryakant (2019) found science stream student’s human rights awareness is lesser than the commerce degree students. Narad and Kaur (2019) revealed that working women had a greater awareness of human rights and exercised more human rights in comparison to their non-working women counterparts. Further, rural working and urban working women had similar awareness of human rights while rural working women exercised more human rights as compared to urban counterparts. Kaur and Devi (2019) found professional students do not differ significantly in human rights awareness in relation to their stream of study Hooda et al., (2018) found B.Ed. students from urban areas are more aware than rural areas. In addition , researchers found urban female students are more aware than rural female B.Ed. students.

Also Oommen (2018) found arts group students had more awareness towards human rights compared to science group students and there existed a significant difference between arts and science teacher trainees in their awareness towards human rights. Paulbhai (2017) study reveals that human rights awareness among

urban male students are found to be more as compared to rural college students. It was also found that there was no significant difference between arts and commerce college students in human rights awareness. Songcayawon (2017) found there is no significant difference according to gender, age, and family's monthly income in the level of human rights awareness. The findings of the study also reveal that there is significant difference in the level of human rights awareness of the respondents when grouped according to religion, nationality.

In the studies of Srilatha(2016) found among teaching professionals and locality, management wise of teaching professionals no significant difference on human rights awareness. Jadav (2016) found urban areas women possess higher human rights awareness than the rural areas women. Padmavathy & Pallai (2015) found post graduates irrespective of their gender, place of residence, stream/faculty and type of family have average level of human rights awareness Venkateswarlu(2015) found no significant difference in human rights awareness among the prospective teachers according to stream and place of residence. VimalKumar et al. (2014) found that B.Ed. student teachers showed low level awareness of human rights and gender, residence place and subject specialization, does not cause significant mean difference in awareness of human rights of B.Ed student teachers. Agarwal (2014) found that the number of people with average level of human rights awareness (65%) is more than the people with high level of human rights awareness (35%). Ashraf (2013) study findings revealed that the level of human rights awareness among prospective teachers is very low and teachers have no sufficient knowledge about the human rights.

Need for the study

Everyone in the world wants to lead a peaceful life with inner harmony, but if one gets into conflicts because of rights denial that disturbs the surroundings in which he/she lives. To achieve the non conflict ridden society there

needs proper understanding of human rights and valuing it. To ensure the strengthening of human rights awareness many initiatives are taken by the government, though the achievement is not up to mark. It is evident from the incidence taking place in the society in day to day life. The young students are more active on social media and have a connection of networks and start raising their voices against human rights issues taking in any place and bringing to the notices of others through their connectivity. They are the one after their course enters the society and take the responsibility of maintaining harmony. Many times researchers felt few issues are not noticed by youngsters though it related to human rights. It creates the interest for researchers to study the higher education student's awareness towards the human rights dimension regarding documents, concepts & principles, situations involving human rights violations and non-violations. Also studies conducted in the past tried to find only the human rights awareness in whole and not given any importance to understand the dimensions where it needs more concentration. Therefore researchers take the study to know the awareness towards human rights dimensions among the higher education students.

Objectives of the Study

For the present research the following objectives are put forth:

- To study the level of higher education student's awareness towards human rights regarding documents, concepts & principles, situations involving human rights violations.
- To compare the difference in higher education student's awareness towards human rights regarding documents, concepts & principles, situations involving human rights violations with regards to nature of residence, levels of education, academic stream and age level.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the objectives the following hypotheses are put forth:

- The higher education student's do not possess the high level of awareness towards human rights regarding documents, concepts & principles, and situations involving human rights violations.
- There exists no significant difference in awareness towards human rights dimension regard to documents, concepts and principles, situations involving human rights violations among higher education students among higher education students on the basis of their nature of residence
- There exists no significant difference in awareness towards human rights dimension regard to documents, concepts and principles, situations involving human rights violations among higher education students among higher education students on the basis of their levels of education
- There exists no significant difference in awareness towards human rights dimension regard to documents, concepts and principles, situations involving human rights violations among higher education students among higher education students on the basis of their nature of academic stream
- There exists no significant difference in awareness towards human rights dimension regard to documents, concepts and principles, situations involving human rights violations among higher education students among higher education students on the basis of their age levels

Methodology of the study

To achieve the objective of the present study researcher adopted a normative survey method.

Sampling technique and Sample

In the present study a sample of 200 students pursuing higher education comprises of representations factors such as residence (urban

and rural), levels of education (undergraduate and postgraduate), stream of study(arts and science) and age group (ranged 21 to 26) were randomly selected from Tezpur University using simple random sampling method.

Tools

In order to measure the awareness towards human rights regarding documents, concepts and principles, situations involving human rights violations among higher education students, investigators adopted the "Human Rights awareness Test" developed and standardized by Vishal Sood & Arti Anand, (2012). This research instrument comprises 50 items covering three dimensions: human rights regard to documents, concepts and principles, situations involving human rights violations with three alternative choices: true, undecided and false. The score for positive items options true(two), undecided (one) and for false(zero). This research tool has a high measure of internal consistency 0.731 and fairly high ensured intrinsic validity.

Analysis and Interpretation of the data

The data were analyzed and interpreted according to respondent's nature of qualification, nature of stream, nature of residence and age level. The mean scores, standard deviation and t-test were calculated. The analysis, interpretation of results and discussion are presented as below:

Demographic profile of the respondents

Sample represents 34% respondents belonging to urban areas and 66% from rural areas, 59% respondents from arts stream and 41% respondents from science stream. Equal percentage of respondents (50%) pursuing undergraduate programmes and post graduate programmes participated in the study. Most of the respondents 61% fall in the age group of more than 22 and less than 26 and 39% fall in the age group of more than 18 and less than 22. This indicates the present study comprises younger respondents also mature enough to deal with awareness towards human rights.

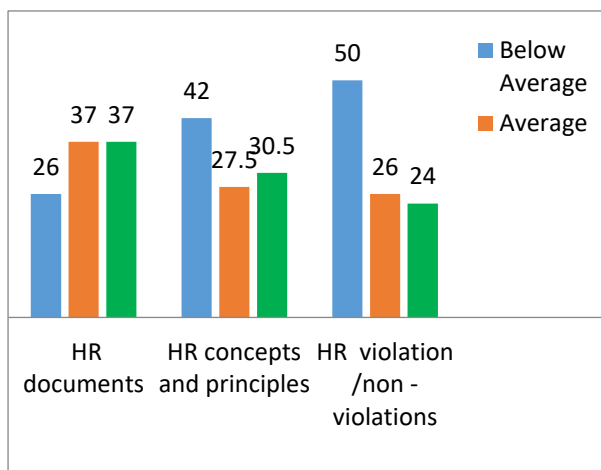
H1: The higher education student's do not possess the high level of awareness towards

human rights regarding documents, concepts & principles, situations involving human rights violations.

Table 1: Showing the higher education student awareness towards human rights regard to documents, concepts & principles, situations involving human rights violations

Dimensions of human rights Awareness	Percentage of samples			Mean	S.D
	Below Average	Average	Above Average		
Knowledge of human rights documents	26	37	37	9.66	2.267
Knowledge and understanding of human rights concepts and principles	42	27.5	30.5	17.46	4.121
Understanding of situations involving human rights violation /non -violations	50	26	24	29.93	5.206

Figure 1: Showing the higher education students awareness towards human rights regard to documents, concepts and principles, situations involving violations



It is inferred from Table 1 and Figure 1, that the findings of the study reveals 26 percentage of higher education students are lacking in knowledge of human rights documents, 42 percentage of higher education students are lacking in Knowledge and understanding of

human rights concepts and principles, 50 percentage of higher education students are lacking in understanding of situations involving human rights violation /non -violations. The mean score of knowledge of human rights documents is 9.66 with standard deviation 2.267, knowledge and understanding of human rights concepts and principles is 17.46 with standard deviation 4.121, understanding of situations involving human rights violation/non -violations is 29.93 with standard deviation 5.206 and overall awareness scores of human rights is 57.05 with standard deviation 11.27. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that the higher education student's awareness towards human rights regarding documents falls equal in average and above average levels, regard to concepts & principles and situations involving human rights violations is below the average levels.

H2: There exists no significant difference in awareness towards human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of residence

Table 2: Showing the mean, S.D, t-value of urban and rural higher education student's awareness towards human rights dimension

Variables		N	Mean	S. D	t-value (df=198)	LS*
Human Rights	Residence					
Knowledge of documents	Urban	68	9.44	2.251	1.93	0.055
	Rural	132	12.09	2.252		

Knowledge & understanding of concepts and principles	Urban	68	17.01	4.237	2.15	0.032
	Rural	132	18.32	4.003		
understanding of situations involving human rights violation /non - violations	Urban	68	24.49	5.263	1.66	0.046
	Rural	132	30.78	5.142		

The comparison of awareness among the urban and rural higher education students was done using an independent t test. The obtained result given in Table 2, indicates the mean values of the higher education students coming from rural areas have more awareness towards human rights dimensions than urban students.

The calculated t-value for knowledge of human rights documents $t_{198}=1.93$, $p=0.055$ equal to 0.05; knowledge & understanding of human rights concepts and principles $t_{198} = 2.15$, $p=0.032 < 0.05$; understanding of situations involving human rights violation /non -

violations $t_{198} = 1.66$, $p=0.046 < 0.05$ levels of significance.

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The result further reveals that there is a significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of residence.

H3: There exists no significant difference in awareness towards human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of education levels

Table 3: Showing the mean, S.D, t-value of under-graduate and post-graduate higher education student's awareness towards human rights dimension

Variables		N	Mean	S. D	t-value (df=198)	LS*
Human Rights	Education level					
Knowledge of documents	UG	100	9.06	2.416	3.188	0.002
	PG	100	10.26	1.942		
Knowledge & understanding of concepts and principles	UG	100	16.59	4.110	3.872	0.001
	PG	100	18.32	3.967		
understanding of situations involving human rights violation /non -violations	UG	100	28.91	4.710	3.029	0.003
	PG	100	30.95	5.494		

The comparison of awareness among the under-graduate and postgraduate higher education students was done using an independent t test. The obtained result given in Table 3, indicates the mean values of post-graduate students is higher than the mean scores of under-graduate students in all dimensions of awareness towards human rights.

The calculated t-value for knowledge of human rights documents $t_{198}=3.188$, $p=0.001 < 0.05$; knowledge & understanding of human rights concepts and principles $t_{198} = 3.872$, $p=0.001$

< 0.05 ; understanding of situations involving human rights violation /non -violations $t_{198} = 3.029$, $p=0.003 < 0.05$ levels of significance.

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The result further reveals that there is a significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of education level.

H4: There exists no significant difference in awareness towards human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of stream

Table 4: Showing the mean, S.D, t-value of arts and science higher education student's awareness towards human rights dimension

Variables		N	Mean	S. D	t-value (df=198)	LS*
Human Rights	Stream					
Knowledge of documents	Arts	118	9.64	2.352	0.182	0.856
	science	82	9.70	2.153		
Knowledge & understanding of concepts and principles	Arts	118	17.30	4.059	0.185	0.854
	Science	82	17.39	4.233		
understanding of situations involving human rights violation /non - violations	Arts	118	29.90	4.941	0.103	0.918
	Science	82	29.92	5.595		

The comparison of awareness among the arts and science higher education students was done using an independent t test. The obtained result given in Table 4, indicates the mean values of arts and science higher education students is almost equal (no major differences seen) in all dimensions of human rights.

The calculated t-value for knowledge of human rights documents $t_{198}=0.182$, $p=0.856>0.05$; knowledge & understanding of human rights concepts and principles $t_{198} = 0.185$, $p=0.854>0.05$; understanding of situations

involving human rights violation /non - violations $t_{198} =0.103$, $p=0.918>0.05$ levels of significance.

Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. The result further reveals that there is no significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among Higher education students on the basis of their nature of stream.

H5: There exists no significant difference in awareness towards human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their age level

Table No. 5: Showing the mean, S.D, t-value of higher education students awareness towards human rights dimension on the basis of their age

Variables		N	Mean	S. D	t-value (df=198)	LS*
Human Rights	Age Group					
Knowledge of documents	> 18 and < 22	78	8.10	2.36	9.28	0.001
	> 22 and <26	122	10.66	1.53		
Knowledge & understanding of concepts and principles	> 18 and < 22	78	15.18	3.41	6.94	0.001
	> 22 and <26	122	18.91	3.88		
understanding of situations involving human rights violation /non - violations	> 18 and < 22	78	27.51	3.82	5.64	0.002
	> 22 and <26	122	31.48	5.39		

The comparison of awareness among both age groups was done using an independent t test. The obtained result given in Table No. 5, indicates the mean values being higher among Higher education students belonging to the age group above 22 and less than 26 compared to students belonging to the age group above 18 and less than 22 in human rights dimensions.

The calculated t-value for knowledge of human rights documents $t_{198}=9.28$, $p=0.001<0.05$; knowledge & understanding of human rights concepts and principles $t_{198} = 6.94$, $p=0.001<0.05$; understanding of situations involving human rights violation /non - violations $t_{198} =5.64$, $p=0.002<0.05$ levels of significance.

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The result further reveals that there is a significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their age level.

Findings and Discussion of the Study

On the basis of analyzed data and interpretation of the results the following findings have been emerged out of the study

- Higher education student awareness towards human rights regarding documents falls equally in average and above average, but regarding to concepts and principles, and situations involving human rights violations is below the average levels. This findings is in line with the findings of Padmavathy & Pallai (2015) ; Vimalkumar(2014), Ashraf (2013) and contradicts to the findings of Agarwal (2014)
- Higher education students from rural areas have more awareness towards human rights than higher education students from urban residence. There is a significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of residence. This findings is in line with the findings of Srilatha(2016) ; Padmavathy & Pallai (2015); Venkateswarlu(2015) and VimalKumar et al. (2014) and contradicts with

the findings of Kandpal & Pawar (2021); Hooda (2018) ; Paulbhai (2017); Jadav (2016).

- Post-graduate students have more awareness towards human rights than under-graduate students. There is a significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of qualification. This findings consonance with the findings of Kandpal & Pawar (2021).
- Arts and science stream students have equal awareness towards human rights. There is no significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of stream. This findings consonance with the findings of Kandpal & Pawar (2021); VimalKumar et al. (2014); Kaur and Devi(2019) ; Paulbhai (2017) and contradicts with the findings of Suryakant (2021); Oommen (2018); Padmavathy & Pallai (2015) and Venkateswarlu(2015).
- Higher education students belonging to the age group 22 to 26 have more awareness towards human rights than higher education students belonging to the age group 18 to 22. There is a significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their age level. This result contradicts with the findings of Songcayawon (2017).

Conclusion

From the present study, it is found that there is a significant difference in awareness towards the human rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of residence, nature of qualification and age level. There is lack of proper awareness towards human rights among the students belonging to the urban area, under-graduate students and the students belonging to the age group of 18 to 22. The government should provide more intervention programmes to all the students to develop their awareness towards human rights. But there is no significant difference in awareness towards the human

rights dimension among higher education students on the basis of their nature of stream. The arts and science students have equal awareness towards human rights. Though human rights are a part of the curriculum there is still lack of awareness among the higher education students about human rights.

There should be provision for special classes for awareness towards human rights at higher education level. Awareness should be created about human rights education particularly regards to various dimensions in all the levels. There is a strong need to develop awareness in various dimensions of human rights to promote and ensure human dignity, values and rights. Effective programmes should be planned to inculcate the habit in the minds of all that without and discrimination every individual have the rights to live his /her life.

As rightly highlighted by Suryakant(2019) “in addition to a firm commitment to democracy and non-violent conflict resolution, human rights encompasses respect for human dignity, rights, justice, tolerance, cooperation, social responsibility, and respect for cultural diversity. Basic to human rights are the values of non-discrimination and equality, which contribute to building a culture of peace in society (NCF, 2005). Students especially, the young students of universities should know or be aware about human rights and concentrate on each dimension to ensure their social responsibility and promote peace and harmony in the environment.

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