

## HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS: A STUDY IN COLLGES OF KAMRUP DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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### **Abstract**

*Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belongs to every person in this world to live a dignified life. Without human rights awareness no one can enjoy the rights. Awareness on human rights among the people is the utmost thing to make the world a better place to live. So the present study is conducted mainly to know about the human rights awareness among the college students. To achieve the objectives of the study the investigator adopted descriptive survey method. The sample of 830 students were taken from two degree colleges of Kamrup District affiliated to Gauhati University. The simple random sampling technique was used. The tool used for the study is Awareness Scale developed by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Arti Anand. The mean, standard deviation and t- test were used as statistical tools for analysing the data. The findings of the study indicates that the college students have high level of human rights awareness.*

*Key words: Human rights, awareness, college students.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Each human being in this universe is unique, unprecedented and unrepeatable and they go under certain parameters and they are free to make their own destiny of life by processing and following specific rights which are inalienable and these are commonly known as human rights. To live a life with dignity and respect each individual must enjoy the fundamental freedoms and some basic rights. Human rights includes all the fundamental freedoms and those rights which

an individual can claim because he/she is a human being. Whatever the place of birth, residence, religion, language, sex, ethnic origin human rights is inherent in all human beings.

Human rights encompasses civil, political, economic, social, cultural and educational rights which are utmost necessary to live as a human being. Human rights imply adequate opportunities for the fullest development of individual's skills, talent and qualities. These rights help the individuals to fully use their knowledge, intelligence, conscience to satisfy their needs of life.

Human rights are important as they protect us from exploitation, discrimination, unfair treatment. It promote and develop all the values among the people which are necessary for living a peaceful life The essence of the notion "Human Rights" includes values such as respecting the human being, equality, brotherhood, solidarity and friendship. (Tanirli, 2007)

According to Donelly (1995), "human rights are needed not for the purpose of life but for leading an honourable life." Human rights enable us to respect each other and live together harmoniously. In other words, they are not only rights to be demanded or to be requested but rights to be respected and be responsible for.

Lawson (1996) in Encyclopaedia of Human Rights defined Human Rights as the universally accepted principles and rules that support morality and that make it possible for each individual to live life in an atmosphere of freedom, justice and peace. That means human rights are the basic moral guarantees that people in all nations and cultures have it to live a prosperous and happy life. Human Rights are such that no court of justice can deprive anyone and these rights are same both for men and women. Human rights has great influence on people's day to day life. These are essential for everyone. Citizen of any nation can't be expected to respect the rights of others, until and unless they are not aware about their own rights. Without a wide- spread culture of human rights and awareness on it, it is difficult for the nations to achieve democracy in the true sense. A civilized society can only exists when the citizens are aware of their rights and respect the right of others and show their obligation towards the society. Hence we can state that the knowledge and awareness of human rights and exercising of these rights are the very basic factors of a civilized and democratic country.

## **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

Human rights abuse is sadly a reality in Indian society. In India, injustice, regionalism, secularism, violence, illiteracy, explosion, terrorism, witch hunting, child labour, child trafficking, exploitation of women and poor, rape, murder, dowry, early marriage, polygamy, slavery, medical experimentation are common problems which arise due to lack of awareness and violation of human rights. Various examples of violation of human rights can be observed in day- to-day life. All rights are useless unless they are known to the people for whom they are made. It seems that human rights awareness is not present among most of the people. Unless the people are aware on human rights, the violation, exploitations will be continuing. The human rights education has an important mission to make people aware about human rights and develop human rights awareness among them. It imparts knowledge to the students on human rights and develops positive attitude towards human rights among them.

After realizing the importance of human rights awareness in the present context the investigator conducted a study on college students to know about their awareness towards human rights.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives are

- 1) To study the human rights awareness among the college students.
- 2) To find out whether the college students differ in their human rights awareness with regards to their gender (boys and girls) or not.

## **HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

Based on the objective the hypothesis is-

**H<sub>01</sub>**: There exists no significant difference in different dimensions of Human Rights Awareness between college boys and girls student.

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

For the sake of clarity the important terms used in the paper have been defined.

**Awareness:** Knowledge that something exists or understanding of a situation or subject at the present time based on information or experience. Awareness is commonly used in reference to public knowledge or understanding of any issue.

**Human Rights:** Human rights are those rights which we claim because we are human being. Human rights are inherent to all human beings whatever the place of birth, residence, sex or ethnic origin, colour, religion, languages or any other status may be.

**Human Rights Awareness:** It means the people's ability to easily distinguish various aspects of human rights- to life, security, religion, expression, education etc. and those they understand and importance of these aspects in relation to human survival and dignity.

**College students:** The students studying in the colleges and those who pursue different degree courses.

## DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations are-

1. The present study is confined to the under graduate students of Arts and Science Stream.
2. The area of the study includes Kamrup District of Assam only.
3. The study is delimited to the provincialized degree colleges affiliated to Gauhati University.

## METHODOLOGY

The study is conducted under the Descriptive Survey method. This is the most widely used research method in education. It is that method of investigation which attempts to describe and interpret what exists at present in the form of condition, practices, processes, trends, effects, attitudes, beliefs etc.

**POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

The population of the study comprises all the degree students (4137) studying in Pandu College, and Rangia College, located in Kamrup district of Assam. The investigator had selected 830 students studying in TDC 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester (approximately 20% of 4137) as sample for the present study by following simple random sampling technique. This technique has been used as all participants has the same probability of being chosen for the sample.

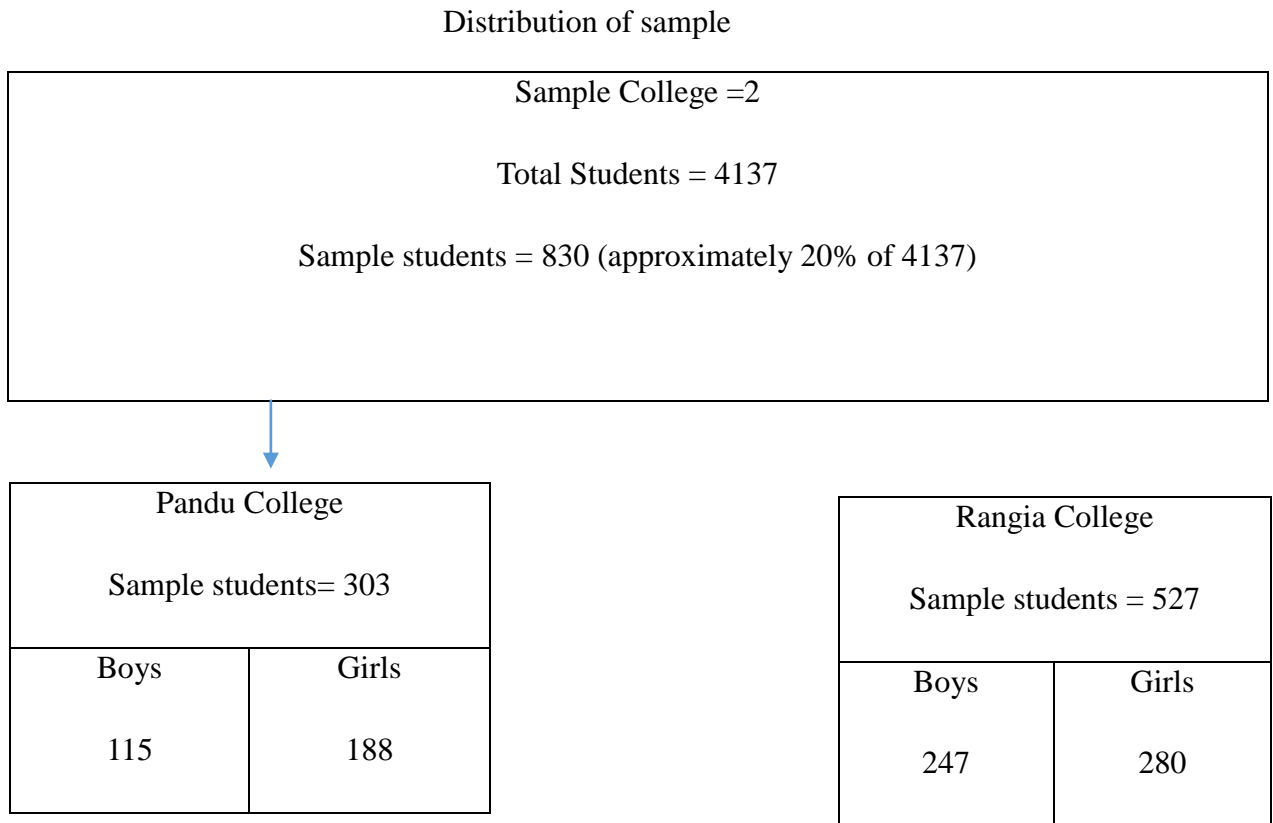


Figure No 1

**RESEARCH TOOLS**

For collection of data the investigator used a standardized scale (Human Rights Awareness Test) developed by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Arti Anand (2012) (HRAT-SVVA). This scale includes 3 dimensions of human rights awareness and it has total 50 statements.

## **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

The investigator went personally to each of the college for data collection. At first the investigator approached the Principals with applications for giving permission for conducting the field work. After getting permission from the Principals the investigator selected the students for her study. The students were selected by simple random sampling technique.

The investigator distributed the “Human Rights Awareness Test” scale among the students and then described the procedure for filling up the scale. After that the responses were collected.

## **STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE USED**

The obtained data were analysed quantitatively by using various statistical techniques. In interpreting and analysing the obtained data following statistical technique have been used-

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- z score
- t test
- Graphical Representation

## **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULT**

To fulfil the objectives of the study, the researcher analysed the data obtained on the “Human Rights Awareness Test” of college students.

**Objective 1: To assess the level of awareness of college students.**

Table No.1

N	M	SD	Raw Score (out of 100)	z-score
830	61.65	10.8	45	-1.54
			47	-1.35
			48	-1.26
			50	-1.07
			57	-0.43
			65	+0.31
			69	+0.68
			70	+0.77
			76	+1.32
			83	+1.97
			87	+2.34
90	+2.62			

Figure No 2

Table No.2: Norms for interpretation of Level of Human Rights Awareness

Range of z- score	Level of HRsA	No of Students	Percentage
+2.01 and above	Extremely high	54	68.43%
+1.26 to 2.00	High	117	
+0.51 to 1.25	Above Average	397	
<b>-0.50 to 0.50</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12.04%</b>
-0.51 to -1.25	Below Average	135	20.72%
-1.26 to -2.00	Low	37	
-2.01 and below	Extremely Low	0	

Figure No 3

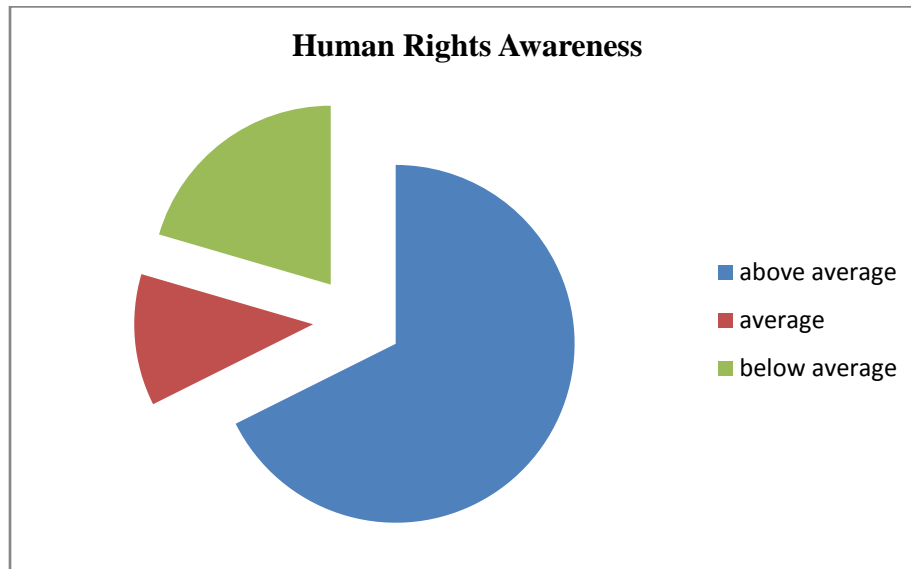


Figure No.3

**Interpretation:**

- The range of z-score shows that approximately 69% students have the high level of human rights awareness.
- Only 12.04% are under average level of human rights awareness and 20.72% are under below average level of human rights awareness.

**Objective No.2: To find out whether the college students differ in their awareness towards human rights with regards to their gender (boys and girls).**

**Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in different dimensions of HRs Awareness between boys and girls.**



Table No.3

Dimensions of HRs	Gender	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	SEm	t-value (calculated)	Critical Value (at 5% level)	Remarks on Significance at 0.05 levels
1 Knowledge about Human Rights Documents	Boys 362	20.63	3.426	6.75	0.2260	30.68	1.96	HS
	Girls 468	27.38	2.985					
2 Knowledge and Understanding about Human Rights Concepts	Boys 362	30.61	4.557	0.24	0.3100	0.77	1.96	NS
	Girls 468	30.85	4.499					
3 Understanding about Situations involving Human Rights Violations/ Non-Violations	Boys 362	27.43	1.482	2.75	0.1946	14.13	1.96	HS
	Girls 468	30.18	3.868					

\*0.05 level

Figure No 4

### **Interpretation:**

To test the hypothesis Mean and SD are calculated for each of the dimensions of HRs Awareness. t -test is applied.

- It has been observed that the mean difference 6.75 between boys and girls regarding dimension no 1. is highly significant at 0.05 level of significance and also the difference is in favour of the girl students. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected in this dimension.
- Regarding dimension no 2. it has been noticed that the mean difference 0.24 between the boys and girls is not significant at 0.05 level of significance hence the null hypothesis is accepted in dimension no 2.
- It has been also observed from that mean difference 2.75 between the boys and girls regarding dimension no 3. is highly significant at 0.05 level of significance and the difference is in favour of the girl students. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected in dimension no 3.

### **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

On the basis of hypothesis testing the study revealed the following major findings-

- 1) It has been found that college students possess higher level of Human Rights Awareness.
- 2) It has also been found that the girl students possess higher human rights awareness than the boy students.

### **CONCLUSION**

Human rights education provides a basis for conflict resolution and the promotion of peace and social order. Human Rights Education is all learning that develops knowledge, skills, understanding and values of human rights. It teaches both about human rights and for human rights. It develops awareness and positive attitude towards human rights among the students. Human rights education should be incorporated in the curriculum of schools, colleges and universities. In degree courses it is very essential to incorporate human rights education. Awareness about human rights will help in understanding about exploitation, violence, injustice,

discrimination etc. Therefore it is utmost necessary to make our students aware about human rights. Human rights should be practiced and implemented in each educational institution with proper planning.

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