

A Study of Human Rights Awareness among the Post Graduate Students in Relation to various Non-Cognitive Variables

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Abstract - Human rights refer to basic rights and freedom which every human being possesses by birth to live a dignified life, irrespective of gender, religion, color, creed, nationality, language, ethnicity, place of residence or any other status. Today one of the greatest challenges faced by human society is the rampant violation of human rights in all aspects. To promote and protect human rights, education plays an important role to make all individuals aware of their human rights. Therefore the present study attempts to find out the level of human rights' awareness among the post graduate students studying in Assam Don Bosco University. Descriptive cum normative survey method was adopted in the present research with a sample of 162 post graduate students selected by simple random sampling technique. Both inferential and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The present study found out that majority (61.73%) of the students possess average and below average level of human rights awareness, and only about 3.70 % of students has high level of human rights awareness and 34.57% students has above average level of human rights awareness. No significant difference was found in relation to gender and place of residence but significant difference was found in relation to stream of study.

Key Words: *Human Rights Awareness, Post Graduate Students, Non-Cognitive Variables*

I. INTRODUCTION

Human rights which are so called the inherent rights of all human family have gained more relevance at present times due to its massive violations in our everyday lives. We need human rights for our existence without which we cannot live as humans. Every human being is a “central subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms” (United Nations Economic and Social Council Organization, 1995). Therefore it is essential for all human family to know one's human rights and freedoms so as to protect oneself against the State or any public authorities or against own members and also for the development of one's personality to the fullest.

Human rights are generally referred to basic rights and freedoms which every human being possesses by birth to live a dignified life, irrespective of gender, religion, color, creed, nationality, language, ethnicity, place of residence or any considerations. Human rights are the rights derived from the 'inherent dignity' of every human being (United Nations Organization, 1948). It upholds the dignity and status of the individuals and reaffirms dignified life of every human being (Stephen, 2002). According to D.D. Basu “human rights are those minimum rights which every individual must have against the state or other public authority by virtue of his being a member of human family,

irrespective of any other considerations” (Agarwal, 2018, p 3). Felix Wilfred defined human rights as “a question of regulating right relationships in society among individuals or groups relationships-which are humanizing, and therefore fair and just” (Stephen, 2002). The theme ‘All human rights for all’ aims to make human rights a reality and accept globally by all human family in a fair and equal manner (Khandela, 2004).

Human rights cover a wide spectrum of rights relating to civil, political, social, economic and cultural aspects. These rights are inalienable and universal in nature because it applies to all human family and no one can take it away. However, “human life and dignity have been disregarded throughout history and continue to be disregarded today” (Upadhyaya, 2004). Every day we hear news relating to violation of human rights and dignity; in fact it has become the greatest challenge for human existence hence, every human being needs to be educated about their human rights and for human rights especially the younger generation at all levels of education as they are in the preparation stage of leading the society in future. Education is considered an important means which holds the key to human progress and transformation of society. Looking into the present situation where human rights are violated in every spheres of human life, human rights education has become the need of the hour. Human rights education enables all humans to

develop positive attitude towards human rights, and enhance “knowledge, values and skills about human rights” (Flowers, 2000). It fosters an understanding of every one’s responsibility to make human rights a reality in every community. Human rights education also empowers an individual to recognize human rights abuses, and to prevent it. Hence to achieve this, quality education based on human rights approach should be implemented throughout the whole education system and in all learning environment in collaboration with teachers and students so as to promote quality life for better tomorrow.

II. STUDIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS

Kaur (2006) conducted a study on ‘Comparison of Senior Secondary Students on Awareness about Human Rights in Relations to Sex, Locality and Stream of Study’ and found that there was no significant difference between male and female senior secondary students regarding human rights awareness based on locality and stream of study. Sarate (2011) in his study on ‘Human Rights Awareness of senior secondary school students based on Gender, Area, Academic stream and personality make up’ found out that senior secondary students possessed average level of human rights awareness. On the basis of gender there was no significant difference but significant difference was found among the students of arts, science and commerce stream. Katoch (2011) conducted a study on College Students Human Rights Awareness and found out that there was significant difference on the level of human rights awareness among the college students with regard to gender and locality. The study also revealed that male and urban college students were found to be more aware about human rights. Padmavathy & Pallai (2015) in their study on Human Rights Awareness of University Students revealed that the post graduate students irrespective of gender, locality and stream of study possessed average level of human rights awareness. No significant difference was found between male and female, rural and urban, arts and science post graduate students. Hence, in the above mentioned studies the level of human rights awareness basically falls under average category and differences were also found based on stream of study, gender and locality as depicted in the result of the study by Sarate (2011), and Katoch (2011).

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Promoting and creating awareness about human rights have become a concern for all individuals for peaceful coexistence. In present times the greatest challenges faced in human society is the rampant violation of human rights in all aspects of human life and in order to promote and protect human rights, education needs to play an important role to make all individuals aware of their human rights by developing positive attitude and disseminating knowledge,

values and skills about human rights to all sections of people especially the younger generation who holds the key position in promoting world peace. Hence every educational institution needs to play a vital role in promoting and creating awareness about human rights and this can be ensured by providing a democratic environment in all educational institutions, which enables the students to enjoy their rights as well as learn to respect the rights of other fellow human. Therefore the present study has been undertaken to find out the level of human rights awareness among the post graduate students studying in Assam Don Bosco University in relation to gender, locality and stream of study. The present study will bring to light the level of human rights awareness among the post graduate students and is also expected that it will help the curriculum planners to review and evaluate the curriculum and incorporate human rights related content and activities in the curriculum of post graduate programme to educate the students about human rights. This investigation will also be beneficial for teachers to understand the level of knowledge possessed by the students about human rights and will provide an impetus to the process of learning about human rights and human rights education.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of human rights awareness among the post graduate students.
2. To find out the differences on the level of human rights awareness among male and female post graduate students.
3. To find out the differences on the level of awareness on human rights among rural and urban post graduate students.
4. To find out the differences on the level of awareness on human right among arts and science Post Graduate students.

V. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H_0 (1) There is no significant difference on human rights awareness mean scores of male and female post graduates students.

H_0 (2) There is no significant difference on human rights awareness mean scores of urban and rural post graduates students.

H_0 (3) There is no significant difference on human rights awareness mean scores of arts and science post graduates students.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted descriptive cum normative survey method of educational research as the purpose of the study is to find out the present status of human rights awareness among the post graduate students. The study is quantitative in nature. A questionnaire consisting of 50 items was used in collecting the data. The population of the

study covers all the post graduate students of Assam Don Bosco University of arts and science stream. As per the record there are 540 students enrolled under ten departments offering Masters Programme in Arts and Science subjects.

DATA COLLECTION

For collecting the primary data, field survey was done by making use of a standardized tool (Human Rights Awareness Test) developed by Vishal Sood and Arti anand, (2012). The respondents chosen were male and female residing in urban and rural area from science and arts post graduate students of Assam Don Bosco University.

SAMPLE SIZE

For the present study a sample of 162 post graduate students was selected by making use of simple random sampling technique out which 81 are male and 81 are female.

VII. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has been delimited to post graduate students of Arts and Science stream and non-cognitive variables includes gender, locality and stream of study.

VIII. TOOLS USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

For this study a standardized Human Rights Awareness Test (HRAT) developed by Vishal Sood and Arti Anand, (2012) was used to measure the level of awareness of post graduate students. The test was classified into three dimensions; (i) Knowledge of Human Rights related Documents, (ii) Knowledge and Understanding about Human Rights Concept, (iii) Understanding of Situations involving Human Rights Violation/ Non –Violations consisting of 50 statements with three alternatives i.e., true, undecided and false. The reliability of the Human Rights Awareness Test (HRAT) ranged from 0.67 to 0.731 which is a fairly high measure of intrinsic consistency of the test. This test was also found to possess adequate content validity.

Norms for interpretation of level of Human Rights Awareness

| Sl. No. | Range of z-Scores | Grade | Level of human Rights Awareness |
|---------|-------------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | + 2.01 and above | A | Extremely High |
| 2. | +1.26 to +2.00 | B | High |
| 3. | +0.51 to +1.25 | C | Above Average |
| 4. | -0.50 to +0.50 | D | Average |
| 5. | -0.51 to -1.25 | E | Below Average |
| 6. | -1.26 to -2.00 | F | Low |
| 7. | -2.01 and below | G | Extremely Low. |

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used in analyzing the data such as mean, standard deviation, standard error of differences, and t- test.

ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table 1. Shows the level of Human Rights Awareness of Post Graduate Students

| Level of Human Rights Awareness | Grade | No. of students | % of Students |
|---------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| Extremely High | A | Nil | 0% |
| High | B | 6 | 3.70% |
| Above Average | C | 56 | 34.57% |
| Average | D | 66 | 40.74% |
| Below Average | E | 12 | 7.41% |
| Low | F | 22 | 13.58% |
| Extremely Low | G | Nil | 0% |
| Total | | 162 | 100% |

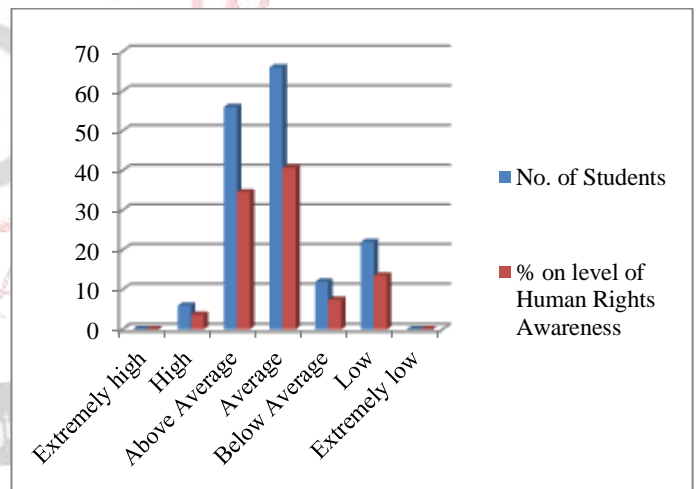


Figure 1. Shows the Level of Human Rights Awareness

INTERPRETATION

Table No. 1 and Figure 1, shows the number of students and its percentage falling under different grades on the level of human rights awareness. It has been found that 61.73% of the students fall under average and below average i.e., grade D, E and F and only about 3.70 % of students has high level of human rights awareness i.e., grade B and 34.57% students has above average level of human rights awareness i.e., grade C. In view of this, there is a need to organize some human rights awareness programmes for enhancing the human rights awareness among post graduate students of Assam Don Bosco University.

Table 2. Summary of Results about the Human Rights Awareness Mean Scores, SD, SE_D and t- value of Male and Female Post Graduate Students

| Variab le | Sub-Grou ps | N | Mea n | SD | SE _D | t- valu e | Level of Significa nce |
|-----------|-------------|----|-------|-------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Gende r | Male | 81 | 55.68 | 9.85 | 1.73 | 0.22 | Not significant at 0.05 level |
| | Femal e | 81 | 56.07 | 12.29 | | | |

INTERPRETATION

The computed t-value came out to be 0.22 which is lesser than the table value (1.98), therefore, the computed t-value (0.22) has not been considered significant and formulated hypothesis “There is no significant difference on human rights awareness mean scores of male and female post graduates students” got retained. From this, it is interpreted that the male and female post graduate students do not differ in their human rights awareness.

Table 3. Summary of Results about the Human Rights Awareness Mean scores, SD, SE_D and t- value of Urban and Rural Post Graduate Students

| Variab le | Sub-Grou ps | N | Mea n | SD | SE _D | t- valu e | Level of Significa nce |
|-----------|-------------|----|-------|-------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Localit y | Urban | 81 | 55.49 | 10.53 | 1.77 | 0.43 | Not significant at 0.05 level |
| | Rural | 81 | 56.26 | 11.70 | | | |

INTERPRETATION

The computed t-value came out to be 0.43 which is lesser than the table value (1.98), therefore, the computed t-value (0.43) has not been considered significant and the formulated hypothesis “There is no significant difference on human rights awareness mean scores of urban and rural post graduates students” got retained. From this, it is interpreted that the urban and rural post graduate students do not differ in their human rights awareness.

Table 4. Summary of Results about the Human Rights Awareness Mean scores, SD, SE_D and t- value of Arts and Science Post Graduate Students

| Variab le | Sub-Grou ps | N | Mea n | SD | SE _D | t- valu e | Level of Significa nce |
|-----------|-------------|----|-------|-------|-----------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Stream | Arts | 86 | 60.28 | 7.04 | 1.58 | 5.94 | Significant at 0.05 level |
| | Scienc e | 76 | 50.89 | 12.70 | | | |

INTERPRETATION

The calculated t-value came out to be 5.94 which is greater than the table value (1.98), therefore, the computed t- value (5.94) has been considered significant and the formulated hypothesis “There is no significant difference on human rights awareness mean scores of arts and science post graduate students” got rejected. From this, it is interpreted

that arts and science post graduate students differ in their human rights awareness. In view of this there is a need to plan effective programme on human rights especially for science post graduate students as the mean score of science students indicated in table 4 is lower than that of arts students.

IX. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

From the above analysis and discussions the findings of the study can be summarized as:

- It was found that majority (61.78%) of the post graduate students’ awareness on human rights falls under average and below average and only about 3.70 % of students has high level of human rights awareness and 34.57% students has above average level of human rights awareness.
- No significant difference was found among male and female post graduate students on their human rights awareness level. This study has similarity with the findings of Kaur (2006), Sarate (2011), and Padmavathy & Pallai (2015) and contradicts with the finding of Katoch (2011).
- Urban and rural post graduate students also do not differ significantly on their human rights awareness level .This finding also have similar finding with Kaur (2006) and Padmavathy & Pallai (2015) and contradicts with the finding of Katoch (2011.)
- Significant difference on human rights awareness level was found among arts and science post graduate students. This study has similar finding with the finding of Sarate (2011) and also contradicts with the findings of Kaur (2006) and Padmavathy & Pallai (2015).

X. SUGGESTIONS

- The curriculum of science discipline can be re-looked so that contents relating to human rights education can be incorporated in science subjects to enhance knowledge about their human rights which is needed for quality human life and peaceful coexistence.
- Various planned human rights programme and projects can be undertaken at the university level which will help the students to comprehend human dignity, values and rights of oneself and respect the rights of other fellow human.
- Teachers should also be oriented through trainings, workshops and seminars on human rights with

emphasis on their subject matter for developing cognitive skills as well as affective skills on human rights to enhance the knowledge, values and skills of the students to protect and promote human rights in the society.

XI. CONCLUSION

From the analytical point of view, there is a need to promote and create human rights awareness among the post graduate students as the result of the present study showed that majority of the students' awareness on human rights was observed to be average and below average. Result showed that there is no significant difference between male and female, urban and rural post graduate students in their level of human rights awareness. Hence, gender and locality is not a factor that affects their awareness on human rights. Stream of study was found to be a factor in the level of human rights awareness as the mean scores of arts and science post graduate students differ significantly. The mean score of science students was lower than the arts students. Therefore, the curriculum planners should review the curriculum of science discipline so that contents on human rights education can be integrated into the teaching-learning process. More over gap between theory and practice should also be evaluated so that human rights education will find its rightful place in the curriculum of post graduate programme as well as in other levels of education and bring transformation in the movement of 'all human rights for all' for quality life and peaceful coexistence for all human family through education.

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