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## A Relative Investigation on Human Rights Awareness among General & ST Girl Students of Higher Education

Rakshita Kandpal<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Anita Joshi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, M.B.P.G. College, Haldwani

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Teacher Education, M.B.P.G. College, Haldwani

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### ABSTRACT

In recent years, human rights have gained important attention as a critical global concern. At its central, the awareness of human rights relates not only to understanding one's freedoms and entitlements but also to recognizing the responsibility of respecting them. Among these rights, education occupies a central place, as it provides individuals with the power to think critically, develop positive values, and uphold principles of equality, dignity, and mutual respect. Creating awareness about human rights among students is essential, as it not only helps them to enhance their quality of life but also strengthens their ability to repel injustice, discrimination, and exploitation. The purpose of this research paper is to investigate awareness of human rights between post-graduate students of general category and scheduled tribe. The study was conducted using the survey method with a sample of 100 girl students at higher education, in which 50 percent students belongs to general category and rest of the 50 percent belongs to ST category. Data were collected from Government post graduate colleges of district Almora and Udham Singh Nagar. To collect data, standardised tool, Human Rights Awareness Test developed by Vishal Sood and Arti Anand (2012) was employed and it was analysed through mean, standard deviation and t-test. The findings of the study revealed that in

human rights awareness the difference between these students was found on the basis of area of residence and academic stream. It was also found that maximum number of students in both the category belongs to below average level of human rights awareness. Hence the study indicates that human rights education is strongly required, especially for girl students in schools and colleges to make them more aware about their human rights so that they may be able to help themselves and others for seeking their own rights.

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### **Introduction:**

Human societies have always evolved around the principles of ethical conduct, justice, and human dignity. These values were deeply fixed in the philosophy of medieval thinkers and later found clearer expression during the Regeneration and the Enlightenment. The notion of Natural Law emerged as a central foundation of legal thought, emphasizing that every individual is entitled to certain rights simply by virtue of being human. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in particular, marked a significant period when human rights and moral values gained recognition and widespread acceptance among citizens. India is witness to a distinct tribal population. Each tribe has its own features and identity; hence it requires different treatment. There are 461 tribal groups in India out of which 424 are considered as the Schedule tribes ([www.jagranjosh.com](http://www.jagranjosh.com)).

The term ‘schedule tribe’ first approved in the constitution of India. Article 366(25) defined, Schedule tribe as, “such tribes or tribal categories as or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal.

India can be divided into seven zones on the basis of distribution and diversity of the tribal population which are North zone, North-Eastern zone, central zone, southern zone, eastern zone, western zone and island region. The tribes of region of J&K, H.P, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Sub-Himalayan UP and Bihar, of the tribe’s distribution.

Human rights have been a burning issue around the globe for the last few years. With time, the need for protection of human rights became persistent and for achievement of the same, various steps were taken and human rights were declared.

### **Studies on Human Rights Awareness among different population:**



**Sarate (2011)** in his study on senior secondary school students based on Gender, Area, Academic stream and personality make up found out that senior secondary students possessed an average level of human rights awareness.

**Shah & Shah (2019)**, In this study, normative survey method was used to find out the human rights awareness among teachers belonging to Jawahar Navodaya Vidhyalaya (JNVs) and Government Secondary Schools (GSSs) in Garwal region. Sample collected by purposive sampling method and to assess the Human Rights Awareness of the teachers, HRAT tool developed by Vishal Sood & Arti Anand was used. The result showed that there is no significant different between the teachers belonging to JNVs and GSSs as relevant to their gender & study stream. Only male teachers and humanities teachers belonging to GSSs were slightly much aware than female teachers and Science teachers of GSSs respectively. Sharma (2020), summarized that ICT is playing a vital role in establishing awareness and preventing violation of human rights of the global citizens in his study.

**Kandpal & Pawar (2021)** conducted study to investigate the awareness of Human Rights among B. Ed level teacher trainees. 80 B. Ed level teacher- trainees were selected through purposive sampling from the department of Education, S.S.J. University, Almora, Uttarakhand. To study the human rights awareness in groups of teacher trainees identified on the basis of demographic and academic factors. A self-made Human Rights Awareness Questionnaire (HRAQ) was used by the researcher based on 5 aspects of human rights and then percentage analysis of data was done. A finding of the study revealed that female, rural, Arts-stream and postgraduate level teacher-trainees were found more aware of human rights.

**Panda & Singh (2024)**, focused on the awareness of civil, cultural, economic, social, educational, political, legal, and educational human rights among secondary school students of the Paddar sub-district (Jammu & Kashmir). An interview schedule was organised to collect the data, which were analysed into percentages. The findings revealed that most of the secondary school students of the Paddar sub-district needed to be made aware of civil, social, economic, political, and legal human rights. In contrast, they were moderately aware of cultural and educational rights.

**Peng Xu (2015)** studied about regulation of child abuse in school and implementation of child abuse rights in China. Present study examined that the child abuse statutes and judicial practice of china reveals that china's domestic law has failed to provide adequate protection for children. It is suggested that China should review its legislation, establish the independent human rights commission, raise awareness of



children's rights and. improve cooperation with NGOs to ensure that it conforms fully to the requirements of the convention on the Rights of the child.

A study by **Jjuunko (2011)** was conducted under Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum, Uganda (HRAPF), to gauge the general levels of human rights awareness, the extent of knowledge of specific rights among rural and urban people. The responses were analyzed according to sex, residence, age, educational status and employment. 12.7% of urban people understand the meaning of human rights more than rural people (8.4 %). 13.3% of men correctly defined the meaning of human rights than women (6.8%).

**Hong Sun-Woo et.al. (2011)** evaluated the factors affecting human rights for nursing students They found human rights was the mother's rearing attitude as predicting factor (7.6%). There was a significant difference in Human Rights for nursing students according to age and awareness were related to perceived parents' rearing attitude, self-esteem and psychological home environment.

**Songcayawon (2017)**, surveyed the human rights experiences among Southeast Asian students in the Philippines as regard age, gender and family monthly income, the results showed no significant difference but there was a significant difference when grouped according to religion and nationality. As a whole, the results show no significant difference. Lastly, a positive relationship was seen when the students' human rights awareness level was related to their human rights experiences.

### **Objectives:**

1. To study awareness of human rights among girl students belong to general and ST category.
2. To relate the level of human rights awareness among general and ST girls' category students
3. To relate awareness of human rights among general and ST category girls' students of Kumaun region on the basis of caste category, academic stream and area of residence.

### **Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant difference in awareness of human rights among general & ST girls' students on the basis of caste category, academic stream, nature of residence and nature of family.
2. There is no significant difference in awareness of human rights among general & ST girls' students of Kumaun region.



## **METHODOLOGY**

The study is conducted under the Descriptive Survey method. It is that technique of investigation which attempts to term and infer what happens at present in the system of state, practices, procedures, effects, opinions etc.

### **POPULATION AND SAMPLE:**

The population of the study comprises all degree level students enrolled in Kumaun region of Uttarakhand. The investigator had selected 100 students studying in Swargiya Shri Jai Dutt walia Govt. *P.G. College, Ranikhet, P.G. college, Dwarahat, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Government Post Graduate College, Khatima* and Sardar Bhagat Singh Government Post Graduate College, Rudrapur. Technique of Simple random sampling was followed. The sample of total 100 girls' students had been selected, in which 50 % belongs to general category and rest of the 50% belongs to ST category. This technique has been used as all participants have the same probability of being chosen for the sample.

### **RESEARCH TOOL**

For collection of data the investigator used a consistent tool (Human Rights Awareness Test) recognized by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Arti Anand (2012) (HRAT-SVVA). This scale comprises of 3 dimensions of awareness concerning human rights and it consists of total 50 items.

### **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

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

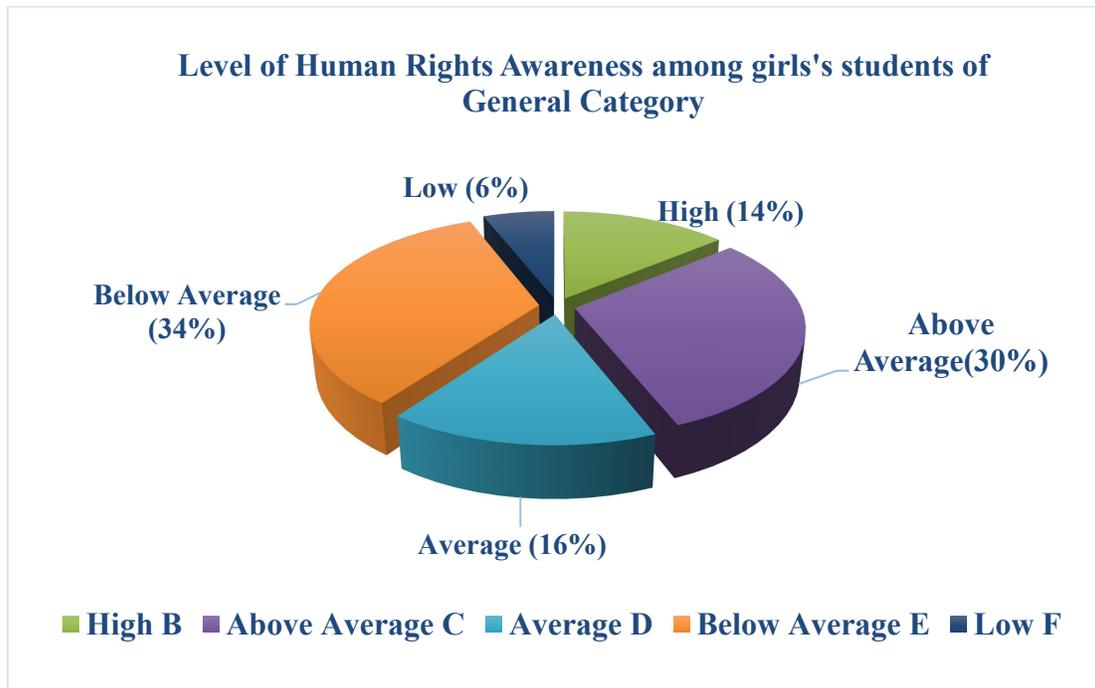
### **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS**



To achieve the objectives of the investigation, the researcher analysed data obtained on the “Human Rights Awareness Test” of college students. After analysing the data, the level of human rights awareness among PG girls’ students of General category is mentioned in Table-1

**Table 1. Level of Human rights awareness among PG female students of General category**

S. N.	Degree of Human Rights Awareness	Grade	N	Percentage (%)
1	Extremely High	A	Nil	00
2	High	B	07	14
3	Above Average	C	15	30
4	Average	D	08	16
5	Below Average	E	17	34
6	Low	F	03	6



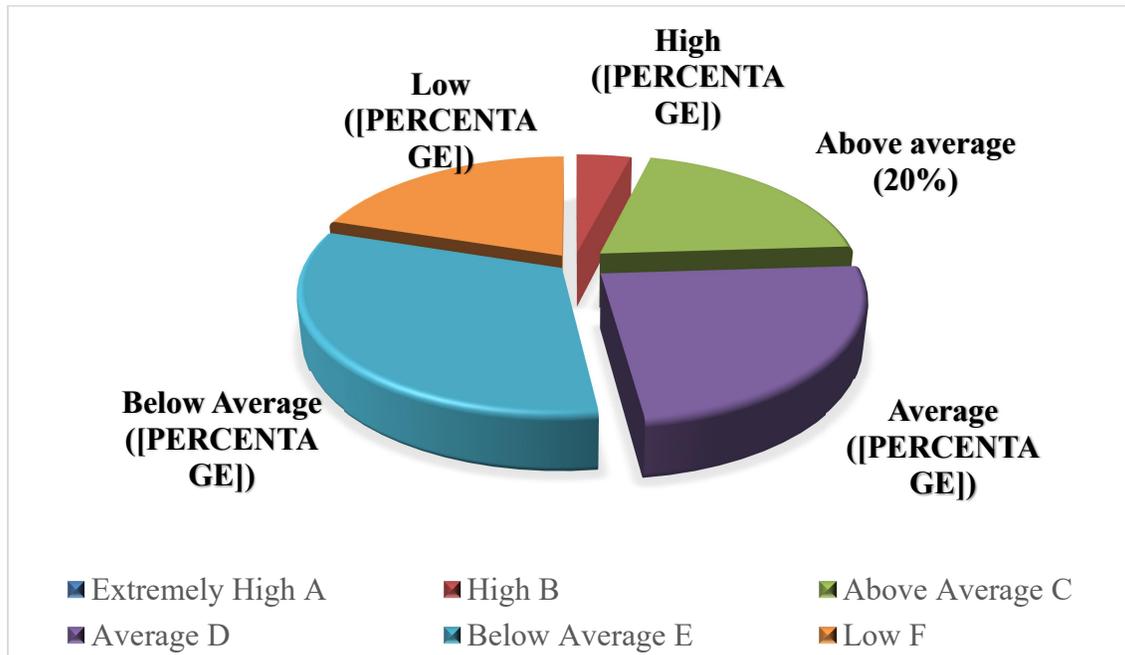
**Fig.1 Showing level of Human rights awareness, among students of General category**

Table-1 shows, none of the students lie in grade A (Extremely high degree of HRA). 14% of the general category falls in High level of HRA, 30% of the students classify under the above average level of human rights awareness (C grade). 16 % of the students fall in the average level of human rights awareness. The largest group falls into below average awareness, highlighting a significant area of concern and the need for education, while very few (6 %) students show low level of human rights awareness with F grade.

**Table 2. Level of Human rights awareness among PG girls' students of ST category**

S. No.	Degree of Human Rights Awareness	Grade	N	Percentage (%)
1	Extremely High	A	Nil	00
2	High	B	02	4
3	Above Average	C	10	20
4	Average	D	12	24
5	Below Average	E	16	32

6	Low	F	10	20
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**Fig. 2 Showing Human rights awareness level among PG female students of ST category**

Table-2 shows that none of the girls’ students of ST category reach to the level, that could be categorised as having extremely high. But high and above average degree of human rights awareness level category are 4 % and 20% respectively. Only 24% students show an average level of awareness. It is also clear from the above table and the figure, that 32% students of ST category show below average level of awareness. 20% ST girl’s students fall with F grade in the category of low degree of HRA

**Table 3. Human rights awareness of girls’ General & ST category students on the basis of Area of Residence.**

Area of Residence	N	Mean	SD	t-test	Results
General Urban	18	62.29	5.872	0.535	Non-significant
ST Urban	21	61.00	10.185		
General Rural	32	69.03	8.441	4.232	Significant

ST Rural	29	60.00	8.190		
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The average score of General Urban students (62.29) is a little higher than that of ST Urban students (61.00). The standard deviation for General Urban students is 5.872, while for ST Urban students it is 10.185. Since the *p*-value is greater than 0.05, the result is not significant. This means there is no real difference between the scores of General Urban and ST Urban students.

On the other hand, General Rural students scored higher on average (69.03) compared to SC Rural students (60.00). The calculated *t*-value is 4.232, which is greater than the table value of 1.98. The *p*-value is less than 0.05, so the result is significant. This means the difference in scores between General Rural and SC Rural students is real and not just by chance. The standard deviation for both groups was the same i.e. 8.441.

**Table 4. Human rights awareness of General & ST category girls' students on the basis of Academic Stream**

Academic Stream	N	Mean	SD	t-test	Results
General Science	26	72.23	7.591	2.154	Significant
ST Science	24	65.38	10.18		
General Arts	24	62.29	5.872	0.535	Non-Significant
ST Arts	23	61.00	10.185		

When comparing human rights awareness based on academic stream, it was found that General Category Science stream students (mean = 72.23) were more aware than ST category Science stream students (mean = 65.38). Since the *p*-value is less than 0.05, the result is significant. The calculated *t*-value (2.154) is greater than the table value (1.98), so the difference between the two groups is statistically significant.

For Arts students, the mean score of the General category is 62.29, with a standard deviation of 5.872. The calculated *t*-value (0.535) is less than the table value (1.98), and therefore, the result is not



significant. This means there is no meaningful difference in human rights awareness between General Arts and ST Arts students.

**Table 5. Human rights awareness of Female General & ST category students on the basis of Caste category**

Caste Category	N	Mean	SD	t-test	Result
General	50	67.33	8.919	0.661	Non-significant
ST	50	65.92	12.385		

Mean value of general category is calculated as 67.33%. The standard deviation is 8.919. Students of ST category found to have mean value as 65.92 and standard deviation as 12.385. t-value is calculated as 0.661, which is not considered significant when General category students compared to the ST category. The mean scores of general category, indicates a relatively high level of awareness or understanding.

### Findings:

- The largest group of general category falls into below average level awareness, i.e.34% students highlighting a significant area of concern and the need for better education. In contrast, only a small proportion (6%) of girl students showed a low level of awareness, receiving an F grade.
- The largest group of ST category students (32%), revealing that a significant portion of respondents has below-average awareness, indicating a serious need for education.
- The General Urban group has a moderate average score, indicating a reasonable level of awareness. The non-significant t-test suggests that there is no meaningful difference in scores compared to the ST Urban group. The ST Urban group has a slightly lower mean score, suggesting that performance levels among these respondents vary widely. The ST Rural group reflected a lower level of awareness compared to the General Rural group.
- The General Science group has a high mean score, indicating a good level of performance or awareness. ST category Science group students performed less well on average compared to the General Science group. On the other hand, the ST Arts group has a slightly lower mean score.



The higher standard deviation suggests more variability in responses, indicating that performance levels vary widely within this group.

- The General category students group has a comparatively high average score. However, the ST group of students has a slightly lower awareness, signifying that some individuals perform much better or worse than others in this group

## Conclusion

Awareness is all learning that develops knowledge, skills, understanding and values of human rights. It develops awareness and positive attitude towards human rights among the college students. Researcher concluded, girl students of the category general and ST have fallen into below average level of human rights. However, most universities do not conduct Human Rights Education. It has been observed that fundamental rights, as mentioned in the Indian Constitution, are introduced only from Class 9 onwards through school education. Moreover, there is no provision for general programs on Human Rights Education at higher levels. Therefore, human rights awareness should be included in the curriculum of schools, colleges, and universities. In degree level courses it is very essential to integrate human rights education. Awareness of human rights will help especially raising women' voice against any sort of abuse, violence, prejudice, discernment etc. Therefore, it is extremely needed to make college students aware about human rights.

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