



Attitude towards Human Rights among College Students in Present Period of Crisis of COVID-19: A Quick Online Survey

Dr. Pintu Kumar Maji

*Assistant Professor and HOD, Department of Education, Sarsuna College (Affiliated to University of Calcutta), 4/HB/A, Ho-Chi-Minh Sarani, Kolkata – 700 061,

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, India

Guest Faculty, Department of Education, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata-700 050

ABSTRACT

The construct human rights have a broad connotation and are closely associated to philosophical, sociological and psychological factors rather than mere accumulation of knowledge. Human Rights' indicates the natural right of a human being which implies the right to guarantee dignity as a person. In other words, human beings themselves are the object of Human Rights'. It is the basic international code of conduct which is considered generally as a binding force for all the member nations of UNO to promote and protect Human Rights'. It has laid utmost importance on protecting basic rights of all human beings as these are essential prerequisites for their survival and for leading a better life.

Purpose: In the present study an attempt has been made to investigate the attitude towards human rights of undergraduate college students.

Methodology: This study is a cross-sectional empirical study based on descriptive survey research design. The sample comprises 190 students, both boys & girls ranging in age from 17-20 years and studying from various undergraduate colleges in Kolkata based on stratified random sampling. One validated questionnaire (Ercan1, Yaman1, and Demir1, 2015) vetted by experts and researchers in measurement and research was used as an instrument for data collection and analyzed by employing quantitative research approach.

Findings: The results showed that those undergraduate college students irrespective of their entire sample, stream, gender and place of residence have average level of attitude towards human rights.

Key Words: Attitude, Human Rights, Covid-19 and Undergraduate College Students

INTRODUCTION

Human rights' is a worldwide issue and with due course it has become a global phenomenon. The construct human rights' is actually a modern interpretation of the age old problem focusing on freedom and, rationality of human kind getting accepted and actualized. It has a broad connotation and is closely associated to various philosophical, sociological and psychological factors rather than mere accumulation of knowledge. Human Rights' indicates the natural right of a human being which implies the right to guarantee dignity as a person. It referred to civil liberties, constitutional rights, freedom to every citizen. It is the basic international code of conduct which is considered generally as a binding force for all the member nations of UNO to promote and protect Human Rights'. It has laid utmost importance on protecting basic rights of all human beings as these are essential prerequisites for their survival and for leading a better life. In other words, human beings themselves are the object of Human Rights'.

Researchers have shown that a large number of cases on human violation are observed among the backward and deprived sections of the society. However cases of human violation, brutality, abuses are incessantly increasing everywhere. In spite of the various policies undertaken by the government to safeguard and protect human and their rights yet the actual implementation of such policies are limited. The main cause for rising incidents of victimization is due to the limited knowledge among the masses for the basic civil liberties. The masses form the bulk of the population and shoulder the responsibility of maintaining harmony in the country. In this context, Human rights education is an imperative tool via which it empowers individuals, groups and communities to have peaceful and respectful life on earth (Selvam, 2018). Thus the researchers intend to assess college students' attitude towards human rights. Policy makers should take stringent actions to overcome such issues and to curb the growing occurrence of exploitation throughout the globe.

Human right is the most fundamental of all rights. Human rights is vital as it protect us from discrimination and unfair treatment; promote the development of democratic values; and develop all human beings as human rights literate (Dubey, 2015). In Indian context, a number of issues like injustice, regionalism, secularism, violence, illiteracy, explosion, terrorism etc. have stem from violation of human rights. In the 1993, UN World Conference of Human Rights pointed out that education for human rights is an imperative tool for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relationship among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. In this regard, universities and colleges play an important role in the development of awareness regarding human rights among people (Rao & Johri, 1999). Chakravorty and Pal (2000) recommended that human rights education should be multipurpose and the structure of curriculum should be so designed that it develops awareness and consciousness regarding human rights among people. Researches in the field of human rights shows that male and female students have equal attitude towards human rights (Dubey, 2008) and human rights awareness (Pandey, 2009). However, Dubey and Upadhyaya (2008) found that male undergraduate students are more aware of fundamental rights than female students. They also found that 50% female students are aware of educational rights, 43% are aware of right to equality, 34%

have awareness of right to freedom of religion, 10% are aware of right to constitutional remedies and 19% are aware about right against exploitation. Taking the post-graduation students into consideration, Padmavathy & Pallai, 2015 concluded human rights awareness of the said sample is in average level. In addition Selvam, (2018) too conducted an empirical study on 97 post graduate students. 61% of the respondents expressed that the human rights subject helps to gain knowledge about human rights. 30.3% of the respondents said that they study human rights education to obtain their degree. They consider it is one of their subjects to study. Kumari (2003) reported that university students have average level of awareness about human rights. Further Akiri (2003) had stated that students' rights are important in schools a view Atonuje (2011) agreed with and advanced that 'those rights which protect students i.e. those persons attending schools'. Both the researchers stated that such rights include the right: to learn or be taught the right to belong to legally accepted voluntary associations of their choice in the school; the right to fair hearing on issues of conflict with fellow students.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The concept of human rights has attained a global phenomenon. It is essential that children are introduced to universal values in a manner appropriate their age (Padmavathy & Pallai, 2015). Academically speaking, according to the recently introduced Credit Based Choice System (CBCS), the college students are introduced to various new area of study, one such being is the Education for Human Rights as their SEC paper. After the completion of college, generally students enter into the civic society and ought to take the onus of different social and political aspect. Unless and until they are well versed with the issue of human rights, we cannot access them properly and at the same time unable to ensure the actual implementation in the larger society. Keeping in view the growing changes in the sphere of education and the society at large, the researchers have intended to study college students' level of attitude towards human rights.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Though an extensive literature has been found on the issue concerning human rights yet researchers related to college students residing in West Bengal is inconclusive. The problem of study is thus stated as "Attitude of College Students towards Human Rights".

AIMS AND / OR OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives of the study are undertaken in consideration to the findings from the literature survey-

- a) To the level of attitude towards human rights.
- b) To assess the effect of stream, gender and place of residence on attitude towards human rights.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The design of the study is case study based on survey, where the questionnaires are used to collect data and to analyse them quantitatively.

The Population of the study

It has already been mentioned that the population for the proposed study comprises the students at under graduate colleges in West Bengal. The sampling frame of the study is the students of age group 18 to 20 years belonging to higher middle class residing in West Bengal.

Method of sampling

The sample will be drawn randomly from the population. Since the study was conducted on students, a list of undergraduate colleges and situated within the administrative jurisdiction of the West Bengal was used as the sampling frame.

Sample size

The sample size is decided by compromising between theoretical perfection and practical feasibility. The size is considered on the basis of level of precision, level of confidence and the degree of variability in the attributes to be measured sample size should be decided by using technique of determining sample size by using statistical technique. The number of college included in the sample was 190.

Instruments

A standardised attitude towards human rights Test developed by RecepErcan, TugbaYaman and SelcukBesirDemir (2015) was used to measure the attitude towards human rights level of under graduate students. There are 21 statements with five alternatives i.e., I completely agree, I agree, I am undecided, I disagree and I completely disagree and for negative statements the scoring procedure was completely reversed. Attitude towards human right stool was classified into four dimensions namely:

- Equality and fundamental rights dimension
- Respect for individual rights dimension
- Respect for right to live dimension
- Political rights dimension

RESULT AND DISCUSSION**Table-1: Descriptive Statistics Concerning Distribution of Attitude towards Human Rights**

N	190
Mean	78.65
Median	81.00
Mode	80
Std. Deviation	17.222
Variance	296.600
Skewness	-0.554
Kurtosis	-0.354
Range	71
Minimum	34
Maximum	105
Sum	14943

The descriptive statistics in Table -1 for attitude towards human rights the scores of mean, median and mode shows an average performance ranging 78.65. In case of the attitude towards human rights (SD-17.222) the scores are more clustered. It is evident that scores of the variable asymmetrically distributed with the scores negatively skewed (-0.554).

Table-2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Attitude towards Human Rights Regarding Gender

Gender		Equality and fundamental rights	Respect for individual rights	Respect for right to live	Political rights	Attitude towards Human Rights
Girls	Mean	38.75	14.48	14.56	10.78	78.57
	N	115	115	115	115	115
	Std. Deviation	8.306	3.686	4.327	2.658	18.120
Boys	Mean	38.41	14.19	15.09	11.08	78.77
	N	75	75	75	75	75
	Std. Deviation	7.187	3.424	3.926	2.398	15.865
Total	Mean	38.62	14.36	14.77	10.90	78.65
	N	190	190	190	190	190
	Std. Deviation	7.866	3.578	4.171	2.556	17.222

Table No-2, shows that, equality and fundamental rights dimension scores and respect for individual rights dimension of the girl students is higher than boy students but respect for right to live dimension, political rights dimension and attitude towards human rights scores of the boy students higher than girl students.

Table-3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Attitude towards Human Rights Regarding Institution

Situating		Equality and fundamental rights	Respect for individual rights	Respect for right to live	Political rights	Attitude towards Human Rights
Semi Urban	Mean	37.71	13.94	14.10	10.44	76.19
	N	116	116	116	116	116
	Std. Deviation	8.219	3.707	4.414	2.674	18.021
Urban	Mean	40.04	15.03	15.81	11.62	82.50
	N	74	74	74	74	74
	Std. Deviation	7.099	3.281	3.541	2.188	15.220
Total	Mean	38.62	14.36	14.77	10.90	78.65
	N	190	190	190	190	190
	Std. Deviation	7.866	3.578	4.171	2.556	17.222

Table No-3, shows that, equality and fundamental rights dimension, respect for individual rights dimension, respect for right to live dimension, political rights dimension and attitude towards human rights scores of the urban students higher than semi urban students.

Table-4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Attitude towards Human Rights Regarding Stream

Stream		Equality and fundamental rights	Respect for individual rights	Respect for right to live	Political rights	Attitude towards Human Rights
Science	Mean	38.59	14.33	14.72	10.86	78.50
	N	58	58	58	58	58
	Std. Deviation	7.872	3.516	4.275	2.717	17.399
Commerce	Mean	36.55	13.70	14.00	10.39	74.64
	N	64	64	64	64	64
	Std. Deviation	8.073	3.513	4.144	2.453	17.250
Arts	Mean	40.59	15.01	15.53	11.41	82.54
	N	68	68	68	68	68
	Std. Deviation	7.245	3.626	4.028	2.445	16.388
Total	Mean	38.62	14.36	14.77	10.90	78.65
	N	190	190	190	190	190
	Std. Deviation	7.866	3.578	4.171	2.556	17.222

Table No-4, shows that, equality and fundamental rights dimension, respect for individual rights dimension, respect for right to live dimension, political rights dimension and attitude towards human rights scores of the arts students higher than science and commerce students.

Table-5: Summary of the ANOVA for the Scores of Attitude towards Human Rights Regarding Equality and fundamental rights dimension

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	479.907a	3	159.969	2.654	0.050
Intercept	549.632	1	549.632	9.117	0.003
Gender	.254	1	0.254	0.004	0.948
Situated	332.590	1	332.590	5.517	0.020
Stream	230.500	1	230.500	3.823	0.052
Error	11213.046	186	60.285		
Total	295017.000	190			
Corrected Total	11692.953	189			
a. R Squared = .041 (Adjusted R Squared = .026)					

It is revealed that there is a significant difference in attitude towards human rights regarding equality and fundamental rights dimension scores in the two groups namely institutional situated ($F=5.517$, $P<0.05$) and stream ($F=3.823$, $P<0.05$) except gender ($F=0.004$, $P=0.948$).

Table-6: Summary of the ANOVA for the Scores of Attitude towards Human Rights Regarding Respect for Individual Rights Dimension

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	85.464a	3	28.488	2.270	0.082
Intercept	69.878	1	69.878	5.568	0.019
Gender	.862	1	0.862	0.069	0.794
Situated	66.427	1	66.427	5.293	0.023
Stream	28.913	1	28.913	2.304	0.131
Error	2334.478	186	12.551		
Total	41617.000	190			
Corrected Total	2419.942	189			
a. R Squared = .035 (Adjusted R Squared = .020)					

It is evident that there is a significant difference in attitude towards human rights regarding respect for individual rights dimension scores in the one groups namely institutional situated ($F = 5.293$, $P < 0.05$) and except stream ($F = 2.304$, $P = 0.131$) and gender ($F = 0.069$, $P = 0.794$).

Table-7: Summary of the ANOVA for the Scores of Attitude towards Human Rights Regarding Respect for right to live dimension

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	207.618a	3	69.206	4.179	0.007
Intercept	9.905	1	9.905	0.598	0.440
Gender	25.670	1	25.670	1.550	0.215
Situated	165.041	1	165.041	9.966	0.002
Stream	60.513	1	60.513	3.654	0.057
Error	3080.192	186	16.560		
Total	44728.000	190			
Corrected Total	3287.811	189			
a. R Squared = .063 (Adjusted R Squared = .048)					

It is evident that there is a significant difference in attitude towards human rights regarding respect for right to live dimension scores in the two groups namely institutional situated ($F = 9.966$, $P < 0.01$) and stream ($F = 3.654$, $P < 0.05$) except gender ($F = 1.550$, $P = 0.215$).

Table-8: Summary of the ANOVA for the Scores of Attitude towards Human Rights Regarding Political rights dimension

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	95.622 ^a	3	31.874	5.203	0.002
Intercept	10.067	1	10.067	1.643	0.201
Gender	8.957	1	8.957	1.462	0.228
Situated	78.414	1	78.414	12.800	0.000
Stream	27.590	1	27.590	4.504	0.035
Error	1139.478	186	6.126		
Total	23809.000	190			
Corrected Total	1235.100	189			
a. R Squared = .077 (Adjusted R Squared = .063)					

It is concluded that there is a significant difference in attitude towards human rights regarding political rights dimension scores in the two groups namely institutional situated ($F = 12.800$, $P < 0.01$) and stream ($F = 4.504$, $P < 0.05$) except gender ($F = 1.462$, $P = 0.228$).

Table-9: Summary of the ANOVA for the Scores of Attitude towards Human Rights (Total Sample)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2933.828 ^a	3	977.943	3.424	0.018
Intercept	1453.404	1	1453.404	5.089	0.025
Gender	58.297	1	58.297	0.204	0.652
Situated	2312.584	1	2312.584	8.097	0.005
Stream	1128.346	1	1128.346	3.951	0.048
Error	53123.546	186	285.610		
Total	1231285.00	190			
Corrected Total	56057.374	189			
a. R Squared = .052 (Adjusted R Squared = .037)					

It is revealed that there is a significant difference in attitude towards human rights scores in the two groups namely institutional situated ($F = 8.097$, $P < 0.01$) and stream ($F = 3.951$, $P < 0.05$) except gender ($F = 0.204$, $P = 0.652$).

CONCLUSION

The arts and urban under graduate students are more concerned with the attitude towards human rights, as quite a large number of researches have reported it though findings are often of mixed nature. In this study also boys' respondents have disclosed their concern and subsequent positive attitude towards human rights more than their girls' counterparts. The research study is significant and has implications for the policy makers including economic policy perspectives as the study will provide necessary inputs regarding essential government policies that need to be undertaken to encourage attitude towards human rights. Limitation of the study is the small size of the sample. A sample from a larger group including students and administrators would have given a broader perspective. The qualitative study of the research has not been included due to paucity of time. It is required to understand the relationship between the other variables in depth.

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