

A Study on Human Rights Awareness in Chaltlang Community

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Abstract

This study assesses human rights awareness among residents of the Chaltlang community in Aizawl, Mizoram, employing a mixed-methods research design with a sample of 200 participants. Quantitative data were gathered using the Human Rights Awareness Test developed by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Arti Anand (2005), supplemented by qualitative data from structured open-ended interviews designed to capture participant experiences and perspectives. The results indicate that 66% of respondents possess average or below-average levels of awareness. While qualitative findings suggest a widespread conceptual recognition of human rights as innate, universal and protective. Consequently, the study advocates for targeted, grassroots initiatives to foster a more informed and empowered citizenry.

Keywords: Human Rights, Chaltlang, mixed- method, open-ended, citizenry.

Introduction

Human rights represent the fundamental and immutable freedoms intrinsic to all individuals, allocation as the essential foundation for a life of dignity, equality, and peace. These rights are characterized as universal, indivisible, and interdependent, encompassing civil, political, economic, and social dimensions that protect individuals from exploitation and discrimination (United Nations, n.d.). However, the mere existence of legal frameworks and international covenants is insufficient to ensure the protection of these liberties; a civilized and democratic society can only thrive when its citizenry is actively aware of their rights and the corresponding obligations toward others. Within the Indian context, persistent social challenges such as systemic inequality, marginalization of vulnerable groups, and various forms of exploitation often stem from a profound lack of public awareness regarding these constitutional and moral guarantees (IISRR, 2022).

In the state of Mizoram, which is characterized by a unique socio-cultural fabric and high literacy rates, the promotion of human rights values remains a critical objective for sustainable development and communal harmony. While the region is often recognized for its egalitarian principles, contemporary challenges—including gender disparities in traditional structures and issues affecting the youth—necessitate a deeper investigation into the actual levels of rights-based literacy (GANC, 2021). Education serves as the primary instrument for this transformation, as it equips individuals with the cognitive and ethical tools to recognize violations and seek institutional redress (Mubangizi, 2005). This study, focused specifically on the Chaltlang community in Aizawl, seeks to bridge the gap between abstract legal concepts and the lived realities of residents, providing empirical data to inform localized, culturally relevant human rights education programs.

Rationale

The necessity of assessing human rights awareness within a community lies in its foundational role in promoting social justice, democratic participation, and the protection of human dignity. Human rights education is not merely a theoretical exercise but a transformative mechanism that empowers individuals with the confidence to identify and challenge systemic injustices (Smith, 2019). Localized awareness initiatives serve as the cornerstone for building cohesive societies where diversity is respected and the rule of law is upheld (Khan & Lopez, 2020). Conversely, a lack of awareness regarding fundamental rights often results in the perpetuation of systemic abuses, social exclusion, and the marginalization of vulnerable groups (Amnesty International, 2021). By examining the specific knowledge gaps and lived experiences within a particular population, this study seeks to provide the empirical evidence required to develop culturally relevant and targeted educational interventions. Such efforts are essential for transitioning from a passive recognition of rights to an active, informed citizenry capable of exercising legal protections effectively (Mubangizi, 2005).

Literature Review

Ashraf (2013) conducted a study titled “A Study of Human Rights Awareness among Prospective teachers”. The study used survey type descriptive research method was adopted. 200 prospective teachers of teacher training institutes of Bhopal District of Madhya Pradesh State were selected. A finding of the study reveals that the level of Human Rights Awareness among prospective teachers is average.

Manna and Gosh (2014) conducted a research titled “Awareness about Human Rights: A Case Study among Final Year College Students” where the primary goal of this study is to find out how knowledgeable college students are of human rights. Descriptive survey approach was used by the researcher to accomplish the study's goals. The sample of 150 students was taken from AKPC Mahavidyalaya. The tool used for the study is Awareness Scale developed by the researcher. The findings of the study indicates that the college students have high level of human rights awareness.

Binjha (2022) conducted a study titled “Students’ Awareness of Human Rights Education at Higher Secondary School level” The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the levels of awareness of these rights amongst students of higher secondary school levels. The study followed the descriptive survey design method and stratified random sampling techniques were adopted to select the sample. A self-developed awareness scale and focus group discussion were used to collect data The findings of the study indicated that many of the students are aware of fundamental human rights while limited awareness about the right to education as a human right and its provisions.

Research Questions

1. What is the overall level of human rights awareness among the residents of Chaltlang?
2. What are the common opinions and experiences of Chaltlang residents concerning human rights in the community?

Research Objectives

1. To assess the overall level of human rights awareness among the resident of Chaltlang.
2. To explore the opinions and experiences of Chaltlang residents concerning human rights in the community.

Research Design

The researcher employed a mixed method research where the quantitative aspect of the study has consisted of a descriptive survey and has been appended with a qualitative aspect focusing on personal opinions and experiences.

Tools Used for the Study

The investigator used the Human Rights Awareness Test (2005) developed by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. (Mrs.) Arti Anand which was published by National Psychological Corporation.

A structured open-ended interview schedule has also been developed to collect opinions and experiences of participants. The interview has been translated into the Mizo language to ensure the participants' better comprehension of the questions. All the interviews were conducted in Mizo, transcribed, and then translated into English.

Population

The population comprised all residents of Chaltlang, Aizawl. The total population amounts to 6106.

Sample of the Study

The study employed a purposive sampling method where 200 individuals were selected for the study. 10 people were selected for face to face open ended interview session.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected was scored and tabulated in excel sheets which was analysed using simple percentage.

The interview transcripts are analyzed using a deductive analysis approach of the respondents' open-ended responses.

Findings

Objective No.1 - To assess the overall level of human rights awareness among the resident of Chaltlang.

The level of Human Rights Awareness among Chaltlang Community is presented in the table 1.1 and figure 1.1 below.

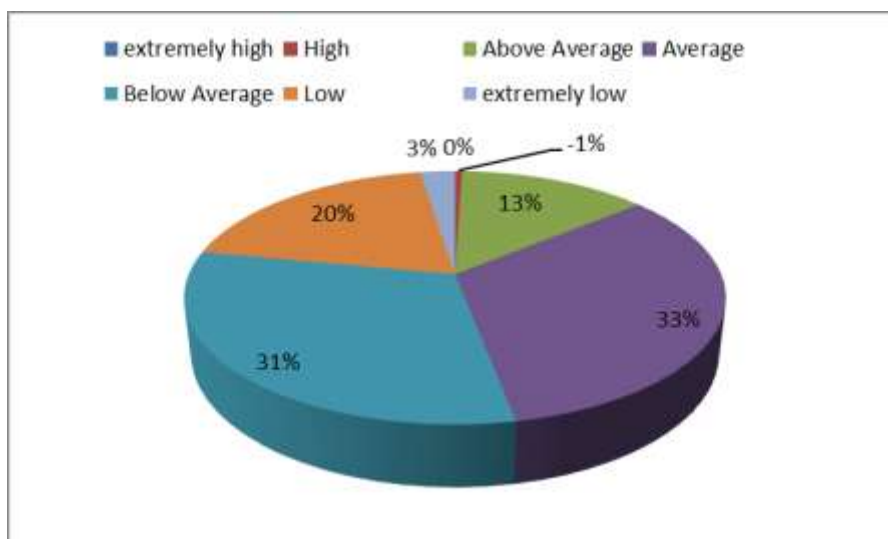
Table: 1.1
Human Rights Awareness among Chaltlang Community

LEVEL	Frequency	PERCENTAGE
Extremely High	0	0%

High	1	0.50%
Above Average	27	13.50%
Average	66	33%
Below Average	62	31%
Low	39	19.50%
Extremely Low	5	2.50%
Total	200	100

Figure: 1.1

Human Rights Awareness among Chaltlang Community residents



As shown in Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1 the distribution of Human Rights Awareness among the 200 respondents from the Chaltlang residents reveals that none of the participants (0%) fell into the "extremely high awareness" category. Only 1 (0.5%) demonstrated high awareness. A total of 27 (13%) exhibited above average awareness, while 66 (33%) fell within the average category. Below average awareness was recorded for 62 (31%), and 39 (20%) were categorized under low awareness. Lastly, 5 (3%) were found to have extremely low awareness.

Discussion

This result indicates a clear gap in deep and comprehensive knowledge of human rights within the Chaltlang community. The fact that over half of the respondents fall at or below the average level of awareness is concerning, especially in a society where awareness is a crucial precursor to both the protection and practice of human rights. The complete absence of any extremely high awareness scores may reflect the lack of institutional or community-based initiatives to educate citizens about their rights. This could be attributed to insufficient integration of human rights education in school curricula, limited outreach by civil society organizations, or poor media representation of rights-based issues. The finding emphasizes the need for community-centric awareness programs and the inclusion of human rights education at multiple levels—beginning with primary education and extending into adult education.

Objective No.2 - To explore the opinions and experiences of Chaltlang residents concerning human rights in the community through open ended interview comprising a thematic analysis

The opinions and experiences of Chaltlang residents concerning human rights in the community is given in detailed description below.

1. Defining Human Rights

The concept of Human Rights is widely recognized by the interviewees as fundamental, inherent, and universal. Most participants defined it in simple yet powerful terms that emphasize its basic and inclusive nature. For instance, one person stated,

“A right we have from the moment of our birth,”

highlighting the innate aspect of human rights. Similarly, one person referred to it as

“Universal... also called birthright,”

Reinforcing the idea that these rights are not earned but automatically possessed. Another person emphasized its protective function, calling it

“Protecting every individual’s rights,”

which suggests that human rights act as a safeguard for dignity and fairness.

2. Identifying Local Human Rights Concerns

The interviewees expressed concern over several human rights challenges, though perspectives varied based on personal experiences. One person pointed to

“Gender inequality, especially in church,”

indicating that traditional structures may contribute to unequal treatment. Another person raised the issue of economic disparity, stating,

“I think economic inequality among the community,”

suggesting that social stratification remains a barrier to equal rights. Meanwhile, one male and others identified substance abuse as a major problem, with his quote,

“I think it is drugs and alcohol abuse”

reflecting a broader societal concern that affects the rights to health, safety, and development.

3. Awareness and Response to Rights Violations

Though many participants responded with “No,” a few shared real encounters and their reactions. One recalled,

“Yes, during my school days, I used to experience and fight back,”

suggesting early activism and awareness. Another person mentioned a more subtle but deeply personal form of violation, stating,

“Some of my friends experience discrimination within the family...”

which points to the often-hidden nature of rights violations within households. One person, meanwhile, expressed solidarity and action with peers, saying,

“I respond by standing and fighting back with my friends,”

showing that youth may take a proactive stance when they feel empowered.

4. The Role of Education in Promoting Awareness

Education was unanimously seen as a cornerstone for promoting human rights. One person summed it up by saying,

“Promoting awareness in school and college,”

highlighting formal education’s role. Another person observed,

“They can be aware the individual rights from their childhood,”

underlining the long-term impact of early education. Meanwhile, some person emphasized both timing and method, stating,

“Help in educating individuals from the middle school stage,”

which implies that structured curricular integration can foster early rights consciousness.

5. Community-Based Initiatives

While not all participants had witnessed such initiatives, some highlighted efforts that made tangible impacts. One person referenced community action through NGOs, stating,

“The action taken by NGO especially MHIP when the rape had taken place,”

describing how civil society can mobilize to defend victims. Another person spoke about progress in child protection, remarking,

“The absence of Child Labour in our community...”

and credited organizations like Women and Child Development. One of the people noted inclusive development, saying,

“They promote women's rights and background.”

suggesting an expanding focus on marginalized groups.

6. Strategies for promoting human rights

Many participants believe that promoting human rights starts with community-based awareness and education. One person suggested using social institutions, saying,

“Through awareness in Community programmes and churches”

which reflects the trusted role of religious and communal gatherings. Another person supported a multi-platform approach, stating,

“Through education, NGOs, and awareness in the Church,”

emphasizing collaboration between civil society and educational systems. One person added that

“...invite a resource person and provide them a platform.”

can enhance credibility and impact by involving knowledgeable individuals in community outreach.

7. Personal Action in Defence of Rights

This question revealed that while many have not directly intervened in such situations, a few did share powerful personal experiences. One person reflected on his school experience, saying,

“I step in to stop ragging and promote human rights,”

demonstrating moral courage during his youth. Another person described a serious incident involving his friend, saying,

“It was a hectic case that went to the human rights case like SHRC... I stood up for him and informed the teacher,”

revealing the real risks involved in defending others. Similarly, one person recalled,

“I fought back for my friend’s rights,”

showing a spirit of solidarity and action among young people.

8. Engaging Youth

Most participants emphasized the importance of targeted outreach through platforms relevant to young people. One person proposed,

“Awareness through social media,”

Leveraging the digital tools that youth are most familiar with. Another person emphasized active participation, saying,

“Engage through social awareness and promote more in NGO programmes and meetings.”

underlining the importance of structured programs. One person further recommended trend-based communication, saying,

“Promote human rights through recent trends,”

which implies integrating human rights messages into pop culture and viral content.

9. Addressing Gender-Based Violence

Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was seen as requiring both legal measures and societal mindset changes. One person recommended structural solutions, stating,

“Through Government laws and regulations and give equal rights, attitude and opportunities to all genders.”

calling for both policy and culture shifts. One person emphasized community dialogue, saying,

“By addressing it on more platforms and raising awareness in the community,”

showing the need for continuous, open conversation. Another person focused on direct support systems, saying,

“By putting more awareness and providing a helpline for every woman,”

showing that safety mechanisms and access to help are essential components.

10. Promoting Human Rights in Schools

The role of schools as early intervention points for human rights education was a recurring theme. One person advocated for formal integration, stating,

“By adding to the syllabus... we should let the children be aware and practice it,”

which points to curriculum reform. Another person proposed peer-led models, saying,

“By establishing a club or group to promote Human rights,”

encouraging student participation. One of them offered a practical strategy:

“By inviting a resource person to the school and letting them have time,”

ensuring that students are exposed to expert knowledge in a structured way.

Discussion:

The qualitative component of this study provides context-specific depth, revealing that while quantitative awareness scores were low, participants maintain a meaningful conceptual understanding of human rights. Respondents identified critical issues—such as gender inequality in religious institutions, substance abuse, and economic disparity—linking human rights directly to social justice and human dignity. Despite this recognition, a significant gap exists regarding legal protections and institutional procedures, a finding consistent with Mubangizi (2005).

Education emerged as the primary catalyst for improvement, with participants advocating for the integration of rights-based values in schools and colleges (Padmavathy & Pallai, 2015; Falk & DuMez, 2006). Furthermore, the emphasis on utilizing churches, NGOs, and social media aligns with existing research (Lahon, 2012; Saikia & Padmavathy, 2022) suggesting that localized, participatory outreach is essential. The community’s readiness to engage underscores a high potential for successful

intervention, provided that future programs remain culturally relevant and receive structured support from civil society and faith-based groups

Conclusion

This study, titled "A Study on Human Rights Awareness among the Chaltlang Community," investigated public understanding of human rights through a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative analysis of 200 participants revealed that a significant majority possess average or below-average awareness, with a notable absence of high-level proficiency. This indicates a profound gap in civic education within the community.

The qualitative findings supplemented these data, showing that while participants define human rights in fundamental terms; their understanding is primarily shaped by lived experiences of gender inequality, economic disparity, and substance abuse. Education was identified as the essential vehicle for progress, with respondents advocating for localized, community-driven outreach involving schools, faith-based institutions, and digital platforms. The study concludes that while current awareness is limited, the community's high readiness for engagement presents a significant opportunity for transformation. Effective intervention will require a multi-stakeholder approach to embed human rights discourse into the cultural and institutional fabric of human life.

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