

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

---

Volume 8 | Issue 2

---

2025

© 2025 *International Journal of Law Management & Humanities*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://www.ijlmh.com/>

Under the aegis of VidhiAagaz – Inking Your Brain (<https://www.vidhiaagaz.com/>)

---

This article is brought to you for “free” and “open access” by the International Journal of Law Management & Humanities at VidhiAagaz. It has been accepted for inclusion in the International Journal of Law Management & Humanities after due review.

In case of **any suggestions or complaints**, kindly contact [support@vidhiaagaz.com](mailto:support@vidhiaagaz.com).

---

**To submit your Manuscript** for Publication in the **International Journal of Law Management & Humanities**, kindly email your Manuscript to [submission@ijlmh.com](mailto:submission@ijlmh.com).

---

# Awareness and Understanding of Constitutional Fundamental Rights: A Study Among Students in Himachal Pradesh University

---

ANIL KUMAR<sup>1</sup> AND RUPANSH RANA<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*The Constitution of India guarantees Fundamental Rights to all citizens, forming the cornerstone of democracy and ensuring individual liberty, equality, and justice. However, the level of awareness and understanding of these rights among the youth, particularly students, plays a crucial role in strengthening democratic values and active citizenship. This study aims to assess the awareness and comprehension of Constitutional Fundamental Rights among students in Himachal Pradesh. Using a mixed-method approach, data was collected through questionnaires from a representative sample of students in Himachal Pradesh University Shimla. The findings reveal significant gaps in knowledge, with many students displaying only a basic or superficial understanding of their rights. Factors such as educational background, curriculum exposure, media influence, and parental awareness were found to influence students' knowledge levels. The study underscores the need for more comprehensive civic education and interactive learning strategies to promote constitutional literacy among young learners. Enhancing awareness of Fundamental Rights is essential not only for personal empowerment but also for nurturing informed and responsible citizens.*

**Keywords:** Constitution, Fundamental Rights, liberty, equality, knowledge.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, stands as the supreme law of the land and lays the foundation for the democratic governance of the country. Among its most vital features are the Fundamental Rights, which aim to ensure equality, freedom, and justice for all citizens, regardless of their background. These rights are not only legal safeguards but also essential for the development of a just and inclusive society.

For a democracy to function effectively, it is important that citizens, especially the youth, are

---

<sup>1</sup> Author is an Assistant Professor at GC Dehri, India.

<sup>2</sup> Author is a student at Department of Education HPU Shimla, India.

aware of their rights and responsibilities. Students, being the future of the nation, must have a clear understanding of the rights guaranteed to them under the Constitution. Such awareness not only empowers them to stand against injustice but also encourages active participation in civic and democratic processes.

Despite the importance of constitutional literacy, there remains a concern that many students lack adequate knowledge about their Fundamental Rights. Various factors such as curriculum design, teaching methods, access to information, and socio-economic background can influence this level of awareness. In the context of Himachal Pradesh—a state with diverse geographical, educational, and cultural settings—it becomes important to explore how well students understand these rights.

This study seeks to examine the extent to which students in Himachal Pradesh are aware of and understand their Constitutional Fundamental Rights. It also aims to identify the factors that affect this awareness and to suggest ways to improve civic education in the region.

## **II. HISTORY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA**

The Constitution of India is the cornerstone of the country's democratic governance and the longest written constitution in the world. Its formation was the result of years of struggle, deliberation, and commitment to building a just and inclusive society.

The roots of constitutional development in India can be traced back to British colonial rule. Several acts passed by the British Parliament, such as the Regulating Act of 1773, the Government of India Acts of 1858 and 1935, and the Indian Councils Acts, gradually introduced administrative reforms. Among these, the Government of India Act, 1935 is considered a significant precursor, as it provided a basic framework for federal governance and inspired several provisions in the present Constitution.

After India gained independence on **15th August 1947**, a **Constituent Assembly** was formed to draft the Constitution. The Assembly comprised representatives from various regions, communities, and political backgrounds. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, known as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, served as the Chairman of the **Drafting Committee**.

The Constituent Assembly held its first session on **9th December 1946**, and after nearly **three years of deliberations**, the Constitution was adopted on **26th November 1949**. It came into effect on **26th January 1950**, a date now celebrated as **Republic Day** in India.

The Indian Constitution drew inspiration from various sources, including the **British Parliamentary System**, the **U.S. Bill of Rights**, the **Irish Directive Principles of State Policy**,

and the **Canadian federal structure**. It enshrined values such as justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, as reflected in its **Preamble**.

Over the years, the Constitution has been amended multiple times to address changing social, political, and economic needs, while upholding its core democratic principles. Its flexible yet enduring nature has made it a living document, capable of evolving with time while safeguarding the rights and freedoms of Indian citizens.

### **III. FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION**

The **Fundamental Rights** enshrined in the **Constitution of India** (Part III, Articles 12–35) are the basic human rights guaranteed to every citizen. These rights are essential for personal freedom, equality, and the development of a just society.

#### **1. Right to Equality (Articles 14–18)**

This right ensures:

- Equality before the law
- Equal protection of laws
- No discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth
- Equal opportunity in public employment
- Abolition of untouchability and titles

#### **Example:**

If a qualified female candidate is denied a government job because of her gender, she can file a case under the **Right to Equality**. In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled that women should have equal right to enter the **Sabarimala Temple**, recognizing gender equality.

#### **2. Right to Freedom (Articles 19–22)**

This includes:

- Freedom of speech and expression
- Freedom of assembly
- Freedom to form associations
- Freedom to move freely throughout India
- Freedom to reside anywhere in India
- Freedom to practice any profession or business

**Example:**

A student starts a YouTube channel to express views on social issues. This is an exercise of the **freedom of speech and expression**. However, hate speech or content promoting violence is not protected under this right.

**3. Right against Exploitation (Articles 23–24)**

This right prohibits:

- Human trafficking
- Forced labour
- Employment of children below 14 in hazardous industries

**Example:**

If a child is found working in a firecracker factory, it is a **violation of Article 24**. NGOs and authorities can take action, and the child must be rehabilitated.

**4. Right to Freedom of Religion (Articles 25–28)**

This guarantees:

- Freedom to practice, profess, and propagate any religion
- Equal treatment of all religions by the state
- Freedom from religious taxes or forced attendance in religious institutions

**Example:**

A person chooses to convert to another religion out of personal belief. This is protected under the **Right to Freedom of Religion**, as long as the conversion is voluntary.

**5. Cultural and Educational Rights (Articles 29–30)**

These rights protect the cultural identity of minorities and their right to:

- Preserve their language, script, and culture
- Establish and manage educational institutions

**Example:**

A Tamil-speaking community in Himachal Pradesh opens a school that teaches in Tamil. This is a valid use of their **Cultural and Educational Rights**.

**6. Right to Constitutional Remedies (Article 32)**

This allows citizens to:

- Approach the **Supreme Court or High Court** directly if their Fundamental Rights are violated
- Seek **writs** like Habeas Corpus, Mandamus, Prohibition, Certiorari, and Quo Warranto

**Example:**

If someone is detained by the police without valid reason or trial, their family can file a **Habeas Corpus** petition to produce the person in court. In the **ADM Jabalpur case**, the importance of Article 32 was strongly debated.

**(A) Review of Related Literature**

The awareness of Constitutional Fundamental Rights among students has been the focus of various national and regional studies, highlighting the significance of civic education in shaping informed and responsible citizens. This section reviews relevant literature that provides insight into the level of awareness, influencing factors, and the role of education in promoting constitutional knowledge.

**Kumar (2015)** conducted a study on high school students in Delhi and found that while most students were aware of the basic Fundamental Rights such as the Right to Equality and Right to Freedom, their understanding of the Right to Constitutional Remedies and Right against Exploitation was limited. The study emphasized the importance of including interactive civic learning in school curricula.

**Sharma and Singh (2018)** examined awareness levels among rural and urban college students in Punjab. Their research revealed a significant gap between urban and rural students, with urban students showing better understanding due to better access to digital resources and exposure to civic activities.

**Joshi (2020)** in a study conducted in Uttarakhand found that students from private schools demonstrated higher awareness of Fundamental Rights compared to those in government schools. This disparity was attributed to differences in teaching methods, infrastructure, and extracurricular programs related to legal awareness.

**NCERT (2021)** in its educational report pointed out that although social science textbooks cover topics on the Constitution and rights, the approach is often theoretical and lacks real-life application. The report recommended introducing project-based learning and debates to improve engagement.

**Verma & Ali (2017)** explored the influence of media on students' constitutional literacy. The study concluded that students who actively followed news and social media discussions were

more informed about their rights, especially in the context of recent court rulings and civic protests.

**Chauhan (2019)** conducted a comparative study in Himachal Pradesh and found that although students were aware of popular rights like freedom of speech, they were often unaware of the legal procedures to protect those rights. The study called for workshops and collaboration between schools and legal institutions.

These studies collectively indicate that while awareness of Fundamental Rights exists to some extent among students, it is often shallow and varies based on geographical, educational, and socio-economic factors. There is a growing consensus that civic education needs to be more practical, inclusive, and continuous throughout a student's academic journey.

### **(B) Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the level of awareness of Constitutional Fundamental Rights among students in Himachal Pradesh University Shimla.
2. To examine the understanding of the purpose and importance of Fundamental Rights among students.
3. To suggest measures to improve constitutional and civic awareness among students through education and outreach programs.

### **(C) Research Methodology**

The research methodology outlines the systematic approach used to conduct the study. It includes the research design, sampling method, data collection tools, and the methods used for analysis.

#### **a. Research Design**

The study follows a **descriptive survey research design**, which is appropriate for gathering information about students' awareness and understanding of Fundamental Rights. This design helps in identifying existing knowledge levels and the factors influencing them.

#### **b. Population and Sample**

The target population for the study consists of Himachal Pradesh University **students** from Arts, Sciences, Management and Law of **Himachal Pradesh University Shimla**. A **sample of 400 students** was selected using **stratified random sampling**. The population of this study consisted of students from four faculties: Arts, Science, Management, and Law. A total of 400 participants were selected using a multistage sampling technique. First, the lottery method was

applied to randomly select 5 classes from each faculty. Then, from each of these selected classes, 20 students were randomly chosen, resulting in a sample of 100 students per faculty. Thus, the final sample consisted of 400 students, with equal representation (100 each) from all four faculties.

### c. Data Collection Tools

The primary tool used for data collection was a **structured questionnaire**, which included:

- Multiple-choice and objective questions to assess awareness
- Demographic questions (age, gender, type of institution, location, etc.)

### d. Method of Data Collection

The questionnaires were distributed through **Google Forms** to ensure wider participation. Data was collected over a period of **one month** with the cooperation of Students.

### e. Data Analysis

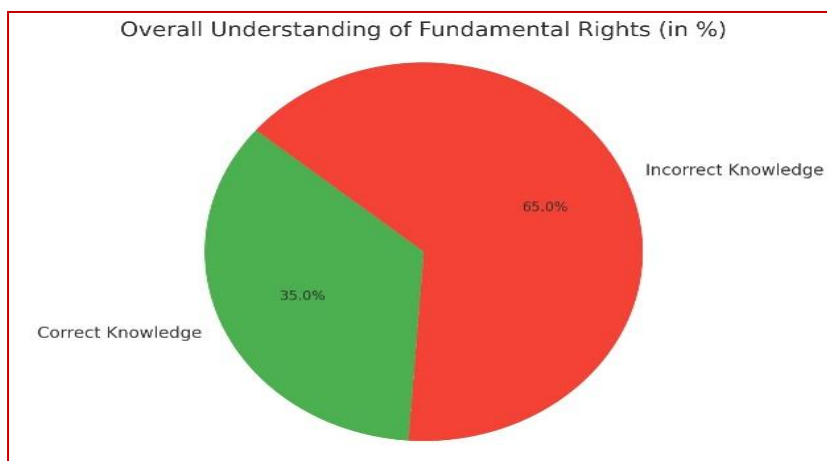
The collected data was compiled and analysed using **simple statistical methods** such as:

- **Percentage analysis** to measure awareness levels.
- **Graphs and charts** for visual representation of results.

## IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the analysis of the data collected through questionnaires from students across different department in Himachal Pradesh University Shimla. The data has been interpreted using percentages and simple statistical tools to highlight trends, comparisons, and key observations related to students' awareness and understanding of Fundamental Rights.

### 1. Overall Understanding of Fundamental Rights (Pie Chart)

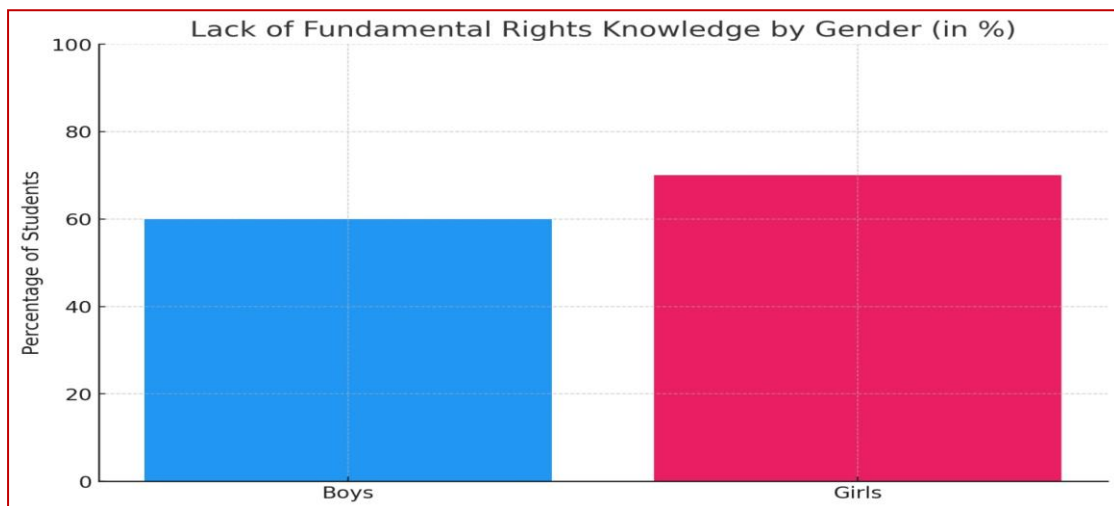


### Interpretation:



Only 35% of the students provided correct information regarding Fundamental Rights, while a massive 65% gave incorrect responses. This indicates a serious gap in constitutional awareness among students. It shows the urgent need for improved civic education, especially about fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

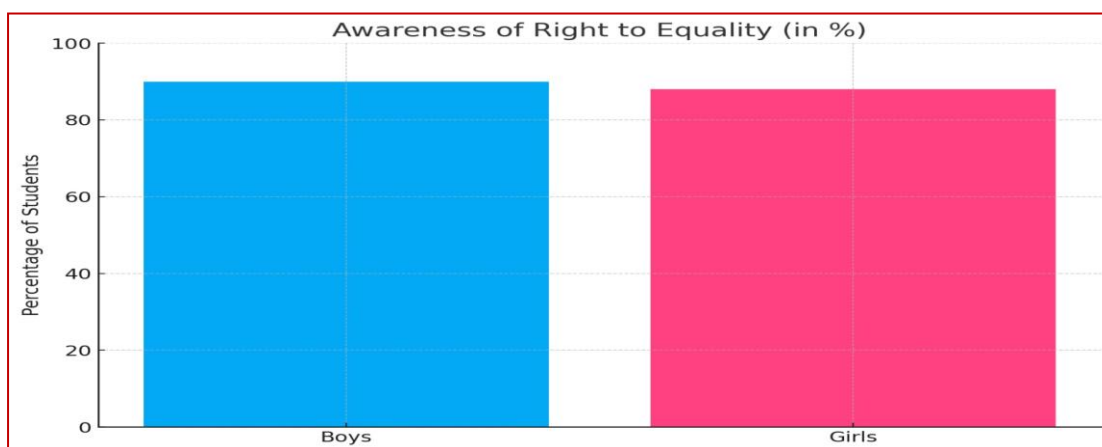
**2. Gender-wise Lack of Knowledge (Bar Graph)**



**Interpretation:**

Among the students, 60% of boys and 70% of girls were unaware of the correct number of Fundamental Rights. This reflects a widespread lack of awareness among both genders, though the gap suggests girls might need slightly more targeted interventions in civic education.

**3. Awareness of Right to Equality (Bar Graph)**

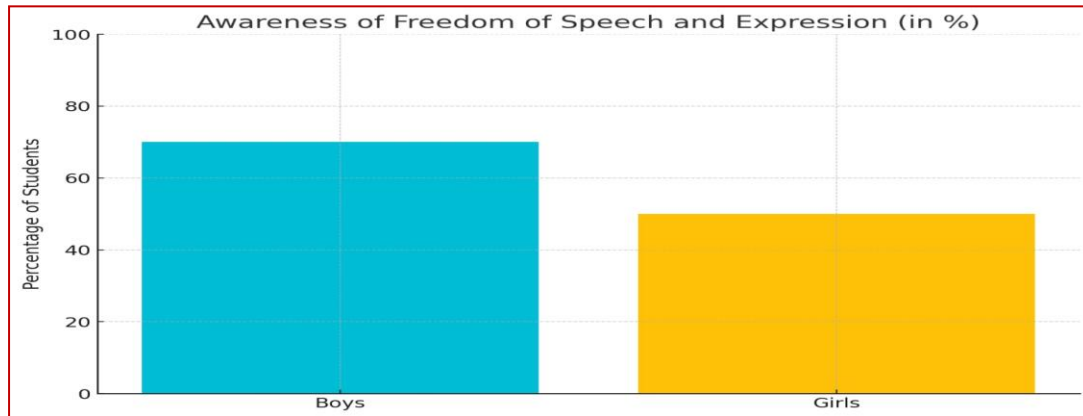


**Interpretation:**

Approximately 90% of boys and 88% of girls are aware of the Right to Equality. This

is a positive outcome, showing that most students understand at least this fundamental right. It may be due to higher emphasis on this right in academic and social discourse.

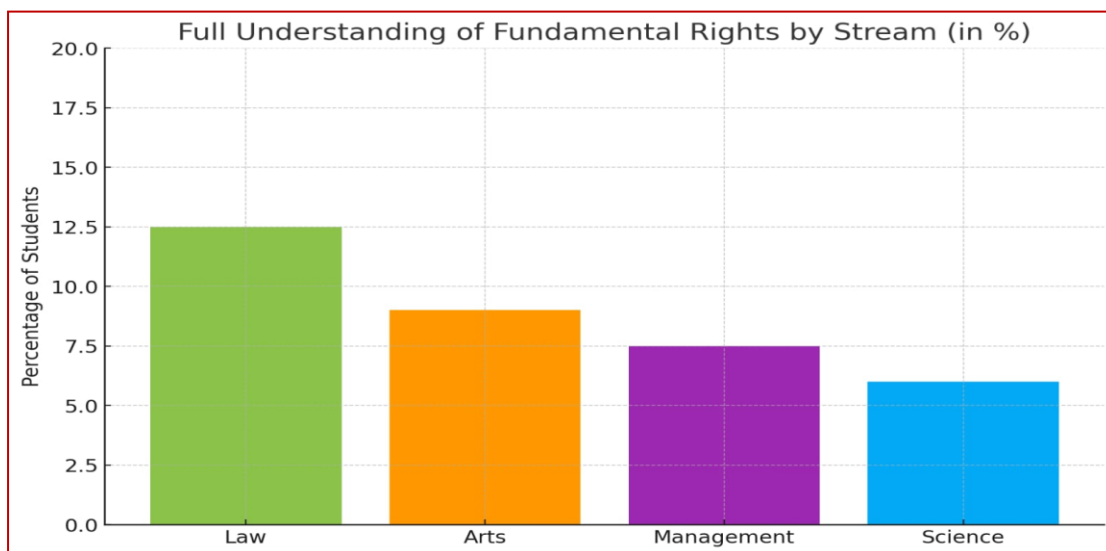
**4. Awareness of Freedom of Speech and Expression (Bar Graph)**



**Interpretation:**

About 70% of boys and only 50% of girls are aware of the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression. This indicates a significant gender disparity in awareness of expressive freedoms, possibly due to cultural or educational factors limiting discussions on these rights among girls.

**5. Full Understanding by Academic Stream (Bar Graph)**



**Interpretation**

- Law students: 12.5%

- Arts students: 9%
- Management students: 7.5%
- Science students: 6%

This clearly shows that Law students have the highest understanding of all Fundamental Rights, as expected due to their curriculum. However, students from non-law backgrounds show very limited understanding, emphasizing the need for interdisciplinary civic education in all streams.

### Overall Interpretation

There is overall lack of understanding of all fundamental rights among students. While the Right to Equality is widely known, the Right to Freedom of Speech and general awareness need significant improvement. Special awareness programs, especially for \*non-law faculties and female students, could help bridge this gap.

## V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Based on the data collected and analyzed, the following key findings have emerged:

1. **Lack of Fundamental Rights Awareness:** A significant 65% of the students (260 out of 400) were unable to correctly state the number of Fundamental Rights, highlighting a major gap in basic constitutional knowledge.
2. **Gender-wise Disparity:** Among those unaware, 60% of boys (120 out of 200) and 70% of girls (140 out of 200) gave incorrect responses, indicating that girls had a slightly lower level of awareness.
3. **Right to Equality – Better Awareness:** A high percentage of students – 90% of boys (180) and 88% of girls (176) – knew about the Right to Equality, suggesting this right is more commonly taught or discussed.
4. **Freedom of Speech & Expression – Moderate Awareness:** Only 70% of boys (140) and 50% of girls (100) were aware of this right, indicating a gender gap and the need for stronger emphasis on democratic rights in education.
5. **Stream-wise Understanding – Low Overall Awareness:** Complete understanding of all Fundamental Rights was limited and varied across academic streams: Law: 12.5% (50 students), Arts: 9% (36 students), Management: 7.5% (30 students), Science: 6% (24 students). This shows that outside of legal education, knowledge of fundamental rights is poor and not sufficiently covered in other disciplines.

6. **Skewed Focus in Education:** The high awareness of some specific rights (e.g., Right to Equality) vs. very low overall understanding suggests that civic education is fragmented and not holistic.
7. **Need for Gender-Inclusive and Stream-Wide Civic Learning:** The data reveals not just a general lack of awareness, but also variations across gender and academic streams, underlining the necessity of targeted interventions in education policies.

## VI. SUGGESTIONS

1. **Integrate Practical Civic Education into Curriculum:** Schools and colleges should include interactive sessions such as debates, quizzes, and role plays related to the Constitution and Fundamental Rights to help students understand their real-world applications.
2. **Organize Awareness Campaigns and Workshops:** Regular workshops and awareness drives can be conducted in both urban and rural schools to educate students about each Fundamental Right in detail. These campaigns can also involve legal experts and civic educators.
3. **Leverage Digital Media for Awareness:** Since a significant number of students use social media, educational institutions and government agencies should share engaging, fact-based content related to Fundamental Rights through digital platforms.
4. **Encourage Student Participation in Legal Literacy Programs:** Schools can collaborate with local legal aid cells or NGOs to organize visits to courts or legal awareness programs, thereby fostering an understanding of rights enforcement mechanisms like Article 32.
5. **Include Fundamental Rights in Co-Curricular Activities:** Topics on Fundamental Rights can be made part of essay writing, poster-making, and speech competitions, allowing students to express and reflect on their knowledge creatively.
6. **Promote Peer Learning Initiatives:** Encourage peer-led clubs or discussion groups where students can share knowledge and experiences related to civic rights and responsibilities, making learning more relatable and collaborative.
7. **Use Local Languages and Cultural Contexts:** Educational material and sessions should be made accessible in local languages and contextualized with relatable examples to make the concept of Fundamental Rights more understandable to all students.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

The present study reveals that while a considerable number of students in Himachal Pradesh have heard about Fundamental Rights, their actual understanding remains partial and, in many cases, superficial. High awareness was observed for commonly discussed rights such as the Right to Equality and Freedom of Speech and Expression. However, awareness levels dropped significantly for rights like Cultural and Educational Rights and the Right to Constitutional Remedies. A striking finding is the gap between claimed awareness and actual knowledge, suggesting that many students may be overestimating their understanding. This highlights the need for educational reforms and interactive methods to teach civic knowledge more effectively. Schools, colleges remain the primary sources of information, but the potential of digital platforms and informal networks like peers and family is still underutilized. To ensure that every student not only knows about their rights but also understands and values them, there is a pressing need to bridge the knowledge gap through inclusive, engaging, and continuous awareness efforts. Strengthening civic education is not just an academic exercise — it is a vital step toward creating responsible, informed, and empowered citizens.

\*\*\*\*\*

### VIII. REFERENCES

1. Government of India. (1950). *The Constitution of India*. New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice.
2. NCERT. (2020). *Social and Political Life – Class 9 & 10 Textbooks*. New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training.
3. Basu, D.D. (2019). *Introduction to the Constitution of India*. LexisNexis.
4. Pylee, M.V. (2021). *India's Constitution*. S. Chand Publishing.
5. Barik, B. (2020). "Role of Education in Promoting Awareness of Fundamental Rights among Students." *Journal of Legal Studies and Research*, 6(2), 85–92.
6. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). (2021). *Handbook on Child Rights and Fundamental Rights*. New Delhi.
7. Choudhary, A. & Sharma, R. (2018). "A Study on the Awareness of Constitutional Rights among College Students." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research*, 6(4), 30–35.
8. Ministry of Education. (2022). *National Education Policy 2020: Implementation Report*. Government of India.
9. Sharma, N. (2019). "Fundamental Rights: A Study on Awareness among Youth in Rural Areas." *Indian Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(1), 12–19.
10. Supreme Court of India. (2021). *Landmark Judgments on Fundamental Rights*. Retrieved from: <https://main.sci.gov.in>.

\*\*\*\*\*