



Awareness of HR Laws and Employee Rights among College Students

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the level of awareness among college students regarding Human Resource (HR) laws and employee rights in India. As young individuals move from academic life to the workplace, having a clear understanding of employment laws—such as those related to minimum wages, workplace safety, maternity benefits, and anti-harassment protections—becomes highly important. The research seeks to identify how well-informed students are about their legal rights and responsibilities as future employees, and how educational institutions contribute to developing this awareness. The study highlights the importance of legal literacy in shaping ethical, empowered, and well-informed members of the future workforce. A structured questionnaire was used to collect insights from students across various academic backgrounds, focusing on the need to integrate basic legal education into higher learning.

Keywords: HR laws, employee rights, labour law, legal awareness, workplace safety, legal education, empowerment.

Introduction

In today's dynamic work environment, understanding one's rights as an employee is more important than ever. As college students prepare to transition from academics to professional life, awareness of Human Resource (HR) laws and labour rights plays a crucial role in ensuring fair treatment, safety, and empowerment at the workplace. Knowledge of laws concerning minimum wages, workplace safety, maternity benefits, and protection against harassment not only safeguards employees but also fosters responsible and ethical behavior in organizations. Despite the significance of these laws, many young individuals remain unaware of their rights and the legal protections available to them. Educational institutions, therefore, have a vital role in promoting legal literacy and equipping students with the knowledge needed to navigate the professional world confidently. This study focuses on assessing the awareness of HR laws and employee rights among college students, highlighting the need for integrating basic legal education into higher learning programs to prepare a well-informed and empowered future workforce.

Review of Literature

1. S. Ramesh (2022) in his article "Employment Law and Human Resource Management: Balancing Legal

Compliance with Business Needs" highlighted that awareness of employment laws is crucial for every professional entering the workforce. His findings suggest that the lack of understanding about HR laws at an early stage—such as during college—can lead to compliance issues later in employment. This indicates the need to include basic legal education in college curricula to prepare students for future workplace responsibilities. (Journal of Legal Subjects, Vol. 2, Issue 4, p. 21).

2. Rushiraj Rohidas Kamble and A.N. Misal (2023) in their study "The Assessing of Compliance with Essential Labour Laws in India's IT Sector" revealed that HR compliance depends not only on company policies but also on employees' knowledge of their rights. Applying this insight to college students, the research implies that low awareness among future employees may contribute to poor compliance in organizations. Therefore, educating college students about essential labour laws can improve future compliance and workplace ethics. (ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts, Vol. 4, Issue 2).
3. Deepankar Sharma (2024) through his article "Work-Life Balance in Indian Workplaces: Role of Labour Regulations" discussed how labour laws influence job satisfaction and employee well-being. Relating this to

college students, the study suggests that awareness about such labour protections—like working hours, paid leave, and maternity benefits—can help students develop realistic expectations of work-life balance and demand fair treatment once employed.

(ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts, Vol. 5, Issue 4).

4. Riya Yadav, Riya Shree, Sania Perwez, and Bhupinder Singh (2025) in their paper “Challenges in the Enactment of Child Labour Laws in India” examined gaps in law enforcement and awareness among communities. The study underscores how public ignorance weakens the effect of protective laws. Similarly, this lack of awareness among college students about employee rights may lead to unintentional acceptance of exploitative workplace conditions, showing why awareness campaigns in educational institutions are essential. (National Journal of Labour and Industrial Law, Vol. 8, Issue 2).
5. Vanshita Gupta (2024) in her research “Examining the Efficacy of Labour Laws in Promoting Gender Equality for Female Workers in India” analyzed how legal protections promote gender equality at workplaces. Connecting this to students, her findings highlight the importance of sensitizing young people—especially women—to their rights under labour laws. Awareness during college can empower female students to recognize and resist discrimination or inequality when they begin working. (National Journal of Labour and Industrial Law, 2024).

Research Method

Population and Sample

Population: This study focuses on college students from different streams such as Arts, Science, Commerce, Management, and Law. The aim was to understand how much students know about Human Resource (HR) laws and employee rights among college students.

Sample: total of 51 students took part in the survey. They were selected through a convenience sampling method, which

means the participants were chosen based on their easy accessibility and willingness to respond. This approach helped in getting honest and quick responses from students across different courses.

Data Collection Methods

To collect the data, a Google Form questionnaire was designed and shared with the students. The form included both multiple-choice and short descriptive questions that focused on their understanding and awareness of HR laws and employee rights among college students. The responses were collected between September 13, 2025, and October 5, 2025. The online format made it simple for students to fill out the form at their convenience and ensured a wider reach within a short period.

Research Instruments

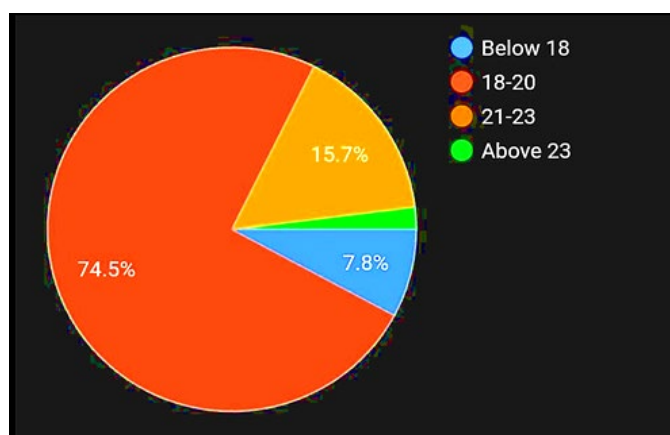
The main tool used in this study was a questionnaire created using Google Forms. It was designed to gather clear and specific information about students’ awareness of various HR and labour laws, such as the Minimum Wages Act (1948), Maternity Benefit Act (1961), POSH Act (2013), and Employees’ Provident Fund Act (1952). The form also included questions about students’ opinions on employee rights, workplace protection, and the importance of knowing legal rights before starting a job. Using an online questionnaire helped make the process quick, accessible, and environmentally friendly.

Data Analysis Technique

The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using the Mean Method. Each response option was given a numerical value, and the mean (average) was calculated to understand the general trend of responses for each question. This method helped identify how aware students are about HR laws and employee rights, how they view workplace protection, and which rights they consider most important for their future employment. The mean values gave a clear picture of the overall awareness level among college students.

Findings

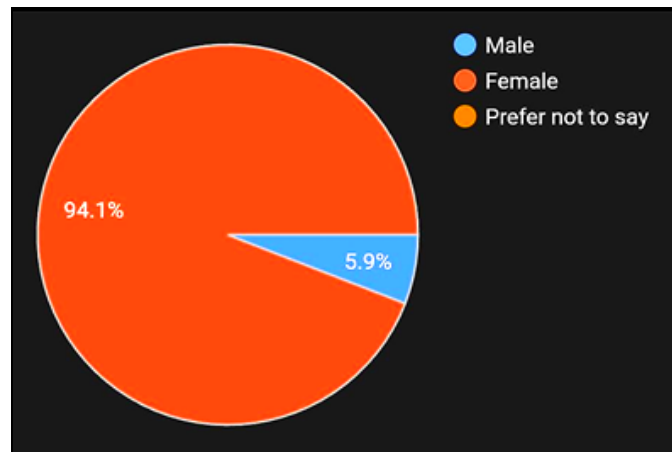
1. Age



Most respondents, 38 students (74.5%), were in the 21–23 age group, which is the common college-going age. 8 students (15.7%) were between 18–20 years, 4 (7.8%) were below 18, and 1 student (2%) was above 23. This clearly shows that the

majority of participants were young adults, who are soon to enter the job market, making their awareness of employee rights very relevant.

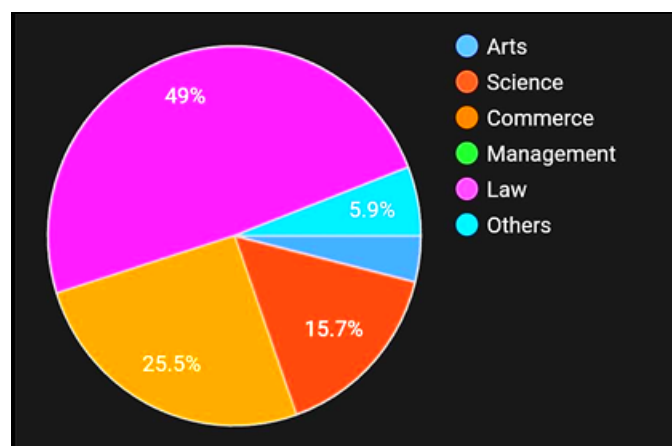
2. Gender



Among the 51 respondents, 48 (94.1%) were female and 3 (5.9%) were male. No respondent preferred not to disclose their gender. This indicates that the majority of participants in

the study were female, reflecting higher engagement of female students in this survey on HR law awareness.

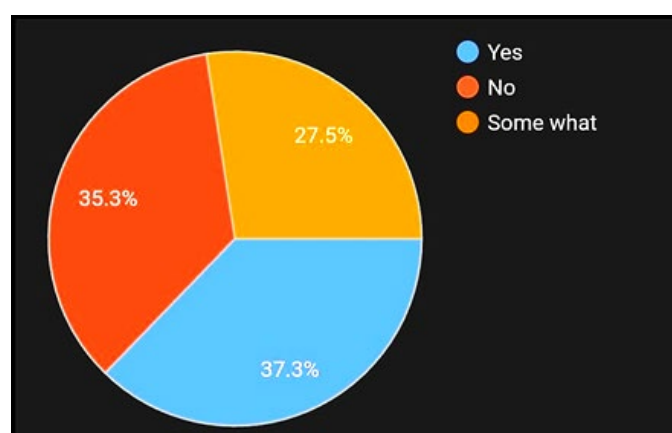
3. Course of Study:



Among all participants, 25 students (49%) were from Law, 13 (25.5%) from Commerce, 8 (15.7%) from Arts, 3 (5.9%) from Science, and 2 (3.9%) belonged to other courses. This

indicates that Law students formed the largest group, which is expected, as they are more familiar with legal concepts, including HR and labour laws.

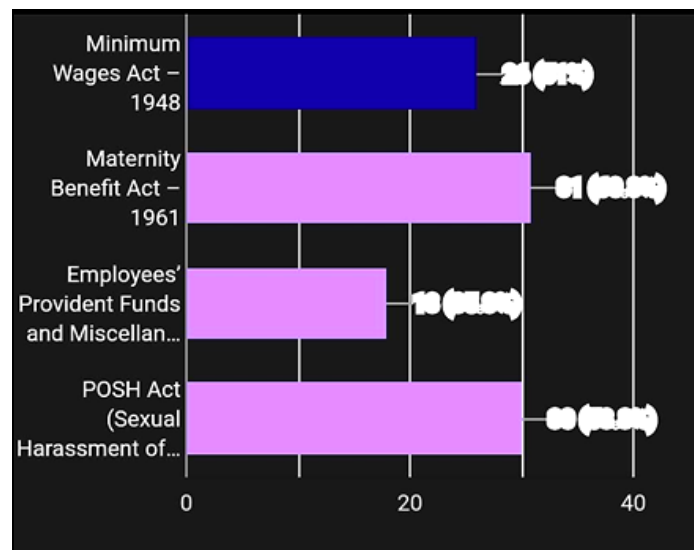
4. Have you studied subject related to labour law HR policies



When asked if they had studied topics related to labour laws or HR policies, 19 students (27.5%) said yes, 14 (27.3%) said they had studied them partially, and 18 (35.3%) said no. This shows that not all students are formally exposed to HR laws,

even though they may soon be entering the workforce. There's still a gap in structured learning about employee rights.

5. Which of the following HR Laws have you heard of?



Students were asked if they had heard about some common HR laws. The responses were as follows:

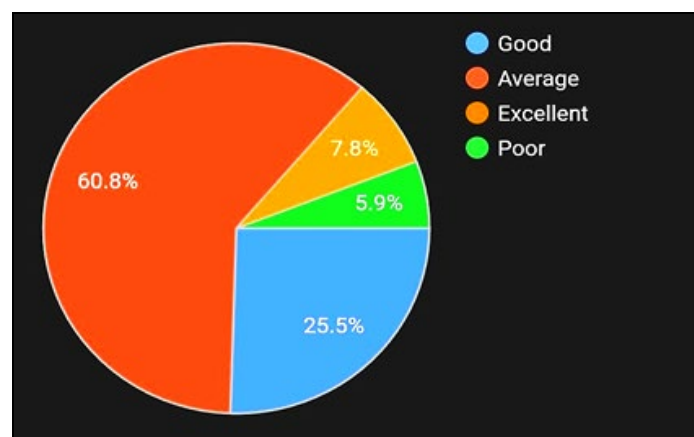
31 (60.8%) had heard of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961

31 (60.8%) were aware of the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) Act, 1952

30 (58.8%) knew about the POSH Act, 2013

26 (51%) had heard of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948

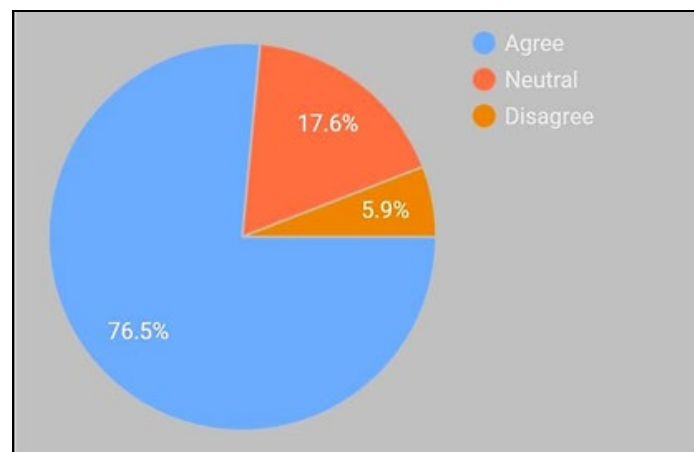
6. How would you rate your overall awareness of employee rights under Indian Labour law?



When asked to rate their overall awareness, 31 students (60.8%) said their awareness was Average, 13 (25.5%) rated it Good, 4 (7.8%) said Excellent, and 3 (5.9%) rated it Poor.

The mean awareness rating was 2.35, which shows that while students have some understanding of employee rights, there is still room for improvement.

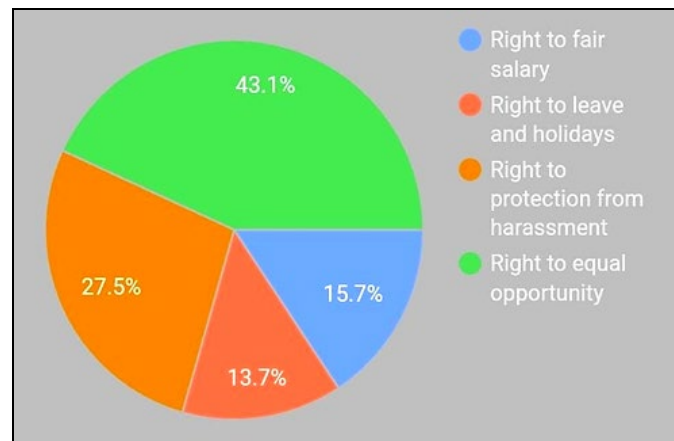
7. Do you think new employee should know about their legal rights before joining a job?



A large majority, 39 students (76.5%), agreed that new employees should know their legal rights before starting a job. 9 (17.6%) were neutral, and only 3 (5.9%) disagreed.

This clearly indicates that most students recognise the importance of legal awareness for a fair and safe workplace experience.

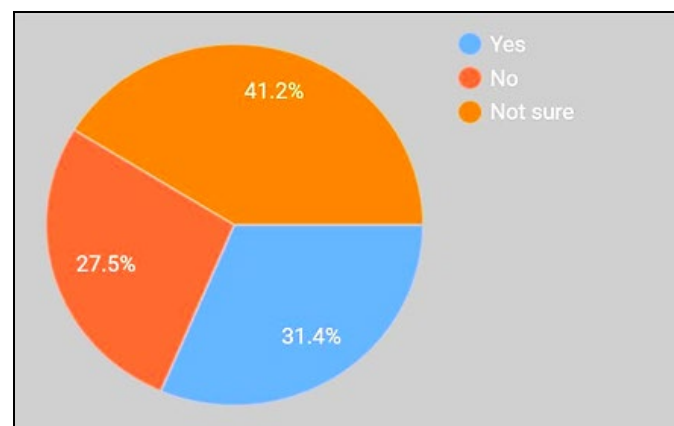
8. Which of the following rights do you consider most important in your future job?



Students were asked which right they considered most important for their future workplace. Their choices were:
22 (43.1%) – Right to Equal Opportunity

14 (27.5%) – Right to Protection from Harassment
8 (15.7%) – Right to Fair Salary
7 (13.7%) – Right to Leave and Holiday

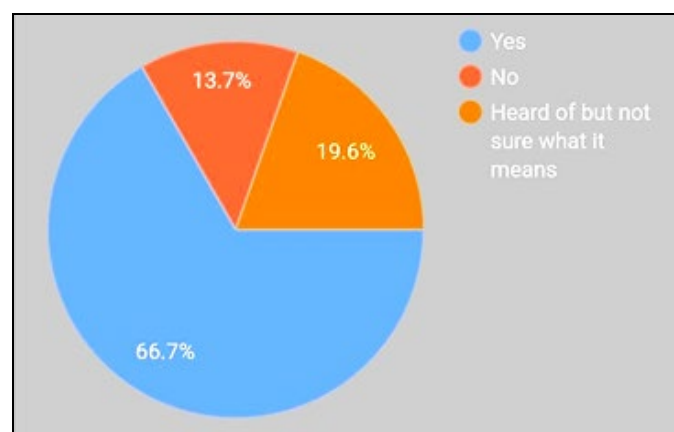
9. Do you know how many paid leaves are usually allowed under Indian laws?



When asked about their knowledge of paid leaves, 16 students (41.2%) said they were aware, 21 (31.4%) were unsure, and 14 (27.5%) said they didn't know. The mean score was 2.10,

indicating moderate awareness, suggesting that more education about workplace leave rights is needed.

10. Have you heard of the POSH Act (Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace)?

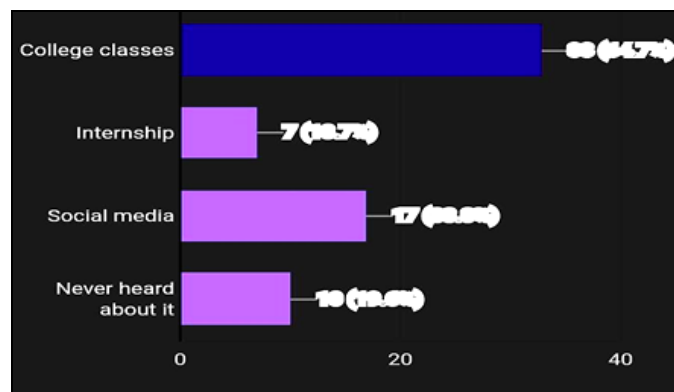


Regarding the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, 2013, 34 respondents (66.7%) had heard of it, 10 (19.6%) had

heard but were unsure about its provisions, and 7 (13.7%) had never heard of it. The mean awareness score was 1.53,

indicating that while awareness exists, detailed understanding of the Act is still limited.

11. How did you learn about employee rights and HR laws? (Select all that apply)?



Respondents mentioned various sources through which they learned about employee rights:

33 (64.7%) through college classes,
17 (33.3%) through social media,
7 (13.7%) through internships, and
10 (19.6%) stated they had never heard about it.

The mean source score was 2.06, showing that college education remains the most significant source of awareness among students, followed by social media platforms.

Analysis

Overall, these findings show that college students have a fair level of awareness about HR laws and employee rights, but deeper knowledge and practical understanding are still needed. Most respondents value equality, workplace safety, and fair treatment — highlighting the need for stronger legal education and awareness programs among young future employees.

Conclusion

From the survey, it's clear that most college students have a basic idea about HR laws and employee rights, but their knowledge isn't very deep. Many students, especially those studying law, understood the importance of knowing their rights before starting a job. However, quite a few were unsure about details like how many paid leaves are allowed or what exactly the POSH Act means.

The study also showed that students mostly learn about these topics through their college classes, while some gain awareness from social media. When it comes to what they value most in a job, most students chose equality and protection from harassment — showing that they care about fairness and safety at work.

Overall, the findings suggest that students are becoming more aware of workplace rights, but there's still a need for more practical learning, awareness sessions, and discussions to help them understand these laws better before they step into professional life.

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