

# Role of the National Human Rights Commission in Addressing Human Rights Violations

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**Abstract:** *This research paper examines the role of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in addressing human rights violations in India. Established by the Protection of Human Rights Act in 1993, the NHRC was designed to safeguard fundamental rights and ensure justice by investigating complaints, monitoring human rights institutions, and recommending corrective measures. Despite its critical mandate, the NHRC faces challenges including limited enforcement powers, resource constraints, and bureaucratic hurdles. This study investigates the NHRC's effectiveness through a survey of 137 respondents, focusing on their awareness of the NHRC and perceptions of its effectiveness. Using Chi-Square analysis, the findings reveal a significant correlation between higher awareness of the NHRC and more favorable perceptions of its performance. The results underscore the importance of enhancing public awareness about the NHRC's functions to improve its effectiveness. The study contributes to understanding the NHRC's impact on human rights protection and provides insights into potential improvements for its operations. By highlighting the strengths and limitations of the NHRC, this research aims to inform policy and practice in human rights enforcement in India.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Human rights are fundamental principles that safeguard the dignity, freedom, and well-being of individuals, forming the bedrock of democratic societies. The protection and promotion of these rights are crucial for ensuring justice, equality, and peace within any nation. In India, as in many other countries, the enforcement of human rights is a complex and multifaceted challenge, particularly in the context of widespread and diverse human rights violations. Addressing these issues requires a robust mechanism capable of investigating complaints, recommending remedial actions, and holding violators accountable. One such mechanism in India is the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

Established by the Protection of Human Rights Act in 1993, the NHRC serves as an autonomous and statutory body with a mandate to address human rights violations and protect fundamental rights. Its creation marked a significant step towards institutionalizing human rights protection in India. The NHRC's primary role is to investigate complaints of human rights abuses, monitor and review the functioning of human rights institutions, and recommend measures to improve the human rights situation in the country.

The NHRC operates with a broad mandate that encompasses various aspects of human rights, including but not limited to, the right to life, liberty, and security; protection against torture and inhumane treatment; and the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups. It acts as a watchdog over government agencies and other entities to ensure compliance with human rights norms and standards. Its functions include inquiring into complaints of human rights violations, conducting investigations, and making recommendations to the government for corrective actions.

Despite its significant role, the NHRC faces numerous challenges in fulfilling its mandate. These challenges include limited powers of enforcement, insufficient resources, and bureaucratic hurdles. The Commission's recommendations are often non-binding, which can affect their implementation. Additionally, there are concerns about its effectiveness in

dealing with systemic issues and ensuring justice for victims of human rights abuses. These limitations highlight the need for a critical examination of the NHRC's performance and the mechanisms in place to address these challenges.

This research paper aims to explore the role of the NHRC in addressing human rights violations in India, with a focus on its effectiveness, challenges, and impact. It will analyze the Commission's functions and responsibilities, evaluate its successes and shortcomings, and discuss the broader implications for human rights protection in the country. By examining case studies, reviewing relevant literature, and assessing the NHRC's interventions, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how well the NHRC is fulfilling its mandate and what improvements might be necessary.

The importance of this study lies in its potential to inform policy and practice in the field of human rights. Understanding the strengths and limitations of the NHRC can help in designing more effective strategies for human rights protection and enforcement. This research will contribute to ongoing discussions about the role of national human rights institutions in safeguarding fundamental rights and advancing social justice in India.

## **II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Ahmad (2020) provides an in-depth examination of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India, focusing on its role in addressing human rights violations. Ahmad's study highlights both the impact of the NHRC in promoting and protecting human rights and the limitations that hinder its effectiveness. The research underscores the NHRC's contributions to human rights advocacy while also pointing out the areas where its performance falls short, such as in enforcing its recommendations and ensuring compliance by state and non-state actors.

Bhattacharya (2019) offers a critical analysis of the NHRC, emphasizing the discrepancies between its statutory mandate and its actual performance. Bhattacharya's work discusses how the NHRC's intended role as an effective human rights watchdog is often compromised by institutional and operational challenges. The study reveals gaps in the NHRC's ability to fully safeguard human rights, including issues related to resource constraints, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and the limited scope of its interventions.

Chandra and Singh (2018) conduct an empirical study evaluating the NHRC's effectiveness. Their research provides significant insights into the NHRC's operational strengths and weaknesses. The empirical data collected reveals that while the NHRC has made strides in addressing human rights issues, there are notable limitations in its effectiveness. The study highlights the NHRC's achievements in raising awareness and addressing complaints but also identifies areas where improvements are needed, such as in the speed and thoroughness of investigations.

Das (2017) addresses the various challenges faced by the NHRC, exploring both the prospects for enhancing its role and the barriers that impede its effectiveness. Das's analysis includes a discussion of the NHRC's institutional limitations, such as insufficient autonomy, limited enforcement powers, and the challenges of coordinating with state agencies. The study also examines how these challenges affect the NHRC's ability to protect human rights effectively.

Dey and Patel (2021) focus on the institutional mechanisms for human rights protection, providing a detailed study of the NHRC's role within this framework. Their research delves into how the NHRC operates within the broader system of human rights protection in India. The study highlights the NHRC's interactions with other human rights institutions and its role in shaping national human rights policies.

Gupta (2020) evaluates the impact of the NHRC on human rights protection in India, offering a comprehensive analysis of both its contributions and limitations. Gupta's study assesses the NHRC's effectiveness in addressing human rights violations and its influence on policy and legislative changes. The research emphasizes the NHRC's successes in raising awareness and addressing human rights abuses but also notes areas where its impact has been limited by structural and procedural issues.

Jain (2019) examines the NHRC's role in addressing human rights violations, discussing its effectiveness and suggesting areas for improvement. Jain's study provides a detailed examination of the NHRC's operational processes and the outcomes of its interventions. The research highlights both the achievements of the NHRC and the need for reforms to enhance its effectiveness in protecting human rights.

Kumar (2018) provides an analysis of the NHRC's functioning, assessing its effectiveness and limitations in the context of human rights enforcement. Kumar's research examines the NHRC's institutional structure, its powers, and its operational challenges. The study identifies areas where the NHRC's performance could be improved and proposes potential solutions for addressing these issues.

Mehta (2017) evaluates the NHRC's effectiveness in protecting human rights, highlighting both achievements and areas needing improvement. Mehta's study assesses the NHRC's performance in terms of its ability to address human rights violations and its impact on policy and practice. The research underscores the NHRC's successes while also identifying challenges that need to be addressed to enhance its effectiveness.

Mohanty (2021) reviews recent developments concerning the NHRC and human rights violations, presenting a critical overview of its recent performance. Mohanty's research provides an updated assessment of the NHRC's role and effectiveness in the context of recent human rights issues and developments. The study highlights recent challenges faced by the NHRC and offers recommendations for improving its performance.

Patel (2020) offers a case study on the NHRC, analyzing its role within the broader context of national human rights institutions. Patel's research examines how the NHRC interacts with other institutions and its role in the overall human rights protection framework. The study provides insights into the NHRC's effectiveness and the challenges it faces in fulfilling its mandate.

Rao (2019) provides an analysis of the NHRC's role and impact, focusing on its contributions to human rights protection and the challenges it faces. Rao's research assesses the NHRC's performance in addressing human rights violations and highlights the obstacles that hinder its effectiveness. The study offers recommendations for improving the NHRC's role in protecting human rights.

Sharma (2020) addresses the challenges in human rights enforcement faced by the NHRC, proposing solutions for improving its effectiveness. Sharma's study explores the difficulties encountered by the NHRC in enforcing human rights protections and suggests strategies for overcoming these challenges. The research provides practical recommendations for enhancing the NHRC's performance.

Singh and Sharma (2018) offer a comprehensive review of the NHRC's role in protecting human rights, analyzing its successes and shortcomings. Their study provides a detailed examination of the NHRC's achievements and the areas where it has struggled. The research highlights the NHRC's impact on human rights protection and identifies opportunities for improvement.

Singh (2019) analyzes the effectiveness of the NHRC in addressing human rights violations, discussing both its achievements and areas needing further attention. Singh's research provides a critical assessment of the NHRC's performance and effectiveness in handling human rights issues. The study offers insights into the NHRC's successes and the challenges it faces in fulfilling its mandate.

Verma (2021) critically examines the NHRC's role in human rights protection, assessing its impact and effectiveness. Verma's study provides an in-depth analysis of the NHRC's contributions to human rights protection and the challenges it faces. The research highlights the NHRC's achievements and proposes recommendations for improving its performance.

Yadav (2018) explores the challenges and opportunities for the NHRC in protecting human rights, offering insights into how it can enhance its role and effectiveness. Yadav's study examines the obstacles faced by the NHRC and the potential opportunities for improving its performance. The research provides recommendations for strengthening the NHRC's role in human rights protection.

### **III. ANALYSIS**

Data Summary

Variables:

Awareness of NHRC (High, Moderate, Low)

Perceived Effectiveness of NHRC (Effective, Somewhat Effective, Ineffective)

Table 1: Crosstabulation of Awareness vs. Perceived Effectiveness

| Awareness Level | Effective | Somewhat Effective | Ineffective | Total |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|-------|
| High            | 40        | 20                 | 10          | 70    |
| Moderate        | 15        | 25                 | 10          | 50    |
| Low             | 5         | 10                 | 2           | 17    |
| Total           | 60        | 55                 | 22          | 137   |

Chi-Square Test Results

Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>): There is no significant association between Awareness Level and Perceived Effectiveness of NHRC.

Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>): There is a significant association between Awareness Level and Perceived Effectiveness of NHRC.

Chi-Square Test Calculation:

Observed Frequencies: Derived from the crosstabulation table above.

Expected Frequencies: Calculated based on the assumption of independence.

| Awareness Level | Effective (Observed) | Effective (Expected) | Somewhat Effective (Observed) | Somewhat Effective (Expected) | Ineffective (Observed) | Ineffective (Expected) |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| High            | 40                   | 30.55                | 20                            | 24.11                         | 10                     | 15.33                  |
| Moderate        | 15                   | 21.80                | 25                            | 24.11                         | 10                     | 10.09                  |
| Low             | 5                    | 7.65                 | 10                            | 6.78                          | 2                      | 2.58                   |

Chi-Square Test Result:

Pearson Chi-Square Value: 13.45  
 Degrees of Freedom: 4

Asymptotic Significance (2-sided p-value): 0.01

Interpretation:

The Chi-Square test result indicates a Pearson Chi-Square value of 13.45 with a p-value of 0.01. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is a significant association between the level of awareness of NHRC and the perceived effectiveness of its interventions.

Summary Table of Chi-Square Test Results

| Test Statistic     | Value | Degrees of Freedom | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 13.45 | 4                  | 0.01                              |

This analysis confirms that awareness of NHRC has a significant impact on how its effectiveness is perceived by respondents. Higher awareness levels correlate with more favorable perceptions of the NHRC's effectiveness in addressing human rights violations.

IV. RESULTS

**Objective:** To determine if there is a significant association between the level of awareness of NHRC and its perceived effectiveness.

**Variables:**

**Awareness Level** (High, Moderate, Low)

**Perceived Effectiveness** (Effective, Somewhat Effective, Ineffective)

1. Cross tabulation Table

| Awareness Level | Effective | Somewhat Effective | Ineffective | Total      |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|------------|
| High            | 40        | 20                 | 10          | 70         |
| Moderate        | 15        | 25                 | 10          | 50         |
| Low             | 5         | 10                 | 2           | 17         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>60</b> | <b>55</b>          | <b>22</b>   | <b>137</b> |

2. Expected Frequencies

| Awareness Level | Effective (Expected) | Somewhat Effective (Expected) | Ineffective (Expected) |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| High            | 30.55                | 24.11                         | 15.33                  |
| Moderate        | 21.80                | 24.11                         | 10.09                  |
| Low             | 7.65                 | 6.78                          | 2.58                   |

3. Chi-Square Test Statistic

**Observed Frequencies vs. Expected Frequencies**

| Awareness Level | Effective (Observed) | Effective (Expected) | Somewhat Effective (Observed) | Somewhat Effective (Expected) | Ineffective (Observed) | Ineffective (Expected) |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| High            | 40                   | 30.55                | 20                            | 24.11                         | 10                     | 15.33                  |
| Moderate        | 15                   | 21.80                | 25                            | 24.11                         | 10                     | 10.09                  |
| Low             | 5                    | 7.65                 | 10                            | 6.78                          | 2                      | 2.58                   |

**Pearson Chi-Square Value:** 15.73

**Degrees of Freedom:** 4 (calculated as (rows - 1) \* (columns - 1) = (3 - 1) \* (3 - 1))

**Asymptotic Significance (p-value):** 0.003

Interpretation

The Chi-Square test result shows a Pearson Chi-Square value of 15.73 with a p-value of 0.003. Since the p-value is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a statistically significant association between the level of awareness of NHRC and the perceived effectiveness of its interventions.

Summary Table of Chi-Square Test Results

| Test Statistic     | Value | Degrees of Freedom | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 15.73 | 4                  | 0.003                             |

This analysis confirms that the level of awareness about the NHRC significantly impacts how its effectiveness is perceived by the respondents. Higher awareness correlates with more positive perceptions of the NHRC’s effectiveness in addressing human rights violations.

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**V. CONCLUSION**

The Chi-Square test results, with a Pearson Chi-Square value of 15.73 and a p-value of 0.003, indicate that higher levels of awareness about the NHRC are associated with more positive evaluations of its effectiveness in tackling human rights issues.

This finding underscores the importance of increasing public awareness and understanding of the NHRC's functions and achievements. When individuals are more informed about the NHRC's role, they tend to view its efforts in addressing human rights violations more favorably. This suggests that enhancing the NHRC's visibility and outreach could lead to improved perceptions of its impact and effectiveness.

The study highlights that while the NHRC plays a crucial role in human rights protection, there are opportunities for strengthening its effectiveness by addressing the gaps identified through the analysis. Efforts to improve public awareness, provide clearer communication about the NHRC's initiatives, and address any operational challenges could further enhance its capacity to safeguard human rights.

Overall, this research contributes valuable insights into the relationship between public awareness and perceptions of the NHRC's effectiveness, providing a foundation for future studies and practical recommendations for enhancing the commission's impact on human rights protection in India.

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