

ANALYTICAL STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHT VIOLATIONS IN NIGERIA AND THEIR FUTURE EFFECTS ON THE PROVISION AND UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

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The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) provides for the protection of human rights of all the citizens of Nigeria irrespective of political leanings, tribe, and religion etc. Despite the constitutional provisions and the fact that Nigeria has experienced a decade of democratic rule, Nigerians from all parts of the federation still face various forms of human violations. Akhaine and Chizea (2011) in relation to this observation observed that Nigerian state is still largely authoritarian as security forces trample on the rights of the citizens with a surprising impunity unexpected under a democracy. The authors further stated that characteristically, some politicians maintain a retinue of thugs who often perpetrate acts of violence against their opponents. In addition to this, some groups who do not have clear cut political leanings, and belong more to tribal and religious pressure groups have caused a lot of havoc as far as human rights is concerned. On the whole, it is hereby observed that the general outlook of human rights during the period covered by this study and even beyond, is highly frustrating and threatening the foundation upon which Nigeria was built.

Just as the country's constitution provides for the protection of human right of every citizen, so also the public libraries provides services to every citizen of the country without discrimination in the form of religion, ethnicity, cultural practices, political leaning, professional background, status and ability. To buttress this point, Mamman in Bitagi and Garba (2008) argued that going by the provision of UNESCO manifesto, public libraries can be considered as the peoples' universities because they serve a greater portion of the community, the elites, the rural dwellers, children and women, and give access to all people irrespective of age, education, ethnic and religious inclination.

Provision of public library services has to do with all the activities by the librarians, using available information resources to provide users with required

information so as to satisfy their information needs. The services offered are in a variety of forms. According to Mamman (1999), such services, among others include Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Current Awareness Services (CAS), compilation of indexes and abstracts and currently, information technologies such as computers, and internet facilities to access the current information in one's chosen area of specialization. In addition to these, Bitagi (2012) offered that the role of librarians should be directed towards making available all necessary information resources and services that could "positively influence" the attainment of the objective for which the users use the Library.

Utilization of public library services, on the other hand, has to do with the extent to which the resources and services provided by these type of libraries are used to increase the knowledge of the users or satisfy their information needs. At this point in time, it is necessary to observe that the utilization of public library services in Nigeria is affected in one way or the other by the violation of human rights. This ranges from destruction of human lives, properties and even the fear of being attacked while using such facilities.

This study deals with the elucidation of state by state account of human right violations of human rights in Nigeria and its effect on the utilization of public library services between 2010 and 2011.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The media, including radio, television, newspapers and magazines and books are awashed with news of human rights violations across the breadth and length of Nigeria. The major problem that might confront the listeners and readers of these news might be, which state of the federation has the highest number and types of human right violations. The other question that library and information professionals may be inquisitive to ask is, how has these violations affected the provision and utilization of public library services, in particular. This study is carried out to provide answers to some of such questions that might be raised by readers, viewers and listeners of such news.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this analytical study is to bring together in useful and comprehensible form, scattered information about human right violations in Nigeria and their types. This is expected to serve as a platform for several comparisons especially, the total number of occurrences per state and geopolitical zone of each violation. Additionally, the governors and security outfits will be encouraged to wake up or live up to expectation in containing these crimes.

CAUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Several factors have been attributed to the cause of human rights violations in Nigeria. However, most of the violations are perpetrated as a result of the peoples' anger against the ways various governments have handled the affairs of the state vis-a-vis the sufferings of the masses. The major causes of human rights violation in Nigeria are as identified by Akhaine and Chizea (2011). These include:-

- a. Failure of politicians to fulfill their promises to the masses especially in the area of respect for the rule of law which has resulted in the authoritarian essence of the Nigerian state that assert itself in ways that have been over bearing for the citizens. Others are non provision of qualitative and quantitative education leading to mass illiteracy among the citizens; non provision of adequate health facilities and a host of other essentials of life such as cheap or affordable food prizes, water, and electricity etc.
- b. The security personnel from the various arms of the security service, who are supposed to protect and defend the people's lives and properties, routinely violate the rights of citizens through harassment, extortion, especially from motorists and motorcyclists, unlawful detention and extra-judicial killings.
- c. Corruption which has resulted into misappropriation and misapplication of state resources by incumbent state actors. As a result of corruption, the common people have been driven beyond poverty threshold and therefore, their wards sent

into the streets as beggars and hawkers of goods whose rate of return can barely offset their daily needs.

d. The unemployment rate in the country among youths in the age bracket of 18-40 years is so alarming that those who find nothing to do, in offices and business circles especially after graduation, do it on highways and peoples' homes as thieves, robbers, kidnapers, religious and ethnic vandals, since they have to survive by hook or crook.

RESEARCH METHOD

The "State of Human Rights in Nigeria" edited by Akhaine, S.O. and Chizea, B.U. published in 2011 by the Center for Constitutionalism and Demilitarization (CENCOD) was the main documentary source used for this study. The book was consulted page by page and analysis carried out on individual state's happenings. The variables measured in the study include Right to Life (RL), Extra Judicial Killings (EJK), Children's Right (CR), Women's Right (WR), Assault on Liberty (AL), Freedom of Expression (FE), and Political Right (PR). The data gathered were analysed using frequency approach. The result of each response was reflected in tables. Descriptive statistics was used in analyzing the numerous data gathered. In that respect, frequencies of occurrence and their respective percentages were shown in each table. Below each table, an interpretation and discussion of the contents are provided.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The data analysed and discussed below is strictly based on a publication titled "State of Human Rights in Nigeria" being CENCOD 2011 annual report.

Table 1 shows a state by state account of human right violations in Nigeria. It reveals that Lagos state leads with 119 (14.4%) of the total human rights violations during the period in focus. This is followed by Borno, Oyo, Delta and Rivers states with 63 (7.6%), 61 (7.4%), 52 (6.3%) and 47 (5.6%) respectively.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Human Right Violations
According to State and Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

S/N	STATES & FCT, Abuja	HUMAN RIGHT VIOLATIONS								TOTAL	%
		RL	EJK	CR	WR	AL	FE	PR			
		F	F	F	F	F	F	F			
1	Abia	9	6	3	2	3	-	-	23	2.8	
2	Abuja	8	2	4	4	12	2	-	32	3.9	
3	Adamawa	3	-	2	-	-	-	1	6	0.7	
4	Akwa Ibom	11	-	6	1	7	1	1	27	3.3	
5	Anambra	7	2	-	-	11	-	-	20	2.4	
6	Bauchi	21	1	1	-	4	2	2	31	3.8	
7	Bayelsa	12	4	-	-	5	-	-	21	2.5	
8	Benue	12	5	2	-	-	2	-	21	2.5	
9	Borno	51	8	-	-	1	3	-	63	7.6	
10	Cross Rivers	2	1	1	-	1	-	1	6	0.7	
11	Delta	31	4	4	-	11	1	1	52	6.3	
12	Ebonyi	5	2	1	-	2	-	1	11	1.3	
13	Edo	13	1	1	-	10	1	-	26	3.2	
14	Ekiti	9	2	2	-	2	2	-	17	2.1	
15	Enugu	5	-	1	2	2	1	1	12	1.5	
16	Gombe	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.2	
17	Imo	7	4	1	1	8	1	-	22	2.7	
18	Jigawa	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	4	0.5	
19	Kaduna	11	3	-	-	3	2	-	19	2.3	
20	Kano	10	1	3	1	2	-	-	17	2.1	
21	Katsina	3	1	-	-	2	2	1	9	1.1	
22	Kebbi	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	4	0.5	
23	Kogi	8	-	-	-	1	1	-	10	1.2	
24	Kwara	6	1	3	-	2	-	2	14	1.7	
25	Lagos	59	11	14	7	25	2	1	119	14.4	
26	Nasarawa	6	1	1	-	1	1	1	11	1.3	
27	Niger	-	7	-	-	2	-	2	11	1.3	
28	Ogun	15	5	1	2	5	-	3	31	3.8	

29	Ondo	6	-	3	-	7	1	-	17	2.1
30	Osun	6	3	-	2	2	-	2	15	1.8
31	Oyo	39	4	8	-	8	1	1	61	7.4
32	Plateau	24	2	4	-	1	1	1	33	4.0
33	Rivers	21	5	3	-	16	-	2	47	5.6
34	Sokoto	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	3	0.4
35	Taraba	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.5
36	Yobe	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	0.1
37	Zamfara	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.4
	TOTAL	430	86	70	23	161	29	26	825	100

KEY: RL-Right to Life; EJK-Extra Judicial Killings; CR-Children's Right; WR-Women's Right; AL-Assault on Liberty; FE-Freedom of Expression; PR-Political Right; FCT-Federal Capital Territory; F-Frequency.

Plateau and Abuja follows these with 33 (4%) and 32 (3.9%) accordingly. Bauchi and Ogun states tie up with 31 (3.8%) cases each. Akwa Ibom, Edo, Abia and Imo states had 27 (3.3%), 26 (3.2%), 23 (2.8%) and 22 (2.7%) cases in that order. Bayelsa and Benue also tie up with 21 (2.5%) cases each. This is closely followed by Anambra 20 (2.4%); Kaduna, 19 (2.3%); while Ekiti, Kano and Ondo also had 17 (2.1%) cases of human right violations, respectively. Osun, Kwara and Enugu follows with 15 (1.8%), 14 (1.7%) and 12 (1.5%). These are followed by Ebonyi, Nasarawa and Niger states with 11 (1.3%) cases each. Kogi and Katsina states have 10 (1.2%) and 9 (1.1%) cases each while Adamawa and Cross Rivers states have 6 (0.7%) cases each. Jigawa, Kebbi and Taraba have 4 (0.5%) cases against each of them. Sokoto and Zamfara had 3 (0.4%) cases. Finally, Gombe and Yobe states follows last with 2 (0.2%) and 1 (0.1%) cases of human right violations in 2010/11.

A casual look at the individual human right cases in Nigeria from Table 1 show that right to life leads with 430 (52.1%) cases. This is followed by assault on Liberty where 161 (19.5%) were recorded. Extra judicial killings follow this with a record of 86 (10.4%) cases. Violation of children's rights with a record of 70 (8.5%)

follow while violation of freedom of expression and political rights also follows with 29 (3.5%) and 26 (3.2%) cases. Violation of women’s right in Nigeria came last with only 23 (2.8%) cases.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Human Rights Violation According to Geopolitical Zones.

S/N	Geopolitical Zones	Human Rights Violation							Total	%
		RL	EJK	CR	WR	AL	FE	PR		
		F	F	F	F	F	F	F		
1.	North Central	64	18	14	4	19	7	6	132	16
2.	North East	81	9	3	1	5	5	3	107	12.9
3.	North West	28	5	4	1	12	6	3	59	7.2
4.	South East	33	14	6	5	26	2	2	88	10.7
5.	South South	90	15	15	1	50	3	5	179	21.7
6.	South West	134	25	28	11	49	6	7	260	31.5
	TOTAL	430	86	70	23	161	29	26	825	100

KEY: As in Table 1

Table 2 above is a reflection of the human right violations in Nigeria according to the six geopolitical zones. The table shows that the South West and South South leads other zones in the violation of human rights during the period covered by this study with 260 (31.5%) and 179 (21.7%) respectively. North Central and North East geopolitical zones follows with 132 (16%) and 107 (12.9%) record of human rights violations between 2010/11, in that order. South East and North West trailed behind with 88 (10.7%) and 59 (7.2%) record of human right violations during the years covered by the study.

FINDINGS/DISCUSSIONS

1. The findings of this study show that Nigeria is very active in the violation of all forms of human rights as identified by Akhaine and Chizea (2011). This is reflected in both tables which reveals the involvement of all the 36 states, FCT, Abuja, and

the 6 geopolitical zones in perpetrating one form of violence or the other in varying degrees.

2. The finding on the violation of right to life and extra judicial killings which rank highest and third, respectively show that Nigeria, as a country lacks desired respect for human lives and only pays lip service to their control and extermination. Consequently, several innocent citizens have been maimed or killed and properties worth billions of Naira destroyed for no tangible reasons. The current perpetration of such violence in the North Eastern zone of the country by the insurgent Boko Haram sect is a typical case in point.

3. The study also reveals that despite the undesirable hatred among various groups (religious and ethnic etc.) and citizens in Nigeria, there seems to be a lot of respect, particularly for women's right where only 23 (2.8%) cases of violence were recorded against women as revealed in the tables.

4. There also seems to be some amount of respect for political right and freedom of expression where 26 (3.2%) and 29 (3.5%) cases were recorded, respectively. However, assault on liberty is on the high side with 161 (19.5%) cases. This put to question the extent to which political right and freedom of expression are enjoyed by Nigerians.

EFFECT ON THE PROVISION AND UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

The provision and utilization of public library services are commitments by both Federal and State governments to provide unhindered access to relevant information to all the citizens of the country in order to satisfy their information needs. However, it must be emphasized that access to public libraries thrive well where there is guarantee of peace, harmony and safety of lives. Violation of human rights in Nigeria is a major militating factor in the utilization of public library services. Because of the reason a fore mentioned, violent groups have sprang up in various parts of the country. Their major objective is to cause unwanted destruction of lives

and properties and to deprive people of their rights and means of livelihood to suit their selfish ends.

The extent to which peace of lives and properties of Nigerians have been threatened by such groups as Boko Haram (BH), Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB), Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and Odua People's Congress (OPC) etc, in the North East, South East, South South and South West geopolitical zones, respectively, poses great threats to the extent to which public library services could be effectively provided and utilized. This is because at the peak of violent cases, curfews are imposed which delimit people's movement from one place to the other and consequently affects the users' ability to even visit the library, talk less of using its services. For example, Ndege (2012) reported that in Borno State of the North East zone, though the curfew starts from 8:00pm and last till 5:00am, people have adopted their own timetable in order to stay alive. Therefore, they leave home by 11:00am and close for business by 4:00pm every day since most of the fighting between the two forces (Joint Task Force (JTF) and Boko Haram (BH) takes place in the early hours of the day.

It is also observable that most of the times, the targets of vandals in Nigeria during crises are places where there are congregation or convergence of people from all works of life. Public libraries fit in well into this group and could become targets of attack. The end result may not only be the destruction of library buildings but also the resources of the library, the providers of services (library staff) and of course, the users.

From the above analysis, it could be argued that people only go out to do the most essential things such as the sale and purchase of food items and other things that could bring in money quickly to sustain their families. This implies that there is little or no time to visit the public library and use its services. Even the librarians who are supposed to provide such services have their own lives to protect and have no alternative than to follow the people's timetable. In view of that, the provision and utilization of public library services will be reduced to very low ebb and therefore,

become of secondary or even tertiary importance.

From the findings and discussions above, it could be concluded that unless more serious security measures, combined with dialogue are put in place, and efforts made to consciously tackle the problems of corruption, illiteracy, poverty, provision of accessible health facilities, employment opportunities etc., the situation of human right violations may go from bad to worse. When this happens, provision and utilization of public library services will be reduced to the lowest ebb in parts of the country affected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to avoid escalation of human right violations in Nigeria and enhance provision and utilization of public library services, the Federal Government should establish Human Right Violation Commission (HRVC) to be saddled with the responsibility of dialoguing with aggrieved groups and individuals in the society. Membership of this body should be drawn from all political parties; National Assembly, the Military, the Police and other Paramilitary agencies, the Judiciary and a member from the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation to serve as secretary. Their findings and recommendations should be presented to the President who should act expeditiously on the report in order to avoid and or control violent situations immediately.

All tiers of government in Nigeria should stop paying lip services to the provision of basic needs of the citizens of the country.

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