AFRICA'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

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Abstract - Africa is one of the unfortunate regions where war and instability has been mainstreamed for centuries. Even in the post-colonial rule, despite the constitutional role many African republics could not get protection of their basic human, civil and political rights. This report discusses the nature and types of human rights violation in Africa over the past few decades. In addition, it has proposed few prospects to promote human rights through effective legal, political and social structures and recommendations.

Keywords - Africa, Human Rights, Governments, Violation

INTRODUCTION

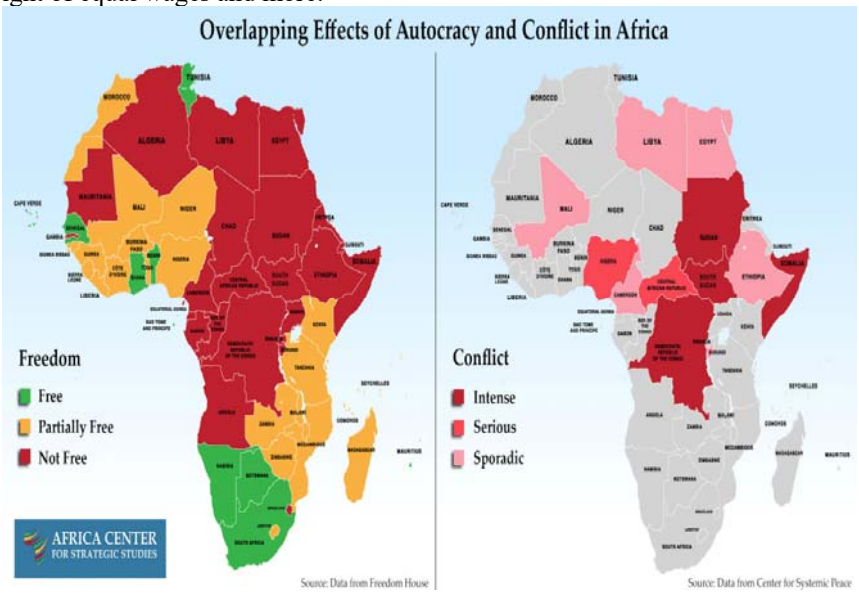
Human rights are the rights, which every individual should have in order to be a human. These rights make a person to live his or her life in an honorable way following the civility. These rights should be given to every individual regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, language, sex or color. Human rights are inherited to all humans regardless of any differences. Every human is entitled to these, whether they belong to any nation or state.

On December 10, 1948, the United Nations embraced the Universal declaration of Human Rights and different member states at UN signed the declaration and assure to implement human rights in their countries. According to this Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there are two sets of human rights. First is civil and political rights, which include freedom of speech, right to live, equality rights, judicial remedy laws, liberty of faith, right to vote and movement or take part in the governance. The second set of laws contain economic and social rights which include right to work and education, living standard rights, right of equal wages and more.

Human rights are now a part of the constitutional laws of most of the democratic countries around the globe. As it is said, with power comes great responsibility. This is the same case with the protection of human rights, when most of the states are concerned about it. It's 21st century, yet many regions or countries are still failing to adopt human rights properly or human rights are being violated in these countries. One of such examples is Africa.

II. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION IN AFRICA

Africa is the most growing region in the world; its population is growing by 2.5% annually. As per census of 2017, the current population of Africa is more than 1.25 billion. Nigeria is the most populous country in the continent with the population of 191 million. Whereas, the food supply growth has been poor. Malnutrition, starvation, and food dependency on food is in mainstream. The climate change has also caused population to migrate into other states in search of food, water, security, fuel, wood, better living standards and labor.



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It is government's first responsibility to implement and secure human rights laws in the country. In today's age, the true standard of a society are measured by observing the human rights, which are being followed by the individuals and institutions. It has been around 70 years since UN adopted the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The colonial rule ended in most of the African states and these states formed their own political governments in 1960s. The independence and autonomy has had many considerable advantages on the states, which they did not have under the colonial rule. Unfortunately, despite having the constitutional power, many political and civil rights were not able to flourish in these African states. There have been many reasons behind it. The biggest reason is the weak political system of these countries. Military coups and takeovers were mainstreamed in every other African state. Election riggings in almost every other country were reported. Independence of judiciary was violated many times, no fair rule of law could be observed in such situation. Oppositions did not let governments to rule independently.

In post-colonial role, many countries faced a long timeline of ethno-religious conflicts. More than 70% of global ethnic conflicts took place in Africa. During these ethnic conflicts many human rights violation occurred. Hundreds of thousands died, millions were forced to migrate, many fatal diseases prevailed among women and children, rapes and other kind abuses were reported. According to UN, one-third out of forty-two peacekeeping missions took place in Africa; still UN peacekeeping forces are deployed in few African states. Currently, 10 million out of 25 million internally displaced persons and 6 million out of 17 million global refugees are African.

III. CAUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION IN AFRICA

There are many elements, which comprise the current human rights violation system; some of them are as follow:

1. **Weak economy:** Limited resources and insufficient employment opportunities for a large population, which is causing poverty. Extreme poverty is causing hunger in Africa. The reasons behind rise of poverty are population growth is increasing rapidly; war and socio-economic crisis are giving birth to political instability, climate change and viral diseases and infections, and agricultural infrastructure.
2. **Growth in Population:** The fast increase in the population is damaging the natural environment and resources.
3. **Ethnic diversity:** For centuries, many ethnic and religious groups have been living together in Africa, but there are number clashes and conflicts among them. Ethnic diversity and religious differences are causing particularistic identification rather than unity. Which is not letting social cooperation to flourish in the region.
4. **Weak political systems:** lack of legitimacy of political systems, a large portion of population does not affiliate themselves with their rulers socially or politically. Therefore, they do not give legitimacy status to their governments.
5. Use of force by ruling classes against their opponents is causing violations against right to live, as a number of political figures has been reported to be murdered or missing.
6. Governments and ruling class is violating their civil, economic and social rights of individuals in the name of national security.

IV. AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

African charter of Human Rights was adopted in Organization of African union in its 1979 assembly of heads of state and government. The resolution which was passed for this purpose, aimed to call a committee of experts to develop a human rights instrument for African continent. He committee designed a charter, which was approved by OAU in its 18th assembly in 1981, in Nairobi, Kenya. The African charter on human and peoples' rights came effective on October 21, 1981. The African charter of human rights is consisted of a preamble, 3 parts, 4 chapters and 63 articles. The preamble of African human rights charter is determined to the elimination of Zionism, which it has compared with colonialism and apartheid.

The civil and political rights in the African human rights charter include right to freedom from discrimination, equality, personal integrity, dignity, freedomfrom slavery, freedom from torture, right to a fair trial, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of movement and participation in politics. Economic, social and cultural rights contain right to education, right to work, right to health, and right to life and food. The African charter of human rights give some rights to groups unlike American charter of human rights. It also gives people the right of self-determination.

V. APPROACHES TO STRENGTHEN THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA

There are six approaches, which are proposed to protect the human rights in Africa:

1. Democracy

Democracy is considered one of the best strategies to promote human rights and take steps towards conflict resolution. As per definition, democracy is the government for the people by the people. Democracy brings a system in which the forcible elements of the government are embarrassed well by the constitution. Democracy can promote human rights through many ways. First, democracy itself is a context for any promotion of human rights. Secondly, democracy is the basis or foundation for any other strategy for human rights progress. Third, human rights especially those are civil and political rights actually follow the definition of democracy. In addition, it is a tool of conflict management. To bring change, it is important to bring democracy first.

2. Human rights education

Education offers a culture of respect and demands appreciation and internalization of the human rights. Human rights education addresses the right to education as well as educating citizens about human rights. Education is directed to fulfill the development of human personality and it strengthens the respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. It spreads awareness among citizens about their basic and human rights, which leads to understanding of justice, democracy, equality, solidarity and peace.

3. Economic progress

Most of the African states' population is living under poverty. Human rights violation is one of the reasons for poor economic structure. Governments should work together to raise up economy in their states.

4. Collective rights

Africa is one of the regions, which has faced ethno-religious crisis over years, and still going through it. In this situation, every group felt violated, as governments were biased to one major group the minorities rights were violated big times. Governments should make such framework, which gives equal rights to all groups. This initiative will provoke to win their trust for states and it should be used to call them for conflict resolution.

5. Need for external assistance

External help such as countries out of Africa, and international organizations can become partners in order to assist the governments in making and implementing human rights part of the contemporary states.

CONCLUSION

Promotion of human rights is very important in order to fill the gaps created because of conflicts in Africa. It will allow African governments to spend more time to work on economic development rather than managing conflicts. However, due to several influences and causes it seems difficult to achieve this goal. There are few ways through which human right model can be designed which helps in the prevention of human rights from violation. African governments, international community and international organizations for peace and conflict resolution should work together to achieve peace in Africa.

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