

The Context of Human Rights in a Poverty-Stricken Africa: A Reflection

Authors : Ugwu Chukwuka E.

Abstract : The African context of human right instruments as recognized today can be traced to Africa's relationship with the Western World. A significant preponderance of these instruments are found in both colonial and post colonial statutes as the colonial laws, the post colonial legal documents as constitutions or Africa's adherence to relevant international instruments on human rights as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981). In spite of all these human rights instruments inherent in the African continent, it is contended in this paper that, these Western-oriented notion of human rights, emphasizes rights that hardly meets the current needs of contemporary African citizens. Adopting a historical research methodology, this study interrogates the dynamics of the African poverty context in relation to the implementation of human rights instruments in the continent. In this vein, using human rights and poverty scenarios from one Anglophone (Uganda) and one Francophone (Senegal) countries in Africa, the study hypothesized that, majority of Africans are not in a historical condition for the realization of these rights. The *raison d'être* for this claim emerges from the fact that, the present generations of African *hoi polloi* are inundated with extensive powerlessness, ignorance, diseases, hunger and overall poverty that emasculates their interest in these rights instruments. In contrast, the few Africans who have access to the enjoyment of these rights in the continent hardly needs these instruments, as their power and resources base secures them that. The paper concludes that the stress of African states and stakeholders on African affairs should concentrated significantly, on the alleviation of the present historical poverty squalor of Africans, which when attended to, enhances the realization of human right situations in the continent.

Keywords : Africa, human rights, poverty, western world

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