



ISSN: 2230-9926

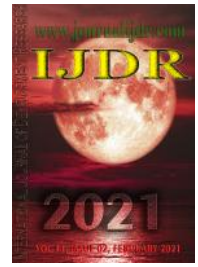
Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

# IJDR

*International Journal of Development Research*

Vol. 11, Issue, 02, pp.44873-44874, February, 2021

<https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.20935.02.2021>



REVIEW ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

## HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMAN DIGNITY: OPPOSITES OR MUTUALLY REINFORCING IDEAS – ASPECTS TO DEVELOPMENT

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2020  
Received in revised form  
19<sup>th</sup> December, 2020  
Accepted 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2021  
Published online 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

#### Key Words:

Enthroned Ethnicity, Racism, Religious Bigotry, Massive Illiteracy.

### ABSTRACT

Some notable events within the African Continent from around the 19<sup>th</sup> Century were the military warfare among tribes, early explorers and missionary activities, trade in agricultural and other related resources, Islamic conquests and Colonial rule. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw decolonisation, military rule and now struggling democracies. Historically, the Sokoto caliphate was an outcome of a revolution which started in the 1<sup>st</sup> decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The outcome generated dynastic conflicts between various social classes like the Masusavant (rulers) and the talakawas, (the commoners), a political phenomenon which nevertheless did not religiously polarize Islam and traditional religions. Till date, the dethronement of the traditional ruler by secular governments in breach of due process manifests current growth of unconscious authorities Arianism and human degradation as enshrined in modern constitution.

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Citation: Kathleen Okafor, 2021. "Human rights, human dignity: opposites or mutually reinforcing ideas – aspects to development", *International Journal of Development Research*, 11, (02), 44873-44874.

## INTRODUCTION

**Religions and Dynasties:** Both Christianity and Islam flourished. The Islamic cleric, Uthman Dan Fodio had exhibited simplicity and sincerity of the purpose and this endeared him to even those who did not embrace Islam. Down South, the British had conquered Lagos in 1851 followed by Ijebu in 1892 and Opobo which culminated in the banishment and death of King Jaga in 1891. 1891, the Itsekiri the Berlin Conference and of Treaty in 1884/1885 formalised European economic stakes in Africa which precipitated massive trade in cotton and other raw materials and Royal Charters. Educationally, the British did little to promote western education in colonised territories with the intention of reducing the pace of socialisation of the people and their ability to agitate for their rights. Inevitably, there were religious and cultural differences between the Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria and the South. Financial investment in education in the North was low. Rather, missionary schools were encouraged in Southern Nigeria as the North discouraged missionary schools. Indeed, recipients of western education from the missionaries were relegated from employment. During this period, European political thinkers like Wilhelm, Weitling and Karl Marx saw the new order to feature a community in all things e.g. equal work and rewards, equal education and a call for messianic leadership in the Holy War for the liberation of mankind. Liberation of mankind was to be attained peacefully through mass propaganda and the changing of hearts which are tenets of most religions. This approach visualised divine life as not a product for sale, but driven by love and a universality of salvation offered by God.

As part of our identity to be recognised are human rights of personal dignity to end nationalism, Ethnocentrism with economic and militarised interest, exclusivism, opening of cultures and community with salvific awareness of ecclesial mission. Liberation from personal social evil and cultural detachment from sin were also considered mutually reinforcing of personal dignity. Traditionally, African ancestors were seeking God without knowing it in rich religious traditions in which the word becomes history and culture. God had many names. Progressively, dichotomisation crept into religion and enthroned ethnicity, racism, religious bigotry, massive illiteracy, population explosion, religious rivalry and pauperisation of the polity which resulted in civil wars in Nigeria and beyond, and also resulted in civil wars in Nigeria and beyond, and also resulted in unstable democracies. Religion became a bastion for control of power and financial resources and commerce. The dominated religions of Christianity and Islam became infested by clerics who sought materialism, populism and government patronage which de-emphasised the message and glorified the messenger/cleric. The traditional religion termed paganism or animism was also influenced by the corruption of the land and the promise of prosperity and miracles. The adoption of Christianity created monogamy, dignity of women and sanctity of marriages. Christianity bequeathed social norms and morality. Negative cultural practices such as the murder of twins, widowhood rites, non-succession rights of women, etc. were declared contrary to human dignity by the Christian faith.

**International Politics, Economics and Human Rights:** The political economy of believers generated economic growth, state

religions, but also terrorist organisations to sustain the wealth of religions and moral philosophers. Marx Weber had presented the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism as religious beliefs which foster traits such as work ethics, honesty, personal discipline and thrift that contributed to economic growth. Also, Adam Smith (1791) postulated the wealth of nations and theory of moral sentiments. In 1950s – 1960s, the Rise of US Utopian religious communities attracted thousands of people like unorthodox Christian sects and temples responsible for mass suicide, religious bigotry and moral bankruptcy which masked religion without spirituality. Thereafter, the struggle for development and the anti-poverty consensus sometimes gave way to ideological manipulation by the state and even by contemporary developmental institutions like UN, ILO, The World Bank, IMF and even the mass media. Some of these bodies became instruments for economic repression, and human improvement. Total global wealth was estimated at \$241 trillion in 2013 and now \$345 trillion by 2020. Out of this humongous wealth, less than 5% of the population had a meaningful stake. There had been a clear wrong assumption that economic growth would be a basis for human development and that capitalist, property rights are necessary in which capitalism generated orders and resources directly. Consequently, reshaping of the intellectual landscape on concerns of the shallow foundations of tall cathedrals to regenerate human aspirations of a better future through new technology, economic and commercial paradigms and social constructivism was seen as imperative and critically urgent. The current reality is that religion has to be redirected as a sources of civilised transformation of human bio-sociology, a philosophy of life. The Rule of Law and Human Rights were generally transmitted to guide social behaviour for justice so much that bigamy and polygamy are considered antisocial in Christian jurisdictions, although wide prostitution is practised. Unlike in the Northern areas, where Polygamy and concubinage are practised, and prostitution mainly by Christian women. Globalisation and religious conflicts have caused poverty, illiteracy and greater exclusivity of women due to women's poor rate of digital literacy and education.

There have been erroneous beliefs of neoliberal growth theory and negative impacts of neo liberal policies for developing countries.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Religions can be used as tools for even and equitable development which needs to be reconfigured by the stakeholders for a more egalitarian society.
2. Advanced economies need to adopt moral common good precepts for greater economic considerations to mitigate negative socio-economic effects caused by globalisation.
3. The huge poverty rate of many nations will continue to affect migration and refugee challenges of advanced economies as well as grave health costs.
4. The costs of industrialisation on the ecosystem must be reconsidered and the long term effects on human dignity and rights subjected to drastic redress.

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