AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.8 (1), January-April, 2023 https://ajemates.org

# ROLES OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN EBONYI STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, IKWO, EBONYI STATE

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## ABSTRACT

*The study was carried out to assess the "Role of Christian Religious Education in Promoting Human rights in Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo Ebonyi State". The study specifically sought to examine the possible ways that lecturers and students of Christian Religious Education could help in promoting Human rights in the College. The study involved eight lecturers, and fifty students from the department of Christian Religious Studies (CRS), Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo. This study is premised on the fact that there are cases of human rights abuses in our colleges that need the intervention of lecturers especially in the field of religion who are highly respected by the society because of their emphasis on morality. Data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, mean scores, percentages and t-test. The three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to determine the acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis. Findings of the study include among others: lectures and students of Christian Religious Education has important roles to play in promoting human rights in College of Education in Ebonyi state. The study therefore recommends; workshops, seminars and conferences on human rights to be organized periodically and should be part of academic curriculum.*

**Key Words**: Role, Christian Religious Education, Human Rights.

## Introduction

Human rights are those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings and without which any society is viable and able to survive. Since the United Nations made a declaration of human rights, on 10th December 1948, it has been receiving global attention. Almost every nation of the world, including Nigeria has it in their constitution. Human rights and fundamental freedom allow us to fully develop our human qualities, intelligence, talents and conscience and to satisfy our spiritual and social needs. They are based on mankind's increasing demand for a life in which the inherent dignity and worth of each human being receives equal respect and protection. Parajuli (2010), Deprivation of human rights and human rights abuses are the major causes of conflict in our society. When people discover that their fundamental human rights are violated, they either engage in violence or crime to pursue their rights at any cost.

In order to respect people's right, Christian Religious Education has the potential to provide opportunities for both males and females to develop the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary for survival in society. Religious education in the Christian sense includes all efforts and processes which help to bring children and adults into a vital and saving experience of God revealed in Christ Jesus. Christian religious education as a problem solving discipline is always interested in finding out the causes of violations and infringements on people's right (Quaarcoopome 2008). The social, moral and spiritual qualities could be learnt in Christian Religious Education. Man is a physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual being. Any educational system which neglects the spiritual part is unbalance. (Musongole,, 2010). The contents of Christian Religious Education is based on the teachings contained in the Holy Bible which includes the importing of knowledge about the existence of God, the creation stories, the salvation of God's people, imminent condemnation of the disobedient to the commandments of God, and his love and concern for the oppressed, the poor, orphans and widows. Through Christian education, education, young and adult have the potential to learn skills such as exploration of religious, human experience, and one's personal search through observing, investigating, questioning, researching, enquiring, listening and synthesizing. This makes Christian religious education unique and able to address issues on human rights.

**Statement of the problem**

To become true leaders of tomorrow, the students obviously need encouragement both from the society, the school management and lecturers in making sure that their rights are protected. Here, experience has shown that some lecturers have failed the youths by not giving them the guidance and direction they need in order to take up the mantle of leadership in society. For example, Abdullahi (2005) observes that corruption which violates the right of individuals has a lot of impact on teacher education. This could be seen in a situation whereby some lecturers make demands (in cash or kind) so as to pass a student who is not serious with his/her studies at the expense of the dedicated, committed and hardworking students. Equity and validity considerations required that no student is granted an unfair advantage over other students in an examination, such as having prior access to examination question or receiving support during the course of an examination. The effect of this syndrome is that certificate awarding institutions promote and graduate incompetent graduates who are not able to contribute positively to national development. Students are not left out in human rights violation. So, in this project the problem it wishes to research on is the extent CRS could help in promoting human right in the College and the society at large.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions are proposed as a guide to the study; i. What are the various ways by which Human Rights are violated in college of education in Ebonyi State?

AJEMATES
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ii. What does Christian Religious Education teach on Human Rights? iii. What possible ways can lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies help in promoting Human Rights in college of education in Ebonyi State?

**Research Method**

The survey method of the descriptive research design was used in this research. The population used was lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies in Ebonyi State College of Education Ikwo. Questionnaires was prepared and used as means of eliciting data for the study.

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

**Research Question One**: What are the various ways by which Human Rights are violated in Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State?

**Table 1: Showing the Understanding of Lecturers and Students on the various ways by which Human Right are violated in Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State**

| Items | SA (%) | A (%) | D (%) | SD (%) | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Human rights are violated when lecturers refuse to lecture the students as expected | 343(55.5) | 239(38.7) | 12(1.9) | 12(1.9) | 1.4951 |
| it is a violation of human right when students are passed in examination based on religious or ethnic sentiments | 300(48.5) | 216(35.0) | 36(5.8) | 26(4.2) | 1.6323 |
| Human right are violated when admission into schools are given by the use of money | 332(53.7) | 157(25.4) | 24(3.9) | 80(12.9) | 1.7483 |
| It is human right violation when students are compelled to pay money before passing examination | 317(51.3) | 173(28.0) | 36(5.8) | 80(12.9) | 1.7967 |
| It is a violation of human right when students are rusticated from school without appearing before a disciplinary committee | 279(45.1) | 226(36.6) | 24(3.9) | 52(8.4) | 1.7397 |
| It is a violation of human rights when female students are harassed sexually by male lecturers for the purpose of passing examination | 406(65.7) | 124(20.1) | 24(3.9) | 52(8.4) | 1.5410 |
| Lecturers violate the right of their students by not being | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| available when the students needed them most | 164(26.5%) | 364(59.9%) | 38(6.1%) | 40(6.4%) | 1.9246 |
| Aggregate Mean Score | | | | | 1.70 |

The results in table 1 revealed the responses of lecturers and students understanding of various ways by which Human Rights are violated in Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State. The overall aggregate mean score which was 1.70 is less than the fixed mean score of 2.50 because of the four point scale where decision rule at 2.50 and above is termed agreement while below it, is termed disagreement. This means that all the items in table 1 are various ways of Human Right violation by lecturers and students in the Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State. This implies that majority of the lecturers and students violate human rights in tertiary institutions as shown in the table above with the mean score of 1.4951, 1.6323&1.7483 respectively.

**Research Question Two:** What does Christian Religious Education teach on Human Rights?

**Table 2: Showing respondents' opinion on Christian Religious Education teaching on Human Rights**

| **Items** | **SA (%)** | **A (%)** | **D (%)** | **SD (%)** | **Mean** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Christian religious education does not promote human rights | 26(4.2) | 74(12.0) | 153(24.8) | 325(52.7) | 3.3471 |
| Christian religious education does not emphasize on the rights of individuals | 38(6.1) | 73(11.8) | 246(39.8) | 207(33.5) | 3.1056 |
| Christian education gives people adequate information and knowledge on how to exercise their rights | 247(40.0) | 297(48.1) | 36(5.8) | | 1.6370 |
| Christian education creates avenue where people of different ethnic, religious and political groups understand, respect and tolerate each other | 395(63.9) | 171(27.7) | 26(4.2) | | 1.3758 |
| The bible is in support of promoting human rights | 342(55.3) | 224(36.3) | | | 1.3965 |
| The ten commandments condemn human rights violation in totality | 311(50.3) | 9(16.0) | 78(12.6) | 92(14.9) | 1.9110 |
| The bible encourages human rights violation | 36(5.8) | 24(3.9) | 48(7.8) | | 3.6062 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The old and new testament condemn human right violation | 153(24.8) | 249(40.3) | 86(13.9) | 56(9.1) | 2.0803 |
| The bible provides adequate guidelines in relation to human rights | 267(43.2) | 274(44.3) | 12(1.9) | | 1.5396 |
| The old testament concept of human rights is not significantly different from that of the new testament | 130(21.0) | 387(62.6) | 36(5.8) | 13(2.1) | 1.8842 |
| **Aggregate Mean Score** | | | | | **2.19 57** |

The observation in Table 2 revealed the responses of lecturers and students on what Christian Religious Education teaches on Human Rights. The overall aggregate mean score which is 2.19 is less than the fixed mean score of 2.50 because of four point scale where decision rule at 2.50 and above is termed agreement while below, is termed disagreement which means that all items enlisted in table 2 are what Christian religious education teach on Human Rights. This implies that majority of the students are not in agreement with what Christian Religious Education teach on Human Rights in colleges of education as shown in the table above with mean score of 2.19 and some of the items on the table revealed disagreement with mean score of 1.3758, 1.3965 and 1.3758. The first two items on Christian religious education do not promote human rights and Christian religious education does not emphasize on the rights of individuals are in agreement with mean score of 3.3471 & 3.1056 respectively.

Research Question Three: **What are the possible ways lecturers and students of Christian Religion Studies can help in promoting Human Rights in Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State?**

**Table 3: Showing respondents' opinions on possible ways lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies can help in promoting Human Right in Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State.**

| **Items** | **SA (%)** | **A (%)** | **D (%)** | **SD** | **Mean** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strong disciplinary action should be clearly spelt out and followed in institution on cases of human rights violation by the | 356(57.6) | 236(38.2) | | | 3.3993 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| school disciplinary committee | | | | |
| Workshops and seminars on human rights issues should be advocated by lecturers and students of Christian religious studies | 208(33.7) | 372(60.2) | 12(1.) | 2.6678 |
| Lecturers should teach and promote human rights during their lectures | 271(43.9) | 283(45.8) | 26(4.2) | 2.5753 |
| Lecturers and students should create awareness on cases of human rights violation in their institutions | 204(33.0) | 334(54.0) | 40(6.5) | 2.7148 |
| Having general meeting between lecturers and their students on human rights issues would help in promoting human rights | 286(46.3) | 270(43.7) | 36(5.8) | 3.5805 |
| Student should report all cases of human rights | 295(47.7) | 285(46.1) | 12(1.9) | 3.5235 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| violation to the school management/ authority | | | |
| The school management should constitute a standing committee that will be responsible for handling cases of human rights violation on campus | 13(4.2) | 7(2.3) | 3.3500 |
| **Aggregate Mean Score** | | | **3.12** |

The result in Table 3 revealed the responses of possible ways lecturers and students of the Christian Religious Studies can help in promoting Human Rights in Colleges of Education. The overall aggregate mean score which is 3.12 is greater than the fixed mean score of 2.50 because of the four point scale where decision rule at 2.50 and above is termed agreement while below it, is termed disagreement. This means that lecturers and students agreed that Christian Religious Studies should help in promoting Human Rights. All the enlisted items in table 3 above revealed various ways that Christian religious studies should help in promoting Human Rights in Colleges of Education. This implies that majority of the lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies can help in promoting human rights in Colleges of Education as shown in the table above which has mean score of 3.12 and some of the items on the table revealed agreement with the mean score of 3.3993, 2.6678, 2.5753 and 2.7148 respectively.

**Hypotheses testing**

In pursuance of the objectives of this study and in order to provide statistical solutions to the question raised, three null hypotheses were formulated. The hypotheses were tested as follows:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the responses of male and female respondents in their understanding of various ways by which human rights are violated in Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State.

AJEMATES
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**Table 4: Independents sample t-test on Responses of male and female understanding of various ways human rights are violated**

| Variables | N | Mean | Std. deviation | t-Cal | t-Crit | DF | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Males | **252 233** | **1.6984** | **1.0120** | **44.432** | **1.96** | **483** | **.000** |
| Females | | **1.9871** | **.8277** | | | | |

**N=Number of Respondents, t-Cal= t-Calculated, t-Crit= t-Critical, DF=Degree of Freedom, Sig.=Probability value**

Table 4 revealed that 618 students were sampled. The observed t-calculated is 44.432 which is greater than the t-critical of 1.96 at the degree of freedom of 483 and the probability level of significance observed in the test is .000 (P<0.05). This indicates that there is significant difference between males and females understanding of various ways by which human rights are violated. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the responses of male and female respondents in their understanding of various ways by which Human Rights are violated in Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State was therefore rejected.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference between the responses of lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies on what Christian Religious Educations teaches on Human Rights.

**Table 5: Independent sample t-test on Responses of Lecturers and Students of Christian Religious Studies on what Christian Religious Education teaches.**

| **Variables** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std. deviation** | **t-Cal** | **t-Crit** | **DF** | **P** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lecturers | 50 358 | 1.9600 | 1.0093 | 22.481 | 1.96 | 406 | .000 |
| Students | | 3.3073 | .8304 | | | | |

**N=Number of Respondents, t-Cal= t-Calculated, t-Crit= t-Critical, DF=Degree of Freedom, Sig.=Probability value**

Table 5 revealed that 50 students were sampled. The observed t-calculated is 14.814 which is greater than the t-critical of 1.96 at the degree of freedom of 420 and the probability level of significance observed in the test is .000 (P<0.05). This indicates that

there is significant difference between lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies on the ways of promoting Human Rights. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the opinion of lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies on the possible ways of promoting Human Rights among Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State was therefore rejected.

**Major Findings**

The following are the Major findings of the study:

**1.** There are lots of human rights violations in colleges of education, and students are afraid to air their views for fear of being dismissed.

**2.** The understanding of human rights by male and female students in Colleges of Education is the same. This implies that all the students believe that human rights should be included in the academic curriculum.

3. The findings revealed that Christian Religious Education is able to promote human rights in Colleges of Education, because moral values can be taught with the help of teaching of religion.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings revealed that Christian religious education has important roles to play in promoting Human Rights in colleges of Education in Ebonyi State. The research questions showed the aggregate mean score of 1.70 for the various ways by which Human Rights are violated which is less than the fixed mean score of 2.50. This shows that there is a lot of violation of human rights in Colleges of Education as shown table 1.

The possible ways lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies can help in promoting Human Rights has aggregate mean score 3.12 as shown in table 1. This shows that there are possible ways by whcih lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies can promote Human Rights in Colleges of Education. The findings revealed that there is no difference in understanding of Human Rights by male and female students in Colleges of Education. The observed significant level is .507 (P>0.05).

According to Henkin (2002), human rights are those liberties, immunities and benefits which by accepted contemporary values all human beings should be able to claim as rights in the society in which they live. Human rights, therefore, are the total sum of legal rights, claims or entitlements recognized by the law and secured by the coercive agents of the state for citizens (Muhammed, 2012). Olokun(2002), highlights various gender inequality in colleges of education:

i. The school- learning environment appears to be more supportive of males than females. A learning environment where female students have to compete for scarce learning resources, live in fear of sexual harassment, be in gross minority relative to males, is discouraging to the female learners.

ii. Classroom interactions tend to disfavour females. It is a fact that teachers as well as students carry into the class their societal values of relegating females to the background.

iii. The curriculum content in various disciplines carry gender bias given the impression that education is only for males, and females are just intruders. For example, the science and mathematics curricular at all levels of education present a masculine image by the content drawing heavily from the life experiences and interest of males.
Oyedepo (1991), asserts that if the rights of freedom of speech, movement from place-to-place, freedom of association, and freedom from harassment and intimidation apply to men, then these rights should also apply to women. Okeke (1989), & King (1996), draw attention to some of the myths and negative stereotypes peddled to discouraged female education in Nigeria. They include:
d) Educated women make bad wives and are not respectful to their husbands.
e) Educated women are irreligious and do not encourage their children to be religious.
f) Educated women tend to be morally corrupt and promiscuous, unruly and bossy. The implication of these is that where parents and society at large believe in such myths, they find no justification in providing girls and boys‟ equal access to education.

Another gender inequality observed by Dansarki (2005), is that the history of secretarial education reveals a high level of discrimination against males who offer the course. Some people believe that secretarial education is right for females and not right for males. Thus, they often look down on the males who offer the course and rate them as people who are ineffectual in other areas of study. Dansarki maintains that, as a result of gender inequality, the enrolment level of males in secretarial education is generally very low, as compared with that of their female counterparts.

Secondly, the finding revealed that there is significant difference between lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies' responses on the teachings of Human Rights, because the importance of Christian Education studies cannot be over emphasized. In line with this Paul (1995), states that Education without Religion is incomplete, and is in danger of distortion, and in danger of being turned into an instrument harmful to man. Jesus did not deprive His followers of their freedom and responsibility, but He taught them to discern what the will of God is in the different circumstances. The ideas of learning, investigation, discovery, and education are intrinsically related to the Christian faith (Ilori 2012).

Finally, the findings revealed that opinions of lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies on the possible ways of promoting Human Rights differ significantly. This means that they have different understanding of Human Rights but the department of Christian Religious Studies can help in promoting Human Rights in Colleges of Educations. This is in consonant with Okeke (2010), who opines that human beings are not machines or electric bulbs which function as soon as they are switched on. God has given us freedom. Freedom to choose, act or speak. We choose whether or not to be identify with God. He only makes us realize the consequences of our actions. If God could initiate human rights and continue to promote

it, Christians should endeavor to see that the rights of people are preserved and protected. The rights of individuals should be promoted by using the gospel of Christ and the teaching of the church to promote the dignity of man created in the image of God.

**Summary**

The study was carried out to establish the role (s) of Christian Religious Education in promoting Human Rights in Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, three specific objectives were raised which is to find out the various ways by which Human Rights are violated in Colleges of Education in Ebonyi State, to investigate what Christian Religious Education teaches on human rights and to examine the possible ways lecturers and students of Christian Religious Education can help in promoting human rights. In line with these objectives, research questions were formulated which included. Also, three null hypotheses were formulated. A total of fifty (50) students were sampled. Structured questionnaire was used to gather data from the students and the data collected were presented in tables. The null hypotheses were tested using Independent Sampled t-test at 0.05 level of significance. It was discovered that there is violation of human rights in Colleges of Education by both lecturers and students' male and female. It was also discovered that lecturers and students of Christian Religious Studies can help in promoting human rights in Colleges of Education because religious education aims at developing effective knowledge of the basic facts of what life is all about as expressed in the Bible.

**Conclusion**

From the analysis of data collected from the study and test of the Hypotheses formulated, the researcher concluded as follows:

1. Lecturers and students of the Christian Religious Studies can help in promoting human right in colleges of education
2. Bribery and corruption constitutes obstacle to fundamental human rights and development of the educational sector.
3. Sexual violence undermines the integrity of the academic environment and it prevents its victims from achieving their full potentials.
4. Human rights and fundamental freedom allow us to fully develop our human qualities, intelligence, talent and our conscience and to satisfy our spiritual and social needs.

**Recommendations**

Based on the major findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

Government should address various cases of Human Rights abuse in tertiary institutions of learning.

Christian Religious Education should include a course on Human Rights in their academic curriculum.

Workshops, seminars and conferences on human rights should be organized

periodically and should be part of academic curriculum

**5.5 Suggestion for Further Studies**

This research work has identified a number of research areas for further studies towards the understanding of issues on roles of Christian Religious Studies in promoting human rights. These include:

1. Studies on various ways by which human rights are violated in colleges of education.
2. Studies on Biblical teaching on human rights; old and new testaments.
3. Studies on sexual violence on female students in Colleges of Education.
4. Studies on using the gospel of Christ and the teaching of the church to promote human rights.

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