
Language, Culture and Human Rights Abuse in Igbo Land

Esther Ogochukwu Akpulu

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

eo.akpulu@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examines language, culture and human right abuse in Igbo land. Language and culture are integral components of the society. The language of the people is embedded in their culture. Language and culture can help to achieve unity, promote security and human right in the Igbo nation. To ensure posterity, no cultural group should forsake their lifestyle and tradition, instead, express their culture and participate in the society free of irrational hostility. Unfortunately, there are some cultural practices that negate the human right in Igbo land. The English language as the official language is deemed more prestigious despite that no ethnic group in Nigeria is English language native speakers. The objective of this study is to highlight and discourage inhuman cultural practices in Igbo land because most often, these practices abuse the human rights and expose the victims to insecurity. The study also aims to analyse the interconnectivity between language and culture, their roles towards enhancing security and rights of the citizens. The study is descriptive in nature. Thomas Aquinas's Natural Right theory is used for analysis. The data collection was by observation, library and internet sources. The findings reveal that some inhumane cultural practices in Nigeria had come into serious confrontations. It also revealed that although there has been notable changes for instance in widowhood practices, more still has to be done. Some unassuming persistent practices that violate the human rights should be addressed and abolished. It recommends that both

the human rights activists and all concerned individuals should stand up against practices that abuse the human rights whether they are masterminded by cultural practices or government policies.

Keywords: language, culture, human rights abuse, cultural practices

1. Introduction

The Igbo nation occupies the eastern part of Nigeria, and it comprises five states namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Out of over two hundred and seventy groups that make up Nigeria, Igbo nation is presumed to be one of the largest. Igbo language is the native language of Igbo people though, they have various dialects. Prior to colonial rule, the Igbo people operated a republican society and were guided by values, norms and customs. Norms are guidelines of behaviour based on values. Cultural norms of the Igbo people serve as code of conduct for the generality of the people. The code of conduct over the time forms the custom of the people and thus, considered as laws of the land. The customary laws were not written anywhere instead, placed in the hearts of the members of the society. Akpulu (2021:86) posits that “For the Igbo people, there is no book that contains their laws or code of conduct. Unlike the Europeans... But every member of the Igbo society grows up and learns it informally from his people.” The customary law has a general application and is no respecter of any body – man or woman, poor or rich, young or old, titled or non-titled members of the communities.

Cultural plurality helps to attain unity in diversity where subordinate groups do not have to forsake their lifestyles and culture instead, express their culture and participate in the larger society without prejudice. Apparently, within the groups exist some harmful and inhuman practices. Since culture is the way people express themselves in their daily interactions, cruelty of any kind must be

eliminated so as not to keep the victims in a permanent state of fear or insecurity. This is because the abuse of the fundamental human rights instead of promoting it, makes the individual or even group involved to sometimes assume a low esteemed identity. In some cases, the victims may summon courage to forcefully register their displeasure and take their natural rights thereby resulting to unrest in the system. In as much as people live out their culture in their daily lives, it is very pertinent to strike a balance between any claim of cultural rights and universal human rights. Needless to say is that women and children are most vulnerable to these dehumanising cultural practices. Human rights are rights we have because we are human beings. They are the rights we rightfully possess as human beings. These universal human rights are inherent to us. This is to say that these rights are not granted by any state. The universal human rights include right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, right to freedom of opinion, choice and expression, the right to education and work among others. Any custom of the land that violates human rights of the citizens should be revisited.

What this study stands to portray is that most of these human rights still face abuses by some persistent obnoxious and dehumanising cultural practices and insincerity of the state to respect these rights even as entrenched in the law. Igbo cultural norms and customs that expose the citizens especially women and children to abuses and insecurity should be abolished. It then calls for more serious intervention of the National Human Rights Commission, human rights activists, religious leaders and all concerned individuals to curb the abuses. This will help to secure the society where everyone will be safe and have a sense of belonging.

This paper examines how negative usage of language and culture can militate against the human rights instead of enhancing it

in Igbo cultural setting. Language and culture will be briefly explained. The concept of human rights will also be expounded. Some cultural practices that still exist within the Igbo communities will be examined and the efforts of the Nigerian Human Rights Protection Agency to avert them portrayed. The findings and recommendations will bring the research to a close.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language

Language is the basic means of communication. Its role is to convey message from a speaker or writer to the possible audience. Without language, interpersonal relationship will be very difficult to achieve. Language is used to create and convey ideas. It is an inseparable part of the human society. It is also used to learn, conserve and transmit cultural traits. Emenanjo (1980) agrees that most human knowledge and culture is stored and transmitted in language. Isidienu and Ibeh (2020:228) observe that “Language is a devise which employs vocal symbols to give or hide information, to give illusions of love or to create realities of hate, to build or to destroy.” Nzeakor and Usondu (2013) assert that, man as a social being, acquires language for a harmonious living. Meaning that the purpose of every language is to communicate efficiently and that failure to do so will amount to communication breakdown. Language and the ability to communicate is an essential building block of human relations.

The above concepts of language reveal that language is very crucial for interpersonal associations. It helps to share information, ideas and feelings with one another and can enhance or mar relationships depending on the usage. The researcher agrees that language as a means of communication and information dissemination can integrate or cause divisions in a multi regional

society like Nigeria. The use of abusive language by any individual or group against any other can ignite sense of insecurity.

2.2 Culture

Many scholars have given many definitions and concepts of culture. Culture is the totality of what a group is known for. Anozie (1999:91) posits that “Obviously, in order to know a people correctly, the knowledge of almost all things they do is very important. The central issue in this probe is not only just how they do things, but more, the reason for what they do. The knowing of why and necessarily how, puts one in an objective position to appreciating others...” Akpulu (2021:203) maintains that, “... people’s culture is how they live as a group of people and what is used to identify them.” Ayton-Shenker (1995) in Eseyin and Udoh (2015:71) posits that, “Culture is one of the prime source of identity and a great deal of self-definition and expression, therefore fundamental values, traditions and cultures which are familiar to a common set of people, give a secure sense of one’s identity.” Williams in Anozie (1999:93) notes four way development of the term culture thus:

Broadly, the concept of culture was developed in four ways, all of which still affects its meaning. First, culture came to mean “a general state or habit of the mind,” with close relations to the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean “a

general state of intellectual and moral development in a society as a whole.” Thirdly, it came to mean “the general body of arts and intellectual work.” Fourth, it came to mean, “the whole way of life, material, intellectual, and spiritual, of a given society.

Williams points out that all these efforts show humankind’s endeavour to show new ways of human social, moral and intellectual development. This equally depicts the changing nature of life. The researcher therefore believes that, since the nature of life can change, any cultural practice that militates against the human rights should be adjusted. This in effect will enhance the overall security and development in the society.

2.3 Interconnectivity between Language and Culture

Language and culture are interdependent. Language is an aspect of culture. Members of society live out their culture using language. Since culture is a particular group of people’s way of life, their beliefs, crafts and everything they are known for, then their language if a conveying factor towards achieving all these. Isidienu and Ibeh (2020:229) concur with this when they opine that “Language is one of the main tools or instruments by which values, norms, belief system, technology and cultural practices of any society are communicated.” Writing on the interrelationship between language

and culture, Paz (2014) believes that since language is central to identity, one's freedom to use one's language is seen as 'inherent' in the 'dignity of the human person' and thus falls within the ambit of human rights law. Wolff (2006) observes that, the function which language serves in the society cannot be overlooked. The cultural values, history and realities are transmitted through language.

2.4 Human Rights

Human rights are rights and freedom which human beings should enjoy because they are human beings. They apply regardless of where one comes from, what one believes or how one choose to live his life. Oghenefavwe (2021) asserts that, "As a basic principle of rule of law, human rights and freedom are acceptable as part of culture of some nations, eg. Great Britain, India, etc, while in other nations (like Nigeria, United States of America, Ghana, etc) they are enshrined in their constitutions." When entrenched in the constitution, it shows high level of sincerity to respect these rights. According to Edwin, Shorts and Than (2001) in Afunadulla (2005), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations on December 10th, 1948, is based on the human dignity and worth inherent in the person, and the principle that the human person is the central subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Human rights are also defined as the rights people are entitled to simply because they are human beings, irrespective of their citizenship, nationality, race, ethnicity, language, sex, sexuality, or abilities: human rights become enforceable when they are codified as conventions, covenants, or treaties, or as they become recognized as customary international laws, (gbgm-umc.org/umw/education/glossary.html). This definition shows the universality of human rights. Igboin (2011) concurs with this as he declares that human rights have been defined as the rational basis

for a justified demand. What constitutes demand should be understood as that which is different from favour or privilege but one's due, free from radical, religious, gender, political inclinations. This entails that human rights enforcement is never a preferential treatment or an honour granted to an individual or group, instead, it is what ordinarily should be obtainable.

Human rights conventions, declarations and acts all attempt to guarantee human decent treatment and protection against discrimination and all sorts of abuse. There are three human rights principles. They are, first, human rights are interdependent and indivisible. This principle connotes that all human rights have equal standing, and none of the rights is more important than another. Guaranteeing one right is not the same as guaranteeing all, and abuse of one human right is abuse on others as well. Secondly, human rights are inalienable, meaning that human rights are completely unconditional. They don't have to be bought or earned, and they cannot be taken away for any reason, by any person, group or institution. Lastly, human rights are universal. This means that all human beings in the world have human rights. Though, whether this is upheld is debatable. But all states have the duty to protect the human rights of their citizens, Soken-Huberty (2018).

Human rights are very necessary as it is a means of protection for all especially for those who may experience abuse, neglect and isolation. Human rights also allow people to stand up to societal corruption. This means that people can speak up when they experience abuse and corruption. This is why specific rights like the right to assemble are so important because no society is perfect. The concept of human rights educates and empowers people and tells them that they deserve dignity from society. Human right helps to hold the government accountable, Soken-Huberty (2018).

2.5 Reasons for the Emergency of Human Rights

The horrific events and experiences of the Second World War (WWII) opened the eyes of the world that certainly humans are not being treated equally. In the opinion of Futurelearn (2021), the mass genocide of Jews, as well as the murder of many disabled and LGBTQ+ people during the holocaust, was a harsh wake-up call for the world leaders. Obviously, human rights have merely existed formally for about 200 years, but before that, there were no real laws to ensure people are treated fairly regardless of things like race, gender, age, and religion. After the creation of UN which was in 1945, the member states under the umbrella of the Universal Declaration of Human rights came together to create the list of human rights. This move was guided by American diplomat and first lady then, Eleanor Roosevelt. This document was revolutionary as it was the first time UN members states acknowledged that all human beings are born the same and so they deserved the same rights, regardless of circumstances. Oghenefavwe (2021:66-67) agrees that “The UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights has become a landmark declaration in the history and politics of global emancipation struggle. ... No people struggling for human rights and genuine democracy can consciously deny themselves the inspiration, vision and wisdom embodied in every sentence of that world historical declaration.”

According to United Nations (UN) document, some human rights contained also in 1999 Nigerian Constitution include:

1. All humans are born equal before the law.
2. Nobody should be treated like a slave.

3. Nobody has the right to torture another.
4. The law is the same for everyone.
5. Freedom of speech and expression.
6. Right to citizenship.
7. Right to freedom of movement.
8. If anyone is hurt, the person can go to another country and ask for protection.
9. Right to work, choose the type of work to do and get paid fairly.
10. Right to vote and be voted for.

Considering the above explanations, when the human rights are violated instead of respected or protected, the result is human rights abuse. Human rights abuse is violation of the basic rights of people by treating them wrongly. This abuse could be either physical or verbal maltreatment and can come up in many ways. For instance, in as much as there is freedom of speech and expression, the use of insulting speech or abusive language violates human right as it demeans the integrity of the concerned human. In the case of a group, it can instigate insecurity.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Natural Law

The natural right law was developed by classical Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle and Plato, but the concept was more fully developed by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*. Natural law is a philosophical theory that states that humans have certain rights, moral, values and responsibilities

that are inherent in human nature. The emergence of human rights from the natural rights tradition did not come without opposition as some argued that rights could only come from the law of a particular society and could not come from any natural or inherent source. Natural law states that there are behaviours that are naturally right or wrong because God ordained it so. What was naturally right could be ascertained by humans as good or right by thinking properly. Then what is bad should be condemned because it is unnatural. Any action that distorts human nature is also generally condemned as evil. This implies that nature intends man to behave in certain ways and to do certain things. Olaposi (2018:76) agrees that “Natural law refers to the principle inherent to man which tells him that what is fair, good, impartial, right and just.”

Hugo Grotius in Heard (1997:103) further expanded on this notion where he propounds the immutability of what is naturally right or wrong thus,

Now the law of nature is so unalterable, that it cannot be changed even by God himself. For although although the power of God is infinite, yet there are somethings, to which it does not extend. ...Thus two and two must make four, nor it is possible otherwise; nor, again, can what is really evil not be evil.

3.2 Strength of Natural Law

Natural law is important because it is applied to moral, political and ethical system today. It has played a large role in the history of political and philosophical theory and has been used to understand and discuss human nature. The development of the concept of equity, human rights, and democracy across the globe. It is universal and absolute so, it is always relevant. It allows for a clear cut approach to morality and establishes common rules.

3.3 Demerits of Natural Law

This theory is based solely on right reasoning, which is a criterion that cannot be verified through empirical scrutiny. There is what is called ‘the multiple-conscience problem.’ That is to say, different individuals have explanations for, and what is right and wrong ... Olaposi (2018). Natural law stresses ‘what ought to be done’ and not necessarily ‘what is done.’

4. Cultural Practices that Violate Human Rights in Igbo land

Cultural and traditional practices have long played crucial roles in Igbo society and continue to influence many aspect of life in the Igbo nation. Cultural institutions like kindred, daughters of the patrilineage *umuada*, masquerade cult among others in Igbo land, for instance have been very useful in promoting the Igbo culture. Cultural practices like *iru mgbede* (for young madiens) and *iwa akwa* (for young men) have historically provided training for young adults in the pre-colonial era before formal education structures.

However, it has been observed that some cultural practices common to many Igbo cultural communities have significant negative impact(s) on the exercise and enjoyment of fundamental

human rights. Some of these cultural practices include female genital mutilation, widowhood rites, servile marriage like *trokosi*, abuse of children, *osu* caste system, wife inheritance, women dis-inheritance, early and forced marriage among others. These harmful cultural practices discriminate more against women and children and inflict injury to their person and dignity. These dehumanising practices differ from one community to another. Examples include,

4.1 Widowhood Practices

The widowhood practices are those cultural practices and rites married women are subjected to when their husbands die. The Igbo custom expects the widow to mourn the dead husband for one year. The woman is secluded from others and do not partake in social activities as a result of observing the widowhood rites. In some cases, the widow is subjected to sit on a tattered mat and wear a particular mourning attire usually an old tattered cloth. She would not change or wash the cloth until the last day of the twelve days *izunaato* when the cloth and mat will be burnt. The widow would then change to a black mourning cloth. (Akpulu, 2016). Sometimes, a woman is subjected to drink water used to bath the corpse of the husband just to prove her innocence. This is in a case whereby the woman is alleged to have killed the husband and in an attempt to prove her innocence. Ogbazi and Orabueze (2013:14 -15) assert this thus “... if the husband’s relations do not suspect her of killing him. If they do, she can be forced to swear an oath or drink the water used in washing the corpse in the order to prove her innocence.” A refusal to drink the water will be a further and complete proof of her guilt, therefore such women go through the ordeal which may eventually affect their health.

It is also obtainable in some other cultures that when a man dies, the surviving wife or wives are subjected to dehumanising funeral rites. Every hair on the body is clearly shaven, unfortunately

by fellow women, and forbidden to see the light of the day for some period proscribed by custom, Adedeji in Eseyin and Udoh (2015:76). Even while women are encouraged to reject these obnoxious practices, some of them for fear of being haunted by their deceased husband's ghosts, would themselves demand for the rites; consequence of a myth that has been indoctrinated in their cultural consciousness. Hence, the call for continuous re-orientations of these women especially those in the rural communities. This will enable them acknowledge that they deserve their rights to the dignity of human persons and those rights as granted by nature and coded in the law should be protected.

Because of Christian influence, there has been reformations and modifications in widowhood practices in most communities in Igbo land. For instance, the mourning period has been reduced to six – three months, wearing of black for mourning changed to white, and no longer total isolation of the widow. But surely, it has been observed that in some communities, the obnoxious treatment associated with widowhood rites still persist. For instance, in Igbo widowhood rites, though Christians are more in number than the traditional religionists presently, their movements are still restricted upon the death of their husbands. The human right abused here is the right to the dignity of human person, principle of non-discrimination and torture which customary international law protects, Eseyin and Udoh (2015). Any woman who failed to observe the restriction in movement is perceived as nonchalant. Sometimes, this alone leads to allegation that the woman is the cause of the husband's death. A woman was alleged to have killed the husband because the man died on the cause of sexual intercourse with the wife in Aguleri community of Igbo land. The woman was paraded round the village naked.

4.2 Women Dis-Inheritance

Obviously, women disinheritance is an Igbo custom that has remained adamant to change. The arduous condition of a widow does not end with the burial of the husband. She is yet to battle with the discriminatory and humiliating treatment from the husband's family. Common in the past are cases where uncles or brothers to the deceased dispose the widows of their husbands' property. Ogbazi and Orabueze (2013:16) assert that "In the past, one of her husband's brother will inherit her. If she is lucky, he will take care of her and her children; if she is not, he will simply divest her and her young children of her husband's property, particularly houses, land and economic trees." The widow is not permitted to be present when the landed properties are shared as obtains in Igbo custom. Even if she has young sons, they will not be there at the sharing. It is only where the sons of the deceased have grown up that they will inherit their father's property. By implication, the widow loses the landed properties to her husband's uncles and brothers if she has only girl child or children. In some cases, the uncles and brothers of the deceased will pretend they are merely holding the properties for the young sons of their brother. But when the time is ripe to return the properties, they will seize them to the detriment of their dead brother's nuclear family. The widow is dissuaded from going to court in order to avoid sanctions such bold step can incur her as well as her children. Then, such widow in her despicable condition finds it very difficult to raise her young children. This exposes the woman and her children to insecurity while some unguided among them eventually end up being notorious elements in the society. Though, this is not as prevalent as it used to be in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it still obtains in some remote communities.

Women dis-inheritance in Igbo land affects the Igbo woman as a wife, a daughter – married or unmarried, married but childless or has only female children. Whatever a man has in his lifetime

belongs to his male children. The girl child is not included in property sharing. There is a belief that when the girl marries, she will not take anything to the husband because she will get new properties from the husband. Remember that when the same husband dies, the woman is divested of those properties if she has no grown up male children. Ajayi (2021) posits that the custom around inheritance in Igbo land is in favour of men, and is unlikely to change soon. Ogbazi and Orabueze (2013:18) concur that “... because it has permeated the mindset of the people – men and women, educated and uneducated, young and old, married and single – for they condone it and are not in a hurry to do away with it.” This is true because, not even Christianity, education or constitutional provisions have eliminated this discriminatory custom against women. It is observed that a rich father can buy land for the daughter in the city as a wedding gift probably during *idu unọ* in Igbo custom; but the land must never be one inherited from his forefathers.

4.3 Forced and Early Marriage

Another cultural practice that abuses human rights is forced and early marriage. Through home training and education in Igbo cultural setting, young girls are taught that marriage is good and early marriage more desirable. This avails the required foundation for early marriage. It can be at the age of 14 or 15 when these girls are yet to be fully matured physically, psychologically and emotionally. They embrace this teaching and as very young wives, they give birth when they are not yet fully developed to go through the rigorous experience of child birth. In most cases, they may end up having prolonged and difficult labour and probably die in the process. Worst still, it may result to ruptured bladder and the victim ends up with Vesico Vagina Festula (VVF). Obviously, this is a very humiliating health condition which makes them to leak and smell

urine, thereby, always go about with urine bags under them. Their husbands will marry another wives and their parents may reject them thus they become outcast and insecured even among their people. Despite condemnations, early and forced marriage has continued in some Igbo communities. It is observed that some young girls who got pregnant outside marriage are still being forced into marriages with men old enough to be their fathers or even grandfathers. Cases also reoccur where people give out under aged daughters in marriage because of poverty. These youngsters go into the forced unions to suffer with no one to rescue them.

Again, Yoruba people have servile marriage in which a virgin girl is offered to serve and appease the gods for a crime such as murder committed by a family member. Asomah (2015) avers thus “The trokosi system is an African traditional religious practice that exist in Ghana, Benin, Togo and in Yoruba land in Nigeria.” It means that harmful cultural practices are not peculiar to communities in Igbo land but also obtain in other African communities. These cultural practices are not only dehumanising but aslo abuse on human rights and should be condemned and discarded.

The victims of these abuses are mainly women and children especially the girls. Most of these practices are traditional religious practices. Bilyeu (1999:459) agrees with this as he asserts that “States will often justify discrimination and noncompliance with human rights conventions on the basis of custom or cultural practices.” Hernandez-Truyol in Bilyeu (1999:459) concurs that “Using religion to justify practices that many believe are violations of human rights standards is not a new concept.” National Human Rights Commission has found out that culture most often becomes an avenue in which serious crime are committed against humanity,

and the perpetrators often go unpunished due to their precieved cultural attributes.

4.4 Language and Abuse of Human Rights

Nigeria has the English language as her official language and deemed more prestigious than over 350 languages in Nigeria. Irrespective of the fact that there is no ethnic group in Nigeria whose native language is English. Some people particularly Igbo people now take the English language to be more prestigious than other native languages. Consequently such people do not speak their native language to their children. This makes the affected children to feel unsafe and as strangers whenever they mingle with their peers or people that speak the Igbo language. As Paz (2014) rightly states that since language is central to identity, one's freedom to use one's language is seen as 'inherent' in the dignity of the human person', and thus falls within the ambit of human rights. In this case, those children are denied the right to learn, speak and use their native language. One of the characteristics of language is that it is not inherited but learn. As a result, children learn so easily the language of their orientation.

Moreso, derogatory language can violate human rights and instigate insecurity. Instance is the president Buhari's hate speech against Igbo people on June 10 2021 in an interview with the Arise TV broadcast. Pesident Buhari states that Indigineous People of Biafra is like a dot in a circle and will have no where to go if allowed to exit, judging the manner they are spread all over the country. This is as the country is experiencing the highest level of insecurity. Statement like this instead of curbing insecurity rather heightened the tension in the land. The president maintains in his negligence for human rights "In any case, we say we will talk to them in the language they understand. We will organise the police and the

military to pursue them.” Statements as this against a group of people can spur social unrest. The proper approach should have been to call the group for a round table discussion where prerogative language will be used to address the situation.

The Nigeria Human Rights Commission serves as an extra-judiciary mechanism for the respect and enjoyment of human rights. It also provides avenues for public enlightenment, research, and dialogue in order to raise awareness on human rights issues.

4.5 Findings

Findings show that most cultural practices against human rights are traditional religious practices. National Human Rights Commission has found out that culture most often becomes an avenue in which serious crimes are committed against humanity, and the perpetrators often go unpunished due to their precieved cultural attributes.

Among the findings also is that women and children are the most vulnerable. They undergo widowhood practices, affected by early and forced marriage, and suffer women dis-inheritance. It also reveals that most of those cultural practices that violate human rights had come into serious confrontations and modified, but some like dehumanising widowhood rites still persists especially in the rural communities.

From the findings, it is evident that religious organisations, the National Human Rights Commission, human rights activists, and some none governmental agencies contribute to educating and redirecting the people to understand their rights and possible ways to seek redress when their rights are violated. Though, more still need to be done.

5. Conclusion

Language and culture as components of the society and their interrelationships make them very essential tools to foster human rights. It therefore means that any cultural practices that militate against human rights instead of enhancing it should be jettisoned. Human rights as inherent from nature should be protected and guarded and it is the responsibility of all well meaning members of the society. People should stop hiding under traditional or cultural practices to perpetrate evil as any cultural practices that do not foster human rights, abuse it. Igbo people should reach a consensus and do away with all customs that violate human rights especially those practices that dehumanise women. Some of the obnoxious practices against human rights had been adjusted as mentioned earlier but a lot still need to be done, for instance, in widowhood practices among rural dwellers. Women particularly the educated ones should help to sensitise their fellow women to stand for their rights. The women should strive to liberate themselves from the shackles of obnoxious traditional practises against them.

The state should on their side be sincere enough to bring to book any violator of human rights. Punishing violators of human rights will go a long way to deter potential offenders. The government need to step up on their fight against Boko Haram, banditry, unknown gunmen and others who torture, kill, and trample on human rights of the citizens with impunity. This will restore dignity of human life, peace and security not only in Igbo land but also in the country.

References

- Ajayi, A. (2020). Disinheritance: Widows in Igboland Battle against Culture that Men Love to Preserve. <https://www.icirnigeria.org> Accessed 17/03/2022.
- Afunadulla, I. (2005). Defining Human Rights: The Need for a Holistic Definition. www.researchgate.net Accessed 15/03/2022.
- Akpulu, E. O. (2016). "Changes and Continuity of Widowhood Practices in Isiamaigbo-Agulu". Unpublished Thesis presented to the department of Igbo, African and Asian Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.
- Akpulu, E. O. (2021). Culture: The Identity and History of Every Tribe. In Anedo, O. A. E. (Ed). *Ekwe Journal of Igbo Scholars Forum*. Onitsha: Onwubiko Printing Press. Vol. 14, No 2, Pp. 201-217.
- Anozie, O. (1999). *The Igbo Culture and the Formation of Conscience*. Assumta Press: Owerri.
- Asomah, J. Y. (2015). Cultural Rights Versus Human Rights: A Critical Analysis of the Practice in Ghana and the Role of the Civil Society. *African Human Rights Law Journal*. Vol. 15 No 1, 1996-2096.
- Bilyeu, A. S. (1999). Trokosi-The Practice of Sexual Slavery in Ghana: Religious and Cultural Freedom Vs Human Rights.
- Emenanjo, E. N. (1980). "Linguistics Language and the Nation." www.uniport.edu.ng Accessed 21/02/2022
- Eseyin, M. And Udoh, S. E. (2015). "Cultural Re-Engineering: The Way out of Human Rights Subversion in Sub Sahara Africa, Nigeria a Case Study." www.eajournals.org 17/03/2022.

- Futurelearn (2021). What are Human Rights and Why are They Important? www.futurelearn.com. Accessed 17/03/2022.
- Heard, A. (1997). Human rights: Chimeras in Sheep Clothing. www.suf.ca. Accessed 17/03/2022.
- Igboin, O. B.(2011). Human Rights and the Perspective of Traditional Africa: A Cosmotheandric Approach. *Sophia* 50, Pp. 159-173.
- Isidienu, I. C. and Ibeh, F. U. (2021). “Language and Development of Igbo Culture”. In *Odezuruigbo: An International Journal of Igbo, African and Asian Studies*. Vol 4, No 1. Pp. 226-242.
- Nzeakor, N. C. and Osondu, P. A. (2013). “Language, a Tool for Conflict Resolution and Nation Building: The Nigeria Example.” In Nwadiolor, K. et al. *The Humanities and Nation Building*. Awka: Fab Anieh. Pp. 364-379.
- Ogbazi, I. and Orabueze, F. O. (2013). “The Inscription of Fundamental Human Rights and the Liberation of the Igbo Woman from Customary and Administrative Burdens.” In *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*. Vol 14, No 2. Pp. 1-26.
- Oghenefavwe, P. O. (2021). Human rights Abuse and Violations: The Nigeria Experience. www.researchgate.net. Accessed 12/03/2022.
- Olaposi, I. (2018). Natural Theory of Law: Merits and Demerits. <https://lawglobalhub.com>. Accessed 15/03/2022.
- Paz, M. (2014). The Tower of Babel: Human Rights and the Paradox of Language. *European Journal of International Law*. Vol. 25, No. 2, Pp. 473-496.
- Soken-Huberty, E. (2018). Ten Reasons Why Human Rights are Important. <https://www.humanrightscareers.com>. Accessed 17/03/2022.

- Tolu-Kolawole, D. (2021). IPOB like a Dot in a Circle, has Nowhere to go. <https://punch.com>. Accessed 31/03/2022.
- Wolff, H. E. (2006). “The Language Factor in Discourse in Development and Education in Africa.” In Kembe-Sure, S. S.Nwangi and N. O. Ogechi (Eds.). *Language Planning and Development in Africa*. Eldoret Moi: University Press.
www.gbgn-umc.org/umw/education/glossary.html.
Accessed 15/03/2022