

# **WOMEN RIGHTS AND CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

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# AIM OF STUDY

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Over the years, women have been faced with different struggles, and with the presence of insecurity and conflict, more threat have risen against their wellbeing and rights.

The aim of this study is to disclose how insecurity has affected women rights.

This study adopts the use of historical approach in the gathering and interpretation of data. This includes the use of both primary and secondary sources include book, journals, etc.

This work therefore aims to bring to lime light, the challenges in the light of insecurity faced by women which have affected them in the area of their fundamental human rights, for instance, the impacts of the Boko Haram menace on their female victims in Nigeria.

This work looks at the state of insecurity in Nigeria, causes of insecurity in Nigeria. etc.

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# INTRODUCTION

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- The presence of Insecurity is evident around the world
- It has proven to be a challenge to the world at large and its presence and evidences in independent Nigeria have been traced back to 1960s. (Danladi D. 2013.)
- Insecurity has been made manifest in the series of conflict, violence, kidnappings, crime, killings, to mention but a few.
- There are records on the agitation in the Niger Delta for resource control, communal crises such as the Ife-Modakeke crises, the Boko haram insurgencies and the presence of Fulani herdsman, all of which have had their different effects on women, especially as regards their rights.
- During these events, people, the immediate communities and their environs are always affected while women have been affected by these in the forms of rape, kidnapping, forced marriage, torture and mutilation, trafficking, killing, to mention but a few.
- The levels of insecurity that comes with all these conflicts and violence have thus affected and infringed upon human rights in general and women rights in particular.

# WORK BREAK DOWN

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**This Work Will Show The Link Between Women Rights And The Challenges Of Insecurity In Nigeria. In Order To Do That, The Paper Has Been Divided Into Seven Sections.**

- 1. Conceptual Clarification: There Is A Need To Understand Both Concepts Namely; Women Rights And Security.**
- 2. Historicizing Women Rights From Global Perspective, To Its Presence In Nigeria**
- 3. The State Of Insecurity In Nigeria**
- 4. The Causes Of Insecurity In Nigeria**
- 5. The Effect Of Insecurity And How It Affects Women In Nigeria**
- 6. Women Rights And Nigeria Insecurity**
- 7. Possible Panacea/ Conclusion.**

# CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

## WOMEN RIGHT:

- The term women rights have been defined to be human rights that applies to women. ( Bamgbose, O.1999.)
- Thus, it is best to explain what human right is in order to get the concept of women rights copiously.
  - Human right is perceived as an “entailment to treatment that a person enjoys simply by virtue of being a human being” (Holfman J. and Graham P. 2009. *Introduction to Political Theory*.P 408)
  - these rights are evident in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 which consist a preamble and 30 articles.
  - Women rights therefore entail the general rights applicable to women
- In relation to this paper, women rights are perceived by women rights advocates to be laws that cover and respond to the realities of women’s lives.

# CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION 2

## INSECURITY:

- The concept of insecurity has been defined by different scholars from different fields. In its simplest form, it means the absence of security.
- To fully grasp the understanding of insecurity, there is a need to conceptualise security.
- This simply means that security has to do with absence of tendencies that are life threatening and hazardous.
- The conceptualisation of insecurity varies at different time and based on different circumstances and eras.
- During the cold war, insecurity was conceived to be the recognition of threats to the state which often accounted for the race for arms and nuclear weapons to defend the state.
- In post-cold war that is the period from 1993 insecurity has been referred to presence of any situation that causes fear , instigate harm; this situation can be socio-economic, politico-strategic etc. Angela Ajodo-Adebanjoko α & Nkemakolam Okorie . 2014
- In all, this study simply views insecurity as any situation or state of things that is an anti-thesis to a safe situation or security.

# WOMEN RIGHTS FROM GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE, TO ITS PRESENCE IN NIGERIA.

Since the end of the second world war, the concern for women rights began to assume a wider spread and became recognized as a global problem as women were marginalized almost in all the parts of the globe. This recognition played a role in the :

- The 1945 UN charter : made it possible for women to have platform
- 1948 declaration of human rights : there was limited change in the way women were treated
- The 1976 covenant of human rights.
- In the mid 1970s – 1980s efforts were intensified to promote women rights and examples of such efforts include the women conference in Mexico, the second women conference in Copenhagen.
- the 1985 UN Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya
- The Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979.
- Declaration of the elimination of violence against women adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993
- The fourth world conference of women in Beijing 1995.

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# NIGERIA'S ATTEMPTS TOWARDS ACHIEVING HUMAN RIGHTS

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Nigeria is not left out in the pursuit of achieving women right, she has ratified the different Acts or documents from the different conferences;

- CEDAW : Nigeria Government ratified CEDAW IN 1985
- Maputo Protocol went into effect in 2005
- The Child Right Acts (CRA) of 2003
- The Violence Against Persons Prohibitions (VAPP) was passed into law in May 2015
- United Nation Security Council Resolution UNSCR 1325 ( 31 October 2000)
- National Action Plan (2017-2020}
- It is important to note that although these laws, protocols, policies, agreement have been enacted and endorsed, their implementations have remained a challenge.
- In all Nigeria encountered and still encountering some challenges.

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# INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

The presence of insecurity is evident in Nigeria and has posed a challenge even after fifty-four years of independence

- 12 day revolution by the Niger Delta Vigilante led by Adaka Boro,
- 1967 -1970 was the period of the civil war in the nation's history.
- Series of religious conflicts and communal clashes eg Maitatsine riots of 1980
- From 1991 to 2000, there were records of over 30 violent crises and from 2001 to 2005, the country had about 100 conflicts which made insecurity the order of the day as lives and properties were hugely lost. (Oarhe 2015)
- The northern part has been ravaged by the Boko Haram,
- The south-south has been faced with the Niger Delta militants,
- The presence of Fulani herdsmen and their and destructive activities and indiscriminate killings have been witnessed in both the north and south divides of the country

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# 3 FOCUS AREA

## 1. NIGER DELTA/ ACTIVITIES OF THE MILITANTS :

- This oil led to the recognition of the region both from the national and international levels.
- It has been recorded that since the 1990's there was crisis in the Niger Delta.
- This limelight has been sustained by uprisings such as those of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People(MOSOP), the Ijo Egbesu boys and in more recent times by the Niger Delta Volunteer Force( NDVF) led by Asari Dokubo

# 3 FOCUS AREA

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## 2. Boko Haram:

- Boko Haram is recognised as an Islamic group and sect just like the Taliban and Al-Qaida. They have become a dominant terrorist group in Nigeria and have carried out different actions that are more detrimental to Nigeria than beneficial. Their activities has led to loss of lives and destruction of properties of great dimension and magnitude such as burning and bombing of churches, United Nations building in Abuja, market squares, etc, and the killing of innocent people in Adamawa state (Mubi) when at least 40 people were killed by a bomb, (Jideofor Adibe. 2013. What Do We Really Know About Boko Haram
- The Boko Haram major target has remained the Christian group, but Overtime, the victims have included women, children, police officers and Christian, as well as non-Christians

# 3 FOCUS AREA

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## 3. FULANI HERDSMEN CONFLICT:

- Fulani Herdsmen conflict is a skirmish between herdsmen and farmers this has led to series of clashes between the two parties . In 2014, the conflict a death toll of 65 percent which cut across north central Nigeria. This means that 786 out of 1150 death count was as a result of the clashes . In 2016, according to existing records about 1425 people were killed in attacks involving Fulani herdsmen. There are over 40 notable clashes n September 30 2012, April 5 2014, February 18 2016 etc. 9-13

# THE CAUSES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

There are several causes of insecurity in Nigeria some of which have been narrowed down to:

1. Lack or inadequate basic infrastructures,
2. Bad governance, Corruption and corrupt practices of government officials,
3. Poverty
4. Unemployment
5. Religious intricacies /conflicts
6. Rerceived victimisation ,materialism and the display of it with impunity, domination and exploitation,
7. lack of quality education or training, to mention but a few.
8. Presence of Ungoverned spaces

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# THE EFFECT OF INSECURITY AND HOW IT AFFECTS WOMEN IN NIGERIA

The presence of insecurity and conflict in Nigeria has affected women drastically as women pay heavily and remain susceptible to its heinous effects:

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- They suffer **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**: women are raped, kidnapped, forced into marriage, trafficked, used as sex slave etc
- Insecurity and conflict in Nigeria has affected women, emotionally, mentally and psychologically: they will have phobia, post traumatic stress disorder , and depressions etc For example, the killing of women's husbands and parents in villages in Yobe, Borno and Adamawa states caused serious mental illness and problems for the women (James Okolie-Osemene & Rosemary I. Okolie-Osemene (2019) The indoctrination process that women and girls go through .

Pages 17-18

# THE EFFECT OF INSECURITY AND HOW IT AFFECTS WOMEN IN NIGERIA

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- The loss of lives and property of women, men and children : This is evident in the series of raid done by the herdsmen, Niger Delta militants and Boko Haram. On April 14<sup>th</sup> 2014 Boko Haram set off bombs in Nyanya, Abuja, which led to the death of over 70 people including women and children. In January 2015, there was an attack In Borno that damaged about 3700 properties and destroyed about 16 towns, (Ogunfolu A., Assim U. M., and Adejumo O. 2018.)

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# THE EFFECT OF INSECURITY AND HOW IT AFFECTS WOMEN IN NIGERIA : WOMEN IN A POSITION OF INSECURITY (Kidnapped and Abducted)

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- From the health perspective as health challenges emerged, women are infected with disease like HIV, STI, etc. Some of the girls end up having Vistula.
- People are displaced, the victims also end up having physical problems like disabilities, separation from parents, husbands, children and loved ones and the loss of cohesive social systems that existed prior to the crises and conflicts eg. May 2013 abduction,
- 276 female Chibok girls on 14th April 2014,
- On 6th May 2014, they abducted eight girls aged between 8 and 15 years from a village in Borno.
- On 10th June 2014, they abducted 20 women near Chibok.
- On 24th June 2014, they abducted over 60 women from the village of Kummabza in Damboa, Borno State.

*Pages 19- 20*



# THE EFFECT OF INSECURITY AND HOW IT AFFECTS WOMEN IN NIGERIA : WOMEN IN A POSITION OF INSECURITY (Kidnapped and Abducted)

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- On 20th October 2014, they attacked the two villages of Waga Mangoro and Garta in Adamawa State where they abducted 40 women and girls.
- On 8th January 2015, they abducted an unknown number of women from Karatako village in Gujba Local Government of Yobe State.
- On 19th February 2018, in Dapchi, 110 female students were abducted, and so on and forth.
- In all, it is clear that the women and girls have been the major target and victims of the Boko Haram violence and attacks, thus placing women on a position of insecurity and infringed human rights.

For More (Iyi J. M.. The Weaponisation of Women by Boko Haram and the Prospects of Accountability in *Boko Haram and International Law.* )

*Pages 19- 20*

## **WOMEN RIGHTS FACED WITH CHALLENGES OF NIGERIA INSECURITY.**

Fundamental Human rights have been guaranteed in Nigeria and it is evident in section 39 of the Nigerian constitution as amended in 1999 that as a citizen be it a man or woman, everyone is entitled to the list of human right enacted,

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Hence, women rights have been guaranteed in the Nigerian constitution. However, despite the constitutional provision of these rights, women rights have been an object of easy infringement by the insecurity in Nigeria.

Experiences faced by women in the series of conflicts and crises during have shown an outrageous violation of women rights during these periods.

1. The right to life, liberty, and personal dignity are greatly infringed upon as seen in the abduction of over 200 Chibok school girls in Borno State.

# WOMEN RIGHTS FACED WITH CHALLENGES OF NIGERIA INSECURITY. 2

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2. Women rights have been faced with the issue of lack of safety and security. For example in April 2013, Ijaw militia men attacked the army which later led to a cross fire between Ijaw militant and Nigerian security forces. In this cross fire women were cut up and unfortunately killed, Herders attacked and killed indiscriminately in location farmers, young and old, men and women disabled and abled.

3. In UDHR 1948 a section shows that there is a right to dignity of human person and the right not to be subjugated to torture, inhuman or ill treatment. This is clause is usually disregarded during the time of insecurity.

## **WOMEN RIGHTS FACED WITH CHALLENGES OF NIGERIA INSECURITY. 3**

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4. This provision recognises the prohibition of slavery, prohibition of torture, protection of minorities. This right is recognised as one of the women rights,
  5. With the presence of insecurity, the right becomes overlooked, as women who were abducted were tortured and used for sex slaves. There are evidences of sexual harassment by Fulanis towards the women.
  6. There is also evidence in the way abducted women are treated that they become slaves or are used as object and subject of dangerous and inhumane acts which are unhealthy to their well being. For example, Boko Haram suicide bombing missions from April 2014-December 2015 were characterised by the presence of women and children as carriers of explosives. The suicide bombing activities from April 2011- June 2017 in which 434 bombers were deployed to 247 target recorded 56 percent of the bombers as women.

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# WOMEN RIGHTS FACED WITH CHALLENGES OF NIGERIA INSECURITY. 4

7. During insecurity, reproductive human rights are violated, the rights of women to access good health care facility and health services and make decisions regarding their health such as pregnancy, family planning and reproductive health are taken away from them.
8. The right to marriage which allows the woman to choose who to marry is infringed upon during crises and conflict
9. During insecurity, freedom of movement is also restricted.
10. Right to education and information becomes insubstantial, an example is to the abductees of Boko Haram as they were made to attend koranic school and made to learn to recite the Koran
11. Women right to freedom of religion is taking away once they are abducted by Boko Haram; they are thought the Islamic way. Women are forced into conversion to Islam. The women were made to cover themselves and follow strict version of Sharia'a requiring.

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# POSSIBLE PANACEA /CONCLUSION

- The question that arises from this is: is there a possible solution?
- Government, Individuals and NGOs have to come and work towards the human right policies
- Those women who have been affected and have had their human infringed upon should be rehabilitated and empowered
- Women should be in the policy making , decision and implantation process
- The attempts to combat insecurity should be improved
- The presence of insecurity and conflict in Nigeria has affected women drastically as women pay heavily with their fundamental human rights while remaining most susceptible to gender-based violence. During insecurity, women are raped, kidnapped, forced into marriage, tortured, mutilated, trafficked, used as sex slave, suicide bombers among others.
- The effect of insecurity on women and girl child is very vast; it affects their mental, psychological and physical wellbeing. In all, Boko Haram remains the greatest perpetrator of the violation of fundamental human rights of the Nigerian women given the above analysis and available records.
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**THANK YOU**