

Contribution of Good Governance in Protecting Human Rights in Tanzania; A Case Study of Selected Public Higher Learning institutions

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Abstract: Protection of human rights in public higher learning institutions is still a challenge in Tanzania. However many public higher learning institutions have adopted good governance reforms in order to strengthen their works in the society and to reduce violation of human rights. The purpose of the study was to assess the contribution of good governance in protecting human rights in public higher learning institutions in Tanzania. The study adopted a case study research design on sample of 74 respondents drawn from a target population of 332; both administrators and academic staff. The primary data were collected using self-administered questionnaires and key interviews. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics including percentages, mean, correlation to help in determining and explaining variable relationships. The study revealed existence of violation of human rights in public higher learning institutions where 2% rated the level of human rights violation at very high, 3% rated it at high, and 21% rated it at somehow high. Respondents agreed that good governance promotes accountability among stakeholders, enhance peace and unity, eliminate gender disparity and ensure equity, increasing the quality of education services and improve decision making process in academic activities. Further, the study revealed that the influence of good governance in protecting human rights was at high. There was also a positive and moderate relationship between transparency and protecting human rights with a correlation coefficient of 0.385**; and moderate and positive relationship between accountability and protecting human rights at coefficient value of 0.289*; also participation and protecting human rights had positive and moderate relationship at coefficient value of 0.290*. The study recommends that public higher learning institutions should put in place adequate measures to achieve zero violation of human rights and public authorities responsible for governance and human rights protection should actively monitor daily activities in higher learning institutions to ensure no violations.

Keyword: Good governance, Human rights, Higher learning institutions, protecting human rights

1. Introduction

Violation of human rights has been experienced by students and staff in public higher learning institutions. In this era, among the causes of violations of human rights in public higher learning institutions are inequality, corruption, poor services delivery, absence of effective accountability, participation and rule of law (Republic of Belarus, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2013). Generally the violation of human rights in public higher learning institutions causes social misunderstanding, inequality, insecurity, poverty, and poor services delivery, misuse of public funds, and abuse of public office.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights emerged in 1948 as important document in the world containing a list of basic rights that the public institutions must protect and promote. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights included the right to education, right to health, right to life; equality; and security of person; freedom from arbitrary arrest; freedom of opinion and expression; freedom of association and assembly; right to safe and healthy working conditions; right to adequate food, clothing, and housing (Foweraker *et al.*, 1997; OHCHR, 2014). According to United Nations (2016), human rights can be described as “rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status”.

The protection of human rights in public higher learning institutions is a global challenge. According to United Nations (2018), the Autonomous University of Nicaragua was attacked whereby some students died and other were injured and forced to flee and seek refuge inside the Divine Mercy Church. In Canada, around 35000 teachers protested against the new law on education stipulating a freeze of salaries for two years, also the university students protested against the increase of tuition fee for students from needy families (Republic of Belarus, 2012). Violation of human rights in public higher learning institutions in Africa have been a challenge for many years. For example according to Pavithra (2018), in Uganda 40% of males and 50% of females felt sexually threatened in universities' premises while in South Africa female students protested against the increase of sexual violence on university. Further, in 2015 the University of Garissa in Kenya was attacked by Somalia's armed group where 147 students died and other 80 students were injured during the attack (Ariel, 2015; BBC, 2015).

In Tanzania the students in public higher learning institutions have been involving in chaotic demonstrations and other unlawful actions including insult, cheating, fighting, corruption and sexual violence (Sylvester, 2011; Makoye, 2015; Daily News, 2016). Further, according to the Guardian

(2016), over 7,000 students were expelled from different public higher learning institutions something which threatened the rights of many students particularly the right to education, right to security and peace, and right to be free from discriminations.

2. Problem Statement

The government of Tanzania accepted the millennium development goals in September 2000 (UN, 2010). In line with MDGs the government of Tanzania is implementing Tanzania's Development Vision 2025 and Five Year Development Plan Phase II for the purpose of transforming Tanzania to the middle income countries. However the main goals of MDGs and Tanzania's Vision 2025 include well-educated and learning society, competitive economy, promoting gender equality, high quality livelihood, and improving maternal health (URT, 2016; URT, 2013). Therefore, the existence of human rights violations in public higher learning institutions becomes the stumbling block towards the success of MDGs, Tanzania's vision 2025 and the five years development plan. Forexample, according to Sylvester (2011), students from public higher learning institutions have been protesting over the issues of the lack of practical training, accommodation and meal allowance for University Students something which affects their attendance and performance in academic activities.

However the government of Tanzania is committed to the protection of human rights as defined by the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 and Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Further, the government of Tanzania established the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance which works to ensure adherence to good governance and protection of human rights in public institutions in Tanzania. Regardless of those initiatives the government of Tanzania went further by developing National Human Rights Action Plan to ensure protection of human rights in Tanzania (URT, 2013; LHRC, 2016; CHRAGG, 2016).

The challenge is that many studies on good governance and human rights have not emphasized on the contribution of good governance in protecting human rights in Tanzania and particularly in the public higher learning institutions. For example CHRAGG (2016) and Mdee and Thorley (2016) argue that little has been done to assess good governance at the level of public institutions. Therefore, the study sought to determine the contribution of good governance in the protection of human rights in public higher learning institutions in Tanzania.

3. Research Purpose

The aim of the study was to assess the contribution of good governance in protecting human rights in public higher learning institutions in Tanzania. Specifically the study sought to determine the contribution of transparency, accountability, and participation in protecting human rights in public higher learning institutions in Tanzania.

4. Research Methods

The study adopted a case study design covering a sample of 74 respondents drawn from a target population of 332 comprising of administrators and lecturers. Primary data was collected using questionnaire and interview guide. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics including percentages, mean and correlation.

5. Results and Analysis

5.1 Transparency and Protection of Human Rights

On transparency the study discovered that the access to information had the overall mean of 4.20 indicating that the access to information in public higher learning institutions was at high. However the study found that among the challenges facing the access to information in public higher learning institutions includes existence of charges, poor internet access and technological barrier among stakeholders. Further, the study found that the quality of information in public higher learning institutions was at high where the overall mean score of 3.81 was obtained even though the study findings indicated that some of the reports received were not indicating all important issues.

According to the study findings, 95% of respondents agree that transparency is important approach in protecting human rights while 5% believed that transparency is not an important approach in protecting human rights in public higher learning institutions. Further, 82% of respondents they agree that transparency is effective means in protecting human rights in public higher learning institutions whereby 40% of respondents rated transparency at very high and 42% of respondents rated it at high; and 18% of respondents rated the effectiveness of transparency as somehow high signifying that transparency is either effective or ineffective in protecting human rights. The overall correlation between transparency and protecting human rights was established at .385** indicating a positive and significant relationship between transparency and protection of human rights in public higher learning institutions in Tanzania.

5.2 Linkage between Accountability and Protection of Human Rights

The study revealed internal accountability within the public higher learning institutions was rated at highly with a mean score of 4.08. Further, the study revealed that external accountability was highly regarded and practiced with a mean score of 3.78 signifying that the external accountability was high in higher learning institutions in Tanzania. The challenges facing accountability in public higher learning institutions include lack of commitment among stakeholders; lack funds, political intervention, absence of quality social services, and the presence of unethical activities among students and staff.

Further, 45% of respondents rated accountability as an important approach in protecting human rights at very high, and other 45% rated accountability as important approach in protecting human rights at high; and only 10% of

respondents rated accountability at somehow high indicating the weakness of accountability in protecting human rights in public higher learning institutions. On effectiveness of accountability, 27% of respondents rated it as very high, and 44% rated the effectiveness as high; and 29% of respondents rated it as somehow high signifying that accountability is instrumental in protecting human rights in public higher learning institutions. However, the overall correlation between accountability and human rights protection was established at .289* implying that accountability had moderate and positive relationship with human rights protection in public higher learning institutions in Tanzania.

5.3 Influence of Participation on Human Rights Protection

The study revealed that participation in public higher learning institutions was high with a mean score of 3.97. Also, the findings indicated that 48% of respondents ranked participation as important approach at very high while 47% of respondents ranked it at high; and only 5% of respondents ranked participation as important approach at somehow high indicating that sometimes human rights protection does not depend on participation of the members of the community. However, the findings indicate that 31% of respondents ranked the effectiveness of participation at very high and 40% ranked it at high, and 29% of respondents ranked the effectiveness of participation at somehow high. The overall correlation between participation and human rights was established at .290* implying a positive and moderate relationship between protecting human rights and participation in public higher learning institutions.

5.4 Status of Human Rights Protection

The study assessed the status of human rights protection in public higher learning institutions resulting in a mean score on the aspects of human rights protection of 3.80. This implies that the protection of human rights was at high. However, the highest score was 4.23 on equal access to human rights education followed by involvement of other agencies which had a mean score of 3.81, the presence of human rights integration approach in the institutions' projects which had mean score of 3.69, presence of standard setting which scored the mean of 3.63 and monitoring of human rights which had a mean score of 3.63. Furthermore, the study revealed cases of violation of human rights in public higher learning institutions whereby 2% of respondents rated the level of human rights violation at very high, 3% of respondents rated the level of human rights violation at high, and 21% of respondents ranked the level of human rights violation at somehow high; and 52% of respondents ranked the level of human rights violation at low and 22% of respondents ranked the level of human rights violation at very low. Despite the level of violation of human rights the study found that protection of human rights in public higher learning institutions was high where 45% of respondents ranked the status of human rights protection at very high, and 32% of respondents rated it at high, and 23% of respondents ranked the protection of human rights at somehow high (Figure 1).

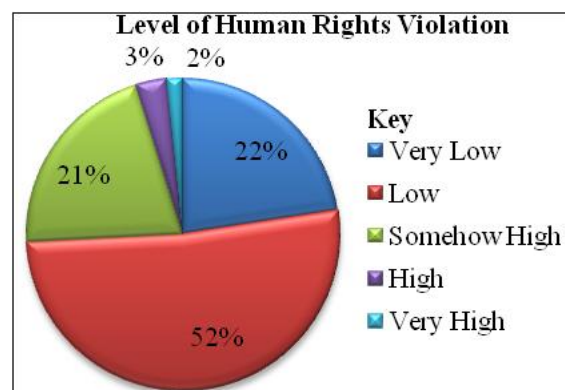


Figure 1: Level of human rights violation

In additional, the results indicate that good governance is very important in human rights protection in public higher learning institutions (Figure 2) whereby 47% of respondents rated the influence of good governance at very high and 40% of respondents rated the influence of good governance at high; and 13% of respondents ranked the influence of good governance to be at somehow high. These findings related to the findings which indicated that the status of human rights protection was at high whereby 45% of respondents ranked the status of human rights protection at very high, 32% of respondents rated it at high; and 23% of respondents ranked the protection of human rights at somehow high. However, the findings indicated that 27% of respondents believed that good governance promote a sense of responsibility among stakeholders, 23% of respondents believed that good governance enhance peace and unity in academic activities, 19% of respondents believed that good governance eliminate gender disparity and ensuring equity, 16% of respondents believed that good governance increase of the quality of education services, and 15% of respondents believed that good governance improve decision making process in public higher learning institutions.

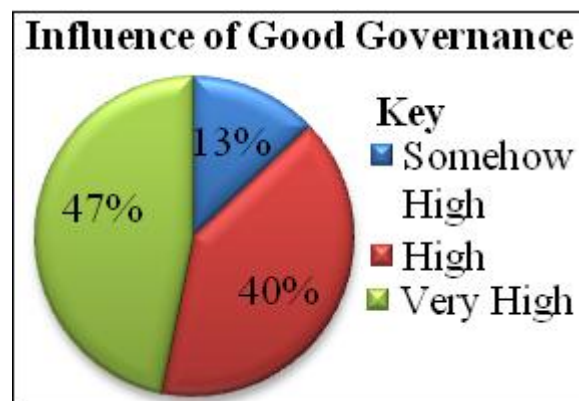


Figure 2: Influence of Good governance

6. Conclusions

The level of human rights violation in public higher learning institutions in Tanzania was found to be generally low as demonstrated thus; 2% of the respondents rated it at very

high, 3 % rated it at high and 21% rated it at somehow high and 52 rated it at low and 22 rated it at very low. The findings imply that that the implementation of good governance systems and reforms are effective though more efforts are required to completely end violation of human rights in public higher learning institutions.

Protecting human rights was positive and significantly correlated with two attributes of transparency namely the presence of newsletter or bulletin where information was reported and circulated, though reports circulated do not show all important issues. Further, protecting human rights was not significantly correlated with the preparation of reports in a way that is easy for many stakeholders to understand, and accessibility of some information about academic opportunities and learning materials, the presence of instance where the issues like planning, budget, and expenditure are disclosed to important stakeholders and the information about institution's projects are posted on websites and notice boards, and last the presence of official website where important information can be accessed.

Accountability was correlated with protecting human rights with the presence of external accountability framework involving government ministries, CHRGG, and Controller Audit General and the external accountability agencies are working effectively to monitor different activities. Further, management takes serious the recommendations from external accountability bodies, the presence of internal accountability framework involving internal audits and oversight committees, the presence of participation of students and staff in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of different activities, and the presence of laid down procedures that give chance to hold accountable administrators and lecturers.

Participation and protecting human rights had positive and significant relationship with encouraging staff and students to manage and mobilize institution's resources. However, protecting human rights was not related with the involvement of staff and students in decision making processes and the presence of participation framework which helps staff and students to be involved in different activities.

7. Recommendations

The endorsement and implementation of governance reforms is not sufficient to address the problem of violation of human rights in public higher learning institutions; the National Higher Education Policy should be revised to meet the demand of good governance and effective human rights protections in education sector in order to address and reduce the challenges in public higher learning institutions such as the shortage of qualified lecturers which has facilitated the problem of part-time lecturing something which destroy the quality of education offered in public higher learning institutions.

Furthermore, the public authorities responsible for governance and human rights protection including the Ethics Secretariat, Commission for Human Rights and Good

Governance, and Parliamentary Watchdog Committees should participate effectively in daily activities of the public higher learning institutions. In line to this the government should assist public institutions to interact effectively in daily activities in order to improve the aspects of good governance and human rights protection among the public institutions. This will enable CHRGG to monitor the daily performance of public higher learning institutions and to ensure adherence to human rights and good governance in public higher learning institutions.

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