THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN'S DIGNITY AND SEXUAL INDEPENDENCE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW: BASIC LESSONS ON CORE THEMATIC HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTS

Introduction

Generally, and in international law, women are considered as disproportionate and particular victims of certain specific cultural exploitations as well as human rights violations including degradation, trafficking, rape, sexual exploitation and allied trade-cultural dehumanisations. Certain municipal laws address these violations in certain ways but the United Nations also addresses these violations through some of its conventions and treaties known as thematic human rights documents. These thematic documents are usually drafted by specialized United Nations agencies responsible for addressing the particular human rights abuse or violation in question. The fact that they are “thematic” that is, addressing specific human rights issue, make them different from basic UN human rights documents such as the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention Against Torture And Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

This paper will thus, examine the protection of the dignity and sexual independence of women in international law by exploring and analysing FOUR thematic United Nations human rights documents on the subject namely, the Convention on The Rights of The Child,1 1990; The Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979 (with General Recommendation 19 of 1992 and Optional Protocol of 2000); The Vienna Declaration on The Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) 1993; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing)

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2 This Convention is herein considered to the extent that it affects the sexual dignity and independence of the girl-child (as a woman).