

An Appraisal of Socio-Economic Rights and the Pursuit of Dignity of the Human Person

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Abstract

The dignity of human person has been denied in many countries following the non-justiciability of socio-economic rights despite the litigation of civil and political rights. This problem is aggravated by the common misconception that human rights are basically natural rights an age-long notion. This paper is aimed at establishing that socio-economic rights are veritable tools for actualizing the dignity of human person and that civil, political and socio-economic right is human rights. To accomplish these objectives this paper adopted the philosophical expository and critical approach in investigating the issues on dignity of human person and socio-economic rights. The paper found that as long as socio-economic rights in a country is regarded as non-justiciable and treated as non human rights the protection of the dignity of human person will remain a mirage. The paper submits that the pursuit of the dignity of human person cannot be achieved by relying solely on civil and political right; as fundamental as they are their full actualization depend on the obligations and responsibilities of the state.

Introduction

The problem surrounding the internalization and litigation or justiciability of socio-economic rights in many countries arises more of misconception of its true purpose and less of the legal, cultural and economic processes involved. Since the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) was enacted in 1966 as an international law, its essence has not been adequately clarified leading to diverse interpretations and implementations by different countries. For many, the fundamental objectives of these rights are; to alleviate poverty, create equal opportunities, achieve the drive for sustainable development and act as instrument for accountable government and good governance (Edih and Ganagana (2020), Edeh (2018) and Olayinka (2019), but these are its secondary purposes. Ibe (2010) attributes the factor responsible for this misconception to the ambiguity of language

of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Whatever the case may be, the true essence of enacting the socio-economic rights as international laws is to enable each individual citizen harness fully his/her potentials and the environment in order to actualize the joy of his being and protect the dignity of his/her human person.

The misconception of the essence of socio-economic rights could be considered to a large extent as the rationale behind the division of human rights into generations (categories) with civil and political rights assumed to be at the apex of these rights. In reality, the basic distinction between civil and political rights and socio-economic rights is that while the former asserts clearly what the government cannot do to interfere with citizens' dignity of human person, the latter highlights the obligations and responsibilities of the government to citizens to enable them attain the dignity of their human person. A critical examination of both civil and political rights and socio-economic rights reveals that these rights are two sides of the same coin. There is a growing consensus among scholars such as Ibe (2010), Faga et al (2020) that the advocacy for the respect of the rights to quality standard of living, education, housing and fundamental healthcare commonly referred to as socio-economic rights is the substructure of fundamental human rights. This presupposes that to achieve or protect the dignity of the human person of citizens, the aforementioned rights must be considered inevitable and inseparable. However, in many countries in the world especially those regarded as developing countries this notion has not been embraced and implemented; only few countries such as South Africa and many Western countries have adopted this perception enabling their citizens to fully actualize the dignity of the human person and further achieve their drive for sustainable development.

The thrust of this paper is to canvas socio-economic rights as a veritable instrument for protecting the dignity of the human person. It also aims at highlighting the nexus between civil and political rights and socio-economic rights. To these objectives this paper adopts the philosophical expository and critical approach of study. By employing the expository approach the paper brings to light the fundamental tenets of civil and political rights, socio-economic rights and the underlined principles of dignity of human person. On the other hand, adopting the critical approach to the subject under investigation, the paper analyses the basic roles of socio-economic rights as the drive for the projection of human dignity.

Conceptual Clarification

The need for the clarification of concept cannot be overemphasized reason being that it prevents every perceived ambiguity and misunderstanding that may rise and hinder us from having a full grasp of the argument. On this note, the paper states the meaning of Civil and Political Rights, Socio-Economic Rights and Human Dignity.

Civil and Political Rights (Fundamental Human Rights)

Civil and Political rights are rights which expressed clearly what the government cannot do to interfere with individual's dignity as a human being. These are rights considered inalienable such as the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of movement, rights to worship etc.

Socio-Economic Rights (Second Generation Rights)

Socio-Economic rights are rights which expressed clearly the duties and responsibilities of the state (Government) to its citizens. They are rights which help citizens live a meaningful existence such as the right to accommodation, rights to access to medical services, right to meaningful employment, right to access to drinkable water, right to electricity and right to education.

Dignity of Human Person

The dignity of the human person holds that every person (human being) regardless of the age, race and status in the society has an inherent or immanent value which must be protected and respected by everyone. It involves issues pertaining to individual's well being; their existence and everything they do to achieve their needs and interests.

The Thrust of the Arguments on Fundamental Human Rights (Civil and Political Rights)

The discourse on human rights is age-long; it is as old as human civilization. There are various documents which serve as evidence to the historical origin of the arguments and advocacy for human rights such as Edicts of Ashoka issued by Ashoka the Great of India between 272-231 BC and the Constitution of Medina of 622 AD, drafted by Muhammad to mark a formal agreement between all of the significant tribes and families of Yathrib (later known as Medina) (Kori, 2018). Shelton (2007) posits that from the religious historical perspective; Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity and Islam all emphasized that all life is sacred, to be loved and respected. From the cultural (philosophical) perspective Hsün-tzu ancient Chinese philosopher (400 B.C) and ancient Greek philosopher (Cicero) argued from the natural stand point that all men by nature possess equal rights. In ancient time the approach to human rights varied from culture to culture; each culture had a way of protecting human dignity depending on their religious beliefs and philosophical ideas about the human person.

However, in modern time despite the variations there has been some sort of uniformed approach to the protection of human rights sequel to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The need for the universal recognition of human rights in modern era was occasioned by the events of the First and Second World War which claimed the lives of innocent citizens. At the root of the Second World War was the quest to establish a supposed superior race (*Ubermash*) distinct from other human race which resulted in the annihilation of thousands of Jews in Europe. Following the landmark achievement in Information Communication Technology (ICT) the world has become a small community; its reduction in size has increased global awareness of various existential issues bedeviling humanity especially the subject of human rights (Obioha, 2018). The underlined role of universal human rights is setting basic principles which serve as accepted paradigms for all human's moral conduct and to ensure the protection of human beings from mistreatment through forms of universal legal rights (Ernst and Heilinger, 2017). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 marked the era of a new dawn in the history of mankind. These rights expressed clearly what the government cannot do to interfere with citizens' dignity of human person. The United Nations (UN) holds that the substructure of freedom, justice and peace among the human race is ultimately the recognition of human rights (Obioha (2018) and Malik (2022).

The need for the protection and justification of human rights has become a pivotal issue which cuts across different walks of life such as religion, politics, law, psychology, pure and applied sciences and philosophy. Among these fields of study the issue of human rights is discussed elaborately in philosophy. The rationale for this assertion is that from ancient through contemporary period philosophers have critically analyzed this issue from the ontological standpoint down to its roles and functions in the global socio-political structure. Long before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as civil and political rights philosophers have held that these rights are naturally derived from our human nature. In recent time, there has been a serious debate concerning whether these rights are “natural, moral or legal entitlement; or whether they should be validated by intuition, culture, custom, social contract, principles of distributive justice or as pre-requisite for happiness; or whether they are to be understood as inalienable or alienable” (Obioha, 2018). These have nothing to do with the question of whether these rights exist or not, as it has been ascertained that these rights do exist. This controversy has birthed two major schools of thought; the naturalist school of thought (traditional doctrine) and the political school of thought.

Proponents of the natural or traditional doctrine hold that human rights are those rights we possess by virtue of being human. This notion is as old as the world; it was common among ancient civilizations. This school holds that man by nature has been endowed with inherent moral rights and these rights are inalienable. This implies that for this advocates, these rights are independent of social or institutional affirmation. Advocates of this school hold that the denial of human rights is tantamount to denying men those essential components that make them human beings. From the natural rights doctrine, Forsythe (2000) establish that human rights are basic rights and liberties to which all humans are naturally entitled. Some proponents of this school are: Grotius, Pufendorf and Locke (Cruft, Liao and Renzo, 2015). On the other hand, advocates of the political doctrine such as John Rawls, Charles Beitz, and Joseph Raz argued that human rights are not based on certain features of humanity; rather, the distinctive nature of human rights is to be understood in the light of their role or function in modern international political practice (Cruft, Liao and Renzo, 2015). Proponents of this school hold tenaciously that the essence of human rights is to maintain order in the world. It restricts the power of the government on issues that seeks to sustain the interest of an individual citizen. It would not be out of place to infer that advocates of this school of thought view these rights from its practical relevance in the world. It must be noted that for Raz the universality of these rights anchors on the facts that nations the world all over have accepted them as necessary or veritable tools for the political protection of human dignity and not on the notion that these rights are based on our humanity. Again, they repudiate the idea that human rights are a subset of moral rights.

Though diverse arguments have been postulated pointing out the pitfall of both schools of thought; naturalist and political, this paper holds that both schools complement each other and the only difference is that they approach the subject from different points of view with the same goal. The arguments of these schools of thought represent a coin with two sides. The arguments of the traditional and political doctrine complement each other. Cruft, Liao and Renzo, (2015) observe that while the political theory appears to deal with the issue of who is responsible for protecting and promoting human rights and the question of when and how such upholding

and enforcing is allowed, the traditional view deals with what important features of human life ground human rights. This does not show a difference rather it goes to show the additional essence of human rights. It is self evident that the loophole found in the former is filled up by the latter. The added advantage of the political doctrine of human rights is that the explanation they offered as grounds for the litigation of socio-economic rights makes more meaning to the argument on contemporary discourse on human rights.

Philosophical Discourse on the Dignity of Human Person

The discussion on the dignity of human person is one of the crucial issues in philosophy. The reason for this as explained by Oguche and Oguche (2022) is that every discourse revolves and centers on the human person. This discourse is vital as it involves issues pertaining to individual's well being; their existence and everything they do to achieve their needs and interests (Hasegawa, 2024). The philosophical discourse on dignity of human person attempts to proffer answers to the following questions:

1. What are those unique ontological components common to all human beings that distinguish them from other beings?
2. How important are these attributes to his well being?
3. What is the essence of human existence?
4. Can the idea of human person be appreciated outside the society?

Different approaches (such as the ethical, legal, religious and political) have been adopted to evaluate the arguments on the need to protect the dignity of human person. In contemporary time the dignity of human person has been regarded as a global common good which must be pursued by all and at all cost. The term dignity from the moral perspective implies the essence of what it means to be a human being (Steinmann, 2016). The answer to the question of what qualifies a being as human person as provided by different scholars, could be summarized to include: a being with consciousness, rationality, soul and spirit. The common notion about human being is that he is the only being who has these attributes. The central thesis of the argument on the dignity of human person is that every person regardless of the age, race and status in the society has an inherent or immanent dignity (honour) which must be protected and respected by everyone. This dignity include; the individual's emotion, opinion, liberty and the sanctity of life. Ontologically speaking, it is the dignity of the human person that distinguishes human beings from other beings (sentient and non-sentient). In the words of Hasegawa (2024) the dignity of human person is the foundation on which human identities, societal statuses, capabilities, and achievements are to be adequately realized.

The ethical and political argument on the need to protect the dignity of human person came into being sequel to diverse activities and actions perform to destroy or alter the sanctity of human life. Liseyev (2009) describes the question of the dignity of human person as a perennial problem; one which takes different pattern in every epoch. From antiquity through contemporary time, the respect for the dignity of human person has been down played and ignored subconsciously especially in the areas of religion, pure and applied science and politics. In some traditional religions in the world, the lack of respect for human dignity is downplayed in the religious beliefs and practices of human sacrifices. The justification for this

practice has always been that it is performed for the common good at the expense of innocent lives. In some parts of the world like Africa the inability of the government to provide adequate security measures has prompted the people to take laws into their hands by executing jungle justice and other degrading treatments to innocent citizens. Generally, violence such as killings, kidnappings, rapes, abortion, terrorist attacks, hunger and wars have become common phenomenon in the world (Aguas, 2009). People are seen and used as means to an end and not as ends in themselves. In the area of pure sciences some new medical discoveries and the use of advanced technologies have downplayed the importance of human life and so creating serious concern. This has prompted the ethical question of the negative effects of technologies enhancing human nature.

Contrary to Oguche and Oguche (2022) assertion that action and activities that are against the sanctity of human lives are products of contemporary ideologies, the fact is that the problem is age-long. The disregard for the sanctity of human life is age-long but this problem has been compounded by contemporary negative ideologies about the human person. Every human being regardless of his physiological, psychological and biological nature has an intrinsic value which is referred to as the dignity of the human person. The need to preserve and protect the dignity of human person is what gave rise to the enactment of human rights laws at the local and international level. The dignity of human person is not a relative concept, rather it is absolute and universal; it transcends culture. Its thrust centers on the way humans treat each other in the society. The interconnection between the concept of human dignity and human rights is one that many may be tempted to conclude that they are inseparable but this is not so. What is known as human rights are all ethical principles which adumbrate how humans are to be treated, not only in the passive but also in the active sense. They are an attempt to introduce ethical demands in social organization, in law and politics (Kucuradi, 2019). On the other hand, human dignity entails the consciousness of the inherent value of the human being. This intrinsic value is what makes every human being worthy of being treated in a special manner. The veracity of the matter is that the discourse or argument on the human dignity serves as the foundation for the advocacy of human rights.

As pointed out earlier, the crux of the ethical view on the dignity of human person involves the argument that every human being by nature of their being have intrinsic worth or value which cannot be taken away from them, regardless of the existence or non-existence of laws to protect this value. The argument on human dignity lays much emphasis on the ontological nature of human person and the sanctity of life. The arguments raised here revolve around:

1. any action aimed at jeopardizing the sanctity of human life
2. and, any action which degrades the human person.

In the first point, the consideration involves any scientific or medical practice aimed at altering the natural physiology of any human being whether to proffer solution to perceived problems or otherwise. For instance, any kind of genetic alteration aimed at improving human dispositions, capacities, and well-being. While the second involve actions such as rape, kidnapping, hate speech, murder, racism, religious bias, gender base violence, indiscriminate torture to mention but a few. The need to protect the dignity of human person is what gave rise to the discussion on human rights laws. The dignity of human person only makes meaning

within the purview of human society; that is human interpersonal relations. The way the subject of the dignity of human person is approached has a serious implication on the overall well being and the essence of human existence. What is worth noting as mentioned above is that human dignity is protected by the enforcement of human rights, and socio-economic Rights are themselves human Rights.

Socio-Economic Rights as Fundamental Human Rights

One of the concerns raise about the argument for the litigation and non-justiciability of socio-economic rights is the supposed nature of these rights. For many, socio-economic rights are not fundamental or inalienable rights but rights that basically depend on the economic, social and cultural condition of the country involved (Ikpeze and Udemezue, 2022). This assertion is a product of the one-sided view of the traditionalist school that civil and political rights are rights possess by virtue of our humanity. The origin of this misconception about socio-economic rights has a lot to do with its distinction from inception as second generation rights while civil and political rights are considered first generation rights. Another reason for the misconception about socio-economic rights is the wrong conception by many about the true essence of human rights and what human right seek to achieve. Lastly, the misconception stem from the debate between the traditionalist and political school of thought on human rights. The debate about the natural and political nature of human rights from critical observation shows that it emanated from the misconception of the nature and attributes of human rights. Human rights are moral framework universally recognized to guide the living together of humans. They protect different aspect of human lives that involve the basic interests and welfare of human agents (Heilinger, 2012). The purpose of enacting these rights is to safe guard the dignity of human person. However, this does not solely imply that since they are meant to protect the dignity of human person then they are rights possessed by virtue of our humanity. Rather these rights show what important features of human life ground human rights.

According to Olayinka (2019) and Edeh (2018) socio-economic rights are universal paradigm design for states to regulate the welfare and standard of living of global citizens. They include rights to healthcare, education, social security, housing and equal access to employment opportunities. The common notion about socio-economic rights is that these rights were established to eradicate poverty, create employment opportunities, environmental protection and overall achieve sustainable development. As a result of the unprecedented hardship that followed after the Second World War such as the high rate of unemployment, poverty and shortage of food supply in the world the need for the establishment of international laws to proffer solution to these needs became inevitable. The possible question that one may likely ask is, can these problems not be solved using civil and political rights which are said to be fundamental human rights? Civil and political rights as we know include the rights to life, freedom of speech, association etc but in reality these rights clearly state what the government cannot do to interfere with citizens' dignity. In simple terms, civil and political rights express the limited powers of the government over their citizens. On the other hand, socio-economic rights state the obligations and responsibilities of the government in assisting citizens achieve the dignity of their human person. Contrary to Obioha (2018) position that the main function of socio-economic rights is that they ensure that every citizen of a country and

the world at large have access to equal economic opportunities, social and cultural welfare. Socio-economic rights state categorically those obligations and responsibilities of the government to her citizens which enable them attain comprehensively the joy of being.

However, the main issue of concern is whether these rights are fundamental human rights either in the traditionalist sense or in the view of the political school of thought. As earlier noted above the ultimate goal of human rights is to protect the dignity of human person, if we toe the line of thought of Obioha (2018) that the main objective of socio-economic rights is to create and protect the access to equal economic opportunities, social and cultural welfare for every citizen regardless of age, race and social status then, socio-economic rights may not necessarily be considered human rights. In reality, the principles of socio-economic rights go beyond the quest for an egalitarian society to the overall idea of sustaining the entire well being of citizens in the global community. The starting point for socio-economic rights is to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor in the society while the underlining aim is to secure the total well being of each individual citizen. Jordan as referenced by Faga et al (2020) asserts that the notion of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can be attained if and only if adequate measures are put in place whereby every citizen enjoys economic, social and cultural rights. This presupposes that while civil and political rights of citizens are the substructure of human rights, socio-economic rights serve as the superstructure. Osita Eze as referenced by Ikpeze and Udemezue (2022) corroborate this point stating that if socio-economic rights are not guaranteed then civil and political rights will remain just as mere palliatives for the masses. For a citizen to effectively harness his fundamental right to life he must have adequate access to healthcare services, food security and security of life and property provided by the government else this right will remain futile. In other words, the right to life makes sense only when the government provides those basic social amenities and systems which make the existence of individual citizen worthwhile.

The interconnection between socio-economic rights and civil and political rights cannot be overemphasized. The success of civil and political rights is necessitated by the success of socio-economic rights vice versa. Socio-economic rights are human rights in the sense that these rights seek to sustain the overall well being of individual citizens and they are the superstructure of civil and political rights. Denying a citizen access to socio-economic rights is tantamount to denying the citizen access to those things which make his civil and political rights meaningful. If the true essence of socio-economic rights and civil and political rights are clearly understood then the argument whether socio-economic rights are human rights would become unnecessary. Though civil and political rights appear to be independent rights, these rights are fully harnessed when the socio-economic rights of citizens are litigated. In light of Joseph Raz's Philosophical standpoint which holds that in as much as all global citizens consent to the important role of socio-economic rights in sustaining the well being of each individual citizen then these rights are human rights. The idea of restricting human rights to those rights acquired by virtue of our humanity is myopic, not all encompassing. But, if human rights are considered as those rights to which all human beings agreed upon as principles for protecting the dignity of human person then the definition becomes holistic. In line with Raz's thought this paper holds that human rights are best understood when we look at their political function. And if this be the case socio-economic rights are human rights because they serve to protect the

dignity of human person.

Socio-Economic Rights as a Veritable Tool for the Protection of Human Dignity

The nexus between socio-economic rights and civil and political rights is best appreciated when the essence of socio-economic rights are clearly understood. The thrust of socio-economic rights like civil and political rights is the protection of human dignity. It has been established that the political function of civil and political rights is that these rights state clearly what the government cannot do to interfere with an individual's dignity of human person; that is, it shows the limitations of the government power in interfering with an individual's well being (Obioha, 2018). But, these rights do not adumbrate the roles of the government in ensuring that the individual's dignity of human person is protected. The need to protect civil and political rights is one of the pivotal reasons citizens decided to establish a civil society, charging those in authority with the obligation and responsibility of protecting these rights (Ikpeze and Udemezue, 2022). Despite the recognition of civil and political rights as human rights, in different parts of the world especially in developing countries the dignity of human person enshrined in these rights and internalized in different constitutions has been downplayed as the roles of the government in ensuring that these rights are protected have been politicized.

According to Obioha (2018) the function of the government is not only to protect the fundamental human rights which citizens ought to enjoy in a civil state, but to also provide ample opportunities that enable them enjoy their human rights. For any human being to have fully enjoyed the dignity of his human person he must have harnessed adequately his human rights protected by the government. This is where the litigation of socio-economic rights comes into play. In countries where socio-economic rights are considered policies and objectives of the state, the protection of the dignity of the human person in the country is at the mercy of those in authority. Categorizing the socio-economic rights of citizens as mere objectives and policies of the state indicates that these rights are not considered human rights. The litigation of socio-economic rights has far-reaching implications for protecting the lives and livelihood of the less privilege and low class citizens in the state (Ibe, 2010). In a civil society where only a few citizens have access to employment opportunities, education, housing and healthcare facilities then the supposed human rights of citizens in that state is subject to doubt.

Faga et al (2020) assert that the justiciability of socio-economic rights is a veritable instrument for exposing the ineptitude of the government in protecting the dignity of the human person of citizens. In many developing countries where the socio-economic rights of citizens are regarded as objectives and principles corruption such as embezzlement and siphoning of public funds have become common practices and with corresponding ratio of high rate of unemployment and poverty. Unemployment and poor standard of living in a country are indices which indicate the irresponsibility of the government towards the need to protect the dignity of human person of citizens. No civil society can speak of rights to life and movement where citizens lack access to means of livelihood, healthcare facilities and adequate security of lives and properties. The criteria for considering a country as developed is not limited to the use of advanced technologies and innovations (production skills) but much as to do with the standard of living of citizens as this is the major factor that guarantees the full enjoyment of the dignity of the human person.

In most civil societies where the socio-economic rights in the constitution are considered objectives and principles of the state, the populace appears to be naïve of these rights, a good example is Nigeria. Describing the situation in Nigeria, Ibe (2010) posits that

At the heart of the pervasive poverty and almost absolute disregard for the economic, social and cultural rights of citizens are ignorance and powerlessness. Public advocacy events directed at equipping the rural and urban poor with the requisite skills to interface with government and, more importantly, demand good governance, are crucial to sustaining Nigeria's fledgling democracy.

In many African countries citizens are naïve of their socio-economic rights. Therefore, they measure and applaud the success of each administration by the number of social amenities provided not seeing it as their fundamental human rights because the constitution has made them see it as mere objectives and principles of the state and not the necessary obligation of the state. It could be argued that the poor standard of education in Africa is a deliberate attempt of the government to keep the people in obscurity and denying them the chance of knowing the truth. The need for a sensitization program on socio-economic rights to enlighten the general populace cannot be overemphasized. As long as citizens continue to live in the dark about these rights the longer they would be denied the chances of enjoying them. The margin between the rich and poor in Africa is so wide because ordinary citizens are denied access to employment opportunities and sources of livelihood. But, this gap can be bridged if citizens get to know their socio-economic rights and these rights are justiciable in the court of law.

At the center of socio-economic rights is not only the fight for an egalitarian society but also the quest for the security of dignity of human person. The question of the respect of the dignity of human person still remains a mirage in many developing countries as the much needed social amenities and socio-economic policies to help better the lives of citizens are not on ground. The recognition and protection of civil and political rights are not enough to ensure the dignity of human person as it is just a stepping stone. As long as the socio-economic rights of citizens are not justiciable the possibility of harnessing their civil and political rights will be futile. The provision of healthcare facilities, education, food, security and housing is to enable individual citizen maximize their full potentials, live a comfortable life and attain the joy of their being. The preamble of the article of Universal Declaration of Human Rights aptly captures the essence of the entire human rights that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world". The implications of the justiciability and implementation of socio-economic rights as human rights are that they bring about true freedom, justice and peace.

It is imperative to state that at the center of every discussion on sustainable development is the need for the litigation of socio-economic rights and respect for the dignity of human person. The idea of sustainable development in itself is all encompassing but the thrust of the advocacy is basically the well being of the human person. In most publications on sustainable development the need for environmental protection and the intrinsic value of nature have been

overemphasized with less attention on the human person, this could be attributed to the present environmental degradation and climate change. Nevertheless, a critical evaluation of the debate reveals that at the end of the discourse is the goal to improve living condition of all human beings in the world.

Conclusion

The pursuit of the dignity of human person cannot be achieved by relying solely on civil and political rights because as fundamental as they are their full actualization depends on the obligations and responsibilities of the state. As seen in our discussion so far, the ethical principles enshrined in civil and political rights only express the limitations of the state power concerning the sanctity of the human life; that is, it explains what the government cannot do to interfere with citizens' dignity as humans. There are certain things which enable citizens enjoy the dignity of their person and these things are provided for in their socio-economic rights. Socio-economic rights express clearly the obligations and responsibilities of the government to citizens which enable them harness the dignity of their human person. Socio-economic rights are human rights in that the central aim is to secure human dignity.

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