



ASSESSMENT OF THE RESPECT OF THE RIGHT TO PRAY AND FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN RWANDA



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october, 2018

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ABSTRACT

The study was “Assessment of the Respect of the Right to Pray and Freedom of Religious Organizations in Rwanda.” The main challenge for the government of Rwanda was to cope with the issue of inadequate places of worship within various religious organizations and this questioned its efforts to guarantee the right of worship and freedom of religion. The study was carried under three objectives, namely identifying the existing nature the respect of the right to pray in Rwanda; examining the exercise of the freedom or religious organizations in Rwanda; investigating challenges experienced in the process of respecting the right to pray and guaranteeing the freedom of religious organization in Rwanda. The design of the study was a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted through both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The sample size of the population included 255 local leaders of religious organizations, 250 believers of religious organizations, 14 local government leaders and 6 representatives of the organizations of the civil society working on human rights issues. The findings indicate that the government of Rwanda has significantly contributed to the respect the right to pray and the freedom of religious organizations countrywide as has been confirmed by around 95% of sampled religious leaders and 97.6% of believers. The respect of the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations was claimed by all local authorities. Essentially, 87.3 of believers revealed that they freely chose their religion on their own. As regards, the recent operation of closing inadequate places of worship, the majority of respondents stated that they perceived this as a significant process since it stirred religious groups to meet all established requirements with respect to appropriate health and secure facilities. All local authorities and 70% of other respondents strongly criticized believers who exercise worship practices in risky places like wildernesses, caves and waterfalls. The sampled heads of civil society organizations suggested that the government should proceed to the capacity building of religious organizations since they greatly contribute to socio-economic development of the nation. Though the government has played a laudable role in upgrading the respect of the right to play and freedom of religion, there are still some believers who are wronged coupled with their beliefs. This the case of some students who are dismissed from school because they practise a different religion other than the one of their school, and some Jehovah’s Witnesses who lose their jobs on the ground of refusing to take oath while touching the national flag.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

The constitution of the Republic of Rwanda in article 37 provides the right to pray and freedom of religion and worship. This right and freedom is guaranteed by the new law N°72/2018 of 31/08/2018 determining the organization and functioning of faith-based organizations.

According to Rwanda Governance Board's report there were about ten religious organizations in 1962 in Rwanda. By 1994, there was an emergence of religious organizations, especially from the Protestant group. After the genocide perpetrated against Tutsi in 1994, the number of religious organizations has considerably increased exceeding one hundred. As has been confirmed by the Ministry of Local Administration the number of religious organizations increases every year. This fact indicates that the right to pray and the freedom of the religious organizations is respected.

Most of believers are members of Roman Catholic Church, followed by Protestants, 7th day Adventists and Muslims. According to the 2012 census, Rwandan population includes 44 percent of Roman Catholic Christians, 11.9 percent of Seventh-day Adventist members, 37.9 percent of Protestants, 2 percent of Muslims, and 0.7 percent of Jehovah's Witnesses. Several other small religious groups, together constitutes less than 1 percent of Rwandan population. Approximately 2.5 percent of the population has no religion. There is no significant correlation between religious affiliation and socio-economic status. According USA report which was published in 2016, the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations is respected in Rwanda as recommended by the constitution and laws.

1.2. The problem statement

The government of Rwanda has recently proceeded to the process of closing all inadequate places of worship. This operation led to various challenges pertaining to the impossibility to work for some religious groups. This issue has compelled some believers to travel for long distance to reach operating places of worship while others preferred staying at home. The number of believers who participated to religious activities (church services, devotions...) went down and this led to economic hardships on part of religious organizations (decrease of offerings tithes...) let alone the shrinkage of spiritual level of believers. This raised doubt about the government' contribution to the respect of the right to pray and freedom of religious groups in Rwanda. This problem stirred LIPRODHOR to conduct this investigation to find out how this operation was perceived by leaders of faith based-organizations and their believers and to know whether the right to worship and the freedom of religion are really guaranteed in Rwanda as provided by the article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which stipulates : "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." This right and freedom is also guaranteed by the article 37of the constitution of the Republic of Rwanda which provides that "Freedom of thought, conscience, religion, worship and public manifestation thereof is guaranteed by the State in accordance with the law."

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. Overall Objective

This study aimed at identifying, documenting and discussing the respect of the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations in Rwanda. It sought to critically explore the assumptions of local citizens with respect to the closure of inadequate religious buildings countrywide.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of this study were to:

- identify the current situation of the respect of the right to pray in Rwanda.
- find out whether the freedom of religion is guaranteed in Rwanda.
- investigate opportunities and challenges experienced in the process of exercising the right to pray and freedom of religion in Rwanda.

1.4. Scope of the Study

1.4.1. Geographical Scope

In terms of space, this study covered geographical area of 29 districts of Rwanda which are Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhango, Nyanza, Huye, Gisagara, Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe, Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Karongi, Rutsiro, Nyabihu, Rubavu, Bugesera, Rwamagana, Kayonza, Ngoma, Kirehe, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Rulindo, Gakenke, Gicumbi, Burera, Musanze. Realistically, all these districts have experienced challenges connected to the process of closing inadequate places of worship. This fact is behind the good reason for choosing them as a study area. The investigation in these districts has provided significant information to base on while determining the contribution of local government to improve the guarantee of the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations in Rwanda.

1.4.2. Theoretical and Temporal Scope

In terms of theoretical framework, this investigation was guided by evaluation theory defined by Rogers and Smith (2006) basically as either about proving something is working or needed or improving practice or a project. With respect to time, this investigation covered a period of 6 months, that is, from March 2018 (when the operation of closing inadequate places of worship started) up to August 2018.

1.5. Significance of the Study

There are good reasons for carrying out this study. Basically, the findings of this investigation will benefit, in one way or another, policy planners, local citizens (believers), local government, religious professionals, and the country at large. The findings of this study will benefit policy planners by showing the actual performance of the implementation of religious sector policy (Public-Private Partnership) and the underlying problems that are affecting the system implementation. Further, the research findings will help planners to understand society's assumptions towards the relevance of the policy regarding the respect of right to pray and freedom of religion. On top of that, the findings of this investigation will be useful for local believers by confirming the contribution of local government to the enhancement of the guarantee of the right to pray and freedom of religion.

In the same way, the findings will help local government by demonstrating its strength, weakness, opportunities and threats to implement human right programmes and identifying major problems that are currently impinging on the programme implementation progress. Hence, findings of this study will provide basis for new framework of monitoring for

optimizing management at local level. The results of the study will also be advantageous to religious professionals by identifying fundamental challenges which are alarming their profession.

1.6. Limitations

Even though the data collection process was successful, some problems were encountered during the research study. At the onset, most respondents complained of having no time to be interviewed. The reason was that they were busy in doing their official duties. The researcher handled this issue by being patient and accommodative until such respondents were available to answer the questions. Furthermore, the researcher faced the problem of information hoarding. This occurred because the respondents feared that the researcher may need the information for other private reasons. This was sorted out by explaining to the respondents that the purpose of the research was for public interests and that the information given would be treated only for this purpose.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In a bid to ensure the same understanding of the terms and concepts which have been used in the study report, it was vital to underscore what other researchers have written about the field of this study. It is in this respect that the bulk of this chapter is devoted on concepts, ideas, and opinions from authors/experts.

2.1. Legal framework on the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations

2.1.1. International standards on freedom of religion or belief

The primary sources of law underpinning the freedom of religion or belief are article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. The freedom of religion is also guided by the relevant articles of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It is also guided by relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations as well as relevant jurisprudence of the treaty bodies and provisions of international humanitarian law. It also takes into account relevant human rights instruments at the regional and national level.

2.1.2. Freedom to adopt, change or renounce a religion or belief

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in Article 18 provide that “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.” This right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is also provided by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right in Article 18 (1) and the 1981 Declaration A/RES/36/55 of the General Assembly Art. 1 (1).

The Human Rights Committee general comment 22, Para 3, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Art. 18 (2) and the 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly, art. 1 (2) state that "No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice."

The paragraph 5: The "Article 18.2 bars coercion that would impair the right to have or adopt a religion or belief, including the use of threat of physical force or penal sanctions to compel believers or non-believers to adhere to their religious beliefs and congregations, to recant their religion or belief or to convert. Policies or practices having the same intention or effect, such as, for example, those restricting access to education, medical care, employment or the rights guaranteed by article 25 and other provisions of the Covenant, are similarly inconsistent with article 18.2. The same protection is enjoyed by holders of all beliefs of a non-religious nature."

2.1.3. The right to manifest one's religion or belief

In the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18 (3): "Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others."

The 4th paragraph of Human Rights Committee of the 22nd general comment states that: "The freedom to manifest religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching encompasses a broad range of acts. The concept of worship extends to ritual and ceremonial acts giving direct expression to belief, as well as various practices integral to such acts, including the building of places of worship, the use of ritual formulae, and objects, the display of symbols, and the observance of holidays and days of rest. The observance and practice of religion or belief may include not only ceremonial acts but also such customs as the observance of dietary regulations, the wearing of distinctive clothing or head coverings, participation in rituals associated with certain stages of life, and the use of a particular language, customarily spoken by a group. In addition, the practice and teaching of religion or belief includes acts integral to the conduct by religious groups of their basic affairs, such as freedom to choose their religious leaders, priests and teachers, the freedom to establish seminaries or religious schools and the freedom to prepare and distribute religious texts or publications."

2.1.4. Freedom to worship

The 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly in article 6 (a): The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief includes the freedom, "To worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for these purposes".

2.1.5. Places of worship

The Human Rights Council resolution 6/37 9 (e) urges States, "To exert the utmost efforts, in accordance with their national legislation and in conformity with international human rights and humanitarian law, to ensure that religious places, sites, shrines and symbols are fully respected and protected and to take additional measures in cases where they are vulnerable to desecration or destruction;".

In paragraph 9 (g), the Human Rights Council urges States, "To ensure, in particular, the right of all persons to worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief and to establish and maintain places for these purposes and the right of all persons to write, issue and disseminate relevant publications in these areas " .

2.1.6. Religious symbols

The 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly provide in article 6 (c), the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief includes the freedom, "To make, acquire and use to an adequate extent the necessary articles and materials related to the rites or customs of a religion or belief".

Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/40 , 4 (b): urges States, "To exert the utmost efforts, in accordance with their national legislation and in conformity with international human rights law, to ensure that religious places, sites, shrines and religious expressions are fully respected.

2.1.7. Observance of holidays and days of rest

The 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly in article 6 (h): The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief includes the freedom, "To observe days of rest and to celebrate holidays and ceremonies in accordance with the precepts of one's religion or belief;"

The Human Rights Committee general comment 22, para . 4 clarify that "The concept of worship extends to [...] the observance of holidays and days of rest."

2.1.8. Appointing clergy

The 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly , in article 6 (g) define that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief includes the freedom, "To train, appoint, elect or designate by succession appropriate leaders called for by the requirements and standards of any religion or belief " .

This is completed by the Human Rights Committee general comment 22 , Para . 4 where it is clear that "the practice and teaching of religion or belief includes acts integral to the conduct

by religious groups of their basic affairs, such as the freedom to choose their religious leaders, priests and teachers [...]."

2.1.9. Teaching and disseminating materials including missionary activity

In the 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly, in article 6 (d) it is provided: The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief includes the freedom, "To write, issue and disseminate relevant publications in these areas;" The article 6 (e) stipulate that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief includes the freedom, "To teach a religion or belief in places suitable for these purposes."

The Human Rights resolution 2005/40 (paragraph 4 (d)) and Human Rights Council resolution 6/37 (paragraph 9 (g)) urge States, "To ensure, in particular, [...] the right of all persons to write, issue and disseminate relevant publications in these areas".

In addition, the practice and teaching of religion or belief includes acts integral to the conduct by religious groups of their basic affairs, [...] the freedom to establish seminaries or religious schools and the freedom to prepare and distribute religious texts or publications.

2.1.10. The right of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children

This is provided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child in article 14 (2) where " States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child."

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Article 13 (3) urges "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

This is confirmed by the 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly in article 5, where the parents or, as the case may be, the legal guardians of the child have the right to organize the life within the family in accordance with their religion or belief and bearing in mind the moral education in which they believe the child should be brought up.

Also, every child shall enjoy the right to have access to education in the matter of religion or belief in accordance with the wishes of his parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians,

and shall not be compelled to receive teaching on religion or belief against the wishes of his parents or legal guardians, the best interests of the child being the guiding principle.

2.1.11. Registration

The Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/40 (paragraphs 4 (c) and 4 (e)) and Human Rights Council resolution 6/37 (paragraphs 12 (e) and 12 (h)) urge States, "To review, whenever relevant, existing registration practices in order to ensure the right of all persons to manifest their religion or belief, alone or in community with others and in public or in private;" and to ensure that, in accordance with appropriate national legislation and in conformity with international human rights law, the freedom for all persons and members of groups to establish and maintain religious, charitable or humanitarian institutions is fully respected and protected."

2.1.12. Discrimination on the basis of religion or belief/inter-religious discrimination/tolerance

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 2 (1): " Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

The article 5 (1) clarify that "Nothing in the present Covenant may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms recognized herein or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for in the present Covenant."

In article 26: " All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

The article 27: " In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language."

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in article 5: "[...] States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its

forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights: [...] (d) Other civil rights, in particular: [...] (vii) The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion".

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in article 2 (2): " The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

The 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly in article 2 (1): "No one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on the grounds of religion or other belief."

Art. 3: "Discrimination between human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and shall be condemned as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and enunciated in detail in the International Covenants on Human Rights, and as an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations between nations."

Art. 4 (1): "All States shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life."

2.1.13. Defenders of freedom of religion or belief and non-governmental organizations

The commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/40 (paragraph 17) and General Assembly resolution 64/164 (paragraph 13) "welcome and encourage the continuing efforts of non-governmental organizations and bodies and groups based on religion or belief to promote the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, and further encourages their work in promoting freedom of religion or belief and in highlighting cases of religious intolerance, discrimination and persecution".

2.2. Regional instruments

The Article 8 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights provide that "Freedom of conscience, the profession and free practice of religion shall be guaranteed. No one may, subject to law and order, be submitted to measures restricting the exercise of these freedoms".

2.3. National laws and regulations

- **Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015**

Freedom to adopt, change or renounce a religion or belief, Freedom from coercion and Freedom to worship is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015. The Article 37, paragraph 1 stipulates that freedom of thought, conscience, religion, worship and public manifestation thereof is guaranteed by the State in accordance with the law.

- **Law N°68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general**

Obstruction of smooth running of religious rituals is punishable by the penal code. Any person who publicly defames religious rituals, symbols and religious cult objects by use of actions, words, signs, writings, gestures or threats, whether carried out at the place where rituals are intended to be performed or where they are normally performed, commits an offence.

Upon conviction, he/she is liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than fifteen (15) days but less than three (3) months and a fine of not less than one hundred thousand Rwandan francs (FRW 100,000) and not more than two hundred thousand Rwandan francs (FRW 2,000,000) or only one of the penalties.

- **Law n°72/2018 of 31/08/2018 determining the organization and functioning of faith-based organizations**

Article 7: An organization, an umbrella, a forum of umbrellas or a ministry that intends to start activities must first apply for and obtain legal personality. The Board is the in charge of issuing legal personality to and monitoring the functioning of an organization, an umbrella, a forum of umbrellas or a ministry.

Article 11: An organization, umbrella, forum of umbrellas or ministry is free to determine the criteria for membership in respect with its own doctrine and practices.

However, an organization, an umbrella, a forum of umbrellas or a ministry must not use coercive or fraudulent means to recruit followers or members and followers and members have the right to exit from them.

Article 17: An organization applying for legal personality must address to the Board an application letter accompanied by the following:

10° a document indicating the building that meets the requirements of the building code of the area of operation;

Article 23: Religious sermon is delivered in designated facilities that meet the requirements of the law. If an organization intends to organize a special public gathering, it seeks authorization from the competent authority.

- **Law n°56/2016 of 16/12/2016 establishing the Rwanda Governance Board and determining its mission, organization and functioning**

Article 5 (10°) RGB has the following mission: “to register, grant legal personality to local non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations and to monitor whether their operations comply with the law”

- **Law N°10/2012 of 02/05/2012 governing urban planning and building in Rwanda**

The Article 25 says that any building intended for public use shall be done in accordance with the rules enacted by an Order of the Minister in charge of urban planning and building.

Article 21: An Order of the Minister in charge of urban planning and building shall determine the modalities to put in all building openings for natural lighting and ventilation

Article 26: All buildings intended for public use shall be equipped with facilities enabling the use of technology.

An Order of the Minister in charge of technology shall determine the list and the use of facilities provided under Paragraph One of this Article.

Article 27:

Buildings intended for public use shall be built in accordance with hygiene and sanitation rules enacted by an Order of the Minister in charge of urban planning and building.

Article 28:

Buildings intended for public use shall be built in a manner that allows access and use by persons with disability.

Article 50:

The Government, local administrative entities with legal personality as well as public and private institutions shall be strictly bound to comply with the approved local land development plan.

Article 71:

An Order of the Minister in charge of urban planning and building shall determine instructions on the categorization of buildings.

Article 83: Constructions requiring building permit

A building permit shall be required for all buildings except for the following:

- 1 ° temporary buildings which may be removed at any time without compensation;
- 2 ° specific buildings designed for national defense.

Article 87: Occupancy permit

When a building is completed, the owner shall not occupy it prior to obtaining an occupancy permit from the competent authority.

Article 88: Building exempted from occupancy permit requirements

The buildings referred to in Article 83 of this Law shall be exempt from the requirement of an occupancy permit.

- **Ministerial Order N° 04/Cab.M/015 of 18/05/2015 Determining Urban Planning and Building Regulations**

The article 16 of this Ministerial order provide the the following minimum building principles must be ensured in the design, engineering and construction of a building as detailed in the

Building Code:

- 1° structural stability, strength and durability;
- 2° functional requirements;
- 3° safety and disaster risk mitigation;
- 4 ° environmental soundness;
- 5° accessibility;
- 6° efficient and effective use of resources;
- 7° energy efficiency and use of renewable energies;
- 8° rain and surface water harvesting;
- 9° natural lighting and ventilation;
- 10° hygiene and sanitation;
- 11° ensuring durability through maintenance

- **The Urban Planning Code: Annex 1 of the Ministerial Order N° 04/Cab.M/015 of 18/05/2015 Determining Urban Planning and Building Regulations**

The urban Land Use Planning provide that an adherent of any religious organization may not exceed at least the maximum distance of 5 kilometers to reach the place of worship. The use Plot development requirements/Plot area recommendation is 0.5 ha

These shall include any building or part of a building, where number of persons not less than 50 congregate. Rain water shall be harvested wherever possible from roofs or ground surfaces

to reduce the use of potable water for other purposes than human consumption. It shall be used to the best feasible extent in irrigation, toilets, and showers or for washing, to reduce the used amount of treated water where possible.

The Rwanda Building Code determining that the place of worship shall have a parking, health facilities, soundproof system. The exit doors shall be readily openable from the egress side without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort and emergency lighting shall be provided. Day lighting shall be used at the optimum level, and the buildings shall be designed and constructed to promote natural lighting. Noise should be taken into account when determining building applications and, where appropriate, conditions requiring adequate noise protection should be imposed where external free field noise levels are in. The construction materials for water closets which use water flushing shall be suitable and adequate for sanitation and shall be partitioned with wall and a door enclosing to ensure privacy.

CHAPTER THREE : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter sheds light on methods and techniques used while gathering, presenting, analyzing, and interpreting data. It contains such sections as research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, instruments for data collection, procedure for data collection, and analysis.

3.1. Research Design

The respect of the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations has not been assessed arbitrarily. It required an application of a particular research design. Descriptive survey has been proven useful to investigate the issue while sticking to qualitative and quantitative research methods. Descriptive survey research design was used because it enabled the researcher to describe the attitude of local believers toward the contribution of local government in promoting the respect of the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations. Quantitative approach was used when dealing with charts, presentation of data analysis and frequencies as well as calculation of percentages. Further, through statistical data, this research approach offered explanation, estimation, prediction, and control of level local government's attempts as with the improvement human rights respect. The reason behind the choice of qualitative method is connected to its flexibility – that is, it allowed greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participants. Qualitative research facilitated the researcher to provide complex textual descriptions of how local believers have experienced the impact of local government's interventions to enhance the guarantee of human rights in their communities. It has been used along with quantitative method, as it helped the researcher interpret and better understand the complex reality of situations involved in this investigation and the implications of quantitative data.

3.2. Research Population

The term "Population" refers to the total human inhabitants of a specified area, such as a city, country, or continent, at a given time (Encarta Encyclopedia, 2009). In research realms, population is the complete collection of all the elements that are of interest in a particular investigation. A target population is the population to which the researcher ultimately wants to generalize the results. Hence, the target population of this study included 6 district authorities, 6 water financial staff members, 30 members of district council, 6 water technical

staff members, and 2400 households. Obviously, it may be very expensive to collect data from each and every person targeted by this study. For that reason, a sample was selected.

3.3. Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting elements from a population in a such way that the sample elements selected represent the population (Amin, 2005). Different authors have argued about what should be the ideal sample size. In this regard, Krejcie (1970) in Uwizeye (2006) asserted that it was the circumstances of the study situation that determines what number or what percentage of the population should be studied but yet the bigger the sample from the population the better. Accordingly, in order to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of local government's contribution to the promotion of the respect of the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations 495 out of the target population of 1446, that is , 6 heads of civil society organizations, 14 district officers in charge of good governance, 250 believers, and 225 leaders of religious organizations. The sample size was determined by using Yamane's formula as illustrated in the table below.

Categories	Target Population	Sample size	Explanation
Believers	750	250	Lay believers from selected religious groups
250 leaders of religious organizations	676	225	Leaders of churches (pastors, bishops, apostles, elders of the church, abets,...), heads of evangelical ministries, leaders of religious communities...
District authorities	14	14	Every local district officer in charge of good governance
Heads of CSOs	6	6	Each from human right- based organizations.
Total	1446	495	Statistically determined by Yamane's formula

Table 1: Population and sample size

To calculate the sample size in question, Yamane (1967:886)'s Simplified Formula for Proportions has been applied with 95% confidence level and $P = .5$

The formula is where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision. The sample size for 750 believers within religious organizations is calculated as follows:

= The same equation has been applied for other categories of population size.

3.4. Sampling Techniques

The use of random sampling was applied to select 28 religious organizations which constituted the sampled population from religious groups. To ensure that people from all the social strata and income levels and groups are adequately and equally represented in the study, the purposive sampling method was employed to select respondents especially those from religious organizations.

3.5. Research Instruments

The study involved a sequence of methodological steps. It included literature review, visits to research sites, observation, and interview. The interview was administered with the use of taped interview guide. It was a directed interaction between the researcher and the respondent. This means that the researcher used both structured and unstructured interview to get additional information from various categories of respondents. Researchers themselves conducted the interview. Interviewing provided both closed and open-ended responses which were analyzed by the researchers according to the views of respondents.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

In order to sensitize the target population about the purpose of the research and to make an appointment on when to administer the interview to the respondents, a visit was done to the area of study. Thereafter, the primary data were collected with the use of interview administered to all sampled study population. Secondary data were gathered from libraries, district good governance offices, ministry of justice and internet.

3.7. Data Analysis and Processing

During data processing, relevant data to the objectives of the study were considered and transformed into meaning information for easy interpretation and understanding. This was done through charts. According to Bailey (1978) not all data can be presented in the entirety. The variables to be presented are those most central to the goals of study; generally, variables included specifically in the research questions. The content of charts are usually percentages, frequencies, or some summary statistical measures. Charts were used to present the findings from questions and observation. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using Microsoft Office Excel program to generate charts and frequency tables.

3.8. Ethical Consideration

In research realms, ethics would refer the application of moral rules and professional codes of conduct to the collection, analysis, reporting, and publication of information about research subjects, in particular active acceptance of subjects' right to privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent (Smith, 2003). In this respect, when carrying this study, the researcher strived to meet ethical responsibilities while abiding by some principles such as voluntary participation, informed consent and confidentiality.

Informed consent: Informed consent is a process by which a person voluntarily confirms his or her willingness to participate in a particular trial after having been informed of all aspects that are relevant to his or her decision to participate. In attempt to respect this principle, the researcher tried to respect each participant as a person capable of making an informed decision regarding participation in the research process. They explained the nature, significance, and implications of the study to participants who were capable (mentally healthy) of giving consent. The participants were given a chance to carefully consider the risks and benefits of the study with extended opportunity to ask any pertinent questions. The researcher resorted to oral consent for participants who were illiterate.

Confidentiality: Within the context of research ethics, observing the principle of confidentiality means keeping information given by or about an individual in the course of a research relationship secure and secret from others (Smith, 2003). This confidentiality is seen as central to the maintenance of trust between research participants and the researcher. In this respect, the researcher assured the participants that the information they have given will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. Actually, the principles of anonymity were respected.

Voluntary participation: Researchers involved in the research individuals who quite accepted to participate. He did not use any coercive power to force people in participating in research activity. Realistically, the researcher strived to handle respondents as wisely as possible to participate in the interview exercise. The researchers associated with the respondents in order to induce a good cooperation which led to accurate, reliable and successful information.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

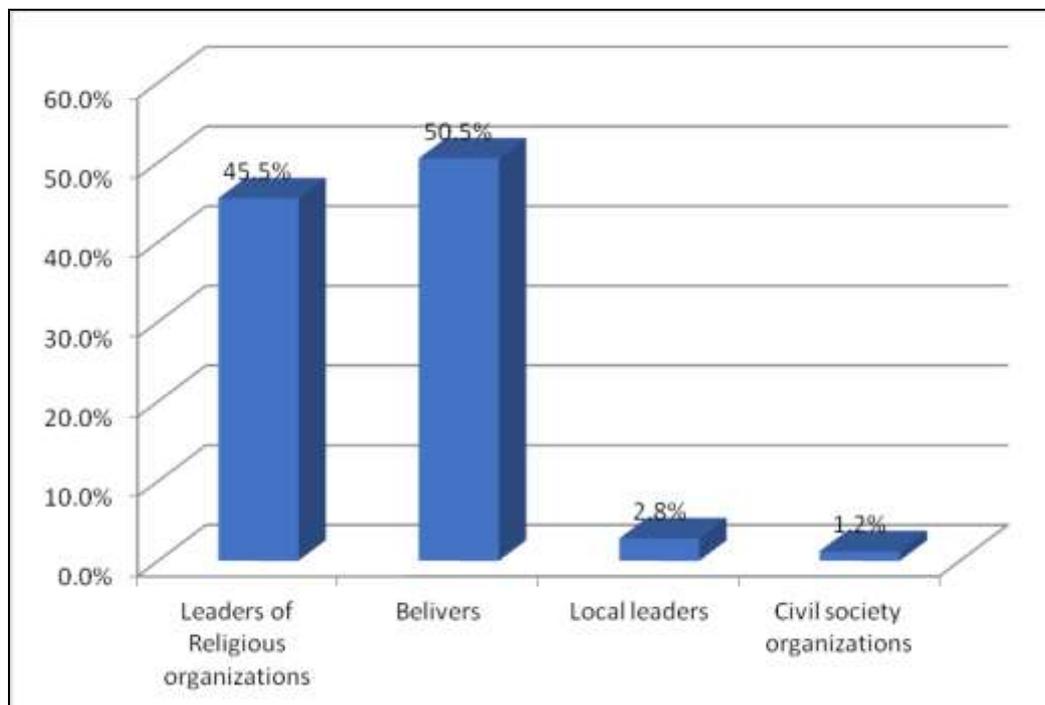
In this chapter, data for the study were analyzed, presented and interpreted based on the research objectives that guided the study. Charts, textual modes were used to present the data collected by means of interview guide. Every chart presented is analyzed and interpreted.

3.1. Identification of the Respondents

The sample of the research is 495 identified on the chart as follows:

Figure 1

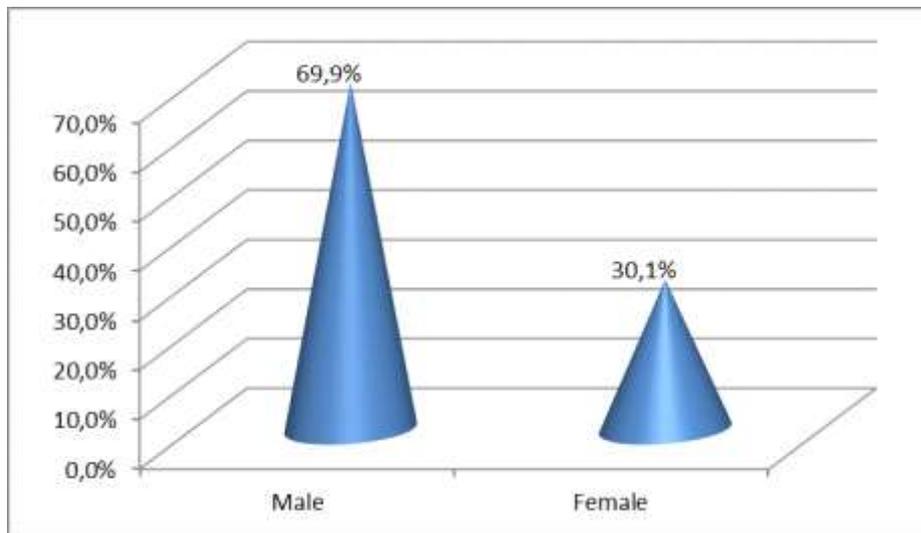
Figure 1 : Percentage of interviewees and their categories



As indicated on the charts above presented, the total number of leaders of religious organizations is 225 (45.5%), believers are 250(50.5%), government local leaders having religious organization in their attributions are 14(2.8%) and 6 representatives of the organizations of the civil society (1.2%).

The number of sampled women is 149(30.1%) while men are 345(69.9%) as recorded on the following chart:

Figur 2: Identification of respondents by sex

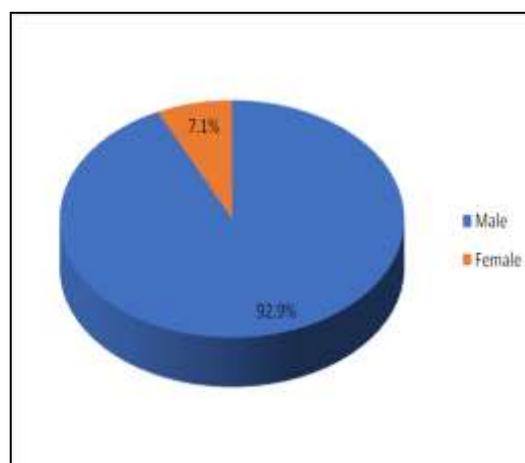


3.2. Perceptions of religious leaders on the respect of the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations in Rwanda

3.2.1. Gender equality in religious leadership

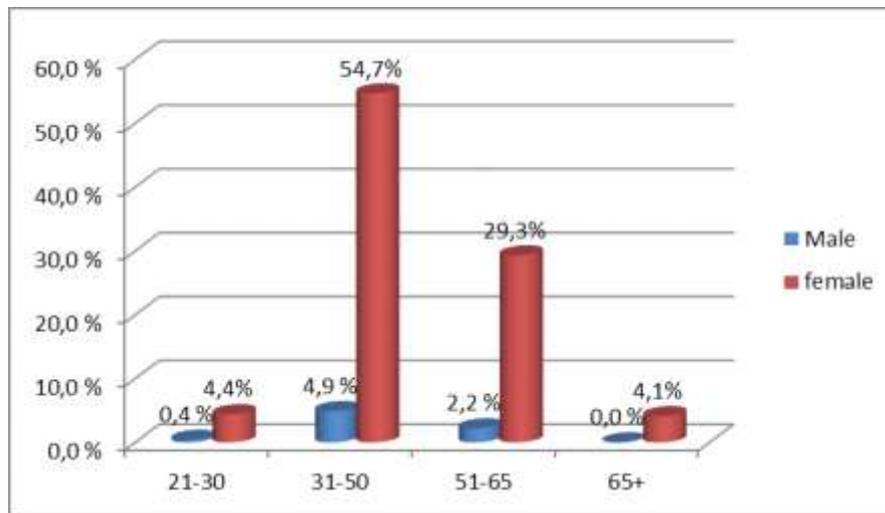
This research has revealed that the number of women leading religious organizations at district level is very limited, that is 7.1% while the portion of male leaders is rated at 92.9 % as indicated on the diagram:

Figure 3: Gender equality in religious leadership



Concerning the age of religious leaders at district level, the research has shown that most of leaders of religious organizations are aged between 31 and 65. The number of religious leaders under the age of 30 is very limited as recorded on the chart:

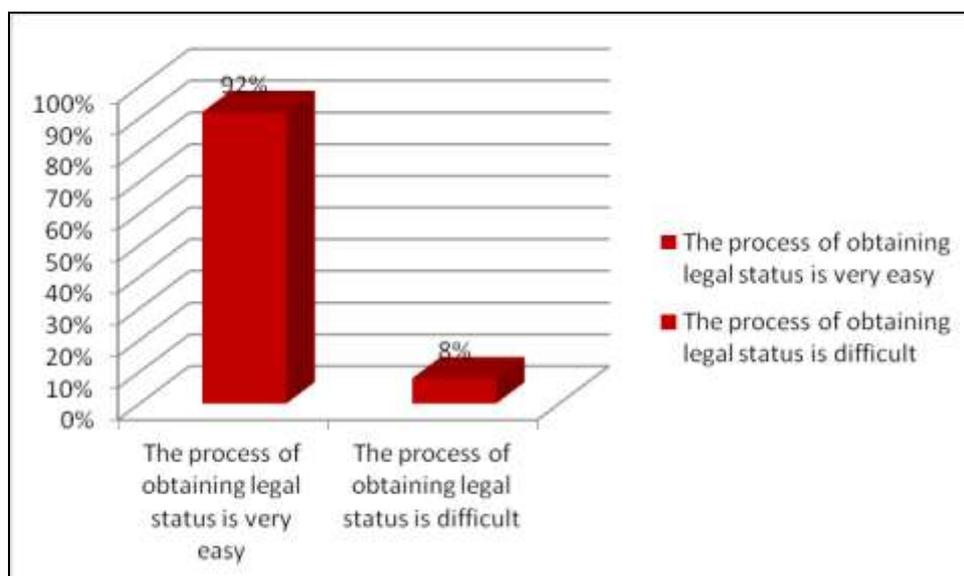
Figure 4: Age of religious leaders at district level



3.2.2. The process of obtaining legal status

All religious organizations that participated in this research have got legal status. 92% of church's leaders who were interviewed disclosed that the process of gaining legal status is very easy, whereas 18% of them confirmed that the process is hard and takes long time.

Figure 5: Perceptions of religious leaders on the process of obtaining legal status



Leaders of religious organizations who claimed that process of obtaining legal status is complicated suggested that RGB should set a time limit for giving feedback to applicants. They also suggested that the application requirements in rural area should differ from ones set for religious organization operating in towns.

3.2.3. Perceptions of religious leaders on the closure of inadequate places of worship/religious buildings (churches, mosques, temples)

On the one hand, a few sampled religious leaders (92.1%) perceived the closure of inadequate places of worship as a significant event since it stirred them to take action, that is, speeding up the completion of pending construction activities and other activities related to adequate sanitation, hygiene and security of believers. This was a golden opportunity to find quick solutions to problems they had been experiencing for long time. Some others hailed the closure as important issue since it has contributed to the reduction of noticeable disorder with respect to the operating of religious organization. This was the time for the government to remind these organizations to properly assume their duties and responsibilities as regards the improvement of their working habits and management.

The study findings have indicated as well that most of sampled religious organizations, especially the old ones, have experienced a lot the closure of inadequate religious buildings. This was not so for the new ones which have not yet expanded their activities countrywide. In districts where data were collected, the Seventh day Adventist Church was the first victim of such closure. The Pentecostal Church of Rwanda ADEPR was as well scourged by this operation. For instance, in Karongi District, 163 churches of the Seventh day Adventist Church were closed while 130 churches of the Pentecostal Church of Rwanda ADEPR stopped operating.

Some places of worship whose religious organizations managed to meet established requirements had reopened when this research was underway. As for those which were still closed, their owners were confident that they would reopen in the near future within a period of time between one month and two years.

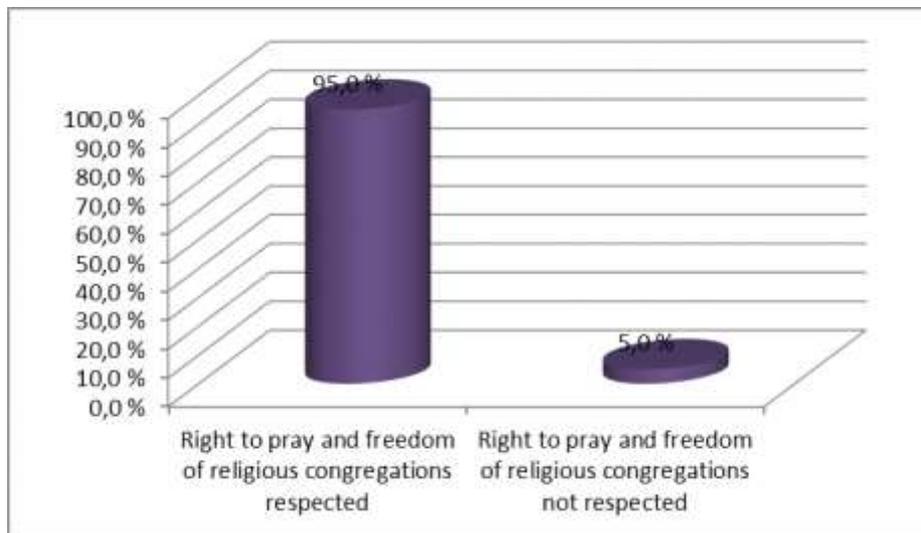
On the other hand, the closure of places of worship surprised some of religious leaders (7.9%) and troubled them. It was very hard for them to understand this issue. They disclosed that this was a needed action though it came up against their activities. Some church's leaders asserted that the closure has compelled their believers to walk for a long distance to reach places of worship that were not closed while others preferred staying at home. This has led to economic hardships on part of some religious groups (decrease of offerings, tithes, and other financial contributions) and the shrinkage of spiritual levels. They censured local authorities for the lack of dialogue with them before the closure.

3.2.4. Respect of the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations

Interviewed religious leaders provided different views on the current situation of respect of right to pray and freedom of religious organizations. 95% of them confirmed that this right

and freedom are fully guaranteed while the remaining portion (5%) perceived this otherwise. The diagram below shows the rate of their reactions:

Figure6: Current situation of respect of right to pray and freedom of religious organizations.



The portion of 5% said that the respect of this right and freedom is not sufficiently guaranteed for the following reasons:

- Prohibition of nocturnal devotions /services;
- Students in some religious-based secondary schools are bound to follow the religion of their school otherwise they are dismissed from school;
- Some believers are deeply wronged due to their beliefs: to clarify this issue, the Representative of Jehovah's Witnesses organization revealed that 43 of his believers were sacked because they denied taking an oath while touching the national flag since this is against their doctrine. The same leader stated that , 1110 families of within this organization suffered mistreatment when it came to get. They declared to take an oath with the holly Bible in their hands instead of touching the national flag while dealing with their civil marriage. They have been denied such alternative and their civil marriage was suspended.

After legal analysis, LIPRODHOR found out that the Rwandan law provides that government officials take an oath while touching the national flag. This is too with civil marriage process. Thus, this should not be considered as a breach of freedom of religion and belief. However, the Government should find an significant alternative to this issue.

3.2.5. Suggestions for improved collaboration between the State and religious organizations

For harmonious collaboration, some leaders of religious organizations(75%) suggested that the government should facilitate them to relocate their places of worship from housing estates to distant secure places. They also suggested that, in case of possible future closing of inadequate places of worship, they should be informed and consulted beforehand. According to them, the criteria for closing inadequate places of worship in towns should differ from those implemented in rural areas. Actually, religious organizations located in towns and those operating in rural areas do not have the same financial means.

The leaders proposed as well that religious organizations that meet working requirements at the rate of 70% should be granted a provisional permission to operate with specific time limit to meet remaining requirements. They have also proposed that representatives of religious organization should be educated. Lastly, religious leaders suggested that all religious organizations should cooperate and carry out their activities in harmony and in partnership with the government so as to avoid further inconveniences.

3.3. Perceptions of believers of religious organizations

This investigation revealed various views of members of religious organizations with respect to some items such as the right to choose religion or belief, freedom to pray outdoors(in wildernesses , caves, waterfalls, etc. The views were provided by 250 sampled believers with 126 males and 124 females from 28 religious organizations (their leaders excluded).

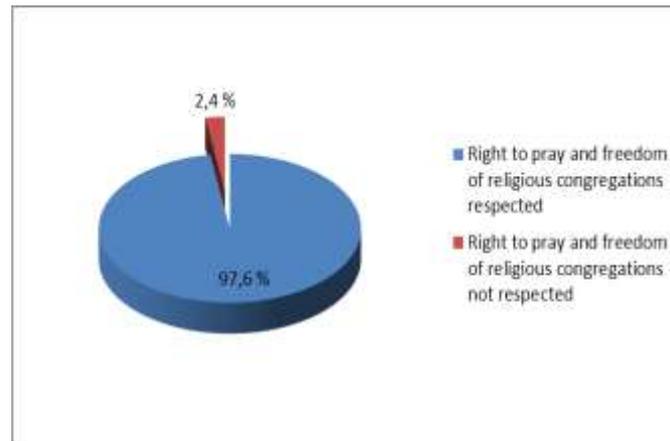
3.3.1. The right to freely choose religion/belief

With regard to the freedom of choosing religion, 31 persons (12.4 %) said that they became believers of specific religious groups under external influence. Some of them followed the choice of their parents while others joined religious organization of their spouses or friends. Another portion of 219 believers (87.6%) said that they chose their religious organizations on their own. The findings of this research revealed that the ancient religious organizations have become like cultural practices where children follow their parents' options without any objection. It is the case of Roman Catholic church, the 7th Day Adventists' church, the Rwanda Muslim Community, the Anglican Church in Rwanda, to name but a few. However, it should be noted that when the children have become mature, they may join other religious organizations of their choice.

3.3.2. Freedom to pray/ worship

The majority of respondents stated that the right to pray is respected in Rwanda.

Figure 7: Perception of believers on the respect of right to pray and freedom of religious organizations



As shown on the diagram, 97.6% of study participants confirmed that the Republic of Rwanda respects the right to pray and the freedom of religion or belief. Only 6 believers (2.4%) provided a different view. This means that they don't feel free while praying. This portion of believers disclosed that the government of Rwanda is against their worship practices and praying ways. Realistically, the worship practices which are prohibited by the government include those which breach public order and security, especially in surroundings of worship buildings. Such practices include noisy behaviors (excessive violent sounds) in the night which bother some nearby household's members who may be sleeping, the use of big loudspeakers, praying in unsecured place deprived of health facilities, parking... A few believers complained that the government uses excessive forces to handle this issue. However, there is another portion of believers who appreciated what the Government is doing to avoid any inconveniences and respect the rights of its population.

3.3.3. Praying in outside places (wildernesses, caves and waterfalls)

The sampled people provided different views as for praying in outside areas. On the one hand, 30% of interviewed believers appreciated wilderness place and consider it as a conducive place to talk to God. They imitate the Lord Jesus-Christ since himself used to worship God in wilderness. "Praying in wilderness is good but it should be better to do it in secured places, well prepared and known by authorities," disclosed one interviewed believer. Another believer said, "It is the right to pray wherever, whenever and the way the way you want".

On the other hand, praying in outside areas sounds wrong and very risky for 70% of sampled believers. According to them, the wilderness can be any place where a believer can go on retreat. It is not necessary to get into remote areas to worship God. They argued that God can hear you wherever you may pray. They also criticized the practice of praying in outside

places as it is illegal and can result in delinquency, impurity, and other immoral acts. One believer said “I don’t appreciate the practice of worshiping God in wilderness because it is a wrong behavior. Those who pretend praying in wilderness breach the public order and security. They practice their religion with ignorance and stupidity. The government should watch over them.”

3.3.4. Suggested strategies for respecting the freedom of religion

Various members of religious organizations provided different suggestions which competent authorities should consider in order to continue guaranteeing the freedom of religion and belief in Rwanda. In general, they acknowledged that the right to pray and the freedom of religion and belief are fully respected for all people in Rwanda. Nevertheless, the recent operation of closing inadequate worship buildings led to different attitudes and emotions. It troubled some and pushed others to seek improvement.

Coupled with this event, some believers (8.3%)who were affected displayed strong emotions. Here are some suggestions they came up with:

- Being informed about what is going on prior to any decision so as to take coping measures;
- Religious organizations/Ministries with worship buildings located in housing estates should be relocated to secured distant places;
- It has been noticed that some religious leaders embezzle assets(offerings, tithes...) of their organizations. So, there is a need of advocacy for the sake of believers of such organizations;
- The States’ authorities should ease the requirements for reopening closed places of worship because many believers have to travel for long distance to reach worship buildings that have not been closed yet.
- Financial contributions asked to believers by religious leaders are higher: the government authorities should intervene and set a limit of such contributions;
- Religious- based schools should guarantee the freedom of religion or belief to their students because it has been noticed that some of such schools dismiss students with a different religion or belief;
- To set new requirements and process of setting up new religious organizations because the usual procedure has become a routine way of favoring private business of founder of religious group.

- Congregations that speak ill of adversarial religions/beliefs should be avoided;
- The unity of all Christians which is not yet gained but still desired should be encouraged;
- The government authorities should bear in mind that religious buildings located in rural areas differ from those located in towns when it comes to make decisions regarding religious matters;
- Worship practices in places other than those authorized (churches, mosques) must be discouraged because they are risky.

3.4. Perceptions of local authorities on the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations

In this investigation, researchers strived to interview district officers in charge of good governance who have the management of religious organizations in their attributions.

Unfortunately, data were collected only in 14 districts out of 29 that researchers could reach. There are various reasons behind the impossibility of collecting data in these districts. In fact, certain district officers were not available while this research was in process. Other district officers required prior presentation of authorization of the National Institute of Statistics to conduct this research and that of the Rwanda Governance Board. Others complained that the research was communicated to the district administration before it was started.

4.4.1. Process of obtaining legal status

In this research, a question was asked to know whether the process of applying for legal documents and getting them to set up a religious organization is easy or not. All Sampled district officers in charge of good governance stated that there is no hindrance to obtain such legal documents because they are granted to any applicants who meet related requirements. They also said that the Government of Rwanda facilitates and advises any applicant who does not meet the requirement on the way to meet them. In addition, all interviewed districts officers confirmed that the law, the government of Rwanda and its institutions guarantee the freedom of religion and belief in the country.

4.4.2. Partnership between government and religious organizations

Local authorities appreciated a great role played by religious organizations in the implementation of government policies in different domains. They confirmed that religious organizations strive to encourage their believers to stop committing crimes, change their

mindsets and display acceptable behaviors, which contributes to peace building, security and development of the country at large.

4.4.3. Religious organizations' practices and beliefs hindering the implementation of government policies

In this research, the district officers in charge of governance were asked whether there are any cases of religious organizations that deter the implementation of government policies. They said that some of them impinge on them due to their beliefs or doctrines.

For instance, some believers of religious organizations worship in unauthorized and unsecured places such as forests, caves and proceed to nocturnal devotions and this breaches peace and security. Local authorities also pointed out that some religious organizations overlook family planning policy basing on Biblical verse saying that “God said to male and female to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth like the sand on the sea.”

They also criticized some believers who do not contribute to health insurance schemes arguing that only God will care for them. The district officials censured some religious groups that urge their believers to fast for long periods of time and consequently do not work and after that they ask them to give offerings, tithes, and other financial contributions.

4.4.4. Issues that should be addressed for a better collaboration

During this research, the district officers in charge of good governance suggested that religious organizations should keep up their partnership with local authorities in sensitizing the population to stick to government policies, maintain security and public order while avoiding worship practices in unsecured and unauthorized places. Another suggestion is that the Rwanda Governance Board should help districts to harmonize tools of management of religious organizations and convey them to all administrative entities especially sectors and cells. The last suggestion is that religious organizations should stop organizing worship services or/ and fasting periods in working hours while preventing their members from doing their activities of development.

4.5. Perceptions of civil society organizations on the right to worship and the freedom of religion in Rwanda

4.5.1. Necessity of freedom of religious organizations

Data related to the necessity of the freedom of religious organizations were collected from members of 6 civil society organizations that are committed to the protection and promotion of human rights. Views that were provided have been summarized as follows:

- Religious organizations play a great role in the prevention and reduction of crimes;
- The closure of inadequate religious buildings was speeded up without taking into account its impact on religious organization's life like impossibility to function for long period of time. Another issue is that the Government was so silent during that time.
- Religious organizations are able to easily gather crowd of people at the same time and influence easily;
- The State should contribute to capacity building of religious organizations because help people feel more comfortable and free while contributing to socio-economic development of the nation.

Civil society organizations committed to the protection and promotion of human rights maintained that it should have been better if decision-makers had proceeded to prior dialogue with leaders of religious organizations before taking any decision engaging them. Some members of religious organizations no longer listen to their preachers in accepted worship places and prefer worshipping God in unsecured areas. The civil society organizations expressed their worries about the increasing emergence of delinquents among them. Civil society organizations have also mentioned that some governmental institutions delay to communicate policies to the population. This leads to poor implementation and performances.

Civil society organizations committed to the protection and promotion of human rights also claimed that the right to freedom of religion or belief is fully guaranteed. They expressed their opinions as follows: "Those who deny the existence of freedom of religion or belief in Rwanda mislead people because a true believer cannot be deterred from worshipping ." Additionally, it is clear that those who deny the respect of freedom of religion are those whose main target is to profit from offerings and any other financial contributions provided by their believers instead of helping them to improve their social living conditions. This may spoil the functioning of religious organizations while opposing the State's vision.

4.5.2. Suggestions from Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations should do a regular follow up of religious organizations' activities especially those regarding social life of their members. Every religious organization should design and present a plan for improving social life of its followers or the population in general (health and educational infrastructures or other of development activities).

Civil society organizations suggested that there should be a channel for communicating State's laws and regulations to religious organizations for there are some regulations that do

not reach them. Religious organizations which do not completely comply with State's policies must be particularly approached in order to help their believers to participate to civic education and development activities like other citizens.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research revealed that the right to pray and the freedom of religious organizations are respected in Rwanda. This was confirmed by leaders of religious organizations, believers, local leaders and members of the civil society organizations who stated that the legal and institutional framework facilitate the respect of freedom of worship in Rwanda.

In addition, the process of closing inadequate religious buildings that was conducted in March 2018 was appreciated. However, the study participants said that the operation surprised them and led to problems. Having seen the significance of this process, they felt the need to improve sanitation and hygienic conditions of places of worship. LIPRODHOR considers that it would have been necessary to go through the consultation process of both parties and proceed to the closure of inadequate religious buildings thereafter.

After analyzing the legal framework governing the right to pray and the freedom of religious organizations in Rwanda, LIPRODHOR found out that the control of compliance with the law was late. This organization found that leaders of the religious organizations do not know laws guaranteeing the right to pray and the freedom of religion and more particularly the laws governing Rwanda.

This research has revealed that the participation of women in leadership of religious organizations is still low and suggests conducting a comprehensive research that can provide a picture of their low participation in leadership while they include a bigger portion of believers. Another further research should be carried out as for the opinions of believers on the contribution of offerings and their use.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Proceeding to consultation between local authorities and leaders of religious organization before taking decisions concerning them;
- The Rwanda Governance Board should plan a strengthening capacity building of leaders of religious organizations on laws and regulations;
- The Rwanda Governance Board should convey clarified regulations on control of religious organizations to all district, sectors and cells;
- The religious organizations whose places of worship are located in housing estate should plan for their relocation to other places according to housing laws and regulations;
- It should be wise to remind and give instructions to schools supported by religious organizations to respect the right to pray and protecting the freedom of worship for students who have different religion/belief other than the one practiced in such schools;
- Leaders of religious organizations should preach tolerance and avoid public opinions or other matters relating to social or faith related matters that can breach the right to pray and freedom of religious organizations;
- Encourage religious organizations to keep up their partnership with the government institutions as for mobilization and awareness-raising of citizens on national development strategies, laws and regulations.

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