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CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The following chapter is intended towards presenting the literature review of the study which takes into consideration different theories and concepts associated with the role and performance of the African Union. The literature review will be discussing the history and establishment of the African Union along with the principles establishing the African Union. In addition, the theories and concepts are highlighted in the light of past studies which are carried out by economists and authors with respect to the role and performance of the African Union. The chapter concludes with the confab on the challenges faced by the African Union and their responses.

2.2. Historical Background of African Union

The African Union (AU) was established in the year 2001 where its predecessor was known as Organisation for African Unity (OAU) that was established in the year 1963 (Tchamyou, 2016). The advent of the African Union (AU) can be explained as the event for the great magnitude within the institutional evolution of the continent. In the period of struggle for the independence to get freedom from the colonial rule, the African leaders commenced observing cooperation at the continent levels which were inclined towards major element in the achievement of success. Moreover, the leaders also discussed the continental development within the opposition to the fragmentary development of the particular regions of Africa (Bengtsson and Elgström, 2012). Furthermore, the observations and perceptions of the African leaders were incorporated in the national struggle and helped them in determining their idea for independence.

According to Chirisa, Mumba, and Dirwai (2014), the Pan-African Congress which took place in the year 1945 at Manchester had brought the leaders from the diaspora and the African Nationalist Leaders together. The Congress had clearly articulated the impression regarding the African vision for the achievement of independence from the colonial rule within the entire Africa what will enable the African leaders and people to rule the country while promoting the continental unity. In this essence, the background of the Organisation of Unity (OAU) come into reality in the year 1963 in Ethiopia with the association of 32 other African countries.

The charter, however, changed in order to meet the challenges associated with the constantly changing world and the realisation for the greater effectiveness and efficiency for the Organisation required for the course of action (Tchamyou, 2016). After that, a Summit was held in Algiers in the year 1999 for addressing the issues associated with the theme of the summit that was intended towards strengthening OAU capacity for enabling the organisation to meet the challenges of the new millennium. However, the transition of OAU to AU was completed during the period of 37th Ordinary Summit of the OAU which was held in Zambia in the year 2001 when the organisation formation was announced along with the plan regarding the execution was adopted.

2.3. The Achievements of AU

The African Union Constitutive Act was recognised in the year 2001, where the official launch of the African Union took place in 2002 in South Africa. Moreover, the principle of the act which corresponds to the UN charter and the legal basis for the formation of the AU is subjected towards the objectives and purpose of the article 52 of the UN charter (Bengtsson and Elgström, 2012). In another context, it facilitates with the codified framework which assists the

AU in implementing itself. In addition, it explains the core objectives for the AU, such as the protection of people rights, promotion of security and stability, and the respect for the democratic objectives and principles.

In addition, the structure of the AU is reliant on the nature of the organisation aspects as each aspect has a different source, control, voting process and the scope of operations. The main objective of AU is focused towards the independence of African states, territorial integrity, and the defence of the sovereignty along with the supporting of the liberation movement (Murithi, 2012). This will assist in the eradication of different forms of colonialism originated in Africa. The objectives are stated in the Article II for the UN Charter which is as follows,

- To promote the solidarity and unity of the African states

- To coordinate and enhance the efforts and cooperation for achieving the better life for the people living in Africa.

- To defend the independence, their territorial integrity and the sovereignty

- To eradicate different forms of colonialism in Africa

- To promote the international cooperation having the regards of the United Nations Charter and the Human Rights declaration.

AU achievements mainly include the programmes which were focused towards promoting the people and human rights within the continent which was achieved through the establishment of the African Human Rights Commission which was located in the Banjul (Vines, 2013). It was also witnessed that the decolonisation of Namibia and Zimbabwe with the diplomatic support and the financial logistical and military aid towards the liberation movements. According to Williams (2011), the aids helped in resolving the boundary conflicts in Central and North Africa and further successfully setting the conflicts without outside

interference and intervention. The African Union also defended the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the members' states. In addition to the above statement, there has been the provision of the job opportunities to the African refugees and created a status for the refugees which is to be recognised by different member states (Williams, 2011). The African Union also contributed the efforts towards decreasing the racial discrimination in South Africa, South West Africa, and the Rhodesia in the favour of African refugees. Although these achievements were accomplished, however, the terrain was never smooth because of some setbacks to the goals which were critical to the achievements.

The succeeding African Union now intends to achieve solidarity and unity for the African countries and is also aimed at becoming the people-centred institution. Moreover, they have tried to build a partnership between the segments of the civil society and government for the purpose of strengthening the cohesion and solidarity among the African people and further to make the African beneficiaries and actors of the structural changes that are engendered by the development (Vines, 2013). Moreover, the African Union has been a desire by the African leaders for uniting all the people of Africa and facing new realities of the globalisation. This comprises of dovetailing and embracing the role and contribution of the development of the African countries that are defined by the emerging powers like China, Russia, India, and Brazil (Gebeyehu, 2012). In addition to the above statement, these emerging powers have been the major aspect in the inducement of the shifting in the power relations between the South and the North.

Considering the developments happening in the African countries, it can be asserted that the goals of AU are not being met adequately. In the light of Boutellis and Williams (2013), Africa continues to engage in the periphery of the global economy which is evident from the

declining share of the continent in terms of global production and the trade. However, the majority of the Sub-Saharan Africa 47 countries are labelled as least or small developed countries according to UNCTAD. In this context, the AU seeks to face the realities associated with the globalisation in order to promote development and the trade; however, its landlocked countries have a high cost of transactions and border barriers (Apuuli, 2012). Over the decade of 2002 to 2012, Africa has observed a superb rise in the economic growth in terms of trade and infrastructure development. Despite the severe uncertainties, African countries are among the fastest growing economies all over the world.

2.4. Performance and Effectiveness of AU

According to Okeke (2016), it was highlighted that the African Union has tried to strengthen their efforts towards the unity of the African countries on the basis of their long history along with a strong desire across economic, political, and social unification. Moreover, the popular demand for the African unity has focused towards the success of the African Union. In the light of Harnisch, Frank, and Maull (2011), the AU was known as the asset which can be utilised for the effective manner in order to gain the support for the unification. Moreover, there is a strong enthusiasm in the AU as there is certainly a strong nationalisation which is also critical for the nation states consolidation.

Despite the various setbacks and shortcomings, the AU is keen towards developing and establishing a common forum for the African government and the development of the common platform will be aimed towards the interest of the African citizens. In the light of Vines (2013), the AU has managed to function as the consistent basis for a couple of years. However, it is particularly the major achievement in contrasting with the performance of different regional

bodies. In addition, the impulse related towards the promotion of unity is consequently embedded and practised by taking into consideration the vulnerabilities which are associated with the individual countries. As a result, there is a genuine opportunity for establishing a sustainable framework for the compliance and governance in the entire Africa. This also appears to be focused towards the strong motive that drives the African Union Project.

2.4.1. The Role of African Union in Safeguarding the Welfare of the African Region

The AU is basically the descendant of the OAU which has been acknowledged as the continental organisation mainly comprising of 54 member countries which also includes new country named as the Republic of the South Sudan. According to Murithi (2012), after the Cold War, the African leaders have experienced a great pressure on the global and domestic fronts for exploring the solutions associated with the problems of Africa. Furthermore, Civil wars which had occurred in the countries for instance, Liberia, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Central Africa, Guinea Bissau and genocide in Rwanda, which caused the total failures of the states in the country of Somalia along with the secessionist movements which has taken place in the Sudan that became the real challenge for the new African leadership. This also required a strong level of the urgent action and attention.

In the light of Bengtsson and Elgström (2012), the humanitarian crises have also occurred in Sudan and Somalia which were catastrophic because it is caused more than the 6 million deaths along with the forced displacements. In the reaction to the following complex conflict, the AU along with the Regional Economic Communities (REC) also had taken a strong step towards intervening in the conflicting condition as they did not have to delay for the authorization for the United Nations Security Council.

According to Chirisa, Mumba, and Dirwai (2014), the AU has focused towards the high amount of involvement for monitoring the elections in Africa. However, in the period of mediation efforts, the post-election violence has occurred in different African countries. This was the main reason why AU had remained quite busy with the African countries such as Zimbabwe and Kenya. In addition, there was not a single principle which was listed down in the Constitutive Act of the African Union that can be implemented with efficacy by the AU other than the principles which are related to the total rejection of the unconstitutional changes. However, these changes can be carried out by the government of the African countries as well other than the African Union.

In the light of Apuuli (2012), there have been several unconstitutional extensions in the countries such as Togo, Niger, Madagascar, and Sao Tome. Moreover, there is a list of countries, for instance, Guinea Bissau, Guinea and Chad, whose governments were without any exceptions got rejected because of the unconstitutional changes and extensions. In this context, the AU made several successful efforts for ensuring the return of the government which were elected. According to Duthie (2011), there have been dictators who were collapsed in the period of North African rebellions and new leaders were elected democratically in Zambia, Nigeria, Liberia, and Tunisia. Moreover, the democratic profile of the African countries has been witnessed certainly as the major generational progress.

In the light of Klavert (2011), there had been several dictators in the countries who remained in power for 20 years, where other leaders were having diminished legitimacy for their powers due to the election violence. From the previous articles and studies, it is evident that the Africa has witnessed "a generational progression for the democracy". However, with the passage

of each decade, the numbers can be associated with the elected leaders of the African countries which were increased considerably.

2.4.2. Role of the AU in Ensuring the Social and Economic Wellbeing of the African Countries

In the light of Benin et al., (2010), the role of the AU for safeguarding the social and economic well-being of the African countries has been quite significant. However, the author has argued that it is the promotion and protection of the human rights which cannot be taken place in the vacuum or isolation. In addition to the above statement, the regional system can only focus on the human rights protection on the ground support which is received by the economic and political factors in that particular region. In the light of Tchamyou (2016), the future for the human rights movements in African countries cannot be protected by the concerned authorities and the constitutions are able to facilitate their valuable financial, moral and ideological support. Moreover, there is a significant amount of the financial resources which is crucial for the establishment of the effective human rights and its protection in the institutions. This was the recorded reason that the multi-faceted approach would be quite suitable for the African countries. For the purpose of achieving this objective, it is necessary that the promotional activities, transformation, and acceleration of the socio-economic condition should be carried out in the African countries.

For a number of years, the international community has appreciated the democratic development which has been taken place within the African states, for instance, Uganda, Botswana, and other countries within the entire continent. Moreover, they have also become the role model for a number of countries in Africa (Klavert, 2011). However, there is a need for consistency in this context. In addition to the above statement, after the September attack in the

USA, the attention of the world was shifted towards the Middle East countries. The significance for the African countries also increased significantly at that time from the strategic perspective which is related to the importance of the fight against terrorism. However, there are certain concerns of the African countries which are well yonder the aspect alone.

According to Duthie (2011), the global economic recession also took place in the year 2008, because of the interest within the African countries which declined further. This is also significant for the United Nations in the context of the global actors such as the UK and USA. Conversely, the first challenge for the African countries was intended towards exerting maximum efforts for the purpose of carrying out the major developments in the social, political, and economic conditions of the African countries which are regarded as the prerequisite for enjoying human rights in the member states of AU.

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