

Human Rights Abuse and Policing in Nigeria: a case study of Niger State

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ABSTRACT: A survey method was utilized in this study to determine the effect of human right abuse and policing in Nigeria. A total population of 374,671 was used from the study area from which a sample of 540 respondents were selected using hat and draw method. A questionnaire was administered to the respondents by personal interview. The collected data was analyzed using appropriate statistical technique such as descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation analysis. Test of significance was at 0.005 alpha level. The study reveals the causes of human rights violations by the Nigerian police force. The following suggestions were put forward by the researcher based on the findings of the study: There is the urgent need to improve the training of the Police in terms of human rights observance. The teaching of human rights education should be made compulsory at all levels of education in the country, most especially in Police Colleges and their Academies. Officers also need to be sensitized periodically over the rights of citizens and human rights issues generally. Better and improved conditions of service should be made for the police force. Welfare of the Police needs to be enhanced to minimize some of their excesses.

Keywords: Human right abuse, Nigerian police force, cause of abuse

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INTRODUCTION

Human rights are rights which people have simply as human beings irrespective of their nationalities, religion, citizenship, marital status, occupation, income or any other social or cultural activities (Ehinder, 2008) cited in Barnabas (2014). In other words, human rights are of universal application and implications. Clinton (2007) cited in Barnabas (2014, p. 2) contends that human rights are the cornerstone of a viable and visible democracy, giving hope to all in society, which includes, the strong and the weak, rich and poor, great and small. If democratic practice in Nigeria must meet up with western democratic standards, then it must address the current problem of gross violations of human rights. The language of human rights can be traced back to the Western Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Political philosophers elaborated the notion that citizens enjoyed certain rights mainly of a civil or political nature in relation to the State. Such theories found their expression in two important documents that emerged from the revolutionary turmoil of the late eighteenth century: the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen

(1789) and the American Bill of Rights (1791). The terminology of both documents can still be found in human rights law of the early twenty-first century. Yet the rights they guaranteed were far from universal, since they were limited on grounds of gender, skin colour or wealth, and they were hardly comprehensive, addressing only civil and political issues. Despite more than a decade of democratic governance and endorsement of universal declaration of human rights charter, Nigerians still face a lot of human rights abuses. This is because contrary to democratic ethos, the state is still largely authoritarian in leadership and security operations (Akhaine and Chizea, 2011). Cases of human rights violations which McCulley (2013) described as becoming a culture of impunity in the country includes extra-judicial killings, illegal detention, destruction of property by security forces etc. Even studies by researchers (Adetoro, 2012a; Oladunjoye and Omemu, 2013; Udama, 2013; Ojo *et al.*, 2014) acknowledged the role of extra-judicial killings of Mohammed Yusuf and other Boko Haram leaders in escalating the sectarian violence that nearly consumed

the whole of North Eastern Nigeria. Kidnapping for ransom and rituals are also alarming (Agabe, 2013; Atoyebi, 2014). Other forms of human rights abuses in Nigeria include motorists' harassment and extortion by security personnel, political assassinations, undemocratic imposition of candidates in leadership and intimidation of political opponents (Akhaine and Chizea, 2011); rape, child abuse, education denial and domestic violence (Adesupo, 2013; Ayegboyin, 2013; Ayoola, 2013; Hamzat, 2013; Salahudeen, 2013). It is against these backgrounds that this paper examined the challenges of human rights abuses in Nigerian democratic governance and suggested the ways out of the menace.

Statement of the problem

The violation of human rights is not a strange experience in Nigeria. This sad situation has been attributed to decades of military rule in the country, which had attracted sanctions and all sorts of condemnation from the international community. Sadly, however, the end of military rule, and the consequent enthronement of democratic rule has failed to eliminate, or at least, reduce the cases of violations of human rights in Nigeria. Perhaps, human rights are still taken largely to mean political and civil rights, and the importance of economic, social and cultural rights may be widely ignored by the media in their coverage of economic issues, including the international economy, poverty, inequity, social and economic discrimination. This is why news editors and reporters certainly need to think about the impact of information they disseminate. They are morally concerned with the abuses they uncover but it is not up to them to determine what to do, let alone do it. In other words, just let the appropriate agencies of government know about the issue.

Purpose of the study

To examine the causes of Nigerian police force human right abuses.

To examine the effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen safety.

To examine the effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen protection of property.

Research questions

What are the causes of Nigerian police force human right abuses?

What is the effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen safety?

What is the effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen protection of property?

Hypotheses

There is no significant effect of the causes of Nigerian police force human right abuses?

There is no significant effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen safety?

There is no significant effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen protection of property?

Significance of the study

The study is of immense significance to the media industry as well as in policy formulation and extant literature. This study is very important to the extent that respect for human rights is important in democratic governance. The results of this study will be beneficial to policy makers, both in the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who would like to develop effective communication strategies to forestall the spread of human rights violations. It will also provide the academia with broader perspectives to consider when developing research analysis of human rights violations. Findings of this study will also be useful to the research community by contributing to the body of knowledge on the propagation of human rights in the country.

Scope of the study

The scope of the study was delimited to human rights abuse and policing in Nigeria.

Literature review

Concept of Human Rights

There is actually no generally acceptable definition for the concept of human rights. Even philosophers according to Oyeboode (2005) are yet to resolve the controversy on the meaning of 'meaning' itself. This invariably suggests the reason why there is no generally accepted definition of the concept of human rights. However, lack of a universal definition does not change the value which is acknowledged by writers (both political and philosophical). The concept of human rights is conceived as a universal one which pertains to all human all over the globe. It is in this vein that Balogun (2014) defined human rights as those rights which all human beings enjoy by virtue of their humanity. This is to say that as long as an individual remains a human being, he or she is entitled to certain rights which are expected to be protected by the laws and government of every state. Similarly, Okeshola (2013) submits that human rights are those privileges enjoyed by the citizens of any given country, guaranteed and protected by the State constitution.

Ogaga (1993) conceives human rights as rights that human beings enjoy simply because they are human.

Therefore, all human beings are born with certain rights. These rights are inherent in any human simply because of humanity, which is the birth right of all mankind (National Open University of Nigeria 2014).

According to Wolfgang (2003), Human rights are the rights of all individuals, whether they have the citizenship of a particular country or not. Therefore, the idea of human rights has relevance to all and sundry without distinction as regards race, ethnicity, color or language. Nancy (1997) also opined that human rights are held by all persons equally, universally, and forever. And As such, these basic rights which are inalienable and indivisible cannot be denied, nor can an individual lose it except he or she ceases to be a human being.

Olugbebi (2004) sees human rights as rights which every human being everywhere at all time ought to have simply because one is rational and moral in contradistinction with other beings. This is to say that compared to other beings (lower animals and other beings aside from humans), bestowed upon human beings are entitled rights based on the fact that they are social beings with some measure of morality and consciousness. They are rights which are sacrosanct to all of humanity with rationality and consciousness.

Contemporarily, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 as attributed to the United Nations (UN) remains binding on member states. Therefore, the denial or violation of these basic rights is regarded as a vicious and uncivilized act by any state. All states are therefore implored by the UN through this act to protect these fundamental rights, as it will foster freedom and peace in their societies. Conversely, violating these rights would likely lead to violence and may result to underdevelopment.

Since the declaration of human rights, it has become fashionable for most countries of the world (Nigeria inclusive) to entrench the catalogue of rights in their constitutions (Adetoro and Omiyefa, 2014). This perhaps accounts for the reason why the National Human Rights Commission in Nigeria has it that "Whereas considering that the United Nations Charter and several provisions of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are based on the principles of the dignity and equality of all human beings and seek, among other basic objectives the promotion and respect for human rights and fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion" (National Human Rights Commission Act 1995).

Human rights abuse in Niger State

Human rights abuse in Niger State has been a significant concern in recent years. According to a report by Amnesty International (2020), there have been numerous cases of human rights violations in the state, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and torture. These abuses have had a devastating impact on the lives of

many individuals and have raised serious concerns about the state of human rights in Niger State.

One of the most troubling aspects of human rights abuse in Niger State is the prevalence of extrajudicial killings. Amnesty International's report documented several cases in which security forces in the state were responsible for the unlawful killing of civilians. These incidents not only represent a blatant disregard for the right to life, but they also contribute to a climate of fear and insecurity within the state.

Arbitrary arrests and detentions have also been a common occurrence in Niger State. Individuals have been detained without proper legal procedures and have been subjected to inhumane treatment while in custody. This not only violates their right to liberty and security, but it also undermines the rule of law and due process in the state.

Torture is another grave human rights violation that has been documented in Niger State. Individuals who have been arrested or detained have reported being subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment by security forces. This cruel and inhumane treatment not only inflicts physical and psychological harm on the victims, but it also violates their inherent dignity and right to be free from torture.

The prevalence of human rights abuse in Niger State is a cause for serious concern and requires urgent attention from both the state government and the international community. Efforts must be made to hold those responsible for these violations accountable and to ensure that individuals in Niger State are able to enjoy their fundamental human rights without fear of abuse.

Evolution of human rights in Nigeria

The concept of human rights has long been in existence before the universal declaration of human rights by the United Nations charter of 1948. According to Faisal (2010), the history of human rights covers thousands of years and draws upon religious, cultural, philosophical and legal developments throughout the recorded history. Faisal, (2010) believes that the concept of human rights is as old as civilization. Similarly, Sokefun (1998) believes that even the Israelites found succor in the concept of human rights at the time they were in bondage in Egypt. This essentially describes the concept as a rise of revolt against authoritarianism, tyranny and perceived injustice. Ancillary to this according to Vinod (2002) opinion is that human rights' prime concern is to offer protection from tyrannical and authoritarian decision-making, which results to exploitation of minority interests. Invariably, this suggests that human rights violation has long been in existence before our contemporary time.

Before the advent of the colonialists in Africa (precisely in Nigeria), there has been the existence of human rights, at least, to a minimal extent. As explained by Oyebode (2005), the primitive communal societies had little need

for rules or laws, but the division of societies into classes necessitated the need for making rules which resultantly crystallized into a legal system. And so, rules were enforced by Obas, Obis, Emirs and clan leaders. Although these rules were not recorded nor written on paper, but orally. Rights such as right to life, freedom of thought and speech, right to clan membership and right to own property existed in those days.

From the Human Rights Violations Monitors' report (2006), it was explained that Human rights and fundamental freedom were recognized in the traditional Nigerian societies but the idea of rights was not conceived in the modern notion. However, the advent of the white men heralded a foreign legal system which was superimposed on the various communities across the country, thereby eroding the tenets, values and traditions of the people. This marked the history of the present legal system from which the idea of human rights began in Nigeria.

The successive constitutions of Nigeria had the concept of human rights embedded in them, particularly in the Independence Constitution of 1960 and the Republican Constitution of 1963 which made provisions for the protection of fundamental human rights. The 1979 and the 1999 Constitutions further laid emphasis on human rights by providing a bill of rights. The entrenchment of human rights provisions in the Nigerian constitutions was aimed at creating a society which protects political freedom as well as the social and economic well-being of Nigerians. Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960 and surrendered part of her sovereignty to the United Nations six days after, having conceived the organization as an organization for multilateral diplomacy and for service (Akpotor and Agbegbaku, 2010). It is therefore important to note that any country that joins the United Nations automatically surrenders part of its sovereignty to the organization, and thus, must abide by its rules and regulations. It is in this vein that the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 remains binding on all member states under its umbrella, including The Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Constitutional provision of human rights

A constitution is a fundamental law according to which a state is to be governed, (Okunoye, 2006). It is regarded as the rule of law guiding the acts of both the ruler and the ruled in a democratic society. Therefore, for every democratic state, a constitution is quintessential. In this discourse however, it is important to note that the idea of human rights is embedded in the Nigerian constitution. The rights and privileges which Nigerians are expected to enjoy are by virtue of their citizenship in a democratic state are found in chapter four, section 34-44 of the Nigerian Constitution (1999). The enjoyable human rights as found in the Nigerian Constitution (1999) in section 33-44 include:

- i. The right to life (section 33);
- ii. The right to dignity of human person (section 34);
- iii. The right to personal liberty (section 35);
- iv. The right to fair hearing (section 36);
- v. The right to private and family life (section 37);
- vi. The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion (section 38);
- vii. The right to freedom of expression and the press (section 39);
- viii. The right to peaceful assembly and association (40);
- ix. The right to freedom of movement (section 41);
- x. The right to freedom from discrimination (section 42) and
- xi. Right to property (section 43), (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1999).

As amplification, these rights are further expounded according to the constitution.

Section 33

(1) Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria.

(2) A person shall not be regarded as having been deprived of his life in contravention of this section, if he dies as a result of the use, to such extent and in such circumstances as are permitted by law, of such force as is reasonably necessary -

Section 34

(1) Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly

(a) no person shall be subject to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment;

(b) no person shall be held in slavery or servitude; and

(c) no person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.

(2) for the purposes of subsection (1) (c) of this section, "forced or compulsory labour" does not include:

(a) any labour required in consequence of the sentence or order of a court;

(b) any labour required of members of the armed forces of the Federation or the Nigeria Police Force in pursuance of their duties as such;

(c) in the case of persons who have conscientious objections to service in the armed forces of the Federation, any labour required instead of such service;

(d) any labour required which is reasonably necessary in the event of any emergency or calamity threatening the life or well-being of the community

Types of human rights

Every individual cross-continent and the world over are

entitled to human rights. It has become a globally recognized and accepted phenomenon that individuals possess certain rights which governments have the duty and responsibility to protect and enforce such rights, (National Open University of Nigeria Study Guide, 2014). It is noteworthy however to espouse the fact that human rights are divided into different categories, ranging from personal (civil) to political, economic to social and cultural rights. According to Roy (2008), the United Nations adopted two covenants in 1966; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the international Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which went into force in 1976. These three documents (Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; And International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) together are collectively known as the international Bill of Human Rights.

Many scholars have classified human rights into different categories, and some into generational rights in order to differentiate the types of human rights. But for the purpose of this work, I shall categorize the concept into two; civil and political rights on one hand, and then, economic, social and cultural rights on the other.

Threats/violations of human rights in Nigerian society

Nigeria is among the countries where human right abuses are recorded daily and virtually in all human endeavors. Below are some of the routinely abused human rights in Nigeria.

Unlawful violation of civil, political and moral rights (first generation rights)

Nigerian citizens had their political rights violated through intimidation, undemocratic imposition of candidates for political offices, assassination and the huge finances on prebendal political environment (Akhaine and Chizea, 2011). Specifically, the violations of civil, political and moral rights include;

Abuse of right to life

This human right violation is mostly found in torture and extra-judicial killings by government security operatives. For instance, Ero (2009) reported that over 20,000 civilians were massacred with other 50,000 displaced from their homes as a result of the brutal handling of the Niger – Delta crises by the Joint Military Task Force (JTF). Earlier, the death of about 50 persons on 25th February, 2008 was caused by the Nigerian police in Ogaminana outskirt of Okene in Kogi State. Akhaine and Chizea (2011) reported that 17 people were shot dead by security forces during a protest in Kaduna state on 17th April and another 118 killed on 27th April in the same state with several houses burnt.

Abbah (2013) and Adetayo (2013) further observed that over 300 people were killed in the Fulani/Farmers clashes that lasted for 5 months in Nigeria.

Reuters (2012) noted the brutal killing of more than 700 lives in Bauchi, Maiduguri and Damaturu as a result of the Boko Haram rootless attack on the civilians. Furthermore, in a latest report on Boko Haram activities, Osun Defender (2014) submitted that civilians in Nigeria are paying heavy prices as „cycle of human rights violations and reprisals gather momentum“ because according to the 2014 Amnesty International report, “more than 1,500 deaths in three months indicate an alarming deteriorations...in the face of extra-judicial executions, attacks on civilians and other crimes committed on a mass scale” (p.1). Even though, the Amnesty report observed the rising number of Boko Haram attacks as “truly shocking” but it also noted the reaction of Nigerian security forces as “brutal” with both serving as acts that may constitute “war crimes and crimes against humanity” calling for immediate investigation and prosecutions (Amnesty, 2014).

Abuse of right to freedom of movement

This human right violation is found in kidnapping and disappearance which has been on the increase in Nigeria. The situation is worst in Abia State due to cases of all forms of kidnapping: including kidnapping of children, women and other civilians (Kaluge, 2013). While Oyewale (2010) acknowledged the daily occurrence of domestic terrorism (brutal kidnapping) in the Niger- Delta between 2006 and 2009, Azania (2013) equally reported how Niger varsity lecturers lamented daily affairs kidnapping of their colleagues. This worrisome physical human right abuse is even preponderant all over Nigeria today.

Abuse of right to freedom of religion

Contrary to the provision of secularity in Nigeria’s constitution, Adeniji (2008) and Oyeweso (2013) reported frequent human right abuses among cleric fundamentalists. According to Adeniji (2008), over 1,000 reported cases of clashes between the Christian and the Muslim adherents were recorded in Nigeria between 2001 and 2008. Musa and Adeniji (2010) equally acknowledged the destruction to lives and properties by frequent clashes in Abeokuta South Local Government in Ogun State between 1980 and 2007.

Abuse of right to freedom of assembly

The Nigerian government is known to oppose anti – government protest and demonstration. For instance, on 3rd January 2009, police in Okeagbe, Ondo State allegedly killed and wounded some youths who

demonstrated against local police extortion. Equally, political killings were reported by Ariyibi (2013) in Ekiti following clashes between rival political parties while Kayode- Ayodeji (2013) reported that rioters stripped a ruler naked after severe beating by angry mobs in Ogun State. Indeed, Akhaine and Chizea (2011) reported that some politicians in Nigeria maintain a retinue of thugs that often perpetuate acts of violence against their opponents. On February 18, 2012, Sahara news reported that activists condemned the police disruption of political memorial procession for the last year's martyrs on fuel price increase. Indeed, Aremu (2012) reported that over 20 tear – gas canisters were used to disperse the protesters and several leaders of the protesters were whisked away and detained for several hours in Alausa police station. Even, in the recently held and inconclusive Anambra state governorship election, the Daily Trust and This Day Newspapers of 20th and 21st November, 2013 respectively reported the continued detention of 182 election observers by the Nigerian police (Adebayo, 2013; Ezigbo, 2013). It is regrettable to note that the Nigerian government has continually failed to address this kind of human right abuses and punish the offenders.

Unlawful violation of the economic, social and cultural rights (second generation rights)

The citizens' entitlements violated under this kind of human right abuses

Abuse of right to education

Although education is an instrument per excellence for effecting national development, it is regrettable to note that corruption, bribery and nepotism are ill vices in the Nigerian educational system. Equally, some state-owned universities do not give equal admission opportunities to all Nigerians while the university council considered some states in Nigeria as education less privileged. Indeed, Nigerian citizens are supposed to have free education as contained in the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, but in practice, some states and federal schools where this has been implemented students still pay fees. As a fall – out of denial to right to education, Olubodun (2008) noted that 41 percent of the Nigerian children totaling 7.5 million were out of school in 1997 and by 2005 (as reported by (Oladosu, 2008)), the figure had risen to 19.8 million children. Although, it appears the figure had dropped to about 8 million in 2011 (according to the Former Minister of Education, Prof. Ruqqayat Rufai) but the situation is that a sizeable number of eligible Nigerian children are still out of Basic Education amounting to existence of denial of education rights.

Violations of right to standard of living

It is regrettable to note that this violation is been caused

by the quantum of corruption in public services. Corruption has generally eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society. It is an abuse of the citizens' rights to have corrupt leaders in the public services. According to Adetoro (2012b), Nigeria as a „cesspool of corruption" still suffers denial to cheaper availability of fuel products arising from fuel subsidy scandal that led to over-invoicing of imported petroleum products. This happened in a country where over 70 percent of the populace lives below 1 dollar per day (UNDP, 2011). This represents a flagrant violation of peoples' right to improved standard of living.

Unlawful violation of solidarity or community rights (third generation rights)

Abuse of right to clean and healthy environment

Certain segments of Nigerian society have been deprived of the right to safe, clean and healthy environment. For instance, the conflict in the Niger-Delta region is partly as a result of an abuse of environmental right. It is on this light that the environmental activists like Ken Saro Wiwa along with others were extra-judicially hanged by the government in 1995. Furthermore, Awah (2009) noted how the rights of women were frequently abused in Nigeria under trafficking circumstances. Equally, it was observed that out of about 8 million children destitute in Nigeria, 7 million of them constitute street beggars known as „Almajirai" in Northern Nigeria (Ahmed, 2007; Obioha, 2009); (Adetoro, 2010). Danladi (2009) further lamented the state of neglect, harm, abuse, exploitation and deprivation that orphans and vulnerable children were subjected to in Nigeria

Prison/prisoner's rights

The Nigerian prison system is nothing but a living hell. Those who came out of it after serving their sentences hardly get reformed; in fact, they become hardened recidivists. Among the problems of the Nigerian prison system is the existence of a large population of those awaiting trial. This always leads to congestion in the prison cells as a result of deficit in prison infrastructures (Ndifon, 2013). These conditions are outright acts of violation of the human rights of the inmates. Equally, prisoner's right to court is impeded by failure to provide vehicles to convey them to court and inadequate medical care is impeded by shortage of health facilities.

Abuses of the right to self determination

The struggle for freedom or self-determination has been at the frontline of most agitators from different ethnic nationals in Nigeria. This right to self-determination has been the major agitation by the Niger – Delta people, the Movement for the Actualization of the sovereign states of

Biafra (MASSOB) and so on. The struggle often leads to armed conflict resulting to loss of lives and properties among others. Indeed, the Human Rights Watch (2011) observed that more than 15,700 people had been killed in inter – communal, political and sectarian violence between 1999 and 2011. Today, the casualties figure would have been doubled due to the insurgent activities of Boko Haram.

Effects of human rights abuse in Nigeria

Human rights abuse in Nigeria often leads to poverty which is so prevalent due to massive abuse of public fund. This is as a result of high rate of unemployment which has resulted in youth's involvement in crimes such as armed robbery, internet scams and kidnapping for survival. Secondly, human right abuse has obvious hindrance to national development. Thirdly, it also breeds high insecurity rate as a state of anarchy had given room to lack of protection of lives and properties as witnessed under conflicts in the Niger Delta region and the various ethno – religious violence. Equally, the poor health care facilities and diseases are as a result of government nonchalant attitude to the well-being of the citizens. Human right abuse has created unlawful detention and lawlessness with gross violation of the rule of law. Furthermore, human right abuse makes people unpatriotic as most Nigerians are not proud of calling Nigeria their fatherland. This is why many citizens of Nigeria seek ways of leaving the country in search of safety and prosperity abroad.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Nworgu (2009:136) highlights that a research design is a plan or blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed. It provides the procedural outline for the conduct of any investigation. The survey method was utilized for this study. This approach was considered most appropriate because it helped the researcher to describe, examine, record, analyze and interpret the variables that were found in the study. It is also useful because of the relatively large population from which the information was collected.

Area of study

The study area of work is some select area of Minna metropolis. Minna city Chanchaga is a Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. Its headquarters are in Minna City. Chanchaga is a local government in Niger State, and its capital city which also the capital city of Niger State. Minna city also remain the capital city of the

Niger state. The Emir of Dr. Umar Farouk, palace is also located Minna and many historic palaces and buildings are located in some Local Government Area of the state. Niger is home to many including the Emir of Bida, The Etsu Nupe, Emir of Suleja Alhaji Awwal Ibrahim, who was the and many other prominent princes and chiefs. It has an area of 249 km² and a population of 374,671 at the 2006 census.

Population of the study

The population of the study consisted of 374,671 populace of Niger local government area of Niger State.

Sample size

The sample size was statistically determined using "Taro Yamane" formula for finite population according to Uzoagulu (2008:63).

Sample size technique

A sample of 540 respondents were selected using hat and draw method as representative schools. This formula was considered appropriate because of the sample size as stated by Ibanga (1992) who emphasized that this approach is particularly useful when one is faced with a relatively large population.

Method of data collection

The researcher used a letter of introduction and permission to gain access into the study area. On getting to the study area (each states of the federation) the researcher presented the letter to the some selects villages in Niger state local government Area, who assigned an assistant to the researcher. The assistant was meant to help identify the respondents, administer and retrieve the questionnaire which was for the collection of primary data. Equally, personal interview was also done with the help of the assistant.

Method of Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed using appropriate statistical technique such as descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation analysis. Test of significance was at 0.025 alpha level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis One: There is no significant effect of the causes of Nigerian police force human right abuses. Table 1 presents the obtained t-value as 2.17. This value was greater than critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 243 degrees of freedom. This observation indicates that the effect of the causes of Nigerian police force human

right abuses. Hence, null hypothesis one which assumed no significant difference was rejected.

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the effect of the causes of Nigerian police force human right abuses.

Variable	N	X	SD	T _{cal}	T _{crit}	Decision
High	217	54.68	217	2.17	1.96	S
Low	28	60.07	28			

*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 243; N=245

Hypothesis two: There is no significant effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen safety. Table 2 presents the obtained t-value as 5.41. This value was greater than critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 243 degrees of freedom.

Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen safety.

Variables	N	X	SD	T _{cal}	T _{crit}	Decision
High	144	54.34	13.794	5.41	1.96	S
Low	101	56.66	10.903			

*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 243; N= 245

This observation indicates that the effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen safety was statistically significant. Hence, null hypothesis four which assumed no significant difference was rejected. The first hypothesis which stated that: There is no significant effect of the causes of Nigerian police force human right abuses was rejected. The obtained t-value 2.17 was greater than critical t-value 1.96 at 0.05 levels with 243 degrees of freedom. This result implies that effect of the causes of Nigerian police force human right abuses. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The second hypothesis which stated that: There is no significant effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen safety was rejected. The obtained t-value 5.41 was greater than the critical t-value 1.96 at 0.05 levels with 243 degrees of freedom. This result implies that there is significant effect of Nigerian police force human right abuses on citizen safety. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

Conclusion

Human rights abuse has become endemic in Nigeria. This is because individuals, groups and state actors are complicit in this vicious circle. In the recent past, human rights violations and abuses have held our people down, devaluing our cherished values and constituting blight on our diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. Therefore, Nigerians must come together to combat these ills by impressing upon their democratically elected government that the principles of democracy and human

rights must be sacrosanct. The challenges facing Nigeria are not limited to North or South, Christian or Muslim, Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa – Fulani. Democracy as identified earlier is characterized by definite principles. These include, adherence to the rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights and the protection of lives and properties. For a prosperous democratic governance to be realized in Nigeria, true principles of democracy must be imbibed and deepened.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations against the back-drop of its findings.

The following suggestions were put forward by the researcher based on the findings of the study:

1. There is the urgent need to improve the training of the Police in terms of human rights observance. The teaching of human rights education should be made compulsory at all levels of education in the country, most especially in Police Colleges and their Academies. Officers also need to be sensitized periodically over the rights of citizens and human rights issues generally.
2. Better and improved conditions of service should be made for the police force. Welfare of the Police needs to be enhanced to minimize some of their excesses.
3. Police Officers should be prosecuted in State Courts for violating human rights.
4. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and human rights groups need to double and improve their efforts in educating the citizens on their fundamental human rights and how to seek redress from state courts for violations.
5. The doctrine of strict liability should be applied in certain instances against the government for acts done by her agencies.
6. Law courts should expeditiously dispose all cases of human rights before them so as to ensure justice is done because as it's often been said, justice delayed is justice denied.
7. The police authorities must place emphasis on the teaching of human rights during their training of Constable Police recruits who are most often culpable of committing violations of rights.

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