



Police brutality and human rights abuse in Bayelsa state, Nigeria: A sociological insight

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Abstract

This study examined Police brutality and human rights abuses in Bayelsa State. The major objective of the study was to investigate the role of training and public reporting on police brutality in Bayelsa state. Two research hypotheses were stated and tested in the course of the study. To achieve the objectives of the study, a survey technique was applied using questionnaire and interview method as the research instrument. The sample size for the study was 400. The samples were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique (i.e., cluster, simple random, and convenience sampling technique respectively). In the course of the study, 348 questionnaires were retrieved, collated, and analyzed. Three analytical techniques were adopted namely, the simple percentage, chi-square statistical method, and the thematic method. The first was used to evaluate the research objectives, the second was applied to test the two hypotheses formulated in the study and the third was opted to analyze the interview. The results from the data analysis revealed that the police training and docile public reporting of cases of police brutality engineers the sustenance and perpetuation of Police brutality and Human Rights abuses in Bayelsa state moderately. The study recommends that there should be proper training and retraining of Police personnel especially in the areas of sociology and psychology so as to deploy criminal intelligence and advance forensic techniques in the process of carrying out criminal investigations in the society.

Keywords: police, police brutality, human rights, human rights violation

Introduction

Nigeria is bedeviled with a myriad of socio-economic and political problems which are inherently multifarious (Gbenemene & Eric, 2017). These problems include but are not limited to; murder, kidnapping, burglary, corruption, political instability, poverty, moral decadence, etc. These problems have dwelled and remained in the system that they have over time blend into the social system to become one and normal in the society irrespective of the litany of negative effects it has on the moral fabric of the society. This has put criminality on the constant rise as an innovative approach in achieving individual and collective goals.

The purpose of having a government in a country is to prevent the country from devolving into chaos and anarchy, where only the strong survive (Orabueze, Okoye & Ohaeto, 2013). Every country in the globe has a government structure in place that is responsible for governance, which includes but is not limited to maintaining law and order (Emmanuel, 2018). One of the techniques the government employs in avoiding a descent to chaos and anomie is through the establishment of security forces who are charged with ensuring the safety of lives and properties of citizens. It is at the backdrop of maintaining law and order that nations and states establish security apparatuses that will help drive the process of social organization and ensure a sense of safety among inhabitants of society. These security forces function to address the rising spate in crime through the enforcement of laws to guide social actions and inactions within the system and apprehension of criminal offenders, prosecution, retribution, and or rehabilitation/reintegration of criminal offenders. It is the utmost responsibility of the security forces of any state, country, or nation to contribute to the progress and development that society by functioning optimally to ensure and guarantee the safety of human lives and properties. The functions of the nation's security agencies as provided by law are primarily to preserve the law and bring about order, detection, investigation, and the persecution of crime with the country (Nigeria). Any meaningful development or progress recorded by an unstable and insecure society is constantly at the peril of losing all that it had labored to amass.

In modern and democratic society, Police, Court, and the Correctional service (the prison) are the bedrock of the criminal justice system and are bestowed with the huge responsibility of the maintenance of law and order. The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), establishes the Nigeria Police Force to maintain law and order, ensure public safety, and spells out the mode of arrest, detention, and prosecution of offenders in Section 214 (Emmanuel, 2018). The police as an agent in the criminal justice system is an essential part of any civilized nation with the objective of preventing crime, protecting the lives and properties of

inhabitants, ensuring social order, detecting and prosecuting criminals, arrest of those who contravene the laws of the society, etc. The role of the Nigerian police cannot be over-emphasized as it is vested with the onus of maintaining law and order as well as the implementation of government policies. It is the entry point as regards criminal cases into the criminal justice system as it is the first contact the general public has regarding the administration of criminal justice. Laudable as the potential goals of the police as an agent of the criminal justice system in maintaining law and order in the society, their effectiveness and efficiency have overtime come under serious scrutiny as it has been laced with several constraints and impediments that have altered their images in the sight of the many citizen and inhabitants in the society. The Police has lost its place and recognition in the sight of many citizens due to a series of allegations of corruption, arbitrariness in the exercise of its powers of arrest and prosecution, subversion of justice, the administration and entronement of crude methods of inquiry, conspiracy with criminal and plethora of cases of accidental discharge of firearms, utterly brutal in its approach in addition to the violation of the fundamental human rights of the citizens.

Tremendous violations of individual rights have been committed by law enforcement agencies whose duty is to ensure that people's rights are upheld (John, 2007). It is ironic that the police who are supposed to preserve and protect, turn around to trample on the rights of citizens are violated. Arrested persons reported that they do not grant them the right to remain silent, but that they are subjected to torture, hunger, and difficult circumstances for them to confess to charges. Police cell detainees constantly complain of ill-treatment in addition to the problem of overcrowding of the police cells that contributes to the spread of diseases that threatens the right to good health, human dignity, and existence. A host of others have alleged the police of being brutish in police checking points and during patrol duties; torture and cold-blooded murder at police stations and during the period of police interrogations while in their custody for questioning. Torture has been confirmed to be widely used by the police across Nigeria, despite the state prohibition against torture and custodial misconduct by the Police, which is a significant reason behind death and extrajudicial killings in custody. The Nigerian Police personnel regularly carry out summary execution of alleged criminal offenders as well as convicted criminals; rely on torture during the process of interrogation as the primary means of investigation; commit rapes of both sexes (males and females) and indulge in extortion at any opportunity in the vicinity. A very good example of Police brutality in Nigeria is the Maroko Shanty protest in Lagos on the 15th of November 2017 where the Nigerian Police broke up a sit-in protest, dispersing hundreds of former slum dwellers (including women and children) demanding compensation from the state government after being evicted from their waterfront homes in a move by the city authority to remove Shanty towns. As the bulldozers moved in and people were chased into the surrounding lagoon, at least 11 individuals are said to have died and 17 others vanished. Police brutality, the use of torture as an interrogation method, and other flagrant violations of human rights continue to be fundamental weaknesses in the Nigerian police force, drawing public scorn, opprobrium, and criticism (Ogunode, 2015).

The above cases highlight the fact that Nigeria's Police conduct is underlined by high-handedness, presumption, abuse of power and authority in addition to the brutalization of the downtrodden or poor masses who more often times are victims of un-actualized personal liberty, constitutional freedom, and rights as numerous cases of Police brutality on innocent and defenseless citizens abound. The activities of the police as an institution are meant to be guided at the national and international level by conventions, standards, and treaties (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and International Covenant on economic, social, and cultural rights, 1966). A situation where the Nigeria Police Force, an institution meant for the detection, investigation, and prosecution of crime in an effort to engender a fall in criminal activities in the society, now turning around to be perpetrators of crime is gradually becoming the norm in the Nigerian security environment. The shared fact that the prosecutors of crime contravene the rule of law puts the society at great peril as it will continue to affect their image in the purview of the end-users of their security services, thereby affecting their effectiveness and efficiency in the barrage against crime in the society. This trend (Police brutality) has claimed the lives of numerous defenseless citizens including the innocent ones who were not given the right to fair hearing in consonance with the rule of law but utterly brutalized. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate and examine the factors sustaining Police brutality and human rights abuse in Nigeria, using Bayelsa state as a case study.

Objectives of the Study

To investigate the influence of poor training on Police brutality and human right violation in the study.

To investigate the role of the docile public in reporting police brutality and human rights abuse in the area of this study.

The Hypotheses includes

The more the Nigerian police are ill-trained in their job, the more they brutalize and violate citizens' human rights.

The more the public lacks the courage to report Police brutality and human rights abuse, the more Police continue to brutalize and abuse citizens' human rights.

Review of Related Literature

Police brutality is a lethal blow to the very philosophical foundation of the basic human rights of existences as guaranteed by the Nigerian constitution of 1999 (as amended). The Nigeria Police Force has been reported to be

exhibiting with impunity, behaviors that trample on the basic rights of human peaceful existences in society. Examples of brutality inflicted by the Nigerian police include dragging of suspects across the road; molestation; beating of detainees with rifle butts, rods, and cables while suspended with a rope; nail, tooth, fingernail, and toenail extractions; starvation; sitting on sharp nails and throwing hot water on wounds; shootings in the leg, foot or hand; water torture and rape (Elkanah, 2017). They are known to subscribe to the use of force and other crude techniques in the process of interrogation that sometimes result in unlawful killings. The brutality being inflicted by the Nigerian police is so severe that deaths often result from these acts (Elkanah, 2017). For instance, officers of the Nigeria police on October 10th, 2017 reportedly tortured and then murdered a Nigerian named Ibrahim Olamilekan Badmus. Similarly, in April 2019, two officers of the Nigerian Police Force named Insp. Ogunyemi Olalekan and Sgt. Godwin Orji, attached to Anti-Cultism Squad, was arrested and charged with murdering a man during a raid in Lagos (afrcanews.com). The Nigerian police do not only execute detainees but also free citizens mostly for refusal to pay bribes or during road checks. A particular incident occurred in Rivers state where an Officer of the Nigeria Police shot a tricycle driver to death on Airport road in Ruuokoro/Rukpokwu area of Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers state for refusing to pay a sum of one hundred naira (#100) bribe. Likewise, the popular #ENDSARS protest in Nigeria was a reaction to evidence of police brutality and an infringement on the fundamental human rights of the individual. Precisely on the 3rd of October 2020, a video surfaced online allegedly showing a Police officer from the State Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) shooting a young man in Delta state. This is a threat to the right to life of the individual. These accounts of police highhandedness are nothing but infinitesimal when juxtaposed with the litany of reports on the abuse of power by Police officers. Extra-judicial killings are a violation of the right to life as enshrined in chapter IV, article 33 of the Nigerian Federal Constitution of 1999 as amended.

Amnesty International has found that the Nigerian police force commit rape in many different circumstances, both on and off duty. For instance, in July, a woman, who was identified as a widow and mother of two children, was reported to have been arrested by a named police officer in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, for not wearing a nose mask, and forcefully taken to a guest house where she was sexually assaulted (Punch 2020). According to the report, the officer, who threatened to kill the woman if she resisted his sexual advances, demanded the bank account details of the woman from her and transferred the sum of N2,000 (\$5) into her account as compensation, apparently, for sexually assaulting her (Richard, 2021). In one of the incidents of abuse of COVID-19 emergency powers, two police officers were shown on a video that went viral, flogging a woman with long canes in Odo Ori Market, Iwo, Osun State, 2 weeks into the lockdown (Premium Times 2020). Reports had it that the said woman was on her way to buy drugs and other needs for her household when she was accosted by the officers. In a study published in 2000, the Nigerian Human Rights Commission and the NGO Centre for Law Enforcement (CLEEN) stated that almost 80 percent of inmates in Nigerian prisons claim to have been beaten by police, threatened with weapons, and tortured in police cells (Elkanah, 2017; Amnesty International, 2008). These are clear violations of the right to dignity of human persons and personal liberty as guaranteed in Article 34 and 35 of the Nigerian Federal Constitution of 1999 as amended. The Nigerian Police frequently use torture while interrogating suspects, despite section 34 of the Nigerian Constitution, article 7 of ICCPR, and the Convention against Torture (Amnesty International, 2008). Torture and other ill-treatment are prohibited at all times, in all circumstances. Internal instability, any other public emergency, war, or the danger of war are all examples of extraordinary circumstances that cannot be used to justify torture. The perpetrators operated with impunity in nearly every case investigated by Amnesty International.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on Talcott Parsons' systems theory. System theory is an interdisciplinary examination of systems as they relate to one another within a larger, more complex system. The basic assumption of the systems theory is that a complex system is composed of multiple smaller systems with input and output functions, and it is the interaction between these smaller systems in functions that create a complex system. Systems theory contends that it is the quality of input invested in any part of society that determines how much output that the part delivers to society as a whole (Ebipamowei and Elem, 2019). Within any discipline, the application of systems theory involves looking at how the different components of the systems fuse to make a complex whole and how this ultimately ushers us the result that none of the parts of the larger system could produce independently without a change in the environment. This aligns with the functionalist theory that holds that society (complex system) is composed of different parts (smaller systems) that exist independently but intricately tied together in terms of output and input in functions to contribute to the survival and stability of the greater structure (society). Put differently, each part of the complex structure does stand alone but is related to each other parts or that operation of one part cannot be fully understood without reference to how the whole itself operates. The different smaller systems are interrelated in functions such that the input one becomes and output of another.

Using the system theory, it is the contention of this study that bad inputs, in terms of the abulia in reporting cases of police brutality and human rights violations to the proper authorities; inadequacy of police personnel; lack of proper training and retraining stemming from the poor funding of the Nigeria police; incommensurate remuneration and welfare practice, etc. that guarantees (as an output) the continuous perpetuation of police brutality and human right violation by personnel of the Nigeria police in the society.

Methodology

The setting of this research is Bayelsa state, located in the south-south of Nigeria. Survey research design was opted for this study. This is because; a survey design makes a correlational research strategy possible. The population of the study comprised of 2,277,961 residents in Bayelsa state according NBS (2017). The sample size of this study is 400 household heads drawn using the Taro Yamane statistical technique as represented thus $n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)$ where n is the expected sample size, 'N' is the total population which is equal to 2,277,961 and 'e' is the level of significance which in this case is 0.05. The study adopted a multi-staged sampling technique consisting of both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The probability sampling techniques were employed include cluster, simple, and convenience sampling techniques. The cluster sampling was used to partition Bayelsa based on the existing three senatorial districts (i.e., Bayelsa Central, Bayelsa East, and Bayelsa West), and one Local Government Area (LGA) each was selected from each of the clusters (that is, Yenagoa, Ogbia, and Sagbama respectively) using the simple random approach. Having done that, the simple random sampling method was also adopted to select one community each from each of the three LGAs (Ekeki, Otuoke, and Sagbama). Thereafter, the convenience sampling technique was deployed to select household residents on easy to contact or reached bases. Hence, 130 respondents each were selected from three communities (Ekeki, Otuoke and Sagbama) to make up 390 respondents. In addition to this, 10 key persons were purposively selected from major organizations that have close proximity to the theme of this research. These are Human Rights Activists, Civil Society Organizations, Legal practitioners, and the police force because they have more experience in the subject matter given the nature of their job. The primary data for the study were gathered using questionnaire and Key Persons Interviews (KPIs) while secondary data were gotten from published materials. The respondents were duly informed about the purpose of the study and other rights as respondents of the study including confidentiality. A combination of analytical techniques were used in this study to interpret the data. These are Descriptive statistics; Descriptive statistics was used for the summarizing of frequency and measures of central tendency. Information gathered from the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools and the statistical programme for social sciences SPSS software. The Chi-square (χ^2) statistical tool was employed to test the various hypotheses while Information from the Key Persons Interview collected with electronic tape and notes were later transcribed, synthesized and organized under thematic headings. Significant statements were quoted verbatim to corroborate or refute important findings.

Results and Discussion of findings.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Information

Gender Distribution of Respondents			
Gender	Frequency	percentage	Cumulative Percent
Male	190	54.6	54.6
Female	158	45.4	100
Total	348	100	
Age Groups of Respondents			
Below 20yrs	6	1.7	1.7
20-30yrs	96	27.6	29.3
31-40yrs	187	53.7	83.0
41-50yrs	49	14.1	97.1
Above 50yrs	10	2.9	100
Total	348	100	
Highest level of Education			
SSCE	27	7.8	7.8
NCE/OND	47	13.5	21.3
B.Sc./B.A	194	55.7	77.0
M.Sc./M.A	67	19.3	96.3
PhD	13	3.7	100
Total	348	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 1 above shows the socio-demographic information of respondents in this study. The first part of the table reveals the gender distribution of respondents and out of 348 of them, 190(54.6%) are male while 158(45.4%). The next is the age distribution of respondents and it captured that 6(1.7%) were below 20 years of age, 96(27.6%) of them fall between the age bracket of 20-30 years, additionally, 187(53.7%) are within the age bracket of 31-40 years, 49(14.1%) of the respondents are between 41-50 years of age, while 10(2.9%) of them are above 50 years of age. Finally in the socio-demographic distribution is the highest level of education of respondents. It captured that 27(7.8%) of the respondents are SSCE holders, 47(23.5%) are NCE/OND holders. Furthermore, 194(55.7%) of the respondents are B.Sc. holders, 67(19.3%) are M.SC. /M.A. certificate holders while 13(3.7%) are Ph.D. holders.

Substantive Data

In this section, the objectives are restated and the related data are presented in frequency table to enable a clear understanding of the results derived. This is followed by the presentation of the test of the hypotheses and interpretation of results.

Evaluation of Objectives

Objective 1: To investigate the influence of poor training on Police brutality and human right violation in the study.

Table 2: Poor training is responsible for Police brutality and human rights abuses in Bayelsa state.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	9	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Strongly disagree	29	8.3	8.4	11.0
	Disagree	42	12.1	12.2	23.3
	Agree	131	37.6	38.1	61.3
	Strongly Agree	133	38.2	38.7	100.0
	Total	344	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.1		
Total		348	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 above is a tabular distribution showing respondents' opinion on poor training as being responsible for police brutality and human rights abuse in Bayelsa State. From the information presented in the table, it is easy to see that 133(38.2%) strongly agreed, 131(37.6%) agreed, 42(12.1%) disagreed, 29(8.3%) strongly disagreed, 9(2.6%) were indecisive while 4(1.1%) left it unanswered.

Objective 2: To investigate the role of the docile public in reporting police brutality and human rights abuse in the area of this study.

Table 3: Docile public in reporting of cases is responsible for Police brutality and human rights abuses in Bayelsa state

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	25	7.2	7.3	7.3
	Strongly disagree	33	9.5	9.6	17.0
	Disagree	52	14.9	15.2	32.2
	Agree	143	41.1	41.8	74.0
	Strongly Agree	89	25.6	26.0	100.0
	Total	342	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	6	1.7		
Total		348	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 above is a tabular distribution showing respondents' opinion on the docile public as being responsible for police brutality and human rights abuse in Bayelsa State. From the information presented in the table, it is easy to see that 89(25.6%) strongly agreed, 143(41.1%) agreed, 52(14.9%) disagreed, 33(9.5%) strongly disagreed, 25(7.2%) were indecisive while 6(1.7%) left it unanswered.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The more the Nigerian police are ill-trained in their job, the more they brutalize and violate citizens' human rights.

Table 4: Showing if poor policing training can result in Police brutality and human rights abuses in Bayelsa state

		Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Gender	Male	5	14	23	74	74	190
	Female	4	15	19	57	59	154
Total		9	29	42	131	133	344

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The data in Table 4 above shows respondents' opinions on whether poor training is likely to make members of the police force enthrone brutality and abuse of human rights in dealing with citizens in their duties process. The data shows that 133 of the respondents strongly agree that when the police are ill-trained, they turn out to be

brutal and abuse human rights when performing their duties, 131 of them agree to this, 42 disagree, 29 strongly disagreed while 9 of them were indecisive.

Table 5: Chi-square computation for hypothesis 1

Category	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E/E) ²
Male	74	73.5	0.5	0.25	0.003
	74	72.4	1.6	2.56	0.04
	23	23.2	-0.2	0.04	0.002
	14	16.0	-2	4	0.25
	5	5.0	0.00	0.00	0.0
Female	59	59.5	0.5	0.25	0.004
	57	58.6	1.6	2.56	0.04
	19	18.8	0.2	0.04	0.002
	15	13.0	2	4	0.31
	4	4.0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Chi-Square	X²				0.65

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From the table above, the chi-square 2 calculated value for hypothesis 2 is as follows:

$$\text{Chi-square } \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(o - e)^2}{e}$$

Where o= observed frequency

e= expected frequency

Note that the expected value is calculated by multiplying the row total by column total for each response and dividing by the total number of respondents. After this, the chi-square calculated value is compared with the chi-square table value based on the calculated degree of freedom (df). Hence, to ascertain the degree of freedom the following formula applies.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{DF} &= (R-1) (C-1) \\ &= (2-1) (4-1) \\ &= 1 \times 3 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore DF =3

At 3 DF, the table value of at 0.05 level of Significance is =7.82

Decision rule: The generally accepted decision rule for the application of the chi-square X² test states that: Accept null hypothesis if the calculated value is less than the table value and reject the hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than the table value. In this study, the calculated value is 0.65, and the table value is 9.49. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that “The more the Nigeria police are ill-trained in their job, the more they brutalize and violate citizen’s human rights” is hereby rejected. Given the weight of the computed value of the chi-square when compared to the table value, it is safe to submit that there is no significant relationship between Police training and Police brutality or human rights abuses by Police personnel in the process of carrying out their constitutional duties in Bayelsa State.

Hypothesis 2: The more the public lack the courage to report Police brutality and human rights abuse, the more Police continue to brutalize and abuse citizen’s human rights.

Table 6: Showing how the public lack of courage in reporting Police brutality is responsible for the sustenance of Police Brutality and human rights abuses in Bayelsa state

		Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Gender	Male	11	19	28	84	46	188
	Female	14	14	24	59	43	154
Total		25	33	52	143	89	342

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The data in Table 6 above shows respondents’ opinions on whether a docile public in reporting cases of Police brutality and human rights abuses sustains police brutality and abuse of human rights in dealing with citizens in

their duties process. The data shows that 89 of the respondents strongly agree that a docile public in reporting cases of Police brutality and human rights abuses is a likely factor that sustains the act of Police brutal and abuses human rights when performing their duties, 143 of them agree to this, 52 disagree, 33 strongly disagreed while 25 of them were indecisive. The data in Table 9 above shows respondents' opinions on whether a docile public in reporting cases of Police brutality and human rights abuses sustains police brutality and abuse of human rights in dealing with citizens in their duties process. The data shows that 89 of the respondents strongly agree that a docile public in reporting cases of Police brutality and human rights abuses is a likely factor that sustains the act of Police brutal and abuse human rights when performing their duties, 143 of them agree to this, 52 disagree, 33 strongly disagreed while 25 of them were indecisive.

Table 7: Chi-square computation for hypothesis 2

Category	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E/E) ²
Male	46	48.9	-2.9	8.41	0.17
	84	78.6	5.4	29.16	0.37
	28	28.6	-0.6	0.36	0.01
	19	18.1	0.9	0.81	0.04
	11	13.7	-2.7	7.29	0.53
Female	43	40.1	2.9	8.41	0.21
	59	64.4	-5.4	29.16	0.45
	24	23.4	0.6	0.36	0.02
	14	14.9	-0.9	0.81	0.05
	14	11.3	2.7	7.29	0.65
Chi-Square	X²				2.5

Source: Field Survey, 2021

3 From the table above, the chi-square (X²) calculated value for hypothesis 2 is as follows:

$$\text{Chi-square } \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(o - e)^2}{e}$$

Where o= observed frequency

e = expected frequency.

It is important to point out that the expected value is the product of the Row and column total for every single response divided by the total number of respondents in the analysis. That is, the expected value is calculated by multiplying the row total by column total for each response and dividing by the total number of respondents. Afterward, the chi-square calculated value is compared with the chi-square critical table value based on the calculated degree of freedom (df). Hence, to calculate the degree of freedom, the following formula applies.

$\alpha = 0.05$

DF = (2-1) (5-1)

= (2-1) (5-1)

= 1x4

Therefore DF =4

At 4 DF, the table value of at 0.05 level of significance is =9.49

Decision Rule: The generally accepted decision rule for the application of the chi-square X² test states that: Accept null hypothesis if the calculated value is less than the table value and reject the hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than the table value. In this study, the calculated value is 2.5, and the table value is 9.49. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that "he more the public lack the courage to report Police brutality and human rights abuse, the more Police continue to brutalize and abuse citizens' human rights." is hereby rejected. Given the weight of the computed value of the chi-square when compared to the table value, it is safe to submit that there is no significant relationship between the public reporting of cases and Police brutality or human rights abuses by Police personnel in the process of carrying out their constitutional duties in Bayelsa State.

Key Persons Interview Data

Following the KPIs, two significant themes emerged that formed the sub-headings under which the results are discussed here. Below, the themes are discussed and supported with verbatim quotes from the interviewees where necessary.

Police Training, Police brutality and human rights abuses

Concerning Police training, the KPI participants had different opinions. Police participants captured that the Police are adequately trained. In justifying this assertion, one of the male participants reported that the training given to police officers is so adequate that even when they go out for foreign missions, they excel.

In sharp contrast to the above, the legal practitioner and Civil/Human rights activist unanimously agreed that Police training received by the recruits (six months) is different from the training received by senior officers that passed through Police College or National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies. They generally believe that the low-ranking officers are ill-trained while the senior officers are well-trained. That is to say, the training given to low-ranking personnel of the Nigerian police is grossly very inadequate when juxtaposed with the enormous responsibilities placed on the shoulders of the Police Force. Yet the lower rank officers are the ones who interface with citizens on a daily basis. According to one of the participants:

“The Policemen that turned out after training as Police officers from the lowest ranks of constable, Corporal, Inspectors even confess how badly they are trained. We equally see it play out usually that they don’t even know what to do when called into policing circumstances. And if they have a very bad departmental head, what they will come to know as the norm will be so wrong. So some get to grow in the Force -in-service experience”.

Another key person espoused that for Bayelsa state there is a different picture to it (worst). He stated that

“it is a different ball game because there are myriads of cutting of corners to bring in people who don’t have the capacity even to be trained but they must get into the system to become policemen. And they do it without the sophistry of the actual training. Some of them are even criminals clothed in Police uniforms (Male KPI participant aged 41).”

Other Key persons agreed that the Police refuse to see themselves as being part of the civil establishment with the onus of peace and to ensure there is law and order in the communities where they are. But because they understand it differently that they are the police force, they do a lot of things just by force. And because they are poorly trained, they don’t even know that they are to make sure that no person who comes into their presence or custody is treated badly. The poor training has also opened them to influence by the complainer who comes to tell them to keep alleged criminal suspects in custody till another day, batter and torture them on behalf of them. This has resulted in several cases where criminal suspects are tortured to death while in police custody and cases where persons not deserving of detention were detained for quite a while.

Docile public, Police brutality, and Human rights

A simple majority of the participants agreed that the public is not contributory to the sustenance and promotion of police brutality and human rights abuse especially when the ineffectiveness of the judiciary in meting out justice against perpetrators is a significant factor they must have considering their fight for their own rights that have been violated. The cost of litigation can also make somebody abandon the pursuit of his/her rights. In justifying this position, one of the KPI participants stated that:

“it is not the way you are angry that you fight. You can get angry and when the person stands waiting for you to come for the fight, you will be remembering that you use to have low blood pressure, and thus, you should be careful.”

Deductively, this is the particular experience of most victims of police brutality and human rights abuse. They get angry at first but when the bill of litigation comes before their table, they are forced to drawback. The victims are ready to fight for their rights that have been violated and or against their brutal experience in the hand of police officers but when they look at what will happen like the bureaucracy, judicial inefficiency, the bills, etc., they tend to draw back and count thy losses. Most of the victims of Police brutality and human rights abuses are frustrated in their own desires to enforce their rights against the police for brutality and wrongdoings. Although, generally, the KPI participants agreed that the judiciary helps in sustaining the act in that the process are very slow in the dispensation of justice (Judicial bureaucracy) some of them also pointed out that docile public reporting of cases of police brutality and human rights abuse is contributory to the sustenance of the act of police brutality. This is because crime mitigation starts from crime reporting and the judicial system is hinged on evidence/facts made available to the Court in proof of a particular case. They added that these things take time and when these facts are lacking, the Court will certainly discharge and acquit the case. They added that nothing free in this world. That is to say, the cost is part of the price to pay in the quest for justice.

Discussion

The discussion of findings is done in line with the research objectives and respective hypotheses. There are several things that were discerned in the course of this study. The first finding in this study dealt with objective 1 and the relevant data were presented in Table 2 above. The result captured that 75.8% of the respondents had positive views concerning whether poor training is responsible for the sustenance of Police brutality/human

rights abuses in Bayelsa state. This finding supports that of Christian, Grace, and Obuzor (2020) who established in their study that there is a significant relationship between the training of police officers and the flouting of fundamental human rights. However, the result from the chi-square statistical test of hypothesis revealed that at a significance level of 0.05, this cannot be termed to be a general statement in Bayelsa state (see Table 5 above). This could be because the training given to Police officers that do not brutalize citizens and abuse human rights is not different from those that actually perpetuate these abuses and brutalities in the process of policing the state. On the other hand, the result from the KPI shows variations in the opinion of the participants with the police clearly justifying that the training according to them is solid and is not in any way a driver of brutality, while other participants hold on to the reverse as true. Based on these submissions and given that a significant number of the questionnaire participants relate training to brutality and even though the hypothesis test result rejects this claim, we can conveniently state that although the result is mixed, the training of the Nigerian police force has a moderate effect on the brutality of citizens.

The second finding from the study dealt with objective 2 and the relevant data were presented in table 3 above. The result shows that 66.7% of the aggregate respondents had positive views concerning whether the docility of the public in reporting cases is responsible for the sustenance of Police brutality/human rights abuses in Bayelsa state. However, the result from the chi-square statistical test of hypothesis revealed that at a significance level of 0.05, this cannot be termed to be a general statement in Bayelsa state (see Table 7 above). From the Key Person Interview, the cost of litigation is a significant factor in the enforcement of rights and justice by victims of police brutality and human rights abuses by police personnel. This clearly shows why most persons find it difficult to report cases given issues related to the cost of litigation and the near lack of confidence in the criminal justice system. Consequently, given the outcome of the findings with regard to the questionnaire outcome, hypothesis testing, and KPI, it is easy to submit that although the outcome of the hypothesis testing led to the rejection of the alternate hypothesis, the significant number of the questionnaire respondents who were positive on this and the outcome of the KPI makes it imperative for us to submit that there is at least a moderate link between the docile nature of citizens concerning the reporting of cases and police brutality/human rights abuses in Bayelsa State.

Conclusion

The study examined the issue of police brutality and human rights abuse in Bayelsa state with a view to restoring sanity into law enforcement in Nigeria. Based on the findings, it concludes that the perpetuation of Police brutality in Bayelsa is high due to the poor training and abulia of crime reporting by victims. Conclusively from the research, is the fact that the level of police professionalism and respect/preservation of human dignity is very weak yet it is a significant factor in the development of the public service sector in the state and country at large. The research also concludes that the issue of Police brutality in Bayelsa state requires a collective effort by all the stakeholders concerned. Finally, the blueprints to restoring sanity in the enforcement of the law by the Police Force are presented below.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions reached in this study, the following recommendations have been proffered:

There should be proper training and retraining of Police personnel especially in the areas of sociology and psychology so as to deploy criminal intelligence and advance forensic techniques in the process of carrying out criminal investigations in the society.

The general public should be encouraged to report cases of police brutality and human rights as it is pivotal to the commencement of criminal investigation proceedings. One way of encouraging this is through the provision of special lines of the police commissioner, external monitoring bodies, and (or) agencies to the public for people to easily report their activities on the road without the notice of the Police offender(s). Also, Police officers on parole duties should be made to wear a body camera, and carry car cameras so as serve as evidence of their policing activities per day. This will go a long way to guarantee conformity in the general police conduct in the relationship with the citizens who are the end-users of the policing services in the society.

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