

PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION AMONG THE PERSONNEL OF THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE IN KANO METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

The Nigeria Police personnel are widely criticized for their inability to observe and display virtues that promote the protection of fundamental human rights in the conduct of their duties. Allegations on human rights abuses such as extortion, rape, forced disappearances, brutality and in some cases extra judicial killings by the personnel of the Nigeria Police are rampant. Thus, knowledge of public feelings, opinions and general perceptions on police human rights protection will provide insight on how the personnel of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) observe the code of conduct designed for them. This study examined the public perceptions on human rights protection among the cadres of the NPF. The target group for the study is adult male and female residents of Kano metropolis, with the sample size of 350 respondents. Multistage cluster sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents, structured questionnaires were administered to 344 respondents; and in-depth interviews were conducted with 3 police personnel, 1 Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps personnel, 1 human rights advocate, and 1 academic that were selected using purposive sampling technique. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics specifically frequencies and percentages. The study discovered that rather than being perceived as the protectors of human rights the police are generally perceived by the public as violators of these rights; that personnel in the senior cadre are perceived to be more prominent than their junior counterparts in protecting these rights; and that the perception was mainly influenced by the people's experience in the hands of the police. The study recommends that the duration and standard of police training should be reviewed and human rights education be prioritized and that mechanisms for investigating human rights abuses by the personnel of the NPF be provided. Similarly emphasis on human rights protection should be prioritized in the course of training the police, especially in training the rank and files.

Key words: police, police cadre, junior cadre, senior cadre, promotion of human rights

Introduction

The desire for the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) personnel to protect human rights stems from the nature and sensitivity of the duties assigned to them by the 1999 Constitution of

the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) and the Police Act of 1943 as amended in 1990. In these statutory documents the NPF has been given a strategic position in the structure of

the Nigeria's criminal justice system. This is because the personnel of NPF are entrusted to protect citizen's fundamental rights to liberty, equality and justice under the law. In fact, it appears that the NPF is the most important institution of social control concerned with the prevention, detection and control of crime as well as the protection of lives property and other aspects of the fundamental rights of the citizenry. Logically, police personnel are the lubricants of the criminal justice process who move the criminal law out of the books as they provide entry point into the criminal justice cycle either through crime reports from the public or by their own discovery. The personnel are statutorily empowered to use discretion and decide when to use deadly weapons in the discharge of their duties. Discretion is exercised by the police when they use their personal judgment to decide on what line of action to take thereby making the decision of a single police officer in the street as important as that of a court judge, as he/she decides on who goes into the criminal justice system and who does not.

A combination of discretion and statutory powers to stop, search, seize, detain, prosecute and even use deadly weapon will inevitably increase the potentials for the police personnel to abuse the inalienable rights of the citizens. Hence, the police are restrained by laws. In monitoring the conduct of the police, public opinions are very important, because the key drivers to democratic policing are accountability, responsiveness and representativeness targeted at achieving common interest and common good.

Since there are two cadres in the police, that is senior cadre (from the ranks of Assistant Superintendent of Police to that of Inspector-General of Police) and junior cadre otherwise known as rank and file (from the ranks of Police Constable to that of Inspector of Police), there is the need to have

knowledge on how personnel belonging to these two cadres carry out their statutory duties, particularly how they are generally perceived by the public as either the protectors or abusers of human rights. In line with the above, this paper intends to examine the public perceptions on police protection of human rights and how these perceptions could be used to understand the cadre of the NPF that is more likely to protect the fundamental rights of the citizens.

Statement of the Problem

The powers and legitimacy of the police are rooted from two sources: from the law and from the public trust in the values that the police symbolize. Thus, the authority of the police relies so much on the consent of people (Siegel, 2009). For the police to obtain such consent, they must conduct their job with all sense of humility: respect human dignity, protect human rights, responsive to people's needs, accountable to people, fairness, compassion, strong display of civility, dedication and restraint, etc. The police must be approachable so that people can go to them in times of need. In short, the police must provide services that enrich the quality of life of the citizens (Reid, 1997).

Looking at the above, one may presume that the NPF has all that it takes to attract public love, support and friendship. Unfortunately, there has been a number of allegations against the NPF and its personnel on human rights breaches. These include among others, abuse of statutory powers, brutality, cruelty, torture, corruption, rape, extortions, incivility and ineffectiveness, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings (Ladan, 2001; Odinkalu, 2003; Oyeozili, 2005; Radda, 2005; Jaja, 2006; Network of Human Rights Violation Monitors, 2006; Dambazau, 2007; Network on Police Reform in Nigeria, 2007, 2008; Nuraddeen, 2010; Jauhari, 2011; United States Department of

States, 2011; Amnesty International, 2012, 2012, 2014). As a result of these abuses, the police image suffers, policing potential is not achieved, suspicion and distrust increase among the public, public confidence in the police declines and the citizens are no longer willing to support the police. It is against this background that this study intends to explore the public perceptions on human rights protection among the personnel of the NPF and how cadres of the NPF are perceived by the public on human rights protection in Kano metropolis.

Thus, the data obtained will help greatly in informing the government and other stakeholders in the police administration on the public feelings on the police protection of human rights. In the same vein, the public perceptions on human rights protection by the personnel of the police in different cadres will give insight as to the prominent cadre in the NPF that is more celebrated by the public as the protector of their rights. This knowledge will give room for understanding the reasons for such disparities and how they could be abridged.

Literature Review

In Nigeria, the fear of domination by the major tribes expressed by the minorities led to the adoption of some provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the 1960 Constitution. These were subsequently reflected in the 1963, 1979 and 1999 Constitutions. The 1999 Constitution has, however, outlined the fundamental rights that must be accorded to all Nigerians and that no one shall be deprived of such rights except by a justifiable law, which shall be in the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, public health or for the purpose of protecting the rights and freedoms of other persons. These rights according to sections (33) – (43) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, include: (i) right to

life; (ii) right to human person; (iii) right to personal liberty; (iv) right to fair hearing; (v) right to private and family life; (vi) right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; (vii) right to freedom of expression at the press; (viii) right to freedom of peaceful assembly; (ix) right to freedom of movement; (x) right to freedom from discrimination; and (xi) right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria.

From 1980s onward, the Country had witnessed mass proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which make human rights campaign their focal point. Some of the prominent human rights NGOs in Nigeria include the Civil Liberty Organization (CLO), National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADL), Universal Defenders of Democracy (UDD), Human Rights Africa (HRA), GaniFawehinmi Solidarity Association (GFSA), Women Justice Programme (WJP). The activities of these NGOs recorded a tremendous success in terms of disseminating knowledge and awareness of human rights activities in the Country. Hence, issues such as promoting the independence of judiciary, prison conditions, police brutality, extrajudicial killings by security operatives, legal aid programs, poverty eradication campaigns, election malpractices, gender inequality, child trafficking and abuse, spousal abuse, female genital mutilation, maternal mortality, corruption and other social problems that pose threat on human rights were made very topical and subjects for national discourse (Cephas, 2007).

Human Rights Abuse by the NPF

Ladan (2001), Radda (2005), and Jauhari (2011) were of the believe that the history of human rights activities in Nigeria far predates the advent of colonial rule. According to these scholars, human rights and fundamental freedoms were essentially recognized by the traditional Nigerian societies. The idea of

rights was not conceived in the modern notion, but such values as rights to family and private life, kin and clan membership, freedom of thought, speech, religion and association, right to private property and to participation in government were guarded and guaranteed. In areas where Islamic legal system was practiced, for example, in the Northern part of the Country, human rights and fundamental freedoms were especially protected and guaranteed in accordance with the Islamic tenets, which holds justice, fairness and equality in high esteem.

The imposition of European imperialism nonetheless eroded traditional values and liberties fundamental to the people (Ladan, 2001). It was not until 1922 when the Clifford Constitution introduced limited franchise. The Independence Constitution of 1960, the Republican Constitution of 1963, the 1979 and the 1999 Constitutions further made provisions for the protection of human rights, catering civil, social, economic, cultural as well as political rights (NHRVM, 2006: 9).

However, despite the protections for the fundamental rights, especially right to life, provided for by the national, regional and international instruments, cases of human rights violations by the police and other law enforcement agents are still prevalent in Nigeria (NHRVM, 2006; Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria and National Human Rights Commission, 2000; and NOPRIN, 2007). These violations of human rights by security operatives especially the police were seen as an aftermath of police over concentration on law enforcement dimension of their work. This is because antagonism and violence between the police and citizens tend to be higher in a society where the police tend to concentrate on law enforcement aspect of their work than in a society where the police blend law enforcement and social services dimensions of the police work. In Nigeria, there is virtual

absence of social services dimension in the police work. This has blocked the opportunities for non-coercive contacts between the police and the members of the public (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2000).

After careful observations of the activities of police in well over four hundred (400) police stations across fourteen Nigerian States in 2007, the Network on Police reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) in a report titled "criminal force?: An Interim Report on the Nigeria Police Force," revealed that it has discovered a police institution whose work has been criminalized. The report further disclosed that:

Police personnel kill, torture, extort and commit rape, safe in the knowledge that they are unlikely to face the consequences for such misconduct. Such brutal police practices have thus become routine of policing in Nigeria. Far from being a scourge to crime and its perpetrators, the NPF is now a danger to public safety and security... (NOPRIN, 2007: 2).

In the same vein, the United States Department of States (USDS) released similar report on the police activities in Nigeria, which reported the human rights violation in the year to include: the abridgment of citizen's rights to change their government; politically motivated and extrajudicial killings by law enforcement agents, including summary executions; torture, rape and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of the criminal suspects (USDS, 2011). The report also revealed that:

The National Police, army and other security forces committed extrajudicial killings and used lethal and excessive force to apprehend criminals and suspects, as well as to disperse protestors (USDS, 2011: 12).

The report further disclosed that in December 2009, the Amnesty International published *Killing at Will: Extrajudicial Executions and other Unlawful Killings by the police in Nigeria*, which documented 39 cases of security forces killings and forced disappearances based on interviews conducted between July 2007 and July 2009. According to the report, National Police conducted hundreds of extrajudicial executions, other unlawful killings and enforced disappearances each year. Victims were not picked at random and, in a country where “bribes guarantee safety,” those who could not afford to pay were at risk of being shot or tortured to death. The majority of cases were not investigated, and perpetrators were not punished. When investigations did occur, they did not comply with international standards, and officers suspected of extrajudicial killings were sent away on training or transferred to other states instead of being prosecuted (USDS, 2011).

In 2012, a report titled: ‘The State of the World’s Human Rights’, credited to the AI revealed that Nigeria’s human rights situation has continued to get worst. The report indicted the police of routinely torturing suspects to extract information. Confessions extracted through torture were used in the courts of law as evidence in contradictions with both national and international standards (AI, 2012).

In another report, titled ‘Welcome to Hell Fire: Torture and Other Ill-treatment in Nigeria’, the same Amnesty International (2014) has again indicted the NPF and other security operatives of extra-judicial executions and torture in resolving criminal cases in the Country. The police and military were allegedly reported as routinely torturing women, men and even children. Some of these children were reported to be as young as 12 years using a number of methods such as beatings, shootings and rape. The report viewed that torture was not a criminal offence

in Nigeria despite the fact that it is constitutionally prohibited. The report further alleged that a law criminalizing torture is yet to be passed despite the fact that two different bills have been pending in the National Assembly for two years.

Rather than carrying out investigations to ensure the validity or otherwise of the above reports and similar allegations, the NPF had consistently denied most of these allegations. The Police has often described such reports and allegations as blatant falsehoods and innuendoes, fabricated to taint its image. The NPF has repeatedly celebrated, romanticized and praised itself for ‘improvement’ on its human rights records since 1999, owing largely to training and retraining, community policing, attitudinal change and structural transformation. The Police further claimed that it is versed with international best practices and operates within the ambit of law. According to the NPF, the Police has zero tolerance for human rights violation and that the offending officers are promptly sanctioned in line with the law (Nigeria Police Force, 2014).

Looking at the above, however, it can be seen that there is contradictions between what empirical literatures reveals and the position of the NPF on the issues regarding the police protection of human rights. This calls for the conduct of this research, which can be used to verify the positions of the NPF and that of other individuals, groups and organizations indicting the Police of human rights breaches in the Country. Whether the police abuses or protects human rights remains debatable, but the debate could be more meaningful if arguments are backed by empirical findings not just mere presumptions.

Methodology

This study obtained both qualitative and quantitative data in order to explore and examine the public perception on human

rights promotion among the cadres of the NPF in Kano metropolis. The study population of this work consists of all adult residents of Kano metropolis both males and females including the judicial officers, police prosecutors, and inmates awaiting trial. Others include members of the public who had one experience or the other in the court of law as plaintiffs, defendants, suspects, witnesses, or even victims of crime. The sample size of this research work is 355 respondents. To obtain this sample, this research work employed a multi-stage sampling. At the first stage, each of the eight Local Governments was considered a cluster within which one traditional ward was randomly selected using snowball sampling technique. At the second stage, two streets were selected from the traditional ward chosen using same method. At the third stage, questionnaires were administered to twenty two (22) and twenty one (21) respondents accidentally met on the first and second streets respectively. Hence, this made the total number of respondents to be forty three (43) in each of the selected traditional ward. This made the total number of the sample size to be three hundred and fifty (350) as shown on tables 2 and 3 below. On the other hand, purposive sampling was used to select respondents for the in-depth

interview on 3 police personnel, 1 Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps personnel, 1 human rights advocates, and 1 academic. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics specifically frequencies and percentages. Similarly, secondary data from relevant journals, gazettes, books, documents, etc were consulted to supplement the quantitative and qualitative data.

Results

This section presents the findings on public perceptions of human rights protection among the cadres of the NPF in Kano metropolis. This is purely based on the respondents' assessment of the ways and manners in which the personnel in the different cadres of the NPF observe and show virtues that promote human rights in the discharge of their duties. However, questions on respondents' knowledge of human rights and their awareness of the different cadres in NPF were asked as a prelude to knowing their perceptions on human rights protection among the cadres of the NPF. This question was preceded with some questions on the respondents' general perceptions on the police protection of human rights. The data are presented in the Tables below:

Table 1: Respondents' Knowledge of Human Rights

Fundamental Rights	Aware	Unaware	Total
Right to life	305 (91.3%)	29 (8.7%)	334 (100%)
Right to dignity of human person	296 (88.6%)	38 (11.4%)	334 (100%)
Right to personal liberty	283 (84.7%)	51 (15.3%)	334 (100%)
Right to fair hearing	287 (85.9%)	47 (14.1%)	334 (100%)
Right to private and family life	286 (85.6%)	48 (14.4%)	334 (100%)
Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion	289 (86.5%)	45 (13.5%)	334 (100%)
Right to freedom of expression and the press	290 (86.8%)	44 (13.2%)	334 (100%)
Right to peaceful assembly	287 (85.9%)	47 (14.1%)	334 (100%)
Right to freedom of movement	290 (86.8%)	44 (13.2%)	334 (100%)
Right to freedom from discrimination	286 (85.6%)	48 (14.4%)	334 (100%)
Right to acquire and own immovable property	263 (78.7%)	71 (21.3%)	334 (100%)

Table 1 above presents responses on the respondents' knowledge of human rights. This is important because without such knowledge the respondents are least likely to understand under which circumstances do the police abuse or protect human rights. However, for easy understanding, the above responses were indexed. Thus, the responses were condensed into three comprehensive

categories. Those who knew at least 9 or more of these human rights as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria were categorized as being very knowledgeable, those who knew only 5 to 8 were considered knowledgeable and those who knew only 4 or below were categorized as having limited knowledge of these rights. The above index is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Index on Respondents' Human Rights Knowledge

Knowledge of Human Rights	Frequency	Percentage
Very Knowledgeable	278	83.2
Knowledgeable	28	8.4
Limited Knowledge	28	8.4
Total	334	100.0

Table 2 above gives data on the level of human rights knowledge among the respondents. Sections 33 – 43 of the 1999 Constitution are where these human rights were provided. As seen in Table 1 above, these human rights were itemized and presented to the respondents. An index taken on the respondents knowledge of these human rights shows that, while 83.2% of the respondents were very knowledgeable of the

fundamental human rights as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 8.4% of the respondents were knowledgeable of these fundamental human rights. However, only 8.4% of the respondents appeared to have limited knowledge of these fundamental human rights. This implies that most of the respondents were aware of the human rights.

Table 3: Respondents' General Perceptions on Police Personnel's Protection of Human Rights

Police Protection of Human Rights	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	136	40.7
Not agreed	198	59.3
Total	334	100.0

Table 3 above indicates that only 40.7% of the respondents agreed that the Nigeria Police Force personnel protect human rights in the conduct of their duties; on the other hand, 59.3% of the respondents who constituted the majority were of the contrary view. This is in line with the findings of the CLEEN and NHRC (2000), NHRVM (2006), NOPRIN (2008) and Amnesty International (2012). The same position can be seen in the writings of Akano (1993); Alemika and Chukwuma (2000);

Dambazau, (2007); Adebayo and Ojo (2009); and Radda et al (2011). The failure of the Nigeria Police Force to protect the fundamental human rights does not affect the civil population alone, because even other security personnel are sometimes victimized by police. An official of the NSCDC revealed that:

... NPF is an organization that is old and has been growing over time. So, it

carried along with it many bad eggs.... Some bad eggs actually do violate human rights. Even (we) security organizations sometimes fall into their hands, they maltreat us. They do because the Constitution has given them the power that they can do whatever they wanted.... (DO, NSCDC, Nassarawa Division, 20).

This opinion was replicated by an academic that specialized in criminology who argued that:

I have been to many police stations in Nigeria and beyond, and whether the Nigeria Police promote human rights or not? The simple answer to criminologist is no... because it is very common, whether you have been to police station or not, the police officer in the street violates human rights. They intimidate, they abuse, they detain, yes they harass, they even punish, they victimize, they brutalize on the street, they extort money from drivers, from road users and they are never polite in their approach... some of those things are definitely abuses of human rights. The moment you are in the police station you are just like a meat, they do whatever they so wish to you. There is nothing like promotion of human rights in police stations in Nigeria. The police are known to be remarkable violators of human rights either in the police station or in the streets (Academic Staff, Bayero University, Kano).

To the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the ability of the NPF's personnel to respect and promote human rights is far below the expected standard. An official of the Commission had this to say:

Actually, the ability of the Nigeria Police to carry out their duties taking into

cognizance the respect and protection of human rights is below average. The NHRC is always receiving complaints from the public in respect of breach of human rights by the law enforcement agents, particularly the police. Thus, to the NHRC, the performance or the ability of the Nigeria Police to perform within the scope of human rights promotion is far close to average (Coordinator, NHRC, Kano Office).

The above failure was however connected to the poor training of the NPF personnel on human rights. The Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the State Command was interviewed on whether the NPF do train its personnel on human rights, he answered:

Yes, the NPF do train its personnel on aspect of human rights protection. Right from the onset, a potential policeman is taught liberal studies in the NPF's training institutions as well as the general provisions of the Nigeria's Constitution, especially those parts which deal with citizenship and human rights. This brought about the idea of launching the 'Code of Conduct for the Police Officers and Men' by the present Inspector-General of Police, Mr. M. D. Abubakar, mni, to guide the conduct of the Nigeria Police Force generally (PPRO, Kano State Command).

However, contrary views were expressed by some of the junior officers of the NPF. For example, a Police Inspector was asked whether he has ever been specifically trained on human rights protection and he responded that:

To be candid with you, we sometimes receive such trainings, but now I can tell you that I personally receive such only training during our induction course.... But, I believed it will really help if this sort of training will be given

to officers while they assume duty (Police Inspector, Gwale Division).

the prominent cadre in the NPF that is comparatively better in human rights promotion. These responses were presented in tables 7, 8 and 9 below.

Despite the above negative perceptions, respondents were asked on their opinions on

Table 4: Respondents' Awareness of the Cadres in the NPF

Awareness of Cadres in the Police	Frequency	Percentage
Aware	202	60.5
Unaware	132	39.5
Total	334	100.0

Table 4 above indicates that 60.5% of the respondents, who are the majority, were aware of the two different cadres in the NPF, as only 39.5% of the respondents admitted that they were not aware of the existence of such cadres. This means that a majority of the respondents have knowledge of the police ranks that constitutes a particular cadre and can thus compare human rights observance and display of virtues that promote human rights among the personnel belonging to each of these cadres of the NPF.

Table 5: Respondents' Opinions on the Prominent Cadre in Protecting the Fundamental Rights of the Citizens

Prominent Cadre in Promoting Human Rights	Frequency	Percentage
Junior Cadre (Those in the ranks of Police Constable – Police Inspector)	143	42.8
Senior Cadre (Those in the ranks of Assistant Superintendent of Police – Inspector-General of Police)	191	57.2
Total	334	100.0

Table 5 above shows that 57.2% of the respondents, who are the majority, were of the opinion that the superior police officers (those in the senior cadre) are more prominent in protecting the fundamental human rights than the rank and files, whereas, the remaining 42.8% of the respondents expressed opposite opinion. However, the perception on these cadres might be related to the fact that the study was conducted in the metropolis which has a significant number of educated residents. The fact that violations of human rights often occurred under the watchful eyes of those senior officers may not necessarily make people to believe that they violate human rights since such accusations are often made on the actual violators (mainly rank and files).

Table 6: Respondents' Source of Opinion

Source of Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Experience	143	42.8
Heard in the Media	86	25.7
Worked with the Police Before	32	9.6
Personal Observation at Scenes of NPF's Operations	73	21.9
Total	334	100.0

Table 6 above indicates the grounds for the respondents' opinions regarding the prominent cadre in protecting human rights. A majority of the respondents (42.8%) related their opinion with their experiences in the hands of NPF's personnel, 25.7% argued to have been influenced by the media, 9.6% have worked with the police before and 21.9% of the respondents were influenced by their personal observations at different scenes during operations by the NPF's personnel. Hence, it can be inferred that a majority of the respondents have the basic assumption that the NPF's personnel in the senior cadre are more likely to protect human rights than their junior counterparts. This opinion may be due to the fact that the junior police officers (otherwise known as rank and files) are those who maintain regular contact with the members of the public, and thus more prone to violate people's rights. On the other hand, the senior officers often work in offices and therefore have little contact with the people. Other reasons could be related to the length of training that police personnel belonging to different cadres have been subjected to. While the rank and files are often trained within the time span of four to six months, the senior officers are trained for two years in addition to the comparatively higher educational qualification they possess (mostly university degrees). Another reason could be connected with the fact that the police in the senior cadre are mainly handling the administrative aspect of policing and therefore remains largely in offices, while the rank and files are the field workers and thus established more regular contacts with the public, and in turn more prone to human rights breaches. Apart from all these, the junior cadre police are more numerous, therefore more likely to have largest number of human rights abusers among them. These may be the reasons for the wide gap that the respondents believed to

have existed between the senior officers and their rank and file counterparts in promoting human rights.

Discussion

The broad objective of this study is to study the public perceptions on human rights protection among the police personnel in Nigeria. The study revealed that the respondents are aware of the human rights as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, because 83.2% of the respondents were very knowledgeable of the fundamental human rights as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 8.4% of the respondents were knowledgeable of these fundamental human rights. Only 8.4% of the respondents appeared to have limited knowledge of the fundamental human rights.

Furthermore, a majority (60.5%) of the respondents were aware of the two different cadres as they exist in the NPF. This is because 76.9% of the respondents knew that those officers whose ranks fall between the ranks of Police Constable to that of the Police Inspector are in the junior cadre. In the same vein, 94.3% of the respondents who are also the majority were aware of the fact that police personnel whose ranks started from the ranks of an Assistant Superintendent of Police to Inspector-General of Police constitutes the senior cadre of the Nigeria Police Force.

The above implies that the respondents are in a very good and appropriate position to identify the prominent cadre in human rights promotion. Thus, a majority of the respondents (57.2%) opined that those police officers in the senior cadre are more prominent in human rights promotion. The respondents have also claimed that their perception regarding this variation across cadres was mainly influenced by their personal experiences in the hands of NPF's personnel

accounting for about 42.8% of the respondents who are also the majority. This may be due to the fact that most of the officers in the senior cadre are the products of the Nigeria Police Academy and were trained for about two years in which topics related to human rights were taught to them, as opposed to the junior officers trained within four to six calendar months. In addition, the senior officers are less visible to the public as most of them work in offices, as opposed to the junior officers who work in the field and thus establish regular contact with the members of the public. Another reason could be that most of the senior officers have higher educational qualifications such as university degree or Higher National Diploma (HND), etc, as opposed to the junior officers most of whom are secondary school leavers.

A criminologist from Bayero University, Kano further elaborated on the consequences of the above situation where members of the public consider police as their enemies. He argued that:

.... One major consequence is that members of the public have lost confidence in the police, and the problem is the kind of double-barrel problem in the sense that because the police are commonly found in abusing people's rights, members of the public are not interested in reporting any problem to them. They are not interested in having any interaction that involves a single member of the Nigeria Police Force. Meaning, criminals can hide under that cover to continue to perpetuate their actions. Meaning, the efforts of the policing organizations are to be in shambles. In the sense that people that they are policing are not ready to accept them. They should think to create an atmosphere that will make people to be forthcoming in terms of reporting any crime to them. If not the

problems of crimes are going to rise in terms of size, because the police are seeing with disdain and serious disrespect because of their disrespectful attitude and behavior towards the members of the public. So, they will continue to harass people, and people will now continue to commit crimes. In other words, instead of them now to reduce crimes they may likely now create a crime of atmosphere that will inflate the criminal behavior and criminality among human beings. Because they are not doing the right thing and people feel the police are useless (Academic Staff, Bayero University, Kano).

Conclusion

Policing is a trust and that the police derives its legitimacy from the law and the people. The law empowers the police while the people entrusted in them to protect them in their persons and possessions. Therefore, the police institution must be transparent, accountable, service oriented and above all promoter of human rights. Unfortunately, the image of the NPF has suffered a lot of damages in the minds of ordinary Nigerians. Many Nigerians, as reaffirmed by the findings of this research have the single opinion that the police are the primary violators of human rights. However, these unethical practices are more related to the personnel in the junior cadre who are more numerous and who establish more regular contact with the civil population. Unless, due attention is given to this faction of the police, the image and the name of the NPF will continue to suffer negative stereotyping that will make the police to be counterproductive and number one enemy to civil population. Not only that, but the criminal justice system will also suffer a serious setback in its effort to regulate and control crimes in the Country.

Recommendations

This study would be more meaningful if lasting solutions regarding those factors that influence the negative public perceptions on human rights promotion among the cadres of the NPF are proposed and presented. In line with the above, some recommendations have been made.

1. The first thing to be done in sanitizing the activities of the NPF personnel in line with the human rights respect protection and promotion has a lot to do with the issue of recruitment. The recruitment exercise must be transparent, rigorous and should include other important aspects such as psychological tests and screening of attitude and behavior. The police organization must make sure that it is recruiting the right candidates worthy in both knowledge and character into the NPF. Similarly, those that are already in the NPF must be properly screened too using sing their documents; and screened in their attitudes and behavior. Those found with questionable characters should be removed from the police.
2. In addition, the government must review the welfare packages of the police officers to meet their basic needs. It is not appropriate for the government to provide the police with uniforms, weapons and authority to stop, search and seizure while they are hungry. Government should make them comfortable by paying them salaries that will meet their basics of life.
3. The scope and standards of the police training should be improved to meet the requirements of modern policing. The training should not be a total police affair; other experts and professionals from different areas should be included in the training because the police needs all those trainings. External individuals must be invited to teach the police those aspects of policing that could not be properly taught in-house.
4. The protection and promotion of human rights should be prioritized through training. and retraining of the officers. In the said training rank and files must be given priority considering their number and the strategic role they play in the police work. Proper sanctioning mechanisms and modern techniques for investigating human rights abuses should be provided.
5. The National Human Rights Commission and other human rights advocates should organize sensitization campaign which shall make the police their primary target.
6. Finally, emphasis should be placed on public relations training, which shall provide the police officers and men with the communication skills and the ability to relate well with the civil population. This will help in transforming the NPF to an organization that is people oriented and one that is loved, respected and trusted by the public.

Reference

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