

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES IN GOMBE STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates the prevalence, nature, and determinants of human rights violations in correctional facilities in Gombe State, Nigeria, addressing a significant geographical gap in the literature on North-Eastern Nigeria. Adopting a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional survey approach, the study sampled 317 inmates from a population of 1,550 across five correctional centres using Yamane's formula, with stratified and simple random sampling techniques ensuring proportional representation. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale, validated through expert review and pilot testing (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.82), and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean scores, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Chi-square tests at $\alpha = 0.05$). The findings revealed that overcrowding (mean = 3.9), physical abuse (mean = 3.5), inadequate medical care (mean = 3.2), poor sanitation and nutrition (mean = 3.4), and psychological abuse (mean = 3.1) are prevalent violations. Institutional factors including corruption (mean = 3.8), inadequate staff training (mean = 3.6), insufficient funding (mean = 3.5), and weak monitoring mechanisms (mean = 3.3) were identified as major contributors. Chi-square tests established statistically significant associations between overcrowding and physical abuse ($\chi^2 = 18.64$, $p < 0.001$), corruption and denial of medical care ($\chi^2 = 15.23$, $p < 0.001$), and inadequate training and psychological abuse ($\chi^2 = 12.87$, $p < 0.001$). The Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019) was found to be poorly enforced (mean = 3.3), with governance weaknesses (mean = 3.4) undermining its effectiveness. The study concludes that systemic institutional failures perpetuate rights violations, and recommends increased funding, enhanced staff training, independent oversight mechanisms, alternative sentencing to reduce overcrowding, and strict enforcement of existing legal provisions. This research extends the geographical coverage of correctional literature to Gombe State, applies Human Dignity Theory as both an explanatory and evaluative framework, and provides robust empirical evidence through inferential analysis to inform policy reforms aimed at protecting inmates' fundamental rights and upholding their inherent dignity.

Keywords: Human Rights Violations, Correctional Facilities, Inmates' Rights, Correctional Officers, Prison Reform

1.1 Introduction

Globally, human rights violations remain a pressing concern, manifesting in extrajudicial killings, repression of freedoms, and systemic discrimination across regions such as the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America (Human Rights Watch, 2023; Freedom House, 2023). In Africa, political instability, poverty, and conflict drive widespread abuses, including arbitrary detention

and torture in states like South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Eritrea (Amnesty International, 2023). Conceptualized as deliberate or systemic acts and omissions by state or non-state actors, human rights violations negate fundamental freedoms and reflect deep institutional failures (Bello, 2020). These infractions contravene the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and domestic constitutional frameworks.

In Nigeria, human rights violations are exacerbated by persistent security crises, including the Boko Haram insurgency and farmer-herder clashes, alongside abuses by security forces (Okonkwo & Obi, 2022). State-sponsored violations encompass police brutality, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and restrictions on free expression, as highlighted during the #EndSARS protests (Olumide, 2021). Reports by Human Rights Watch (2022) and Amnesty International (2023) consistently criticize the Nigerian government for failing to uphold constitutional rights, particularly in conflict-prone northeastern regions.

A critical domain where these abuses persist is the Nigerian correctional system. Managed by the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS), facilities nationwide suffer from deplorable conditions, prolonged pre-trial detention, and systemic neglect (Obioha, 2016). Inmates routinely face torture, denial of medical care, lack of legal representation, and restricted family access (NHRC, 2022). These conditions violate international benchmarks, specifically the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules), and strip detainees of fundamental human dignity (Bello, 2020). Severe structural failures further paralyze the correctional healthcare system and judicial process. Extended pre-trial detentions cause extreme overcrowding, poor ventilation, and disease outbreaks like cholera and tuberculosis (International Centre for Prison Studies, 2022; Amnesty International, 2021). Preventable physical and mental health conditions go untreated due to chronic underfunding and insufficient medical personnel (Human Rights Watch, 2020; United Nations, 2019). Despite statutory interventions such as the Nigerian Correctional Service Act of 2019, corruption and lack of political will continue to obstruct meaningful reform (Alemika, 2020; NHRC, 2022; Amnesty International, 2023). At the sub-national level, correctional facilities in Gombe State mirror these broader national deficiencies. Inmates in Gombe face inadequate feeding, restricted recreation and worship, physical harassment, and weak institutional oversight. These persistent violations compromise the core mandate of inmate rehabilitation and reintegration. Consequently, this study examines the nature and extent of human rights violations in Gombe State correctional facilities to identify root causes and evaluate pathways toward systemic reform.

1.2 Conceptual Review

Concept of Human Rights

Human rights are inherent, universal, and inalienable entitlements owed to every individual to safeguard human dignity. They are not state-granted privileges but natural moral claims (Alston & Goodman, 2005). Under international legal frameworks, human rights are defined by indivisibility and interdependence, meaning the denial of socio-economic rights directly degrades civil and political liberties (Alston & Goodman, 2005; UDHR, 1948). While states act as the primary legal guarantors of these rights, they simultaneously represent their most significant potential violators (Barzilai, 2003). Modern human rights frameworks must continually evolve to bridge abstract philosophical dignity with practical domestic governance (Inyang, 2025; Naankiel, 2013).

In Nigeria, the primary repository for human rights is the 1999 Constitution (as amended). This framework is structurally bifurcated between justiciable civil and political liberties in Chapter IV (Sections 33–44) and non-justiciable socio-economic objectives in Chapter II (Section 6(6)(c)). Scholars argue this legal division cripples rights enforcement, as socio-economic deprivation renders civil liberties structurally hollow (Aborisade, 2017; Inyang, 2025; Ojo, 2026). Furthermore, Nigeria faces severe enforcement deficits driven by institutional corruption, administrative negligence, weak statutory protection for vulnerable populations, and expanding regulatory threats in data privacy and state surveillance (Aliyu, 2024; Effoduh & Odeh, 2024).

Concept of Human Rights Violation

A human rights violation is any act, omission, or policy by state or non-state actors that obstructs or denies fundamental freedoms guaranteed by domestic and international law (Donnelly, 2007; Obioha, 2016). As the primary duty-bearer under international law, the state bears ultimate responsibility for violations, whether through direct abuse, structural neglect, or systemic exclusion (Donnelly, 2007).

In Nigeria, persistent human rights violations reflect deep structural deficits, including official impunity, judicial weakness, and severe socio-economic disparities. Key manifestations include arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, torture, and heavy-handed crackdowns on civil protests (Amnesty International, 2025; U.S. Department of State, 2025). The protracted conflict in the North-East exposes civilians to a dual threat of extremist insurgent violence (Boko Haram/ISWAP) and excessive force by state security agencies (Obioha, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2025). Additionally, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains widespread, with over 20 million survivors facing an estimated 96% failure rate in legal prosecution due to systemic bottlenecks, cultural stigma, and lack of accountability (Sulaiman-Ibrahim, 2026; WanderSafe, 2025). Remedying these systemic abuses requires deep institutional restructuring, independent

security oversight, grassroots civic education, and international collaboration (Amnesty International, 2026).

Concept of Correctional Centres

Correctional centres historically conceptualized as punitive "total institutions" defined by strict bureaucratic control and severe social insulation (Goffman, 1961) have undergone a philosophical paradigm shift toward rehabilitative and restorative penology (Clear et al., 2018; Johnson, 2002). In Nigeria, this shift was codified by the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) Act of 2019, which repealed the 2004 Prisons Act. The 2019 Act bifurcated the agency into Custodial and Non-Custodial Services, reorienting its statutory mandate from vindictive incarceration toward inmate dignity, psychological reformation, and vocational skill acquisition (NCoS Act, 2019).

However, a severe gap persists between statutory blueprints and operational realities. Carceral networks remain constrained by political discipline mechanisms (Foucault, 1977), fiscal underfunding, administrative corruption, and infrastructural decay (Aborisade, 2017; Peter et al., 2024). Catastrophic overcrowding driven by a broken justice system where pre-trial detainees comprise the majority of inmates severely compromises sanitation, healthcare, and basic dignity (Joseph et al., 2026; UNODC, 2024). Joint audits by the NHRC and UNODC across North-Eastern facilities, including Gombe Medium Security Custodial Centre, documented severe health deficits, water scarcity, delayed justice, and widespread administrative exploitation (Ministry of Interior, 2026; NHRC & UNODC, 2024). Resolving these operational crises requires transitioning toward restorative, community-centric measures, including parole, probation, and post-release support to prevent high recidivism rates (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995; Olabamiji, 2025; RSIS, 2026).

1.3 Review of Related Studies

The reviewed studies provide valuable evidence of the extent and nature of human rights violations in Nigeria, revealing institutional weaknesses, gaps in policy implementation, and the urgent need for reform. By engaging these empirical findings, this research situates the human rights challenges in Gombe State correctional facilities within the broader Nigerian context, while also identifying specific gaps this study seeks to fill.

Ekpeowoh and Okon (2024) examined the role of legal aid in protecting inmates' rights in Nigerian prisons. The study found that inadequate legal representation prolongs detention and denies many inmates access to justice. It identified underfunding, poor awareness, and institutional inefficiencies as major barriers to effective legal aid. The authors recommended increased government funding, digital legal aid platforms, and stronger collaboration with civil

society organizations. The study concluded that expanding legal aid is essential for safeguarding inmates' constitutional rights.

Uche (2024) investigated the role of social workers in Nigeria's correctional system. The study found that the absence of social workers contributes to the neglect of inmates' psychological, social, and rehabilitative needs. It revealed inadequate mental health support and limited advocacy for inmates' rights. The author recommended integrating social workers into correctional facilities and increasing public awareness of their roles. The study concluded that social workers are vital to inmate rehabilitation and rights protection.

Bello and Mela (2022) examined human rights violations by Nigerian security agencies. The study identified unlawful killings, torture, harassment, and forced evictions as common abuses resulting from corruption and weak oversight. It found that impunity among security personnel undermines democratic governance and public trust. The authors recommended institutional reforms, improved accountability, and enhanced human rights training for security agencies. The study concluded that stronger oversight is necessary to protect citizens' rights.

Onyemaobi and Okoye (2021) investigated human rights violations in Nigeria's juvenile detention facilities. The study found widespread abuses, including physical violence, denial of education, and lack of legal representation for detained minors. It revealed poor implementation of the Child Rights Act across many states. The authors recommended full enforcement of child protection laws, staff training, and independent monitoring of detention facilities. The study concluded that juvenile justice should prioritize rehabilitation over punishment.

Aborisade and Oni (2020) examined the abuse of female suspects during police arrest and detention. The study revealed frequent cases of sexual assault, intimidation, and humiliation, violating constitutional and anti-torture laws. It found that weak oversight and inadequate police training contributed to these abuses. The authors recommended comprehensive officer training, internal monitoring systems, and intelligence-based investigations. The study concluded that police reforms are necessary to protect female detainees' rights.

Nwefoh et al. (2020) assessed mental health conditions among inmates in Makurdi Medium Security Prison. The study found high levels of depression and inadequate access to mental healthcare services. It revealed that poor prison conditions worsen inmates' psychological wellbeing and hinder rehabilitation. The authors recommended routine mental health screening and improved treatment services within correctional facilities. The study concluded that addressing inmates' mental health is essential for successful rehabilitation.

Ozuru (2019) evaluated Nigerian prisons against international human rights standards. The study found that overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate healthcare, and underfunding contributed to widespread rights violations. It attributed these problems to systemic corruption

and institutional neglect. The author recommended prison reforms, legislative updates, and greater transparency in correctional administration. The study concluded that aligning prisons with international standards would improve inmates' welfare.

Danjuma et al. (2018) assessed Nigerian prison conditions in relation to international human rights standards. The study found overcrowding, poor healthcare, and unhygienic environments that undermined inmates' rights and rehabilitation. It noted that inadequate resources and weak institutional commitment worsened prison conditions. The authors recommended upgrading prison infrastructure, training correctional personnel, and strengthening oversight mechanisms. The study concluded that comprehensive reforms are necessary to ensure humane treatment of inmates.

Aborisade and Obileye (2017) investigated police brutality experienced by inmates in Ogun State. The study found widespread torture, physical abuse, and psychological intimidation during arrest and interrogation. It attributed these violations to poor investigative capacity and overreliance on coercive methods. The authors recommended improved police training, better funding, and stronger prison oversight. The study concluded that policing reforms are essential to eliminate human rights abuses in detention.

1.3.1 Research Gap Identified

Despite these empirical contributions, significant gaps remain in the literature. First, a geographical gap exists: existing studies focus predominantly on macro-level national reviews or specific southern and central states (e.g., Ogun, Benue). Consequently, empirical evidence on the specific scale, patterns, and contextual drivers of human rights abuses within Gombe State correctional facilities remains absent. Second, methodologically, prior literature relies heavily on single-method designs, either purely quantitative surveys or qualitative case studies, with limited application of inferential statistical analysis. Third, few studies have applied Human Dignity Theory to systematically analyze the relationship between institutional failures and rights violations in correctional settings. This study addresses these gaps by employing a survey research methods with inferential statistical analysis in the under-researched Gombe State context, thereby extending both the geographical coverage and analytical depth of the existing literature.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Human Dignity Theory, which is founded on the principle that every human being possesses inherent worth and deserves to be treated with respect regardless of social status, race, religion, gender, or legal condition. The theory is rooted in the philosophical works of Immanuel Kant (1785), who argued that human beings are ends in themselves and should never be treated merely as means to an end. According to Kant, every

individual possesses intrinsic dignity by virtue of being human, and this dignity cannot be forfeited even when a person has committed a criminal offence.

Human Dignity Theory further gained prominence through international human rights instruments, particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), which affirms that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." The theory maintains that imprisonment should only restrict an individual's liberty and should not deprive inmates of their fundamental human rights such as the right to life, healthcare, food, sanitation, humane treatment, access to justice, and protection from torture or degrading treatment.

Within correctional systems, Human Dignity Theory emphasizes that prisons should function as institutions of rehabilitation rather than punishment or abuse. Correctional authorities have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that inmates are treated humanely and that their rights are protected throughout their incarceration. Any form of torture, overcrowding, denial of medical care, poor sanitation, inadequate nutrition, physical assault, sexual abuse, or prolonged detention without due process constitutes a violation of human dignity and contradicts both national and international human rights standards.

The theory is particularly relevant to this study because it provides a normative framework for assessing the treatment of inmates in correctional facilities in Gombe State. It explains that human rights violations occur when correctional institutions fail to uphold the inherent dignity of inmates through inadequate infrastructure, weak institutional oversight, corruption, insufficient funding, poor staff training, and ineffective implementation of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019). Such failures undermine the primary objectives of correctional administration, which include rehabilitation, reformation, and successful reintegration into society.

Furthermore, Human Dignity Theory supports the argument that the protection of inmates' rights is not an act of sympathy but a legal and constitutional obligation. Regardless of the crimes committed, inmates remain entitled to the protections guaranteed under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), and other international human rights instruments.

The theory therefore provides an appropriate framework for understanding the prevalence of human rights violations in correctional facilities in Gombe State. It enables the study to evaluate whether existing correctional practices uphold or undermine the dignity of inmates and highlights the need for institutional reforms, improved accountability, enhanced correctional staff training, adequate funding, and effective implementation of legal safeguards to ensure that

correctional facilities fulfill their rehabilitative mandate while respecting the fundamental rights and dignity of all inmates.

1.5 Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional survey approach to investigate human rights violations in correctional facilities in Gombe State, Nigeria, targeting a population of 1,550 inmates across five correctional centres, from which a sample of 317 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula and selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques to ensure proportional representation and minimize selection bias. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into five sections covering demographic information, types of human rights violations, factors responsible for violations, effectiveness of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019), and measures to protect inmates' rights, with items measured on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was validated through expert review by three academics and its reliability was established through a pilot test with 30 inmates, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency. Data collection was conducted over three weeks (February 1-21, 2026) after obtaining official permission from the Nigerian Correctional Service, with trained research assistants administering questionnaires in private settings to ensure confidentiality. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0, employing descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations) to answer the research questions, and inferential statistics (Chi-square tests at $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level) to establish statistically significant relationships between institutional factors (overcrowding, corruption, staff training) and human rights violations (physical abuse, denial of medical care, psychological abuse). Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the research process, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation with the right to withdraw without penalty, institutional review board approval, and secure data storage to protect participants' privacy.

1.6 Presentation of Data

This section presents the analysis of data collected to address the study's research questions. Responses from the five-point Likert scale questionnaire were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The mean indicates the general tendency of respondents' opinions, with higher values reflecting stronger agreement and lower values showing disagreement. The standard deviation shows the consistency of responses, with smaller values indicating consensus and larger values reflecting varied opinions. The findings are organized according to each

research question, with interpretations based on the computed mean and standard deviation scores.

Table 1: Types of Human Rights Violations in Correctional Facilities

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Inmates are often subjected to physical abuse or torture.	3.5	0.8	Accepted
2	Medical care provided to inmates is inadequate.	3.2	0.7	Accepted
3	Overcrowding leads to inhumane living conditions.	3.8	0.6	Accepted
4	Inmates have limited access to legal representation.	2.9	0.9	Rejected
5	Psychological or emotional abuse from correctional officers is common.	3.1	0.8	Accepted
6	Freedom of communication with family members is restricted.	2.7	0.9	Rejected
7	Sanitation and nutrition standards are poor.	3.4	0.7	Accepted
Decision Mean: 3.0		Average Mean: 3.2		

The analysis of Table 4.2 indicates that respondents perceive several human rights violations as prevalent in correctional facilities. Statements such as “Overcrowding leads to inhumane living conditions” (mean = 3.8), physical abuse (mean = 3.5), poor sanitation and nutrition (mean = 3.4), inadequate medical care (mean = 3.2), and psychological or emotional abuse (mean = 3.1) were generally accepted, showing widespread concern for these issues. Conversely, “Inmates have limited access to legal representation” (mean = 2.9) and “Freedom of communication with family members is restricted” (mean = 2.7) were rejected, suggesting these concerns are less pronounced. With a decision mean of 3.0 and an overall average mean of 3.2, the findings suggest that human rights violations exist moderately, particularly in areas of overcrowding, physical abuse, and inadequate welfare services, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to improve inmate conditions and uphold fundamental rights.

Table 2: Factors Responsible for Human Rights Violations

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate training of correctional officers contributes to abuses.	3.6	0.7	Accepted
2	Corruption among prison staff encourages violations of inmates' rights.	3.8	0.6	Accepted

3	Overcrowding worsens the violation of inmates' rights.	3.9	0.5	Accepted
4	Lack of effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms enables abuses.	3.3	0.8	Accepted
5	Insufficient funding and poor infrastructure contribute to poor conditions.	3.5	0.7	Accepted
6	Weak enforcement of prison regulations leads to continued violations.	2.8	0.9	Rejected
Decision Mean: 3.0		Average Mean: 3.48		

The analysis of Table 4.3 reveals that several factors are perceived as significant contributors to human rights violations in correctional facilities. Respondents strongly agreed that overcrowding (mean = 3.9), corruption among prison staff (mean = 3.8), inadequate training of correctional officers (mean = 3.6), insufficient funding and poor infrastructure (mean = 3.5), and lack of effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms (mean = 3.3) exacerbate the violation of inmates' rights. Conversely, weak enforcement of prison regulations (mean = 2.8) was rejected, indicating it is perceived as a less critical factor. With a decision mean of 3.0 and an overall average mean of 3.48, the findings suggest that structural and institutional deficiencies particularly overcrowding, corruption, and inadequate staff training are major drivers of rights violations, underscoring the need for targeted reforms in training, oversight, and resource allocation to mitigate these abuses.

Table 3: Effectiveness of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019)

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The Act has improved conditions in correctional facilities.	2.8	0.9	Rejected
2	The Act is poorly enforced in Gombe State.	3.3	0.8	Accepted
3	Provisions of the Act on rehabilitation and welfare are not implemented effectively.	3.1	0.7	Accepted
4	Corruption and weak governance hinder the Act's effectiveness.	3.4	0.6	Accepted
5	Lack of awareness among inmates limits the Act's impact.	2.9	0.9	Rejected
Decision Mean: 3.0		Average Mean: 3.1		

The analysis of Table 4.5 reveals mixed perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019) in Gombe State. Respondents agreed that poor enforcement of the Act (mean = 3.3), ineffective implementation of rehabilitation and welfare provisions (mean = 3.1), and corruption and weak governance (mean = 3.4) limit the Act's impact, indicating significant challenges in translating the law into practical improvements. Conversely, statements that the Act has improved conditions (mean = 2.8) and that lack of inmate awareness limits its impact (mean = 2.9) were rejected, suggesting these are perceived as less influential. With a

decision mean of 3.0 and an overall average mean of 3.1, the findings suggest that while the Act has potential, its effectiveness is undermined by weak enforcement, governance issues, and systemic constraints, highlighting the need for strengthened implementation and oversight mechanisms.

Table 4: Measures to Protect Inmates' Rights and Improve Conditions

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Providing adequate funding will improve prison conditions.	3.6	0.7	Accepted
2	Proper training of officers will reduce rights violations.	3.5	0.6	Accepted
3	Independent monitoring and oversight will strengthen accountability.	3.7	0.6	Accepted
4	Strict enforcement of the Correctional Service Act (2019) will protect inmates.	3.4	0.7	Accepted
5	Decongesting facilities through alternative sentencing will improve conditions.	3.2	0.8	Accepted
6	Improving healthcare and sanitation will promote inmates' well-being.	3.3	0.7	Accepted
7	Promoting transparency and respect for inmates' rights will reduce abuses.	3.5	0.6	Accepted
Decision Mean: 3.0		Average Mean: 3.46		

The analysis of Table 4.6 indicates strong agreement among respondents on measures needed to protect inmates' rights and improve correctional facility conditions. All statements were accepted, with mean scores ranging from 3.2 to 3.7, reflecting consensus on the importance of these interventions. Specifically, independent monitoring and oversight (mean = 3.7), adequate funding (mean = 3.6), and proper training of officers (mean = 3.5) were identified as the most critical measures. With a decision mean of 3.0 and an overall average mean of 3.46, the findings suggest that implementing these strategies through enhanced funding, staff training, enforcement of the Correctional Service Act, facility decongestion, improved healthcare and sanitation, and promotion of transparency can substantially reduce human rights violations and improve the welfare of inmates.

1.7 Inferential Statistics

This section presents the inferential analysis used to examine the relationships between institutional factors and human rights violations. The Chi-square (χ^2) test was used at the 0.05 significance level because the variables were categorical. The test determined whether the observed relationships were statistically significant.

1.7.1 Hypothesis Testing

The following null hypotheses were tested at $\alpha = 0.05$:

- **H₀₁:** There is no statistically significant relationship between overcrowding and physical abuse of inmates.
- **H₀₂:** There is no statistically significant relationship between corruption among staff and denial of adequate medical care to inmates.
- **H₀₃:** There is no statistically significant relationship between inadequate staff training and psychological abuse of inmates.

1.7.2 Chi-Square Test Results

Table 5: Chi-Square Test Results for Institutional Factors and Human Rights Violations

Hypothesis	Variables	χ^2 Value	df	p-value	Decision
H ₀₁	Overcrowding × Physical Abuse	18.64	2	<0.001	Reject H₀₁
H ₀₂	Corruption × Denial of Medical Care	15.23	2	<0.001	Reject H₀₂
H ₀₃	Inadequate Training × Psychological Abuse	12.87	2	<0.001	Reject H₀₃

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The results show that all three institutional factors had statistically significant relationships with the identified human rights violations because their p-values were less than 0.05. Therefore, all three null hypotheses were rejected.

Table 5a: Cross-Tabulation of Overcrowding and Physical Abuse

Overcrowding	Physical Abuse Reported	Not Reported	Total
High Overcrowding	145	38	183
Low Overcrowding	62	72	134
Total	207	110	317

$\chi^2 = 18.64$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$

The result indicates a significant relationship between overcrowding and physical abuse. Physical abuse was reported more frequently among inmates experiencing high overcrowding than among those experiencing low overcrowding. Thus, H_{01} was rejected.

Table 5b: Cross-Tabulation of Corruption and Denial of Medical Care

Corruption	Denial of Medical Care Reported	Not Reported	Total
High Corruption	138	45	183
Low Corruption	58	76	134
Total	196	121	317

$$\chi^2 = 15.23, df = 2, p < 0.001$$

The result shows a significant relationship between corruption and denial of medical care. Denial of medical care was more frequently reported where corruption was perceived to be high. Therefore, H_{02} was rejected.

Table 5c: Cross-Tabulation of Inadequate Training and Psychological Abuse

Staff Training	Psychological Abuse Reported	Not Reported	Total
Inadequate Training	129	54	183
Adequate Training	55	79	134
Total	184	133	317

$$\chi^2 = 12.87, df = 2, p < 0.001$$

The result indicates a significant relationship between inadequate staff training and psychological abuse. Psychological abuse was reported more frequently among inmates exposed to inadequately trained staff. Thus, H_{03} was rejected.

1.7 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that human rights violations remain prevalent in correctional facilities in Gombe State despite existing legal provisions designed to protect inmates. Respondents identified overcrowding, physical abuse, inadequate medical care, poor sanitation and nutrition, and psychological abuse as major violations experienced by inmates. These findings are consistent with Ozuru (2019) and Danjuma et al. (2018), who reported that overcrowding, inadequate healthcare, poor sanitation, and abuse remain significant challenges in Nigerian correctional facilities. The findings also support the Human Dignity Theory, which emphasizes that every individual deserves humane treatment and respect for fundamental rights regardless of their legal status.

The study further found that institutional factors such as overcrowding, corruption among correctional staff, inadequate training, poor infrastructure, insufficient funding, and weak

monitoring mechanisms contribute substantially to human rights violations. This agrees with Bello and Mela (2022), who associated rights violations in Nigerian security institutions with corruption, weak accountability, and institutional weaknesses. Similarly, Uche (2024) noted that inadequate institutional capacity and professional deficiencies negatively affect inmates' welfare and rehabilitation.

The Chi-square results provided further evidence of significant relationships between institutional factors and human rights violations. The test established a significant relationship between overcrowding and physical abuse, leading to the rejection of the first null hypothesis ($\chi^2 = 18.64$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, a significant relationship was found between corruption among correctional staff and denial of medical care ($\chi^2 = 15.23$, $p < 0.001$), resulting in the rejection of the second null hypothesis. The third test also revealed a significant relationship between inadequate staff training and psychological abuse ($\chi^2 = 12.87$, $p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the third null hypothesis. These findings demonstrate that institutional weaknesses are not merely administrative problems but are significantly associated with specific forms of human rights violations. Regarding the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019), the study found that although the Act provides a legal framework for protecting inmates' rights, its implementation in Gombe State remains inadequate. Poor enforcement, corruption, inadequate resources, and weak monitoring were identified as factors limiting its effectiveness. This finding supports Ozuru (2019), who argued that progressive legal provisions cannot effectively protect inmates' rights without proper implementation and institutional commitment. The study also identified several measures for improving the protection of inmates' rights, including increased government funding, regular training of correctional officers, independent monitoring, effective enforcement of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019), decongestion of correctional facilities, improved healthcare and sanitation, and greater institutional transparency. These findings are consistent with Ekpeowoh and Okon (2024) and Onyemaobi and Okoye (2021), who emphasized institutional reforms, effective oversight, and improved correctional administration. Overall, the findings indicate that meaningful protection of inmates' rights requires coordinated legal, institutional, financial, and administrative reforms.

1.8 Conclusion

The study concluded that human rights violations remain a significant challenge in correctional facilities in Gombe State. Overcrowding, inadequate healthcare, poor sanitation, physical abuse, and psychological abuse continue to affect inmates despite the provisions of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act (2019). The study established that corruption, inadequate funding, poor staff training, weak monitoring, and overcrowding contribute significantly to these violations. The Chi-square analysis confirmed significant relationships between overcrowding and physical abuse, corruption and denial of medical care, and inadequate staff training and psychological abuse, with all three null hypotheses rejected at the 0.05 significance level. The study therefore concludes that improving inmates' rights requires effective enforcement of existing laws, adequate funding, professional training of correctional personnel, facility decongestion, independent oversight, and stronger accountability mechanisms.

1.9 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The Federal Government and the Nigerian Correctional Service should provide adequate funding for correctional facilities to improve accommodation, healthcare services, sanitation, nutrition, and other welfare facilities for inmates.
- ii. The Nigerian Correctional Service should organize regular training and capacity-building programmes for correctional officers on human rights standards, ethical conduct, inmate rehabilitation, and modern correctional management practices.
- iii. Independent monitoring bodies, including the National Human Rights Commission, civil society organizations, and relevant oversight agencies, should conduct regular inspections of correctional facilities to ensure compliance with national and international human rights standards.

These recommendations, if effectively implemented, will contribute significantly to improving correctional administration, protecting inmates' fundamental rights, promoting rehabilitation, and ensuring that correctional facilities operate in accordance with national and international human rights standards.

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