

The Sociological Dimensions of Minimum Wage in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Minimum wage for employees is important for the progress of any organisation. Therefore it is significant for employers of labour to make employees happy by providing them with sustainable wages, welfare packages and other incentives which are not always given. It is therefore not unusual to see labour unrest as a result of complains of poor welfare provisions and services to the workers. The objective of this paper is to examine the historical antecedent of minimum wage and the challenges of minimum wage in Nigeria. The theory of Capitalist Economy was adopted to dissect issues surrounding minimum wage in Nigeria. From the assessment of the literature, the study found that inadequate funds, poor leadership and lack of political will were the major reasons for not fully implementing the minimum wage policy in Nigeria. The study recommends that the government should take the issue of wages and salary administration serious by giving workers a living wage to enable them take care of their basic needs and be better positioned for enhanced productivity and output level in civil service.

Keywords: Minimum Wage, Employees, Employers, Wages, Salary, Civil Service

Introduction

Governments around the world set a minimum wage in order to raise wages of workers whose wages are relatively low. Currently, fixing of National Minimum Wage is one of the topical issues that is being extensively debated in the ongoing National Conference in Abuja, the Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. Minimum-wage laws dictate the lowest price for labour that any employer may pay (Mankiw, 2011). Hence, requiring that firms or organisations pay minimum wages are illustrations of government interventions designed to raise the income of specific groups; the purpose of which is to provide a 'wage floor' that will help less-skilled workers earn enough income to escape poverty (McConnell, et al, 2009). Minimum wage policy supported by a strong social policy is an efficient mechanism against poverty and income erosion of the poorest households. Herr and Kazandziska (2011) asserted that minimum wage is one of the instruments which can control wage dispersion and in this way reduce income inequality. It can also help to prevent a general decline in the level of nominal wages and deflationary developments. According to ILO (1970), the elements to be taken into consideration in determining the level of minimum wages include (a) the needs of workers and their families, taking into account the general level of wages in the country, the cost of living, social security benefits, and the relative living standards of other social

groups; (b) economic factors, including the requirements of economic development, levels of productivity and the desirability of attaining and maintaining a high level of employment. How high the minimum wage should be treated as a country-specific issue. In many countries the amount of the minimum wage to average wage is set in practice at around 40 per cent (ILO, 2009:10). As vaguely defined as it is, minimum wage has been extensively studied and debated by economists over time, each with divergent views. For instance, in a survey of 210 members of the American Economic Association, Whaples (2006) found that about 47 percent of the economists surveyed believed that the federal minimum wage in the United States should be eliminated, while about 38 percent believed that the minimum wage should be increased.

Nigeria has over the years witnessed a huge increase in the number of industrial actions. What was once thought to be a 'British disease' (Honeyball & Bowers, 2004:389) seems to have become a Nigerian disease. In fact, strikes have become so endemic in Nigeria that even our courts would be prepared to take judicial notice of them (Oshio, 2004:171). The major issues canvassed or motivating the industrial unrest has been directly or indirectly related to workers remuneration in terms of inadequacy of what is paid or non-payment of negotiated increases in the remuneration. Indeed, available records indicate that 90% of strikes in Nigeria arose from wage related disputes (Kester: 2006). Wages refer to such daily or weekly payments that employers pay to their workers while salaries are monthly payments that workers receive for services they render (Amobi, 2015). Collective bargaining constitutes an important means by which workers seek to resolve their salary issues and the Nigerian labour law provides for automatic recognition of trade unions for collective bargaining purposes (Amobi, 2015). The government of Nigeria has over time used the instrumentality of salaries and wages review commissions, and these days the National Salaries and Wages Commission, to fix salaries of public servants, and, importantly, the national minimum wage. Through these means, government has exerted some kind of influence on the pattern of income distribution in the country. Starting with the Hunt Committee in 1934 up to Udoji Review Commission in 1972-74 and later, salary reviews of the administration of Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, President Olusegun Obasanjo government, President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari governments "living wage" concept, salaries, wages and other conditions of service of public servants have been reviewed upwards. The National Council on Establishments has periodically reviewed grading of cadres in the Nigerian Public Service, after job study and evaluation exercises. In all sectors of the economy, salary is used as a motivational strategy. It is aimed at attracting, motivating and

retaining skilled personnel (Amobi, 2015). According to Eneanya (2009), good minimum wage policies serve as a strategic tool to motivate, retain and promote organizational effectiveness. People therefore seek salary employment so as to gain the respect, quality of life, and full citizenship that come from earning wages and contributing to the economy (Fajana, 2006). Salaried employment, no doubt, is a major source of income for most families in Nigeria today, and what is paid at the end of the month as salary is very vital to any employed person because their sustenance depends solely on it. Hence, workers are more concerned about their salary and the process of determining what they earn (Nwoko, 2009). This paper seeks to examine the historical antecedent of minimum wage and the challenges of minimum wage in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

According to Archibong, Forstina, Jude & Chukwudi, (2014), minimum wage can simply be defined as the smallest hourly wage that an employee may be paid as mandated by Federal Law. George (2012) in a succinct definition of the concept of minimum wage averred that minimum wage is the lowest wage an employer is allowed to pay. Minimum wage in Nigeria can simply be defined as the smallest hourly wage that an employee may be paid as mandated by Federal Law (Eme & Okeke, 2009). Meanwhile, the different types of minimum wage policy a government can institute may be national, local, or based on free market principles. Many little tweaks and adjustments can occur here, depending on how governments determine minimum wages (Archibong, Forstina, Jude & Chukwudi, 2014). These laws are often controversial as the effects are both seen and unseen and the consequences intended and unintended. National minimum wage policy indicates that all workers entering employment will earn a specific starting wage. Regardless of industry or job type, a new worker can have the expectations of this starting pay. The purpose of a national minimum wage is to ensure that all workers are able to achieve a specific standard of living (Archibong, Forstina, Jude & Chukwudi, 2014). In some cases, these laws may come from the idea of fairness in terms of employee remuneration. For example, a worker entering an unskilled job should receive the same starting wage as an individual starting a semi-skilled job in a different industry. Local minimum wage policy may occur when a national wage policy is absent from or insufficient for the market. Local policies may be in place due to the conditions of a state being different from another. For example, the cost of living in one state or local region can be significantly higher than another area. The result is a necessary increase in minimum wage policy in order to offset the standard of living costs between the two regions or locales. Free market principles dictate no minimum wage policy from national or state governments. Each

individual's wage bases itself on the current market rate for workers with similar knowledge, skills, and abilities (Archibong, Forstina, Jude & Chukwudi, 2014). The wage can fluctuate frequently based on changes in the overall market or other economic changes. The result here is often a wage much lower than one set by a national or state minimum wage policy. More workers may receive employment, however, due to the lower wages per worker, allowing for more workers employed. A minimum wage policy may also extend a bit further if necessary. For example, the policy may have different pay scales for individuals, family size, and other statistics. Too much control through regulations, however, can greatly restrict a market and choke off the self-interest of individuals to achieve success (Archibong, Forstina, Jude & Chukwudi, 2014).

Wages refer to such daily or weekly payments that employers pay to their workers while salaries are monthly payments that workers receive for services they render. To that extent, the concept of salary would apply to career officers in employment while wages would be more appropriate term for casual or daily rated workers (Amobi, 2015). Collective bargaining constitutes an important means by which workers seek to resolve their salary issues and the Nigerian labour law provides for automatic recognition of trade unions for collective bargaining purposes. The duty to recognize a trade union is coterminous with the duty to negotiate with it and conclude agreements. Over the years, successive governments in Nigeria have monopolized the issue of salary determination contrary to their policy on voluntary negotiations and collective bargaining for the determination of salaries (Fashoyin, 2008). Maicibi (2005) defined remuneration as pay or reward given to individuals for work done.

He further identified the indicators of remuneration to include: basic salary, wages, health schemes, pension schemes, transport allowances overtime allowances and responsibility allowances. Braton & Gold, (2003) basic salary is a fixed periodical payment for non-manual employees usually expressed in annual terms, paid per month with generally no additions for productivity. Wage refers to payment to manual workers, always calculated on hourly or piece rates. Surbhi (2015) also defined salary as a fixed amount paid to the employees at regular intervals for their performance and productivity whereas wages are the hourly- based payment given to the labor for the amount of work finished in a day. He further argued that while Salaried persons are generally said to be doing "white collar office jobs" which implies that an individual is well educated, skilled and is employed with some firm and holds a good position in the society, whereas the waged person are said to be doing "blue collar labour job" which implies that an individual is engaged in the unskilled or semi-skilled job and is drawing wages on a daily basis. According to Eneanya (2009), good compensation policies

serve as a strategic tool to motivate, retain and promote organizational effectiveness. On the link between salary/wages and motivation.

Historical Antecedent of Minimum Wage in Nigeria

It is noteworthy that though the Nigerian government has mainly resorted to the use of Salary tribunals or independent commissions in salary administration with respect to the Nigerian Public Service, it has also in certain times utilized two other mechanisms: collective bargaining and regulatory agencies of government (Fashoyin, 1978). The earliest evidence of joint negotiation or consultation in the nation took place in 1937 when the colonial government established the Provincial Wage Committees everywhere to undertake periodic wage reviews for daily paid employees in the public service (Yesufu, 1982). The committees were originally composed of government officials and therefore wage determination was unilateral. However, because of workers' dissatisfaction, the committees were expanded to include workers' representatives. The political leaders at the time eventually used this inchoate collective bargaining machinery as a tool for advancing their political interests by granting unrealistic wage concessions to win workers' votes. Following growing disenchantment of trade unions, compounded by the general strike of 1945, it became clear that the Provincial Wage Committees were grossly inadequate, for they excluded the established staff from salaries and wages determination (Fashoyin, 1978). For these reasons, the Whitley Council system which had been in use in Britain was introduced in Nigeria in 1948. Basically these were three councils catering respectively for senior, junior and technical staff. Each council functioned as a negotiating as well as a dispute settling machinery in the public service. Just like the preceding machinery, Whitleyism failed in many government establishments. This was because, first, the councils failed to fulfill the purpose for which they were established. Instead of serving as a mechanism for negotiating wages, they served merely as consultative machineries. Second, the Whitley councils were afflicted by red tapism, indecisiveness and lack of real government support. Third, they were rendered useless as government had usual recourse to wage tribunals for determination of wages and conditions of employment. Following the failure of Whitleyism, the Udoji Public Service Review Commission supported earlier recommendation by Morgan Commission for the establishment of the Public Service Negotiating Council whose mandate includes matters relating to wages, arbitration, and centralization of the machinery for negotiation. This organ later became moribund during the military administration but has been resuscitated during the

present democratic dispensation in Nigeria, operating at both national and state levels. Their impact has not really been felt, and despite their names, they only concentrated on civil service matters, neglecting other arms of the Nigerian Public Service. Also the government has used regulatory agencies from time to time either to regulate or determine wages in the country. The government in 1942 established eight Labour Advisory Boards, later reconstituted into the Federal Labour Advisory Council, to advise it on all labour issues and make special investigations on employment conditions in specific trades or industries. By the sixties, the boards had become so inactive partly because of the nature of partisan politics and government's penchant for wage tribunals. In 1965 the National Labour Advisory Council and the National Wages Advisory Council were established, following the recommendation of the Morgan Commission, to counsel the government on labour matters. The National Labour Advisory Council is a tripartite body comprising representatives of government, management and labour. The National Wages Advisory Council co-ordinates and advises government on all aspects of the National Wages Policy. Unfortunately, the organs have not achieved much however; compelling Fashoyin (1978) to observe that government appeared to be "engaged in a desperate search for methods of prompting industrial peace but it has failed to analyze the inherent pitfalls in its approaches to wage determination. As already mentioned, government has preferred the use of salary tribunals and commissions to the collective bargaining system in determining public service pay. This is mainly borne out of political expediency (Abudu, 1987:37). Thus, in 1959 and again in 1964, in order to avoid the risk of being voted out of office at the election, the political leadership decided to accede to the demands of labour union, though knowing full well that the demands were not in the economic and social interests of the nation. The Newns (1956); Mbanefo (1959); and Morgan (1963) Commissions were set up to review and award wage increase to appease workers. The Morgan Commission (1964) specifically confessed that:

The present Commission was set up in an atmosphere charged with tension and threat of a general strike. In fact it is freely admitted by every side to the present inquiry that our terms of reference represent a compromise, that they were drawn up by the representative of labor and that the governments agreed to pay.

The military administrations in Nigeria also needed the support of the trade unions to gain political popularity and legitimacy and achieve industrial peace. They were acutely aware of the fact that the trade union movement is an easy vehicle for the mobilization of people's sentiments. The quest of the military government for workers' support is exemplified by the setting up of the Adebo Commission in 1970 after the end of the civil war, and the Udoji

Commission in 1974. Even the government of Gen. Sani Abacha made efforts to review workers' pay to gain support, which was eventually realized by succeeding administration of General Abdul salami Abubakar. Critical analysis of salaries and wages review exercises by wages tribunals and commissions has shown that they have never provided a proper and rational review of public service salaries and wages. The use of the wage commission has instead obfuscated issues and at times led to trade disputes associated with their awards. It represents a clear governmental interference in the process of collective bargaining and salary/wage determination. The awards are made without an in-depth study of the economic circumstances of the nation, productivity trends, and other necessary data. Many of the wage increment recommendations are therefore based on emotional and political considerations. Adebo Commission's justification of its interim award, for example, was based on the argument of "intolerable suffering at the bottom of the income scale because of the rise in the cost of living" and "manifestations of affluence and wasteful expenditure which cannot be explained on the basis of visible and legitimate means of income" (Adebo Commission, 1970). Udoji salary awards, apart from the political undertones, arose from the sudden oil boom of 1973-74 and the petrodollars that swept into Nigeria. During the implementation of the Udoji Report, the top bureaucrats selfishly concentrated attention on the enhanced salary package while neglecting the more fundamental recommendations aimed at reforming the institutional and operational system in place since the 1920's.

The first legislative process to enact national minimum wage legislation in the post independence era started on May 28, 1981 and ended in June 15 of the same year culminating into National Minimum Wage Act of 1981. However, the National Minimum Wage Act of 1981 mandated every employer to comply with wage of 125 Naira as the basic salary per month. Subsequently, in January 1991, the National Minimum Wage Act was reviewed, and workers started to earn a new minimum wage of 250 Naira per month which was an addition of 100 Naira representing a percent increase of 80 percent (Onuegbu 2010). But the Babangida Regime (1985-1993) made a series of salary reforms and introduced different patterns of salary systems to various professions taking into account the differing job requirement. The universities, the judiciary, the police, prison service, health, etc, were granted differing salary structures higher than those of the civil service yet the Udoji principle of uniform pay for public servants within a particular service in the entire Federation was maintained in all the tiers of government of the Federation. In addition to this, the Babangida Regime (1985-1993) soon after the 1988 Civil Service Reform appointed the Gray Longe Commission and later the Adamu Fika Panel. The two bodies made substantial reforms in the

wages and salaries system of Nigeria. They made major adjustments in the salaries, introduced the elongation of salary structure thereby increasing the numbers of steps within each level and ameliorating stagnation and introducing more items of allowances with substantial amount. The Allison Ayida Panel appointed by the Abacha Regime (1993-1998) in 1997 recommended strongly a substantial review of the wages and salaries of the workers of the Nigerian public servant following its recommendation, the federal government under General Abdulsalam Abubakar introduced a salary structure based on the minimum wage of 3,000 Naira per month for states and local governments and 3,500 Naira for federal workers (Ogunna 1999; Asodike and Jaja 2012).

The pay system introduced in January 1999 under Abubakar Regime (1998-1999) created for the first time, a dual pay structure, one for federal workers, and the other for the state and local governments' workers. The two structures maintained the Udoji Public Service Commission's 17 grade levels, each with a number of steps and super grades for permanent secretaries. The Babangida Regime's elongated steps system was retained, but the steps were not uniform for all the 17 levels. It is structured in such a manner that the higher the level, the less the number of steps which was made to prevent stagnation in annual salary increments (Asodike and Jaja 2012). The structure for the federal officers has its minimum wage at 3,500 Naira per month or 42,000 Naira per annum which was the salary and allowances for grade level 01, step 1. The last step of level 01, that is, step 15 has the annual salary and allowances of 4,214 naira per month or 50,568 naira per annum. The highest salary, that is, the salary and allowances for level 17, step 9 was 27,405 Naira per month or 328,860 Naira per annum. On the other hand, the structure for state workers has its minimum wage as 3,000 Naira per month including all allowances or 36,000 Naira per annum for level 01, step 1. The highest salary is 21,476 Naira per month or 257,712 Naira per annum including allowances for level 17, step 9. Thus, there was a wide gap in the salaries of state and federal officers taking Nigeria back to pre-Udoji Salary Award era (Ogunna 1999). On May 1, 2000 under Obasanjo's Civilian Administration (1999-2007), the National Assembly continued with this dual salary structure when it enacted the National Minimum Wage Act to pay a wage not less than national minimum wage of 7,500 Naira per month to all federal workers and oil producing states and then 5,500 Naira to all other states, but this was rejected by the NLC. So, in the same 2000, the Act was amended and the national minimum wage was reviewed upwards for states at 6,500 Naira per month while that of federal workers remained at 7,500 Naira per month (National Minimum Wage Amendment Act 2000; Arizona-Ogwu 2007). It was not until 2010/2011 under Jonathan's Administration that the issue of national minimum

wage was put on the front burner of national politics. After excessive negotiations and bargaining, the National Assembly enacted a new National Minimum Wage Act which was signed into law by the President Goodluck Jonathan in May 2011 at 18,000 Naira per month for workers of all tiers of government including private sector. As Akunnakwe (2011:56) puts it: On the 23rd February, 2011, the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria approved eighteen thousand Naira (N18,000) as the minimum wage for the Nigerian worker. The bill which was given an expeditious passage by the upper chamber increased the minimum wage from N7,500 to N18,000 (US \$ 118.00). The section 2 (1) of the National Minimum Wage Act of 2011 states “As from the commencement of this Act, it shall be the duty of every employers to pay a wage not less than the national minimum of 18,000 Naira per month to every worker under his establishment”. Thus, the Act abolished the dual minimum wage of Abubakar Regime (1998-1999) and re-introduced the same minimum wage for all the tiers of government in Nigeria. Again, in line with the policy of five yearly review of the national minimum wage, the leader of the Nigerian Labour Congress, Mr. Ayuba Wabba observed that the organized labour (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) made a formal demand to the federal Government of Nigeria on the need to raise the national minimum wage from eighteen thousand Naira (N18,000) to fifty six thousand Naira (N56,000). According to him, the logic behind the clamour for an upward review of the existing minimum wage was to ensure that no worker earns below what could sustain him or her for a period of thirty days (Udoh, 2015). Also, the plight of an average Nigerian worker is compounded by high inflation rate. Today, with inflation rate at 18.48 percent and the widening gap of purchasing power of the ordinary Nigerian, Ayuba insists that N18000 is unrealistic. Recently, President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law to increase Nigeria’ minimum wage from 18000 to thirty thousand naira. The implementation of the law took effect from April 18, 2019 (Onuah, 2019). From the forgoing, we can deduce that one of the factors which may be exacerbating the demand for minimum wage is the inflation level. This is because wages is not always at par with the level of inflation in Nigeria.

Challenges of Minimum Wage in Nigeria

According to Ogunna (1999) in all the determinants of wages and salaries of workers, ability to pay is the most crucial factor as no organization can pay beyond its financial ability. This is because when an organization is relatively weak financially, it considers more the factor of ability to pay than other criteria or determinants of wages and salaries. It must be noted that there is a difference between willingness to pay and ability to pay. A state may have the willingness to pay, but may lack the ability to pay and vice versa. For example, many states

have reiterated their willingness to pay, but regretted their inability to pay. The Abia State Government has restated its readiness to pay the new minimum wage, but regretted that no other project might be executed after payment of salaries except funds accruing to states from the Federation Account are reviewed upwards.

Perhaps nowhere in the world, is the issue of fiscal federalism as controversial as in Nigeria (Ukwueze 2010). The issue of intergovernmental fiscal relations has raised serious contentions in Nigeria due to dependence on oil revenues. The problem of how to share resources has generated a lot of heat threatening Nigeria's corporate existence. The debate on Nigeria's fiscal relations has been so passionately pursued by various tiers of the federal structure. Agitations are rife, reactions and demonstrations are also witnessed. The challenges of intergovernmental fiscal relations in Nigeria hinges on the equity of the expenditure assignment and revenue raising functions among the three tiers of government (Ukwueze 2010). From the inception of Nigerian Federalism, there have developed a mutual mistrust between the central government and the component units, and among the constituent units leading to problems of national question, revenue allocation and agitation for resource control. Nigeria is yet to resolve the issue of how the national resources are to be allocated vertically among the three tiers of government, and horizontally, among the states as well as among the local government units. Nigeria is a mono-cultural economy, in which oil accounts for over 80 percent of its revenue. Thus, issue of fiscal federalism is very fundamental, contentions and at the heart of public debate. Consequently, the challenges of fiscal federalism in Nigeria hinge on the equality of the expenditure assignment and revenue sharing among the three tiers of government. This is because the expenditure assignment and revenue sharing have been generally inadequate in addressing the needs and resource gaps in the three tiers of government. The strategy and institutional arrangement for redressing the challenges of sharing national revenue have been approached over the years on incremental basis; beginning with the era whereby a committee was appointed every five years to make recommendations regarding fiscal responsibilities among the tiers of government. However, the 1999 Constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria, under the Third Schedule, provides for the establishment of a body known as the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (Aigbepue and Ainabor 2011).

The point is that revenue sharing and expenditure assignment formula has been generally inadequate in addressing the needs and resource gaps in the three tiers of governments. The strategy and institutional arrangement for redressing the mismatch have been approached incrementally over the years. The persistent discourse on resource control is predicated on the

imbalance in the redistribution of the federation revenue which is often attributed to the allocation formula that rewards landmass at the expense of derivation. Thus, the nature of revenue allocation in Nigeria has reflected a character of complexity that is characterized by contestations and disagreements among the various tiers of government as a consequence of the revenue sharing adopted since independence. The sensitivity and lack of consensus among the states have led to the setting up of various ad hoc and permanent revenue allocation commissions. Yet these various revenue allocation commissions were not able to adequately address and resolve the problems of fiscal federalism in Nigeria. In other words, the revenue allocation has been reviewed several times in a bid to find an acceptance formula to no avail (Okafor & Aniche, 2015). Ukwueze (2010) notes that all states in Nigeria are not equally endowed with natural resources and this resource gap implies that various levels of government have capacity to develop and grow at different pace. This imbalance creates competitions and tension among the units that make up the Nigerian Federation. The tension generated leads to agitation on the best way to share the revenue collected and the urge for appropriate revenue allocation formula. The less endowed states in terms of resources will always insist on equality, population and landmass as a criteria or bases for sharing the revenue. Conversely, the more endowed states especially the oil producing states would always prefer a revenue sharing based on derivation (Onah and Okwueze 2006). The hitherto existing revenue allocation formula has clearly resulted to the agitations for resource control in Nigeria. Thus, there has been an increasing wave of discordant voices from state and local governments over revenue allocations. This suggests that an appropriate balance is yet to be struck in the use of revenue allocation to correct the imbalance between expenditure and revenue assignments in Nigerian Federation. Thus, Ukwueze (2010) observe that fiscal federalism has been contentious and problematic in Nigeria. The revenue allocation formula has thus been arbitrary and unstable, and appropriate revenue formula has eluded Nigeria. Similarly, Arowolo (2011) observes that several attempts were made to achieve harmonious revenue sharing formula among the component units of the federation, but there are still nutty issues challenging Nigerian Federalism and consequently posing serious problems to Nigerian fiscal federalism. Among these critical issues are overdependence on oil revenue, conflicts over revenue sharing formula, centralizing tendency of intergovernmental fiscal relations in Nigeria and the agitation for resource control. Revenue sharing among the component units of Nigerian Federation has from the inception, been replete with agitations, controversies and outright rejections. The process of revenue sharing is inundated with conflicting criteria that were often times rejected by majority of the states in Nigeria.

Arowolo (2011) states that so long as states in Nigeria depend on the federal government economically; the wrangling and controversy surrounding the issue of revenue allocation will remain a persistent or a recurring problem in Nigerian fiscal federalism. The radical change from agrarian economy to oil dependent economy has further propelled dependency, centralism and hegemony of the central government over states in Nigeria. The centralizing tendency of the Nigerian Federalism is as well a legacy of military regimes that used various decrees to institute and consolidate the dominance of the central government over state governments. In Nigerian Federation, almost every constitutional making process has sought the best way to arrive at equitable distribution of national income. Yet the Nigerian fiscal federalism continued to grant minimal fiscal autonomy to the state and the local governments in terms of revenue allocation. For example, all broad-based taxes such as company income tax, value-added tax, customs and excise duties, petroleum tax, education tax, among others, are assigned to the federal government. Most state and local governments depend largely on federal allocation. There is as well an apparent disconnects arising from expenditure assignment and revenue sharing, but this has not been as visible and controversial as sharing of the national revenue. The major argument against derivation principle centres on spatial disparity and uneven development that it might cause if not properly applied (Aigbepue and Ainabor 2011). Cost of living is not the same in different states of Nigeria which means it varies from state to state and from city to city in Nigeria. For example, the cost of living is higher in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Warri and Abuja than Enugu, Ibadan, Owerri, Kano, Jos, Kaduna, Ilorin, Makurdi, Maiduguri, Benin, and others. Also, the cost of living is generally higher in southern states than northern states in Nigeria. Therefore, salaries of workers have more value or higher purchasing power in some states than others, or more specifically, in states that have lower cost of living than the others. Arizona-Ogwu (2007) has noted that cost of living varies with location. Ogunna (1999) includes cost of living as one of the important determinants of wages and salaries. If the cost of living is high and continuously rising, the wage rates should be high and continuously adjusted to be in tandem with the cost of living. The cost of living determines the living wage in an economy which should be what it cost to maintain an average worker and his family in a year on an adequate level of living beyond the question of affording the basic necessities of life. Living wage therefore should constitute the minimum wage and no wage in an economy should fall below it. The introduction of the minimum wage for workers based on geographical area by the Morgan Commission of 1963 is principally anchored on cost of living. The Morgan Commission of 1963 introduced minimum wage that varied from region to region based on the economic condition of the area

most especially cost of living. Arizona-Ogwu (2007) argues that when a new or minimum wage is introduced, some aspects of the cost of living may be passed to consumers such that the cost of living will go up or the purchasing power will reduce due to inflation occasioned by higher cost of living. It will end up such that the new cost of living or inflationary rate will exceed what the new minimum wage can provide. The point being made is that unified wage or equal pay for equal work for civil servants does not conform to the principle of fairness and equity as NLC contends. This is because of variations in the cost of living across the federation. For example, a civil servant in Zamfara State is likely able to buy more quantities of commodities or afford higher level of comfort than a civil servant in Rivers State, because of the lower cost of living in Zamfara State than Rivers State.

Therefore, any policy of uniform minimum or unified wage pay will benefit workers in some states more than others due to differential cost of living in states in Nigeria and this contradicts the principle of fairness and equity trade unions are insisting on. Thus, uniform minimum wage or unified wage pay is antithetical to principle of fairness and equity. By the very fact of Nigerian federalism and by logic of fiscal federalism, there are variations or differences in the revenue profile of states in Nigeria. Apart from differences or variations in revenue profile of states, there is also a wide gap between revenue shared by the federal government and other tiers of government or specifically between the federal government and the state governments. For example, in the current revenue sharing formula, the federal government alone is entitled to 52 percent while the state and local governments are entitled to 48 percent, that is, 26 percent for states and 22 percent for local governments. This is why the federal government is not finding it difficult paying the new minimum wage and the states are asking for review of the revenue sharing formula or special grants from federal government for them to be able to pay the new minimum wage or implement the new minimum wage regime.

More so, some states are better positioned to pay and implement the National Minimum Wage Act of 2011. This is because of variations in revenue profile of states. For example, generally oil producing states receive higher amount of money from the Federation Account due to constitutional mandate or derivation principle of 13 percent which accrues to states where national resources are derived on the basis of the quantity or volume of the resources exploited. Even among the oil producing states there are variations in revenue derived from the Federation Account, because there are variations in the quantity or volume of oil derived from each oil producing state. For example, oil producing states like Rivers State, Delta State, Bayelsa State and probably Akwa Ibom State receive higher oil revenues from the Federation

Account than other oil producing states like Abia State, Imo State, Cross Rivers State, Edo State and others. There are also variations in terms of internally generated revenue of states, for example, due to its highly urbanized and industrialized nature, Lagos State generates relatively much higher revenue than other states like Zamfara State, Yobe State, Kebbi State, Jigawa State, Ebonyi State, and others. The point being made is that there are wide variations in the revenue profile of the states in Nigeria and between the states and federation governments. For details of revenue accruing to states and FCT from the Federation Account. Thus, Oko (2011) writes that the Abia State Government has called on the federal government to urgently adopt true fiscal federalism as well as review the current revenue sharing formula of the Federation Account to enable state and local governments to cope with the N18, 000 new minimum wage. The restoration of true fiscal federation has become very imperative in view of the huge financial burden the proposed new minimum wage would place on states. As quoted in Oko (2011:3): The issue of fiscal federalism should be restored. We all know that this country is made up of federation of states and all over the world; federalism has its characteristic features of fiscal federalism. States and regions should be in charge of their natural resources and develop at their own pace and pay statutory rights or royalties to the federal government for the maintenance of her other responsibilities. It is grossly inadequate for the federal government to collect 52 percent of the distributable federal funds and leaving the states and local governments with only 48 percent. If the minimum wage should be properly paid the revenue formula has to be reviewed... the state governments would not be able to discharge other financial responsibilities if they were to implement the new wage except more funds were made available to them. Also, the Governors from ACN-controlled states echoed the same view when they say that there is need to amend the Nigerian Constitution to pave the way for a return to fiscal federalism. But true federalism and fiscal federalism also presupposes that based on variations in revenue profile of states, the federal government should not fix national minimum wage for the country. It as well means that there should be no uniform or unified salary and wage pay for workers in all the states and local governments of the Federation, and between or among the three tiers of government.

In fact, implementing true fiscal federalism like resource control in mono-product economy like Nigeria where oil and gas account for over 90 percent of its revenue will simply lead to the collapse of some states in Nigeria because most of the states depend almost solely on revenue from the Federation Account. The internally generated revenue in most states and local governments are meager. The truth is that going by the size of the Nigerian economy; it

is not supposed to have up to 36 states let alone 774 local governments in a three tiered federation. The point being made is that the Nigerian economy cannot support the 36 states. Many other federations like Canada, Australia, and Germany with the size of economy far larger than that of Nigeria do not have up to 36 states. For example, Germany, Australia, Canada, etc, have less than twenty states. The fundamental criterion for determining the number of states or constituent units in a federal structure is not population or landmass or even parity, it is viability. It is paradoxical that some geographical regions are lobbying for more states when the existing states are complaining that they are not capable of paying the new minimum wage of 18,000 Naira. It is unfortunate that state and local governments creation in Nigeria has been politicized relegating the principle of viability to the background and elevating the principles of population, landmass and parity high above it. No wonder census figure has been too controversial and political in Nigeria. Once 'true' fiscal federalism becomes operational in Nigeria, many states will simply collapse (Okeke and Aniche 2010). Again, the recurrent expenditure for some states may be ranging from 70 percent to 90 percent of the total budget hereby shrinking the available funds for capital expenditure. No state will develop in this way, and it will just be an accident waiting to happen, because it will not be long before the states will collapse or forced to retrench workers to cut recurrent expenditure. But the politicians and political officeholders are not helping matters at all with the rising cost of governance contributing to the recurrent expenditure. Politicians are to be blamed for the agitations of workers with their ostentations and flamboyant lifestyles like moving in siren convoys of fleet or choice cars as well as the high level of political corruption (Okafor & Aniche, 2015). Already the trade unions had complained that while the salaries of workers increased by 15% between 2006 and 2007, those of political officeholders increased by over 800%, which further widened the disparity. For rising cost of governance in Nigeria. Owing to variations in revenue profile, discriminating or varying wage structure can be traced to the implementation of Morgan Commission of 1963 in Nigeria which introduced the minimum wage for workers based on geographical regions which varied from region to region depending on the economic conditions of the geographical regions such as revenue profile and cost of living. Under Babangida Regime (1985-1993), different salary scales for different categories of workers like the universities, health, etc, were implemented, thus, reintroducing variations in workers' salaries and wages. Thereafter, Abdulsalam Abubakar Regime (1998-1999) introduced a different wage pay for federal civil servants and state civil servants which the Obasanjo Civilian Administration (1999-2007) continued with it in 2000. It was the Obasanjo's Civilian Administration that tried to introduce different wage

pay for oil producing states and non-oil producing states and federal government which NLC rejected.

The trade unions in Nigeria insisted on Udoji's unified and uniform salary structure for civil servants based on the principle of equal pay for equal work also known as the principle of fairness and equity. But this argument is flimsy because there is still differential salary and wage scale for public servants like universities, schools, polytechnics, health, etc. Even the principle of fairness and equity is only "fair and equitable" for workers and not states owing to differential revenue profile. The bottom line is that the variation in revenue profile of states in Nigeria is undermining their respective ability to pay the new minimum wage regime (Okafor & Aniche, 2015). In the same vein, Akindele and Olaopa (2002) note that dissatisfaction with the inability to properly determine salaries in accordance with prevailing economic challenges provides a veritable source of industrial disharmony. When there is disagreement between the labour and the Anambra State government over remuneration (and they occur often) it normally leads to strike (Amobi, 2015). According to Fashoyin (2007), strike action is the most common manifestation of conflict of interest between workers and their employers. This development however, is not healthy as they destroy the desired growth and development of the economy.

Empirical Literature

According to Newmark, Schweitzer & Wascher (2004), where a panel time series adjustment in minimum wage on wages, labour hour, employment and labour income within the USA economy. They found that low-wage workers are the most beneficiaries of minimum wage, while higher-wage workers derived little or no benefits from policies that raised minimum wage. The study revealed that though low-wage workers income increased with the raising of minimum wage, their hours and employment declined, leading to overall negative effects on minimum wage policy. A study conducted by the U.S' Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) (2004) claims that increases in the minimum wage at the state level has had no adverse employment effects. Sabia (2006), while refuting the findings of the FPI in his study, found that increases in the minimum wage decrease employment, particularly for low-skilled and entry-level employees. Sabia concludes that "A 10 percent increase in state minimum wages is consistently associated with a 1 percent reduction in retail employment and a 1 percent reduction in small business employment". Studies by Neumark Schweitzer & Wascher (2005) and Burkhauser and Sabia (2004) suggest that raising the minimum wage is a poor policy tool to aid low-skilled workers. Akpansung (2014), in his study on Empirical Assessment of the Effects of Minimum Wage Increases on Unemployment during Democratic Governance in

Nigeria, using Using Ordinary Least Squares estimating technique, Granger Causality, CUSUM and CUSUM Squares stability tests reveals the following main findings: (i) minimum wage was highly positively correlated with unemployment, money supply, real GDP, and least negatively related with inflation ii) real March gross domestic product and inflation rate were insignificantly inversely related to unemployment; (iii) there was no evidence to support the existence of causality between minimum wage and unemployment; however the results provide evidence of unidirectional causalities running from unemployment (UNEM) to real gross domestic product (RGDP) at 1 percent level of significance; RGDP to money supply (MS) at 5 percent as well as from MS to minimum wage (MW) at 1 percent; (iv) minimum wage hikes during the specified period were associated with increases in unemployment, especially in the lagged period; (v) a one (1) percent increase in the federal minimum wage decreased employment by about 6.4 percent in the current year and 9.9 percent in the subsequent year. Our finding implies that minimum wage hikes were detrimental to employment creation policy of the Nigerian government during her 13 years of democratic governance.

Babagana & Dungus (2015) examined the effects of staff remuneration on the performance of Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri students from 1995-2011 in Borno state. Questionnaire was served for 45 respondents who ware academic staff of the polytechnic from the five schools within the polytechnic (school of environmental studies, school of engineering and applied science, school of agricultural science and technology , school of management studies, and school of vocational and technical education). The data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment correlation and regression analysis using Microsoft excel. The findings showed strong positive relationship between staff remuneration(fringe benefits and staff nature of working conditions) and performance of Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri students. Edirisooriya (2014), examined the impact of extrinsic rewards and intrinsic rewards on employee performance: With Special Reference to ElectriCo Sri Lanka. Self designed questionnaire was used as the primary data collection method. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The representative sample of 100 employees are selected from a population of 1075 employees in the ElectriCo. The results revealed that there is a positive relationship between extrinsic reward, intrinsic reward and employee performance. Hameed, Ramzan, Zubair, Ali & Arslan.(2014). examined the impact of compensation on employee performance (empirical evidence from banking sector of Pakistan). A questionnaire was designed to solicit response from the respondents on factors related to compensation like indirect compensation, wages, salaries and employees

performance. Approximately 45 banks were included to collect data. 200 Questionnaires were distributed among the full time working employees of banks and they were selected randomly. Correlation analysis and Regression analysis using SPSS 17.0 version to analyzed the collected data. The findings suggest that Compensation has positive impact on employee performance. It is proved from correlation analysis that all the independent variables have weak or moderate positive relationship to each other. Regression analysis shows that all the independent variables have insignificant and positive impact on employee performance. Sajuyigbe, Olaoye & Adeyemi (2013) examined the impact of reward on employees performance in a selected manufacturing companies in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from one hundred (100) participants through purposive sampling method and data were analyzed by multiple regression analysis with the aid of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 16. Result showed that reward dimensions jointly predict employees' performance which accounted for 71% variance of performance. Folawewo (2007) examined the macroeconomic effects of minimum wage (MW) policy in Nigeria using a static computable general equilibrium. He found that the impact of MW increase on employment is mixed; while it leads to marginal rise of employment in agricultural sector, there is a marginal fall in services sector's employment, and no significant effect in manufacturing and mining and oil sectors.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted is Capitalist Economics theory and the proponent of this theory is Karl Marx. It has been impossible to discuss materialism and alienation without introducing many of the issues that are central to Marx's theory of capitalist economics. Marx takes issue with the bourgeois assumptions of harmonious economic relations in modern society, equality of opportunity, the freedom and mobility of both labourer and capitalist, and wages as a fixed and fair basis for the economic life of the labourer. In the unalienated, noncapitalist world of the owner-worker, one's labour is the value by which one survives. In today's world, labour still produces value (Adams & Sydie, 2001). However, labour is a commodity belonging to someone other than the labourer; it is alienated labour. Products or commodities take on a "life" of their own, apart from the producer or worker. According to Marx, "the increasing value of the world of things proceeds in direct proportion to the devaluation of the world of men. Labour produces not only commodities: it produces itself and the worker as commodity" (Marx, 1844 cited in Adams & Sydie, 2001). An additional fact of the capitalist world is that individual workers produce surplus value more exchange or commodity value than they are compensated for. If in an hour a worker produces \$80 worth of products (or

services), and is paid \$50 per hour, the surplus value produced goes to the one owning the worker's labour the capitalist (Adams & Sydie, 2001). In fact, except when money itself is used to make money, through investment and loans, the capitalist lives from the surplus value produced by the worker. Surplus value did not originate with capitalism; it was found in slavery and feudal systems as well. However, with industrialization and the mass commodification of labour, surplus value increased manifold. The capital of the capitalists became, as Marx and Engels put it, ever more colossal. Marx noted that surplus value could be increased for the benefit of the capitalists in two ways: "by extending the work day or by developing the productivity, that is, increasing the intensity of labour power (Tucker, 1978 cited in Adams & Sydie, 2001)). Engels suggested a third way: Some small business owners or owner-workers (*petit bourgeoisie*) are driven out by competition, fail financially, and end up in the working class, or proletariat. This increases the ratio of workers to capitalists, thereby producing more surplus value for each capitalist. Of these three, the least likely to occur today is an increase in the length of the work week; the most likely is a dramatic increase in productivity. This makes it possible to increase workers' wages, shorten their workweek, and still increase the profit or surplus value of the capitalists (Adams & Sydie, 2001). From the above position, we can deduce that employees tend to exchange work for a survival wage. However, the employers could force the employees to spend more time on the job than was necessary for earning this survival salary, and the excess product or surplus value created would be claimed by the employers. The employers often justify the exploitation of the employees with excuses like inadequate revenue, economic challenges, rising cost of governance and productivity. These excuses of not paying the minimum wage to employees don't affect the humongous wage of the employers and political office holders. On the whole, the inability to pay minimum wage to employees is as a result of lack of political will of the employers and the political office holders. Thereby subjecting employees to problems like inflation, high cost of living and increasing tax rate which will render their wages valueless and further pauperized the employees in the society.

Conclusion

Wage administration is an aspect of industrial relations. It is one of the many areas of interaction between workers and government or employees and management. Determining minimum wage has been subjected to several challenges. For instance the excuse that non-implementation of minimum wage policy is as a result of government's lean resources is unfounded. Government has the capacity to implement the policy but the problem is weak leadership and misplacement of priority. Other problems leading to non-implementation of

minimum wage are corruption, over bloated work force which leads to low productivity and lack of political will to improve condition of service for workers. Therefore cordial relationship must exist between government and the workers for organizational goals to be realized.

Recommendations

The government must diversify the economy. This is because, diversifying the Nigerian economy is necessary for states to enhance their internally generated revenue and creation of employment opportunities.

Wages administration in the state must be seen as a very serious issue by the government. In fact, government must set-up a standing-committee for salaries and wages review at regular intervals of not more than five years. This will take care of effect of inflation on workers salary and reflect the real economic realities in the economy.

Government must always enhance the wages of civil servants so that their take-home pay can provide at least their basic needs so as to discourage the few corrupt ones from engaging on sharp practices as a result of insecurity arising from such inadequate salary. It is believed that the nonchalance and laxity currently being observed among some civil servants is as a result of loss of confidence in the government to fulfill its own part of the contract of employment between it and its employees.

The federal government must involve the assistance of economist in formulating salary structure that could be sustainable for public servants in agreement with the Nigerian Labour Congress.

Also government must endeavor to implement only policies and programmes with human face, as this will lessen frustration, fear and anxiety on workers. They can achieve this by carrying out impact assessment of policies and programmes before they are announced and implemented.

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