

TRADE UNIONISM AND THE POLITICS OF MINIMUM WAGE IMPLEMENTATION IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA, 2012-2022

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Abstract

This study investigated the role of trade unions (TU) in the politics of national minimum wage (NMW) implementation in Nigeria, with focus on Bayelsa State, 2019-2023. The problem of the study was that dynamics of power play and pursuit of selfish interest by leadership of the unions undermined the successful implementation of the 2019 NMW, particularly the consequential adjustment in wage. Marxist political economy was adopted as the theoretical framework of analysis. The study adopted mixed research method and applied the descriptive survey research design, by using both primary and secondary data. The study found that civil servants in Bayelsa State do not have good working conditions in terms of fully enjoying the 2019 NMW because the state government has a negative disposition towards the interests and welfare of civil servants. This is exacerbated by the weakness and ineffectiveness of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), in such a way that the government and the leadership of NLC jointly exploit the workers. Fundamentally, the character of the national minimum wage law is major problem of NMW implementation in Nigeria. The study therefore recommended among others that Bayelsa State government should prioritize the welfare of civil servants in the State, bottom-up strengthening of the union and worker's education consciousness should be encouraged and depolarization of the trade union, amendment of the NMW law in manner that accommodates percentile consequential adjustment relatively a new wage regime.

Keywords: *Trade Unionism, Leadership, Politics, National Minimum Wage, Bayelsa State.*

DOI: 10.58934/jgeb.v5i16.231

1. INTRODUCTION

Worker welfare is the responsibility of the employer (in this case the government). This is because the fundamental objective of government is to provide for the well-being of its citizens as attendance to the welfare of the people adds to the legitimacy of any government. Continuous

increase in wages is one of the ways to improve workers' welfare. In Nigeria, like in other countries, the national minimum wage (NMW) is a kind of government intervention in the labour market aimed at enhancing the well-being and socio-economic circumstances of workers. According to Adesina (2002), national minimum wage law and a system for periodically reassessing it are two ways in which governments might raise citizens' standard of living. This is to protect employees from being taken advantage of by their employers. Thus, over the years, successive Nigerian governments have made efforts to address the perennial problem of national minimum wage. The issue of worker's welfare and minimum wage increase has been a very thorny contentious issue in Nigeria. Even after the minimum wage bill was passed and the Act enacted, the implementation had been war-torn situation. It has often times manifested in face-off between government and the trade union, in this case the NLC.

In Nigeria, trade union began during the colonial times. While, this was a tool for the protection and promotion of worker's welfare, it was also a tool for struggle against the evils of colonialism. After colonialism, trade unions in Nigeria had continued to be tools for workers and instrument of collective action against the exploitations by the class controlled and class interested Nigeria state. They held sway and made impact even in despotic military regime and mobilized against exploitation, regression, workers and human right violation. Nigeria trade union under the leadership of the Nigerian Labour Congress has over the years fought against oppressive policies of the Nigerian state (Okechukwu, 2016, Okoroafor, 2012; Okolie & Agbele, 2020). Some of these happened in what could be described as the glorious days of labour movement in Nigeria, which movement seem to have ended with the reign of former Comrade Adams Oshiomhole as NLC President. These periods labour leader's collaboration with the civil society and media to achieve their fundamental aims

The agitation for increase in wages, the contestation and politics that surround it is a historical phenomenon in Nigeria. The trend showed that there have been contestations for wage increase. Many times, this had led to strike action by organized labour. Even where minimum wage is agreed and the bill enacted. The implementation has remained a thorny issue. For instance, in 2000 wage review agreement was reached and National Minimum Wage Act of 2000 enacted. The provision provided a further 25% wages increase for workers effective from May 1st, 2001 and another 15% increase effective from May 1st, 2002. This was however not implemented. Only an increase of 4% and 12.5% was implemented by government (Asodike & Jaja, 2012). This was even after a long spell industrial dispute and strike by the Nigeria Labour Congress.

The condition of the Nigerian workers has “become solitary, nasty, brutish and short” (Hobbes cited in Gauba, 2006), in the hands of the Nigerian ruling class and the labour leaders as conspirators. There is the worrying condition that a Nigerian fortunate to find employment, finds it increasingly difficult to survive on their monthly income. There then appear to be no marked difference between the employed and unemployed in Nigeria, as both live in penury. By the UNDP definition of poverty many of the employed workers on a minimum wage of 30,000 (where tax has not been deducted) live on less than 1 USD per day. Today 1 USD is above 1000. Their take home pay cannot take them to the bus stop (Epelle, 2020). This has become more worrisome in the face of current inflation. In Nigeria, inflation rate as at November, 2022 stands at 19.64% (NBC, 2022). The rate is a government figure and therefore circumspect. While wage has been stagnant, the price of commodities such fuel price is now above ₦700, a bag of rice ₦46,000, electricity bill has quadrupled even with epileptic supply, transport fare has plummeted, all against a minimum wage of ₦30,000 approved when all these prices were lower. Inflation has made the current minimum wage worthless.

There are strong contentions that the minimum wage has not been effectively implemented in Bayelsa State, particularly at the local government level. There are arguments that what government did was to ensure that no worker who is on payroll earns less than the approved wage ceiling of ₦30,000.00. What this implies is that workers earning above the approved minimum wage figure of ₦30,000.00 did not benefit much from the minimum wage policy and its implementation. Therefore, a whole lot of shenanigans in minimum wage negotiation and implementation in Nigeria. From the point of negotiation, to the point approval of minimum wage policy making, to the point of implementation and including the economic policies of government that follows after implementation, there are enormous politics, power play and interest. There are contentions that the labour leaders in pursuit of their selfish interest, have abandoned the whole essence of the pursuit of wage increment and implementation. It is against this background that this study ventures into investigating the role of the trade union in the politics of minimum wage implementation in Nigeria using Bayelsa State as a case study.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years, the effect of trade union involvement and political interference in the implementation of minimum wage policies in Bayelsa State has been dagger drawn between trade unions and the government. The minimum wage policy is an essential labour law that establishes the minimum amount of pay required for workers in all sectors. It aims to promote

fairness and reduce poverty through the provision of a living wage. However, the implementation of minimum wage policies has been a contentious issue in Bayelsa State public service. The state government and trade unions often engage in a tug of war over its implementation. The government is often accused of neglecting workers' welfare by failing to implement minimum wage policies adequately, while unions are seen as overly militant and combative in their approach to demanding a living wage for workers.

This has had significant consequences for workers in Bayelsa State, considering the high level of poverty and the exorbitant cost of living, associated consequences of the influence of political interests on the decision-making process, a lack of consensus, and compromises, further deepening the divide between the parties involved, high rates of youth unemployment, insufficient social safety nets, and the proliferation of illegal work activities. Additionally, there seems to be a lack of transparency and accountability in the dialogue between trade unions and the government. The absence of clear channels for negotiations and a fair representation of workers' interests exacerbates the problem. This creates an environment of mistrust and frustration among the trade unions, making it difficult to achieve meaningful progress in minimum wage implementation in Bayelsa State.

Minimum wage effects on unemployment, worker transitions into and out of poverty, and the labour market. Addison et al. studied how minimum wage rise influence United State workers in 2013. From a comprehensive perspective, Alaniz et al. (2011) examined how legislative minimum salary changes affect host labour market results. According to studies, only workers with 20% beginning incomes would be affected by the changes in Minimum wage demonstrated in their studied (Onyeche and Edet, 2017). They concluded that salary increases don't immediately boost unemployment but only help a small percentage of low-wage workers

According to Abada et al. (2019), the proposed national minimum wage of ₦56,000 faced significant hurdles throughout discussions phase, State government payment viability was a major concern. The instability of the national economy has hampered payment and even the complete implementation of the 2011 ₦18,000 minimum wage. It was observed that while some state could pay, many other were financially incapacitated to pay (Oforle, 2014). Abada *et al* (2019) and Oforle (2014) doubted the capacity and willingness of states government to comply concerning the poor implementation of the ₦18, 000 minimum wage in many states.

Nwude (2013) also noted that Nigerian workers' decent pay attempts had failed. He argued that public personnel struggled on the current and prior national minimum wages. Inflation and hyperinflation have reduced workers' purchasing power. Instead of raising the minimum wage, he is of the opinion that the government should strengthen the Naira, Workers' wages vary per country's currency. In recessions, wages are raised to boost workers' buying power (Marginean & Chenic 2013). Largely all demands for minimum wage increase in Nigeria has resulted in industrial action particularly long drawn strike to force the government to sit down and talk, formulate the agreement into law, have the National Assembly pass the law, get the bill assented to and also to have the various levels of government effectively implement the minimum wage law to the overall benefit of Nigerian worker, especially, the civil servants.

Sulaiman (2012) highlighted that most state governments' refusal to implement the minimum wage is concerning. Even if these governors were key players in salary hike negotiations, as of 2014, more than a quarter of the 36 states owed over 110 billion Naira in minimum wage arrears, according to Oguabiyi (2015). The federal government bailed out several states that couldn't pay the 2019 minimum wage. In the same vein Onyeche and Nse-Abasi (2017), the state's inability to pay the minimum wage should not be blamed on a lack of funds. They said that the government's failure to pay shows its insensitivity to public workers' wellbeing after looting, embezzlement, misallocation, and misappropriation. Nigeria's minimum wage implementation has another major concern; Under Section 3(1) of the National Minimum Wages Act, employers must provide a minimum monthly wage of ₦30,000 to all employees, unless otherwise indicated.

Okechukwu (2016) argued that trade unions have pressured authoritarian and fascist governments to satisfy workers' requests for improved salaries, working conditions, and political and government policies that hurt workers and society. The question is what has changed? Politicization and polarization changed the unions. This has birthed union leaders who are self-serving, pro-employer, and pro-government, not employee-serving. The union's worker protection has declined. The effectiveness of Nigerian trade unions in defending workers needs closer scrutiny.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to examine trade unionism and the politics of minimum wage implementation in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, with the specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the conditions of Bayelsa State Civil Servants (BSCS) in relations to payment of the 2019 National Minimum Wage;
2. Evaluate the disposition of the Bayelsa State Government towards the effective implementation of the 2019 NMW to Civil Servants in Bayelsa State;
3. Assess the effectiveness of the NLC as an umbrella trade union in pursuit of the full implementation of the 2019 NMW to civil servant in Bayelsa State;
4. Examine the factors undermining the efforts of Nigeria Labour Congress in pursuit of the effective implementation of the 2019 NMW in Bayelsa State.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the Concept of Trade Union/Trade Unionism

Trade Union has been defined by different scholars and writers. The different definitions are reflections of the types of trade union. As Akpala (1982) also noted, the definition of trade union may vary from one situation to another depending on the economic and political situation especially employee- employer relations in such country or situation. Meanwhile, the concepts of trade union and labour union are used interchangeably in this context. A union is generally the coming together of persons bound together by interest to pursue a common goal. Such goal may be restriction of movement into their trade, pulling resources to help members, demanding for better welfare from employers etc.

Interestingly, Okolie and Agbefe (2020) are of the opinion that a British couple, Sydney and Beatrice Webb, presented the first definition of trade union in 1897, which defined trade union as "a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining and improving the conditions of their working life". In the same vein, Fajana (2006) provides a concise definition of a trade union as "a collective organisation of workers who receive wages and salaries, established with the purpose of protecting and enhancing the remuneration, social standing, and quality of life of its members and the broader society."

According to Banks (1974), all employees of a business, whether managerial, technical, clerical, or manual, are eligible for membership in a basic trade union that represents workers in the enterprise's industry. According to Fajana (2006), a trade union is an association of wage or salary earners founded to protect and improve its members' income and work circumstances to elevate their social standing and standard of life. Trade union or labour union is an

organisation of employees whose representatives negotiate between workers and their employers to prevent unfair treatment and ensure job dedication (Collins, 2013). In line with this Adefolou (2013) aver that trade unions are organised groups of employees that negotiate with employers on problems related to their members' working conditions and welfare.

Yusuf (2009) citing the Nigerian Labour Law, defined a trade union as,

“any association, temporary or permanent, with the primary purposes of which are to regulate the relations between workers and workers, or between masters and masters, or to impose restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business, and to provide benefit to members.”

Part 1 section 1 of the Trade Union Act State that:

"any combination of workers or employers, whether temporary or permanent, whose purpose is to regularize the terms and conditions of employment of workers" is illegal, regardless of whether or not the purposes of the combination include the provision of benefits to its members (Obikwe & Obibhunun, 2019, p. 12).

Richardson (2000) refers to a trade union as an ongoing organization of both manual and non-manual workers, including professionals, that aims to protect and enhance working conditions, advance vocational interests, and occasionally bring about positive changes in a country's economy and political institutions. One of the most important qualities of a labour union, according to Richardson, is stability or continuity. Therefore, a trade union cannot be only a temporary coalition of employees from a single company or sector working together to accomplish a single goal. Perhaps adopting Richardson's perspective, Ojeli (2001) stated that the fundamental purpose of a trade union is to control and improve the salaries, wages, and working conditions of its members, regardless of any other responsibilities they may have. Trade unions' operations and the goals they've developed should be seen as byproducts of and complements to their primary activity.

The Concept of Politics

The Greek term polis, from which we get the English word "politics," means "all things that concern or belong to the polis" (the city-state). According to Bismarck, politics is not a science but the art of governing (Heywood, 1997, citing a traditional understanding of the term from Ancient Greece). The study of a state, its goals and objectives, the institutions through which

these are going to be realized, and its connections with its constituents and with other states is another definition of politics.

Politics may be described as the scholarly examination of the governing body, which comprises a group of officials responsible for formulating, interpreting, and implementing regulations that apply to the entire society. This implies that the realm of politics is primarily confined to the confines of government departments, cabinet rooms, and parliamentary chambers and is predominantly the purview of politicians, civil employees, and lobbyists. This constrains the concept to a significant extent. It excludes the majority of people from politics. All the institutions that are not engaged in running the country by the above definition would be regarded as non-political and therefore excluded from the realm of politics (Heywood, 1997). Politics is however essentially concerned with public sphere of life than private, except where the private impact adversely on the public life. How can we differentiate the public sphere from private sphere? Example is where the private like of a president, governor, legislator or jury interfere with his public duty.

Politics could be seen as conflict resolution. Indeed, the essence of politics lies in the inherent presence of conflict throughout society. The ambitions of individuals are boundless, whereas the resources available to communities are finite and sometimes inadequate to fully meet the demands of all individuals. Given the finite nature of societal resources, it becomes necessary to make decisions regarding their allocation (Grant, 2009). The act of making decisions is the underlying cause of conflicts. Therefore, competition for access to, or control over, a society's resources, politics cohere with Easton and Laswell conceptualization of politics, the "authoritative allocation of values"; "who get what when and how" are essentially and in the real expected to be targeted at reduction of Conflict, the building of compromise, conciliation and negotiation for harmony and the common good of all members of the society. Politics therefore is the art of finding peaceful resolutions to conflict, through compromise and the building of consensus (Garner, 2009).

According to Dowse and Hughes (1972), politics is power. When power differentials exist, politics occurs. Any power-difference-based social connection is political (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995). Power is a capacity to coerce others by threats, punishments, or persuasion. Political power is the capacity to achieve a goal by whatever means. Leftwich (1984) believe that politics permeates all human communities. Every group is defined by politics. Beyond

governmental institutions, politics happens in private life. Hence everyone is involved in politics. Political action underpins all social gatherings, official and informal.

Two classical definitions demystify politics, especially in this study. The first discusses David Easton's insightful concept of politics. Easton called politics “authoritative allocation of values” (Nwosu, 2006, p. 2). Value here mean social values. These are thing cherished by the society, which make life worth living. Examples include power, influence, riches, money, property, etc. All humans want some of these values. The second definition by Harold Laswell described politics as “who gets what, when, and how” (1958). This may be described using Easton's value concept—who receives what, when, and how. Though concise, these descriptions encapsulate Nigeria's governing and political class understanding of politics and labour leaders.

Easton's political thoughts were influenced by the British geopolitics of the period, which led him to contemplate how valuable resources and ideals might be distributed for the benefit of society. Regrettably, the political elite and trade union leaders in Nigeria are characterized by their prebendalist, clientelist, myopic, kleptocratic, and crass materialistic tendencies. They view politics as a means to selfishly accumulate social resources, disregarding the interests of the people they claim to represent.

The Nigerian political class perceives politics as a strategic endeavour in which state authorities distribute resources, determining who receives what, when, and how. A game that requires complete success or failure with no middle ground. The lack of moral principles inside the political and governing class renders the question of "how" the game is played irrelevant. The pervasiveness of political influence is extensive. It is possible to concur with Adebayo and Ogunleye (2008) that politics, particularly in Africa, is a critical topic that determines whether one lives or dies, akin to a game of human survival or downfall. Deustch (1974, p. 6) asserts that if civilization were to be annihilated and a significant portion of humanity were to perish in the next two to three decades, it would not be due to epidemic diseases but rather to political factors. This research primarily focuses on the discussion of politics as the process of determining the allocation of resources and power, as well as the distribution of authority.

The Concept of Minimum Wage

Before delving into the concept of minimum wage properly, it is apposite to make some passing comments on the concept of wages. Wages are commonly viewed as workers' compensation.

Regular wages are wages provided on a set schedule, whether that be weekly, monthly, biweekly, or annually. Extra payments, such as those for overtime, leave bonuses, and ad-hoc bonuses, may also be part of a worker's regular wage (Navamukundan, 2011). Wages are the money an employee really pockets after working. Wages may be viewed from the workers' point of view as the sum total of the costs associated with hiring and using workers at a business. Direct pay, fringe benefits, social security benefits, and the expense of human resource training and development are all components of this category. Gainful employment provides the means for a decent standard of living in every nation. In this context, salaries may be broken down into three categories: minimum, living, and fair (Navamukundan, 2011).

The term "minimum wage" refers to the legally mandated minimum amount of money that an employer must pay their lowest-paid worker or employee on a monthly basis, as stated in Section 3(1) of the National Minimum Wage Act of 2019. Since 2019, Nigeria has been administered under the National Minimum Wage Act. The phrase "minimum wage law" refers to the legislation or regulation that sets a certain minimum payment and forbids companies from hiring workers for less than a prescribed hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly compensation (Okafor & Aniche, 2015, p. 111).

The International Labor Organization (1970) identifies three components that make up the minimum wage concept. The first is that, according to each country's economic and cultural situation, the minimum wage is the amount of money thought to be adequate to provide employees with adequate subsistence (food, clothes, shelter, education, and entertainment). The second concept is that the minimum wage is the lowest level of compensation that may be paid to an employee under any circumstance, regardless of the means of payment or the individual's credentials. Thirdly, the minimum wage is the lowest salary that a country is obligated by law to pay its citizens and which may be enforced via various forms of punishment. As a crucial step towards bettering working conditions, the supply of a living wage was emphasized in the ILO's founding document from 1919 (Starr, 1981). It was reaffirmed in the International Labour Organisation's 1944 Philadelphia Declaration that governments should implement a minimal living wage to safeguard low-income employed people. Since then, the minimum wage has served as a catalyst for social, economic, and political change. In emerging nations, incumbent governments are strategically utilizing the minimum wage as a political instrument, either by increasing salaries for unskilled individuals or by including this measure in their party's agenda, with the aim of garnering support from voters. Nigeria's

minimum wage has not prominently included the economic and social aspects of the minimum wage that emphasize productivity, ability to pay, and correct indexation to price increases.

According to the ILO (2008), more than 90% of nations throughout the world have minimum wage laws or binding collective bargaining in place. The argument in favour of a minimum wage is that it provides people with a fair chance to get by and improves their quality of life. Minimum wage policies have little effect and use unless they are really implemented, as noted by the ILO (2009). The efficiency of the enforcement procedures is crucial to this purpose. Crucial considerations include the imposition of penalties on offenders, the provision of proper compensation for victims of violations of workers' rights, and the provision of enough resources to the enforcement body. For Ojo (1998) and Owoye (1994), when wages are raised, governments and businesses often threaten to lay off workers in response. This has sometimes led to large-scale layoffs in the public sector. Also, labour unions in Nigeria are always lobbying for pay and salary increases since the minimum wage is not being raised at the same pace as inflation. Trade unions in Nigeria have to shoulder the burden of enforcing minimum wage laws since the government at all levels is unconcerned with the well-being of its employees. How efficiently has the union used its enforcement tools.

The colonial era was the genesis of minimum wage bargaining and increases in Nigeria (Oforle, 2014). The Hunts Commission was established in 1934 as the first organization that try to establish a minimum wage. The Commission produced the pay fixing and registration statute of 1943 based on the concept of collective bargaining. The Wage Board Act of 1955 and the Wage Board legislation of 1957 superseded this legislation. Collective bargaining was revived in the United Kingdom, in 1955 Act and 1957 Ordinance, which gained priority there. Fair salaries and safe working conditions were also advocated for by the commission (Okafor & Aniche 2015; Alarudeen 2008; Nwude 2013).

Table 2.2: Historical Patterns of Minimum Wage and Salary Adjustment in Nigeria from the Colonial Era to the Present

S/N	Year	Commissions/Committees	Major Recommendations
1.	1934	Hunts Commission	NA
2.	1941	Bridges Committee of Inquiry	NA
3.	1945	Tudor Davies Commission	50% increase in COLA for black employees
4.	1956	Mbanefo Salaries & Wages Commission	Five grading system for civil servant payment
5.	1963	Morgan Commission	Minimum wage geographical location and cost of living
6.	1964	Flwood Grading Team	Uniformity, equal pay for equal work
7.	1970-1971	Adebo Salaries & Wages Commission	Abolition of daily pay work system in the public service
8.	1974	Udoji Wages Reform Commission	Uniformity, introduction of seventeen grading system in public service, subdivided salary step, equal pay for equal work ₦60.00 minimum wage, ₦1,025 maximum wage
9.	1981	National Assembly Minimum Act	Minimum wage of ₦125
10.	1990	Minimum wage (Amendments) Decree	Minimum wage of ₦250 Introduction of different salary structure for universities, judiciary, police, prison and health workers.
11.	198-1993	Gray Longe Commission Laler Adamu Fika Panel	Elongation of salary structure, more items of allowance on salary structure, 45% increase across board on ₦250 to ₦363
12.	1997	Allison Ayida Panel	₦3,000 minimum wage for state and local government workers, for Federal Government workers.
13.	2001-2001	Sylvester Ejiofor Committee	₦5,500 and later ₦ 6,500 for state and local government workers, ₦15,000 for Federal civil servants
14.	2011	Justice Alpha Belgore Committee	₦18,000 National minimum wage
15.	2019	Ama Pepple (HOSF) 30 man tripartite minimum committee	₦30,000 National minimum wage

Source: FGN (1991), World Ban (1994), CBN (1998), Arizona Ogwu (2007); Jude & Earnest, (2015); Sanu (2019), Opene & Kelikwuna, (2021).

With the exception of the most recent two, nearly all of these commissions use adjustments to the cost of living indexes rather than productivity changes when deciding whether or not to award or propose salary increases. It's possible that inflationary pressures, which often led to a drop in employees' actual income below what they needed to survive, are to blame for this situation. One of the Commission's less pleasant legacies was the official backdating and subsequent implementation of a pay and salary rise (of anywhere from 12 percent to 30 percent). While this helped government workers in the 1970s, inflationary forces eventually rendered the salary increases meaningless. As shall be shown in later section of this review, the practice of national minimum wage is not new in Nigeria. However, the nature and practice is far different what is obtainable in civilized climes. This is despite the fact that Nigeria had been seen increasing national minimum wage over time. These has not provided the needed

social protection to vulnerable and non-organized categories of workers (Fapohunda, *et al*, 2012).

Table 2.3: Minimum Wage Figure in Selected African Countries

S/N	Countries	Minimum Wage Per Month (Converted To USD) as at 31/10/2022)	Equivalent In Naira (At 31/10/2022 Exchange Rate)
1.	Algeria	\$175	₦83,000
2.	Botswana	\$652	₦293,400
3.	Cameroon	\$75	₦38,000
4.	Cote'd Voire	\$72	₦36,607
5.	Chad	\$120	₦60,000
6.	Equatorial Guinea	\$2,618	₦1,178,100
7.	Gabon	\$3,043	₦1,369,350
8.	Libya	\$430	₦190,000
9.	Democratic Republic of Congo	\$1,826	₦821,700
10.	Nigeria	\$67	₦30,000

Source: Opene and Kelikwuna (2021)

In Nigeria, the 2019 minimum wage per month is \$67. This is far below any of the African countries listed in the table 2.1 above. The least of the countries in the table above which is Cote D' Ivoire pay \$72, which is far above Nigeria minimum wage.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Liberal-Pluralist idea serves as the theoretical framework for this paper. To clarify the nature and distribution of power in those societies, pluralism had emerged in western democracies. Its main tenet is that different social groupings share power in society. This is predicated on the idea that the organization is made up of several segment groupings with unique leaders and members who each have their own interests and goals (Ratnam, 2007). In order to sustain a strong collaborative framework, it is important to manage a complex of fragile and competing claims.

The Liberal-Pluralist Theory identifies three main competitors within an industrial relations system. Firstly, the employers' association, also known as management, serves as the representative body for employers within the organized private sector. Secondly, the labour union, or trade union, acts as the representative entity for employees. Lastly, the state, or government, assumes the role of representing the interests of the government itself. This

perspective posits that the aforementioned three entities engage in collaboration to attain the shared objectives of the organization as well as the individual objectives of each party involved. Each of the participants has their own ideology (interest), according to Dunlop's (1958) contention, and they all share the idea of a pluralist industrial relations system. The pluralist viewpoint sees management and employee disagreements as rational and unavoidable, in contrast to the unitary worldview. The survival of the whole, of which they are components, is understood as requiring mutual dependency and shared interests.

Haralambos and Holborn (2000) argue that the industrial society's increasing segmentation into a range of social groupings and sectoral interests is the basis for pluralism. Therefore, pluralism is the politics of interest groups, each of which is vying for dominance. Politics becomes one of negotiation and compromise since no one faction is perceived as dominating.

Trade unions and professional organizations are two examples of interest groups that participate in compromise and negotiation. Since trade unions are the primary organizations representing the interests of employees in the workplace, they have been effective in integrating the working class into capitalist society. This is because conflicts between employers and employees have been institutionalized and regulated. Industrial stability has improved as the adversarial relationship between capital and labour and has given way to a cooperative one as both sides struggle for survival. Haralambos and Holborn, further, asserted that all sides should benefit from the possibility of pluralism. According to him, this would result in a more equitable distribution of power between employers and employees, and the subsequent emergence of what he terms industrial democracy.

6. METHODOLOGY

This study employs the survey research design. In survey research design, the small sampled population is studied and findings about the sampled population is used to make generalization about the whole population. The population of this study is the total number of civil servant servants in the Bayelsa State Government payroll. According to the Oracle Payment System in the Bayelsa State Ministry of Finance (OPSBSMF, 2023), there are 40, 667 staff on the Bayelsa State Government Payroll. On the flip side this number would also have reduced owing to retirement and other disengagement options. This study derives the sample size by employing Taro Yamene's statistical Formula to determine the sample size. This is as shown below:

$$N = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

$$N = \text{Population size} = 40,667$$

$$E = \text{Margin of error at 5\% or } 0.05$$

$$1 = \text{Unit}$$

Hence,

$$N = \frac{40,667}{1+40,667 (0.05)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{40,667}{1+40,667 (0.0025)}$$

$$N = \frac{40,667}{1+101.6675}$$

$$N = \frac{40,667}{102.6675}$$

$$N = 396.1$$

$$\text{Approximately } (\cong) = 396$$

The study adopts purposive sampling to select the three hundred and ninety (396) respondents for this study. The use of purposive allows the researcher to rely on those civil servants that have a fair knowledge of the national minimum of wage 2019 and the role of the trade unions in the crisis of its implementation in Bayelsa State, by using both primary and secondary sources of data. The questionnaire was structured in line with four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), to measure the variables of the research coded with Trade Union and Minimum Implementation (TUMIQ). Data was analysed quantitatively by using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation.

7. ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.2.1 What is the condition of Bayelsa State civil servants in relation to payment of the 2019 NMW?

Table 4.2.1 Respondents view on the condition of Bayelsa State civil servants in relation to payment of the 2019 NMW.

S/No	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean (\bar{x})	Decision
1.	Enjoys full payment of 2019 NMW together with consequential adjustment to salaries	36 144	38 114	178 356	148 148	400 762	1.91	Rejected
2.	The NMW of ₦30,000 enhanced quality living condition of the civil servant	24 96	38 114	193 386	145 145	400 741	1.86	Rejected
3.	The 2019 NMW has improved the economic and social conditions of civil servants in Bayelsa State	24 96	38 114	193 386	145 145	400 741	1.86	Rejected
4.	Both the leadership of the NLC and the ruling class exploit the civil servants in Bayelsa State.	138 552	142 426	93 186	27 27	400 1791	2.98	Accepted
Grand Mean =							2.15	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The result of the data presentation in table 4.2.1 above was in response to research question one which asked: what is the condition of Bayelsa State civil servants in relation to the payment of the 2019 NMW? The results of the data presented showed that the sampled population with a mean score (\bar{x} = 1.91) disagreed that civil servants in Bayelsa State enjoys the full payment of the 2019 NMW together with payment of consequential adjustment to salary. The calculated mean was below the criterion mean 2.5. It was therefore rejected that civil servants the full payment of the 2019 NMW of ₦30,000 with consequential adjustment. The second research instrument item on whether the NMW of ₦30,000 enhanced quality living conditions of the civil servant scored \bar{x} = 1.86. It was also below the criterion mean. This implied that the respondents (sampled population) disagreed that the ₦30,000 had enabled civil servant achieved enhanced quality living conditions. The respondents (sampled population) with a

mean score of $\bar{x} = 1.86$ also disagreed that the payment of the 2019 NMW has helped improved the social and economic conditions of the civil servant in Bayelsa State. Finally, on research question 1, the respondents by a mean score of $\bar{x} = 2.98$ strongly agreed that both the leadership of the NLC and the ruling class of Bayelsa State exploits the civil servants in Bayelsa State.

Generally, the grand mean of $\bar{x} = 2.15$ indicated the respondents (sampled population) strongly hold the view that the conditions of the civil servants of Bayelsa State in relation to the payment of NMW 2019 is poor. The civil servant on the state does not enjoy payment of the NMW. This is because the government has refused to pay the consequential adjustment to salaries based on percentage increase occasioned by the 2019 NMW. This finding is in agreement with Nwude (2013) which found that efforts at ensuring a decent wage for Nigerian worker have not yield positive result. This according to figures are grossly inadequate in the light of the economic reality of Nigeria. This has made it difficult for the civil servant in Nigeria and particularly Bayelsa state to survive with NMW

4.2.2 What is the disposition of the Bayelsa State Government towards the effective implementation of the 2019 National Minimum Wage to civil servants in Bayelsa State?

Table 4.2.2 Respondents view on the disposition of the Bayelsa State Government towards the effective implementation of the 2019 National Minimum Wage to civil servants in Bayelsa State.

N = 400 Criterion 2.5

S/No	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean (\bar{x})	Decision
5.	Poor state of government revenue profit undermine the ability to the 2019 NMW and consequential adjustment	49	36	193	122	400	2.03	Rejected
		196	108	122	122	812		
6.	Insensitivity and unwillingness to pay 2019 NMW and it consequential adjustment	122	103	94	81	400	2.67	Accepted
		488	309	188	81	1066		
7.	High handed of the governor has determined the effectiveness of NLC in Bayelsa sate	122	116	78	84	400	2.69	Accepted
		488	348	156	84	1076		
8.	Strict interpretation of the NMW Act undermines	118	119	86	77	400	2.70	Accepted
		472	357	172	77	1078		

application legal
instrument to pursue
enforcement.

Grand Mean =

2.5 Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data presented in table 4.2.2 above, the respondent’s view on the disposition of Bayelsa State government towards the effective implementation of the 2019 National Minimum Wage. This was in response to research question and in satisfaction of research objective(s). From the data presented, it was shown that the respondents (sampled population) holds the strong view that Bayelsa State government revenue profile does not undermine the ability to pay the 2019 NMW and accrued consequential adjustment to salaries. This item score a mean $\bar{x} = 2.03$ which showed that poor revenue is not a substantial excuse for not fully implementing a mean score $\bar{x} = 2.67$ rather strongly agreed that it is the insensitivity and unwillingness of government that has frustrated the full implementation of the 2019 NMW together with accrued consequential adjustment. This position was accepted because it was above the criterion mean of 2.5. Also the respondents (sampled population) with a mean score $\bar{x} = 2.69$ strongly agreed that it is the high handedness of the executive governors of Bayelsa State in it relation to labour matters that has undermined the effectiveness of NLC in pursuit of workers welfare.

Finally, on table 4.2.2, the respondents (sampled population) strongly hold the view that the strict interpretation of NMW Act undermined the application of legal instrument to pursue enforcement of 2019 NMW in Bayelsa State. This got a mean score $\bar{x} = 2.70$, which as accepted because it was above the mean score of 2.5. Generally, a grand mean $\bar{x} = 2.5$ showed that the Bayelsa State government have a negative disposition towards the effective implementation of the 2019 National Minimum Wage to the advantage of the civil servants of Bayelsa State. There is no clear result especially as it related the letters and character of the 2019 NMW Act. It is the contention of this study that the effective implementation of the NMW are inherent in the character of the 2019 NMW Act.

This finding corroborate the finding of Onyeche and Nse-Abasi (2017) which found that government at all levels do not care about the welfare of its workforce. They explained that the failure by most states to meet up their minimum wage obligation to workers need not to be attributed to issue of poor revenue. It is the looting, embezzlement, misallocation, misappropriation of fund and lack of care for workers that has underlined the failure to

effectively implement the minimum wage together with expected consequential adjustment in Bayelsa State.

4.2.3 Research Question 3: How effective is the NLC in the pursuit of the full implementation of the 2019 National Minimum Wage for civil servants in Bayelsa State?

Table 4.2.3 Respondents view on the effectiveness of the NLC in the pursuit of the implementation of the 2019 National Minimum Wage in Bayelsa State.

N = 400 Criterion 2.5

S/No	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean (\bar{x})	Decision
9.	NLC is effective in the pursuit of the full implementation of 2019 NMW for civil servants in Bayelsa State	46 184	39 117	79 158	236 236	400 695	1.74	Rejected
10.	NLC has ensured the payment of the 2019 NMW together with approved consequential adjustment	47 188	38 114	239 478	76 76	400 856	2.14	Rejected
11.	Weak and fragmented trade union undermined effectiveness in demand for NMW payment	218 872	112 336	38 76	32 32	400 1256	3.14	Accepted
12.	Politicization of NLC undermined its strength in the application of labour tools in pushing for full implementation of the 2019 NMW	218 872	116 348	36 72	30 30	400 1322	3.31	Accepted
Grand Mean =							2.58	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The result of the data presented in table 4.2.3 above showed that the respondents (sampled population) with a mean $\bar{x} = 1.74$ strongly disagreed that NLC is effective in the pursuit of the full implementation of the 2019 NMW to civil servants in Bayelsa State. The result showed that with a mean score $\bar{x} = 2.14$ showed NLC has not ensured the full implementation of the 2019 NMW together with accrued consequential adjustments to civil servants in consequential adjustments to civil servants in Bayelsa State since the signing of the law in 2019. The respondents with a mean score $\bar{x} = 3.14$ which was far above the criterion mean strongly agreed

that weak and fragmented trade union undermined the effectiveness of NLC for the full and effectiveness of NLC in pursuing for the full implementation of the 2019 NMW. Finally, the results of the table also showed that respondents strongly hold the view that politicization of NLC undermined its strength in the implementation of 2019 NMW. Generally, the grand mean of $\bar{x} = 2.58$ showed that NLC had been ineffective and therefore has not endured the payment of the full payment of the 2019 NMW. This is further compounded by the fragmented nature of the union and its politicization. The above findings corroborate Okechukwu (2016), that labour union are no longer agents and lobbyist for worker’s welfare rather have become bargaining agent and lobbyist for union selfish interest.

4.2.4 Research Question 4: What are the factors undermining the efforts of NLC in pursuit of the effective implementation of the 2019 NMW for the civil servants in Bayelsa State?

Table 4.2.4 Respondents view on the factors undermining the efforts of NLC in pursuit of the effective implementation of the 2019 NMW for the civil servants in Bayelsa State.

N = 400 Criterion 2.5

S/No	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean (\bar{x})	Decision
13.	Patron client relation and unholy alliance between NLC and government	212 848	109 327	41 82	38 38	400 1295	3.24	Accepted
14.	Leadership of the NLC sacrifice of members welfare for selfish personal interest	198 792	101 303	52 104	49 49	400 1248	3.12	Accepted
15.	Political partisanship of NLC leadership	192 768	98 294	43 86	67 67	400 1215	3.04	Accepted
16.	The wordings of NMW legislation is antithetical workers/welfare	198 792	121 294	52 104	29 67	400 1257	3.14	Accepted
Grand Mean =							3.14	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The findings derived from the data shown in Table 4.2.4 indicate the perspectives of the respondents, who represent the sampled population, about the factors that hinder the NLC's endeavors to successfully execute the 2019 National Minimum Wage. This was in response to

the 4th research question and 4th objective. The result showed that respondents strongly agreed with a mean score $\bar{x} = 3.24$ that patron-client relation and unholy alliance between NLC and government is a serious factor that undermined the pursuit of the full implementation of the 2019 NMW. The result with a mean score $\bar{x} = 3.12$ which was accepted because it was above the criterion mean also showed that respondents strongly agreed that the leadership of NLC in the patron-client relationship has sacrificed the interest of workers (civil servants) of the Bayelsa State for their selfish personal interest. The respondents with a mean score $\bar{x} = 3.04$ strongly agreed that political partisanship of NLC is a serious factor undermining the pursuit of the full implementation of the 2019 NMW. Finally, on the items in table 4.2.4, the respondents with a mean score of $\bar{x} = 3.14$ indicated that the poor wording of the NMW legislation is a factor in the full implementation of the Act particularly as it related to issues of consequential adjustment to salaries. As such the Act 2019 NMW is antithetical to workers' welfare. Generally, a grand mean of $\bar{x} = 3.14$ strongly indicated patron-client relations, unholy alliance between NLC and government, political partisanship of the leadership of the union, pursuit of selfish interest by the leadership of NLC and the criminal wicked wordings of NMW Act 2019 are factors that undermine the effective implementation of the 2019 NMW.

The above is partly the underlining problem in the politics of minimum wage implementation in Nigeria. This finding corroborate Dunmade et al (2020) which that pursuit of selfish interest, poor negotiation skill and threat by employers are factors that undermined effective wage determination and implementation in Nigeria. The study finds the following as essential factors undermining effectiveness and productivity of civil service in the state, which includes, Poor conditions of the civil servants in Bayelsa State, Negative disposition of Bayelsa State Government toward the effective Implementation of 2019 NMW and the Welfare of Civil Servants in Bayelsa State. Weakness and ineffectiveness of labour pursuit of the implementation of the 2019 NMW. The attitude of government and labour leaders undermine the pursuit of the full implementation of the 2019 NMW for civil servants in Bayelsa State, and the poor character and wording of the 2019 NMW Act.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Workers in Bayelsa State endure abuse at the hands of their bosses and the people ostensibly meant to safeguard them. Regrettably, the labour union has failed in its duty to represent its members' best interests during collective bargaining. Civil servants suffer double jeopardy, both exploited by the employer (government) who does not care about their welfare and also

exploited by the union leaders who uses union position to bargain for the satisfaction of their selfish interest. That the 2019 NMW is not fully implemented in all sectors for the state public services, partly the fault of labour union. They compromise during negotiation by asking for a figure as minimum wage instead of percentage increase in wage or by not insisting that consequential adjustment to salaries become worded into the minimum wages legislation, because, they were compromised in satisfaction of their individual selfish interest and not the interest of the workers whom they represented. The union leaders are belty-bourgeoisie who have joined forces with state/comprador bourgeoisie to sandwich the proletariat, the working class. Both the union leaders and the government are the oppressors of the workers. Based on the findings and conclusion, this study makes the following recommendations:

1. Improvement of working conditions of Civil Servants by the state government and as a matter of urgency commence immediate promotion of civil servants in the state and ensure immediate implementation of the provision together with the arrears. This is because, beside poor minimum wage, lack of promotion affect what is paid to a worker.
2. The state government should prioritize welfare by introducing welfare scheme such a payment of approved minimum wage, agreed consequential adjustment to wages/salaries as well as promotion of workers should be treated with utmost priority to reduce poverty.
3. Bottom-up strengthening of the union and worker's consciousness, this is because the gullible members of the union have forgotten their role and allowed the leadership of the union to act as though they are above the union. To this, the members of the union has to build their collective consciousness to confront their exploitation by the union leaders and the government. The members of the union should take the powers of the union into their hands and elect only public spirited leaders that fight for workers right and bring back the glory days of the union.
4. Amendment of the national minimum wages law in a manner that it makes provision for consequential adjustment relative to percentage increase in wage because the interpretation of the law has foreclosed opportunity to consequential adjustment since it was not provided.
5. Education of union leaders and members will reset their thinking to be concerned about percentage increase in wage than pegging a figure as minimum wage. When the percentage increase is passed into law, it will automatically rob off positively on all categories of workers and on not only hitherto earning below a given minimum wage.

This is the sure way out of the entire minimum wage ineffective implementation brouhaha.

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