

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS' PRACTICE IN EBONYI STATE: A STUDY OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS, EBONYI STATE BRANCH (2007-2014)

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ABSTRACT: *The impact of environmental factors such political, economic, bureaucracy and ideology on industrial relations in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. These factors in one or the other have in the past and at present shaped the relationship between the labour and the government, influenced socio-economic development, and overall productivity of the productive sectors. Poor industrial relations between the Nigeria Labour congress and the Ebonyi state government was responsible for the prevalent industrial conflicts that overwhelmed Ebonyi state between 2007-2014 which most often resulted in industrial actions, demonstrations and protests. The frosty relationship between labour and government under the period under review resulted in government intimidation of labour leaders, none payment of workers wage who embarked on strike, threat of retrenchment, and unnecessary transfer of workers from one duty post to another as a punitive measure. Upon the above, the thrust of this study is to objectively assess the environmental factors that impact on the industrial relations practice in Ebonyi state, a focus on the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Ebonyi State Branch (2007-2014). Therefore, the study was principally designed to identify the environmental factors that impacted on the labour relations in Ebonyi State between 2007 and 2014. To achieve this objective among others, the study proposed hypotheses whose outcome constitutes the findings of this study. The study also adopted qualitative design in which documentary method and content analysis were adopted for data collection and analysis respectively. The study similarly adopted Marx Class Struggle/Contradictions as the theoretical framework. Findings of the study reveal that industrial relations between Ebonyi state government and NLC between 2007-2014 was conflictual and discordant; that environmental factors such political, economic, bureaucracy and ideology shaped the industrial relations in the state; that the identified environmental factors negatively affected labour relations in Ebonyi State during the period under review. Based on the findings, the study recommended that government should improve on workers wage and conditions of service; that government should always involve labour in the initiation of policies before implementation; that government should eschew the use of intimidation, alienation and threat of force to labour to shift ground on their demands; that government should pay much attention to labour agitations, minimize her intervention in labour affairs.*

KEYWORDS: Environmental Impact, Industrial Relation, Nigeria Labour Congress

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Scholars have attributed the incessant and recurring industrial conflict between the government and the labour to the intervening environmental factors such as political

ideology, bureaucracy, economic and social factors. It is also argued that these factors do not only account for the incessant industrial actions embarked by labour against government, but also account for the poor growth of the economy. For instance, scholars like Flanders, (1972), Kerr, (1973), Damachi, (1983) have contended that industrial relations system can better be appreciated in the context of the political environment within which it operates. It is the contention of these scholars that existence of favourable political environment creates a healthy political atmosphere for industrial relations system in Nigeria. The above contention is justified by the fact that politics greatly affects and shapes the nature of industrial relations between labour and government in Nigeria. The political atmosphere that surrounded industrial relations in Nigeria prior to the mid 1970s, created a devastating labour structure that greatly informed her diverse and disorderliness at that period. Anyim, Ekwoaba & Shonugal (2013) opined that apart from the environmental factors that impact on industrial relations in Nigeria, there are other factors that exert greater influence on the relations. The factors according to them are: “the organization of industry and their geographical distribution; the attitude of employers and trade union

leaders; and the permissive and porous nature of the trade Unions Act”. These factors they argued damage national economy and also constitute hindrances to industrial and commercial productivity. On the same note, environmental impacts of industrial relations can be conceptualized as the socio-economic, political and ideological factors that originate from government/public policy, periodic economic variables, public bureaucratic rules and interpersonal and governmental relations that impinge and impede harmonious labour relations in a given state like Ebonyi. In the submission of International Institute for Labour Studies (1998:9), in Thomas (1999:1) it was noted that:

The labour movement has a major role to play in sustainable development. Trade unions... can bring a unique contribution to the development of a community. They are directly involved with economic systems of production and distribution; they can influence the course and content of employment and social and economic policies...

In the same view, Anoneuvo (2013:3) aligned to the fact that, trade union as a membership based organizations are mandated to represent its members, protect their rights and interests and provide services from field of education to social security. The period of 2007-2014 in Ebonyi state was characterized by unprecedented industrial disputes between the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Ebonyi state government. This unhealthy relationship between the labour and government culminated in several industrial actions. For instance, the failure of the Ebonyi state government to implement the National Minimum Wage and include workers in the implementation of the monetization policy resulted in untold strange relationship between labour and government. Against this backdrop, the thrust of this study is to unveil the environmental factors that impact on industrial relations practice in Ebonyi state; A study of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Ebonyi State Branch 2007-2014.

Statement of the Problem

At the dawn of Nigeria’s political independence in 1960 till the present day, the system of industrial relations in the country has been giving keen observers a source of concern and a cause to worry. This is due to the nature and character of the relationship between government and labour which always results in frequent industrial disputes, crises, and unrest between the workers and government. Politics, bureaucracy, ideology, intimidation, threat to life and unnecessary interference on labour affairs constitute some of the environmental

factors militating against cordial relationship between the state and labour. These factors have not only estranged the harmonious relationship that ought to exist between labour and government, but have also negatively affected productivity and development of the state. For instance, these environmental factors have accounted for the incessant labour dispute culminating in strikes, lockout, picketing, sitdowns, agitations, and demonstrations in Nigeria industrial systems. Observers of the state of affairs have regretted why relationship between the organized labour and government has always been chaotic and disastrous, or that of cat and mouse? It is no longer debatable that hardly could a quarter of a year pass without the organised labour being at logger-head with the government over one demand or the other. This in turn leads to protest or industrial actions that degenerate a colossal loss to the economy and foreign exchange. The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), since its evolution has always used the instrument of strike, protest or demonstration to either press home its demand or pre-empt government from carrying out obnoxious and unpopular policies. Since 2007, the Nigeria Labour Congress, (NLC), has embarked on number of strikes and demonstrations to force government to grant its demand or come to negotiation table. The most prominent were the general strike embarked upon by the Nigeria Labour Congress to restrain government from renegeing on the implementation of the National Minimum Wage and the implementation of the National Monetization Policy for all workers, instead of political office holders only in Ebonyi state.

Consequent upon the above, this study has come up with the following research questions:

- i What has been the nature of industrial relations practices between NLC and Ebonyi State government between 2007-2014?
- ii What are the different environmental factors that impacted on the industrial relations between NLC and Ebonyi State government between 2007-2014?
- iii To what extent does political environment in Ebonyi state impact on industrial relations practices in the State between 2007-2014?

Objective of the study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the environmental factors that impacted on industrial relations practices in Ebonyi state between 2007-2014, while the specific objectives include:

- i To investigate the nature of industrial relations practices in Ebonyi State between 2007-2014.
- ii To identify the different environmental factors that impacted on the industrial relations practices in Ebonyi State between 2007-2014.
- iii To determine how environmental political factor impacts on the industrial relations between the state government and the Nigeria Labour Congress in Ebonyi state, 2007-2014.

Significance of the study

This study has both theoretical and empirical significance. Theoretically, this study will add to the existing and increasing pool of knowledge in the area of industrial relations practices in Nigeria in general and in Ebonyi State particular, thus serving as source of secondary data

to students, scholars, and researchers who would be interested in researching in the same area. Empirically, the study will be significant in channelling of new course for better relationship between the labour and government especially in the areas of collective bargaining, negotiations and dispute resolutions. Once more, the study will satisfy the curiosity of the researcher who is interested in investigating the environmental impacts of industrial relations practices in Ebonyi state. Again, the recommendations of the study shall serve as guide towards more cordial industrial relations between government and labour in Ebonyi state and Nigeria in general.

Scope of the Study

This study has geographical and periodic scopes. Geographically, the scope of this study is the environmental impacts of industrial relations in Ebonyi State, while periodically, the scope of this study is 2007-2014. On this note, environmental impacts on industrial relations in Ebonyi State prior to this period may not be entertained in this study save for emphasis purpose.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of related literature of this study is divided into two sections. The theoretical and empirical review. The theoretical review of this study will pay attention to the contextualization of some theories relevant in the understanding of the environmental impacts on the industrial relation practices, while the empirical review discusses some of the scholarly writings, publications, and postulations on the environmental impacts of industrial relations practices in (Ebonyi State) Nigeria.

Theoretical Review

The following theories shall be reviewed in this study. They are: Unitary Theory, Conflict Theory, and Social Action Theory.

The Unitary Theory:

Unitary theory in the words of Fox (1974) holds the belief that labour organizations are united bodies in which way they share same goals and objectives. Fox argued that a member of an organization assumes same united interest thus conflict does not need to ensue among them. It is the belief of the unitary theorists that every organization has same interest and goal, therefore, members ought not to engage themselves in conflictual states. Though this theory was able to state that members of an organization need not to engage in conflict since they pursue same goal, it could not explain why disputes occur between government and labour, nor did it identify the environmental impacts on industrial relations. Given this inadequacies, this theory cannot suffice as the theoretical framework of this study.

Conflict Theory:

The conflict theory of industrial relations criticizes unity theory as unnecessary since there is no existing misunderstanding or mischief, Crouch (1982). The theory perceives trade union as old which is dispensable in the present century (Salamon 1992). The theory contends that the adherents of the theory conceptualize conflict as innate in labour/management relationship based on the fact that these two classes have interests of conflictual nature and

which are diametrically opposed to each other. The apologist of the conflict theory also “postulated that in a capitalist economy, the state is always on the side of the employer in an attempt to protect the interest of the bourgeoisie”. Miliband (1969) opined that “the state stands for a number of institutions that are constantly used to harass and repress the trade unions”. He sees the state “as a coercive instrument of the ruling capitalist class”. Conflict theory as a theory of industrial relations gives insight into the causes of disputes between employer and employee. It also sees government as the coercive instrument of the state used to suppress the working class. In spite of the strength of this theory, it could not be adopted as the theoretical framework of this study due to its inability to identify the environmental factors that impact on the industrial relations practices.

Social Action Theory:

The Social Action Theory of industrial relations looks at the individual responses of the social actors such as managers, employees and union leaders to given situations. The theory is associated with the teaching of Max Weber. To Weber, “action is social by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual”. He continued that “action takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course” (Max Weber, 1896). Social action theory cannot be applied as the theoretical framework of this theory due to its inherent inability to explain the causes of industrial dispute in a society. Given this inadequacy, this theory cannot be adopted.

Conceptual Clarification

Descriptively, industrial relations connote the various aspects of employment relations. It simply refers to all that has to do with or affect the relationship between labour and its employers through inception to exit. A good number of scholars such as Akpala (1982) have attempted to conceptualize industrial relations as a global idea that encompasses all the activities embodied in manpower management. Their conceptualisation also embraces the attitude in personnel management, the process of joint employment regulation between workers and employers (labour-management relations) and the intervening actions by outside agents including the government. Once more, industrial relations can be interpreted to mean the intertwining activities of trade unions, employers and the state. Cordova (1980) defines industrial relations as the process of interest accommodation by which conditions of work are fixed; relations are regulated, and power is shared in the field of labour. Yesufu (1982) in his view sees industrial relations as the whole web of human interactions at work which is predicated upon and arises out of the employment contract. Both definitions recognize that industrial relations is concerned with the systems, rules and procedures used by unions and employers to determine the reward for effort and other conditions of employment, to protect the interests of the employed and their employers and to regulate the ways in which employers treat their employees. On the other hand, Poole (1986) avers that:

Industrial relations concentrates on conflict, accommodation, and reconciliation of parties and partly divergent interests of the managers labour and trade union and the state and its agencies in both production and distribution spheres.

Dunlop (1958) in his elaborate description conceptualized industrial relations as “the participants or actors involved in the process as, a hierarchy of managers, and their representatives or representatives of organizations; a hierarchy of workers (non-managers) and their spokesmen i.e. workers organisations and representatives; specialized

governmental agencies that may include specialized private agencies created by the first two factors". In the opinion of Fajana (2006), the whole idea of industrial relations emerged because the conflict involving the inability of the employers and employees to have a proper dialogue concerning the terms and conditions of employment. The ensuing conflict is inevitable but there are generally mechanisms to ensure that it is channeled or accommodated. These mechanisms are individual resolution, unilateral determination by employers, state, trade unions or workers or joint modes of regulation by the actions of the parties. In spite of the strong desire or compelling necessity to work harmoniously, there is nevertheless latent antagonism or conflict among the parties. For instance, a worker may seek more favourable terms and conditions of work; a trade union may want to secure maximum benefits for its members; employers may seem always poised to achieve minimum costs and maximum profits while government and its regulatory agencies on the other hand may adopt socio-economic objectives and policies to which the other two parties may consider undesirable or find unpalatable (Anyim, 2009). In a nutshell, industrial relations refer to the relationship between workers, trade union and the employer, management or government.

Development of Industrial Relations Practice in Nigeria

The development and growth of industrial relations in Nigeria have variously been traced to many origins by many writers and scholars. For instance, Akpala, 1982, Fajana, 2000 and Yesufuf, 1976 have different notions with respect to the evolution and development of industrial relations in Nigeria. Be that as it may, the commonest view on the evolution and development of industrial relations practice in Nigeria has greatly been attributed to the events of the colonial period. Yesufu (1982) argued that industrial relation is as old as industry itself. He opined that:

Industrial relations' was coined out of the historical circumstances of the British Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. It came into common parlance long before its subject matter drew enough attention or acquired sufficient respectability to be treated as an academic or intellectual discipline.

Conversely, Akpala (1982) asserted that "the remote background of the development of industrial relations in Nigeria features the absence of a sense of direction and a lack of policy for labour". He attributed the evolution of industrial relations to the absence of sense of direction and policy for Nigerian labour. On the other hand, Davies (1966) revealed that "non existence of distinct labour policy in British colonies in West Africa prompted the development of industrial relations in Nigeria. He maintained that "prior to the advent of the First World War, the principle of *lassies-faire* was made to guide the actions of employers and the administrators with respect to economic activities and matters affecting the employers-employee relationship". But labour related events started to unfold at the dusk of the First World War as a result of the momentum gained after the initial conditions that gave it the momentum which created the initial conditions that gave drive for the development of labour policy. The development of industrial relations in Nigeria was facilitated by two events, they are: The formation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the conditions of labour after the war which encouraged the implementation of a definite labour policy. This policy was introduced to ensure adequate utilization of labour against the backdrop of international scrutiny of labour standards. Later, in between the First and Second World wars, the colonial administration in Nigeria adopted policies directed towards concrete labour policy in their colonies. This policy enhanced the conceding of legal rights to unions in the British colonies including Nigeria.

Environmental Factors that Impact on Industrial Relations Practices

Industrial relations emphasize the relationship between employer and employee in paid employment. It also includes the nature of reward, motivation, training and discipline of the employee alongside the influences of this process on the major institutions involved such as the management, trade unions and the state. In a broader sense, the concept of industrial relations means the organization and practice of multipronged relationships between workers, the unions, and management in an industry (Nanda&Panda, 2013). In contrast, industrial relations environment refers to the resultant state of interaction amongst composite forces operating within and outside the organizations. The need for looking at industrial relations in broader context has been recognized in academic as well as business circles. While absence of strikes, lockouts, indiscipline, individual and collective grievances and restrictive practices have been attributed to existence of industrial relations system in an enterprise, these constituted however, the negative indicators of industrial relations environment. The positive indicators of healthy relationship amongst various internal stakeholders in the organization ought to be high productivity, efficiency, moral, commitment, constructive discipline and heightened sense of belongingness and identity with the vision and values of the organization amongst the employees (Nanda&Panda, 2013).

In Ebonyi state, concerns for industrial relations cannot be limited to the maintenance of industrial harmony but also to prevailing issues of socio-economic conditions prevalent in the country at the macro level. Industrial relations systems and practices therefore must be directed toward addressing major challenges surfacing from undue intimidation, interferences and harassment of workers by Ebonyi state government as was the case between 2007- 2014. Healthy industrial relations practices cannot be maintained unless broader developmental issues are addressed. In discreet terms, most of the environmental factors of industrial relations practices in Ebonyi state are:

- 1. State government's intervention in labour affairs:** Undue government interference in trade unions' internal affairs/leadership relations fondly referred to as "government interest and government candidate". These are issues that NLC has the sole right to deal with. The NLC state congress of 6th April, 2011 was stopped by Ebonyi state government through the then Head of Service claiming that there was security in the state.
- 2. Use of government powers and influences to intimidate workers:** The use of government powers and security agents characterized the activities of Ebonyi state government between 2007-2014. The state through the agents of the state intimidated and harassed the organized labour in the state. For instance, the assault on workers with canister at Pastoral Centre by the team of the Nigerian Police Force on 6th April, 2011 as was directed by the state government testifies to this fact. This incidence led to the death of a pregnant teacher.
- 3. Relegation of the rights of workers to the background with impunity:** Within the period under review, the rights and privileges of workers in Ebonyi state were infringed upon. A case in point was the denial of labour the right to peaceful protest over the non implementation of the monetized policy on May 29th, 2008 by the state government.
- 4. Threat to life, assault and harassment of labour leaders:** The state government through her agents threatened, assaulted and harassed many labour leaders within the period under review. The assassination attempt on the life of Comrade Onyemaechi Eke, Chairman

Joint Public Service Negotiating Council (JPSNC) on May Day, 2008 for daring to lead workers on a protest march is a case in point. In nutshell, above are the prominent environment impacts that have negatively affected industrial relations practices in Ebonyi state between 2007-2014.

Empirical Review

Political Environment and Industrial Relations in Ebonyi State

The most obvious environment that impacted much on industrial relations in Ebonyi state under the period under review is the political environment, political interference on labour matters and government intolerance of labour agitations speak volume of this factor. On several occasion the then government used thugs to compel labour rescind their demands and call off strikes. A case in point was the breakage of the gate of the Ministry of Finance by the Ebonyi Youth Assembly when the organised labour embarked on strike.

Theoretical Framework

Granted that healthy industrial relations are sine qua non for socio- economic growth and development of an organization or state, this study has adopted the theory of Class Struggle/ Contradictions espoused by Karl Marx. Marx in this theory stressed on class relations and conflict irreconcilability, with respect to industrial relations regulations and their determinants. The Marxist perspective on class struggle /contradictions contends that society is segmented into two major contending classes which are the bourgeoisie (the haves), and the Proletariat (the have nots). In this respect, the employers of labour who also owns the means of production comprise the wealthy class. More so, this perspective argues that these two contradictory classes are in conflictual relations because of the exploitation of one class by the other, thereby creating alienation and economic imbalance. The exploited who are alienated are irritated while those who exploit the have nots are pleased, thus the origin of class struggle. The class struggle approach to the study of industrial relations contends that the contradictions and conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat will come to an end only when the exploited class overthrows the bourgeoisie class thereby taking control of the organization in order to institute a classless society (Eme et al, 2011). Marxists theory of industrial relations perceives contradictions and conflict as the outstanding feature of what takes place in the work place. The perspective does not recognize order, peace, stability, and consensus as essential features of industrial relations; it rather sees industrial relations in terms of the struggles for power between labour unions and employer of labour. That is to say, this theory sees industrial relations occurring within a dynamic conflict situation, which is permanent and unaltered as long as the structure of society remains the same. Experience has shown that many constraints such as ban and death threats of the union and its leadership from government or management and inadequate resources, have reduced trade unions and their leaders to limit their own threat to using radical rhetoric to frighten governments so that their bread and butter objectives can be achieved.

Justification of the Theory

The strength of the Karl Marx theory of Class Struggle/contradiction adopted in this study lies in its ability to indicate the genesis and causes of conflict between labour and the employer of labour. This theory hypothesized that the alienation of workers from the surplus value that accrued from their labour which in turn degenerates into the classes of haves and

have not informs the origin of class contradiction. In this case, the frequent protest by workers for better wages and conditions of service represents the Marx's class struggle. The Ebonyi state government, the employer of labour, and the Nigeria Labour Congress, the employee engage in frequent industrial disputes over certain demands by labour on government. The government of the state in other to get labour bent on its appeals employ political and economic measures to prevail on labour. Such measures most times are threat to lives of labour leaders, intimidation, economic sanction (no work no pay), disengagement of workers from service, ban on labour movement among others. In this study, the Nigeria Labour Congress (Poletariat) represents the exploited while the Ebonyi state government represent the exploiter (bourgeoisie).

DISCUSSION

Critique of the Literature Review

In this study, relevant theoretical and empirical studies were undertaken to ascertain the opinion of scholars and writers on the appropriate theory to be adopted in the study. Theories reviewed are: The Unitary theory, Conflict theory, Social Action theory, and the Marxist theory of class struggle/contradiction. After the review of each of the theories, it was discovered that none of the theories was adequate to be adopted as the theoretical framework for the study except the Marxist theory of class struggle or contradictions which argued that industrial relations is characterised by conflict between the labour and the state. The theory further argued that order, peace, and stability are not essentially part of industrial relations. On the other hand, views of scholars such as Nanda & Panda (2013), Anyim (2009), Fajana (2006), Poole (1982), Yesufu (1982), and Akpala (1982) on the industrial relations were reviewed. They conceived industrial relations as the various aspects of employment relations. They also see industrial relations as all that relates labour with employers. It is the view of these scholars that industrial relations involve all the variables that shape the structure of relationship between labour and management. Though these scholars were able to conceptualize industrial relations, none was able to make elaborate contributions on the environmental impacts that affect industrial relations practices or invent mechanisms that can be adopted to reconcile industrial disputes.

Critique of the Theoretic Framework

Though the Marxist Theory of class struggle/contradiction is apt in the explanation of the causes and genesis of industrial disputes between labour and its employer, it derailed by assuming that the phenomenon of conflict is central in employer/ employee relationship. Labour and its employer are not always at logger- head. There are always moments of peace and order. The theory failed to recognize peace and order, stability, and mutual agreement as fundamental characteristics of industrial relations, but rather chaos, disorder, and crises. Class struggle theory conceives the phenomenon of industrial relations as tussle for supremacy between the labour and its employer. To Marx, industrial relations exists in a forceful conflict situation that cannot change as long s the relationship between labour and management remains what it is. Marx in this theory enjoined labour to play prominent political role instead of the one assigned to it by its employer. He went further to state that trade unions may sometimes observe that in absence of political activism, economic, education, socio-political objectives may elope it. It therefore believes that trade unions

should be brave and politically vigorous and join the crusade to reform or change bad governments. Apart from reforms and overthrow of unjust government by labour, Marx also called for restructuring of the prevailing capitalist order and then replaces it with a classless society. Marx in this context failed to understand that the interest of workers is not the overthrow of government but improved conditions of service and better wages.

Strategies for Achieving Stated Objectives.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher adopted content analysis method. The researcher employed secondary sources of data. This is because the relevant data needed for this study were available in documentary literature. The sources of data include journals, magazine, workshops, internet, materials periodicals, bulletin, unpublished articles, and research findings made by other scholars. The information generated from the sources mentioned above assisted the researcher to achieve the stated objectives using normative orientation approach in comparing and contrasting the sources of data.

Findings

- a. Industrial relations practice in Ebonyi state between 2007-2014 was characterized by conflict.** Findings of the study show that due the unco-operative attitude of labour and government, the relationship between them was obviously conflictual and discordant. Available facts have that the then government in power was never willing to invite labour for a discussion to look into their agitations but will rather threaten the labour with “no work no pay”. Then labour most times in defiance of the threat embark on strike thus bringing the socio-economic activities of the state to a halt. The findings once more show that the government in power had always pay deaf ears to intermittent protest of labour against poor conditions of service or demand for wage or salary increment.
- b. Political, economic, bureaucratic and ideological factors constitute the environmental impacts on the industrial relations practices in Ebonyi state.** The study indicates that the most prominent environmental factors that impact on the industrial relations practices in Ebonyi state are the political, economic, bureaucratic and ideological factors. These factors badly influenced the industrial relations in the state within the period.
- c. Environmental factors impacted negatively on the industrial relations in Ebonyi state between 2007-2014.** The environmental factors such the political, economic and social factors negatively affect the industrial relations practice in Ebonyi state. These factors apart from shaping the relationship between labour and the state, account for the incessant industrial disputes between the sat and the organise labour which most times result in industrial actions, strikes and demonstrations.

CONCLUSION

After the testing of the hypotheses and analysis of the data generated in this work, the study concludes as follows: that the industrial relations practice in Ebonyi state between 200-2014 was characterized by conflict due to the indifference of the state government to labour demands and improved conditions of service; that political, social and economic factors and some of the environments that impacted on the industrial relations practice in Ebonyi state;

that these environmental impacts affected negatively the industrial relations practice in the state during the period under review; that peaceful negotiations, collective bargaining, negotiation, and compromise will ensure cordial industrial relations in the state; that the absence of these factors can guarantee smooth industrial relations practice in the state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study and existing literature on the environmental impact on industrial relations practices, the following recommendations have been advocated.

1. Government and labour should understand that their existence is complementary and not conflictual. This means government should always engage the labour in peace talks each time labour places demand on her. Government should also endeavour to honour any agreement reached with her by labour, since experience has shown that frequent strikes embarked by labour often result from government failure to implement reached agreements.
2. The influence of the identified environments that impact on the industrial relations practices between labour and government should be minimized. For instance, the politicisation of labour and its leadership by government to enable it to pressurize labour to accept her condition should stop forthwith. Available facts have shown that government in order to have its way after negotiations have always sponsored leadership crises among the organized labour and its leadership. Again, the economic starvation of labour as a means to press it to shift ground on her demands should be discouraged. The “no work no pay” mantra always adopted by government as a means of winning labour war against the organized labour shouldn't be. Government should not alienate or impoverish labour to enable her to win, but should engage the organized labour in a negotiation table for amicable reconciliation.
3. Since it has been observed that the identified environmental factors impact negatively on the industrial relations practices, government should as a matter of necessity involve the organized labour in her policy formulation. This results from the fact that almost all the policies formulated by government affect labour in one way or the other. When labour is aware of the policies formulated, and probably makes her imputes before implementation, there would be no chaos or sabotage.
4. Government should endeavour not only to increase workers' wage but also make their conditions of service better. This if done will go a long way to minimize usual face-off between the labour and government over conditions of service and wage increment. If conditions of service and wage improve, the industrial relations practices in Ebonyi state will not only be cordial but will remain convivial.

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