

International Labour Organization Decent Work Agenda for Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract. Human beings are at the core of any production process in any given economy, indicating the importance of the human activity. This is why the International Labour Organization in its global pursuit of establishing human right in employment relations have charted decent work guides for member nations to follow for work places to be conducive and elicit performance from employees for ultimate good of the people and the nation generally. This paper examined the concept of decent work, the conventions of decent work as outlined by International Labour Organization, the challenges to decent work in Nigeria and the ultimate gains of decent work to employers, employees, and all stakeholders in the Nigerian workplace environment. The paper revealed the in capability of both the State and employers align with the various ILO conventions for smooth industrial harmony of the industrial players. The paper thus recommends the strict adherence of all industrial players to the guidelines stipulated by ILO Charters and Conventions to create a peaceful, safe and progressive working environment for all industrial

players as well as present the Nigerian State as a committed organ of the international comity of nations as reliable and worker friendly State.

Keywords: International Labour Organization, Decent Work Agenda, Conventions, Nigeria, Challenges, Prospects.

1. Introduction

The International Labour Organization, a subsidiary of the United Nations Organization, committed to global employment and labour relations matters of peoples and nations of the world expressed concern at its 87th International Labour Congress in 1999 (ILO, 1999) on the objective of member states not only to create jobs but with acceptable standard quality. Further, the International Labour Congress adopting Convention 189, 2011 in 2013 reaffirmed the Declaration on Decent Work Agenda to members “to respect and promote and realize in good faith” the principles concerning four (4) categories of fundamental rights at work.

Categories of Fundamental Rights at Work

Areas	Core Conventions
Freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining	No. 87- Freedom of Association and Protection of the right to organize, 1948; and 98-Right to organize and Collective Bargaining, 1949
The elimination of all forms of forced labour or compulsory labour	No. 29- Forced Labour, 1930; and No. 105- Abolition of Forced Labour 1957
The cancellation of Child Labour	No. 138-Minimum Age, 1973; and No. 182- Worse forms of child labour.1999
The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation	No. 100-Equal remuneration, 1951; and No.111- Discrimination (Employment and occupation), 1958

Source: www.molsmed.gov.tt/portals/0/Decent%20work%20Agenda accessed 10/13/2019

The perspective of the ILO in recent time towards compliance level of nations with decent work agenda

in the face of dwindling resources, economic recession and increasing population particularly in Nigeria stirred this study.

2. Concept of Decent Work

Okafor, (2012) defined decent work as the availability of employment in conditions of freedom, equity, human security and dignity. The ILO opined that decent work involves advantages for work that is productive and creates a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, valuable prospect for individual development and social integration, freedom for people to voice concerns, organize and involve in decisions that influence lives and equality of opportunity for men and women (Levin, 2003, Kayode and Agboola, 2019). Therefore, decent work in totality is what people hope for in their working lives: opportunity and income; rights, voice and recognition; family stability and personal development; public health and wellbeing; and fairness, gender and racial equality. Furthermore, decent work covers access to employment in conditions of freedom, allowing basic rights at work that guarantee the absence of discrimination or harassment, an income that allows one to afford basic economic, social and family needs and responsibilities, an adequate level of social protection for the worker and family members and the exercise of voice and participation at work, directly or indirectly through representative organizations (ILO, 2005).

The United Nations Economic and Social Council has given a general comment that defines "decent work" and requires satisfaction of Article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: decent work is employment that "respects the fundamental rights of the human person as well as the rights of workers in terms of conditions of work safety and remuneration as well as respect for the physical and mental integrity of the worker in the exercise of his/her employment." In discussing decent work, Nazani & Prasad (2017) says it applies to both the formal and informal sector of the economy as it must reflect in all kind of jobs, people and families. Decent work is a multidimensional concept because it touches the humane grounds. It is implicit in the meaning of the job or income is good, meeting one's expectation and those of one's community and at the same time, it is not exaggerated and is falling within the reasonable aspirations of reasonable people.

The ILO Decent Work Agenda (2015) is the balanced and integrated programmatic approach to pursue the

objectives of full and productive employment and decent work for all at global, regional, national, sectoral and local levels. It has four pillars: standards and rights at work, employment creation and enterprise development, social protection and social dialogue. The Sustainable Development Goals (2019) also proclaims decent work for sustainable economic growth. The Goal aims to increase labour productivity, reduce the unemployment rate, and improve access to financial services and benefits. Encouraging entrepreneurship and job creation are key to this, as are effective measures to eradicate forced labour, slavery and human trafficking. With these targets in mind, the goal is to achieve full and productive employment, and decent work, for all women and men by 2030. In other words, it is in order to say that the ILO decent work agenda is intended to advance economic and working conditions that give all workers, employers and governments a stake of lasting peace, prosperity and progress. The decent work agenda is much related to the employment generation, support for small and medium enterprises, addressing informality, securing better working conditions and safety and health, and freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, with gender equality. A dimension to this decent work agenda is about the statistics of Nigerians in employment as at 2017 approximated to 85million people (NBC, 2018). It further revealed that in the third quarter of 2017, unemployment rate increased by 18.8 percent with increase in the number of school graduates not matched by job opportunities increases (ILO, 2019).

3. Decent work trends in Nigeria

The problem associated with non-availability of decent work has stirred global attention making the United Nations Secretary-General at the 2015 Congress to advice nations to increase their efforts in promoting job opportunities for men and women in order to foster decent and productive work environment, in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity (ILO, 2010, TUC, 2014; Ban Kimono, 2015) which has inspired several studies in the area of labour and industrial relations, (ILO, 2010, 2011) with United Nations to include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the need to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all" as the eighth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda.

This extends to job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. There is no doubt that SDG

(8) which is geared towards promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable employment and decent work for all is meant to set a new path to economic growth and development for a country like Nigeria which has 112,519 million people living in poverty and over 20 million people without jobs. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the number of unemployed persons globally in 2017 is estimated to stand at just over 201million with an additional rise of 2.7 million expected in 2018 as the pace of labour force growth overshadows job creation. The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) states that unemployment stood at 6.4% for the final quarter of 2014 in Nigeria and increased to 7.5% for the first three months of 2015 and had further risen from 13.3 per cent in the second quarter to 13.9 per cent in the third quarter of 2016.

In its report, NBS stated the number of people that were unemployed or underemployed increased from 24.4 million as at the end of the first quarter of 2016 to 26.06 million persons. The report further expressed the number of underemployed in the labour force (those working but doing menial jobs not commensurate with their qualifications or those not engaged in fulltime work and merely working for few hours) increased by 392,390 or 2.61 per cent resulting in an increase in the underemployment rate to 19.3 per cent in Quarter 2 of 2016 from 19.1 per cent in Quarter 1 of 2016. This statistics shows that Nigeria is not free from the global trend of rising unemployment. The inference from this is that the rate at which the labour force is growing is faster than the rate of job creation. This means that the few jobs that are available are not enough for the unemployed. Hence, the labour market is becoming fierce and more competitive that most people just settle for any job even though it is not decent enough. The lack of decent jobs is causing issues such as social unrest, suicide, terrorism and migration in many parts of the world.

4. Provisions of decent work in Nigeria: The ILO intervention

The attention on provision of decent work is stirring global momentum, Juan Somavia as Director General of ILO stressed the deficit of the provision of decent work across countries of the globe. Based on the Decent Work Agenda, the ILO had been collaborating with Nigeria through the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) under the Declaration for fair and globalization framework of action. Decent work is linked to the concept of human development, a process of enabling choices, freedom to live one's value and manage one's affairs which are key indicators of which are long and healthy life,

education and a decent standard of living. However, these indicators are measured by UNDP Human Development Index. The ILO (2004) enunciated four strategic objectives of decent work which are fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards, employment and income opportunities; social protection and social security and tripartism (Adewumi, 2008). Barrientos (2007:1-2) pointed some challenges associated with these objectives which reflect in the Nigerian situation in connection with nonstandard employment relations. These include the following:

Job creation: This objective states that economy is to create opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, skills development, job creation and sustainable livelihoods. Barrientos (2007) is of the opinion that the employment challenge created arose from the diversity of employment generated by the global production system. He explained that decent work requires permanence, regularity, and to be secured in it as a worker. Relating this to the Nigerian context, it is clear that the economy is incapable of generating employment to the teeming population Nigerians in dire need of job will accept whatever being offered. Many employers have provided in decent jobs, not considering the global standards. Government ought to create jobs as well the conducive environment to facilitate job creation, otherwise nonstandard employment relations will continue to flourish wrongly.

Guarantee rights at work: This second objective expresses the need to give recognition and protect workers' rights. Barrientos (2007) is of the view that rights of workers could be protected by organization as well as the representatives of the workers union. In Nigeria, workers who work in nonstandard environment are grossly undermined; denied of several rights because they cannot unionize (Okafor, 2012). Succinctly put, (Uvieghara, 2000; Okougbo, 2004, Adewumi, 2008, & Okafor, 2010) says any employment relation that does not allow the workers to unionize in decision making, denies workers of their rights and such organization does not provide decent work.

Extending Social Protection: It attempts to highlight the need for inclusion and productivity ensuring women and men enjoy good and safe working conditions have free time, rest and family, social values are considered as well view issues of compensation and health care regarded. In the Nigerian setting, many workers in nonstandard work environment are denied access to most of this probably because the labour laws are not obeyed

even though Nigeria is a signatory to ILO conventions (Okafor, 2012).

Promoting Social Dialogue: This objective states the inclusion of strong and independent workers and employer's organizations being germane to increased productivity, avoiding disputes at work, and building cohesive societies. In the view of Barrientos (2007) the social dialogue challenge arises from lack of effective voice or independent representation of such workers in the process of dialogue with employers, government or stakeholders. This hampers production of such workers whose morale, motivations are low.

The ILO remarks about the Decent Work deficits in the Nigeria Decent Work Country Programme 11 indicated that even though Nigeria ratified 40 ILO Conventions with 35 in force, Nigeria is yet to ratify a number of conventions which are crucial to addressing decent work issues. These include ILO Conventions C122, C129, C150, C187, and C188 that relate to labour market governance, C102 on social security, C181 on Private Employment Agencies and C189 on Domestic Workers. However, the implementation of the ratified conventions has not been effective due to capacity challenges in ensuring compliance, lack of awareness of the provisions of such conventions. Reviewed Labour Laws were delayed in receiving legislative attention for about nine years. It can be said that the efforts of ILO in reducing this scourge is being evaded in the Nigerian situation, the current depressed economic situation is biting harder, employers of labour, both public and private are using all forms of unacceptable avenues to exploit their workers. Some of these are low wages and long hours of work, gender and age discrimination, in humane physical work environment, disrespect for freedom of association and poor industrial relations, inadequate social protection, thus eroding the dignity of the Nigerian worker (Okafor, 2012; OECD, 2012; World Economic Forum 2014). According to ILO in the Nigeria Decent Work Country Programme II (2015 - 2018) the country has had a decade of jobless growth given that years of economic growth has not translated to more wage employment opportunities and poverty alleviation. The report further states that over half of the entire 170 million population live in urban areas with unsustainable conditions, with high rate of unemployment. Nigeria is hardly on pursuit of meeting the MDGs, more so in the area of reducing extreme poverty and hunger. Therefore, in line with ILO 2011 convention 98 that has made public the importance of decent work agenda to individual employees, organizations and the society and

probably one of the most important issues in labour and employment relations, as it leads to poverty, increase in insecurity and inclusive sustainable development, efforts must be stepped up by all stakeholders to stem the further drift in Nigeria (Report of the E- Discussion 2012; Ban Kimoon, 2015). ILO (2007) emphasized that, employment that will guarantee decent work for the people should start from national policy, adapted to national priorities and incorporating such to national development policies.

Rogers (2007) elucidating on decent work agenda says it is base for social policy which shows concern for dignity of work and gender equality in work, the role of work in social integration and personal development. Thus efforts need to be channeled towards aggressive job creation, international cooperation, entrepreneurship and skills training of citizens, creating a better working condition for the employed, while promoting decent employment. Governments of developing countries are mostly faced in creating efficient labour markets that can guarantee decent work agenda. To promote decent work agenda is to serve as a universal principle which will drive economic system, propel organizations to increase the quality of work through improved working conditions, better occupational safety and health, and higher incomes that will secure a more environmentally sustainable economy (ILO, 2013). Importantly workers are to be seen as adding value to organizations and as the most valued asset for organizational development and growth than been seen as a tool of production (ILO,2011;Torrington, Hall and Taylor,2008; Stiglitz.2009; Armstrong,2011)

Providing decent work is a serious issue across the globe for human beings who have attained the working age to as a fulfillment of the human right and obligation of states to her citizens. The essence of providing decent work is to improve standard of living of employees, create a decent and productive work environment, and create conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity (ILO, 1999).

Literature reveals that many vices and issues surround the non-availability of decent work to the citizenry. Adebayo (1999); Fajana (2005) associated idleness, unemployment leading to frustration, depression, hostility and criminal behaviour. Chigunta (2002) is of the view that many youths engage in casual work, stealing, prostitution and other unwholesome activities due to lack of decent work. Accordingly, ILO (2018) further enunciated the lists of Decent Work deficits in the Nigerian environment to include non-availability of social

security to protect all the citizens, inadequate pensions system, trafficking of women and the use of child labour more so working in non-standard workplaces.

The ratification of the ILO conventions by Nigerian government to the point of getting it enshrined in some of the provisions of the constitution has probably not been really effective from record of events about the observance of these human rights. The 2009 World Bank report captured half of Nigeria's 170 million people as living in urban areas with high rates of unemployment. This high level of unemployment reflected in the death of about 18 job seekers who died and many injured in the nationwide recruitment test conducted by the Nigeria Immigration Service in 2014. In September 2015, there was the report of death of a worker in a Steel company in Lagos. The report indicated the anomaly of forced work under conditions near slavery, even at the point of evacuation of the corpse reflects employers not meeting the provision of safety standard environment of work. The 2015 event of World Day of Decent Work remarked the picketing of some companies accused of not providing decent work environment. The President of the NLC made an address requesting that workers deserve the best in terms of decent work and welfare.

The ILO government partner or operative unit is the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment (FMLE) in Nigeria. Since 1959 when the ILO opened its First African Office in Nigeria, the ILO has been providing technical cooperation assistance to Nigeria through the FMLE. It has assisted in enhancing the human and institutional capacities of the FMLE, especially in the areas of social dialogue, HIV/AIDS, employment issues, etc. This has enabled the ministry to be proactive in fulfilling its mandate as a labour and employment organ of government and to contribute to decision making on labour and economic issues (ILO, 2014).

ILO (2009) asserts that for most people and their families and communities the main route out of poverty, and the key to reducing the risk of falling into poverty, is decent and productive work. Decent work aims at a substantial reduction in the levels of unemployment and a major improvement in the quality of jobs available to women and men. In Nigeria, the number of labour market entrants has outpaced the economy's ability to absorb them, resulting in high unemployment, underemployment and discouragement.

Fapohunda (2004) reported that, on a national basis, open unemployment was over 10%. Most of the

unemployment is concentrated in the urban areas. As at July 2018, urban unemployment was over 20% in some Nigerian states. The unemployment is not only of unskilled workers; it includes unemployment of highly skilled people including graduates of universities and of other institutions of higher learning (ILO, 2018).

ILO (2018) reported that employment expanded by about 30 per cent between the 1990s and the mid-2000s. However, the period was characterized by a contraction of formal employment and decent work (full-time, formal, regular and permanent contracts covered by labour legislation) and a proliferation of various types of non-standard work in Nigeria. The bulk of new employment in recent years, in Nigeria, has been in the informal economy. Such forms of work are generally precarious and poorly paid, with few benefits and not covered by labour legislation or social protection.

Fapohunda (2012) affirmed that recent estimates suggest that informal work now accounts for more than 80 per cent of total non-agricultural employment in Nigeria. Several factors are responsible for the rise of non-standard work. The downsizing of the public sector and privatization of state-owned enterprises are contributory factors, as retrenched public-sector employees often turn to the informal sector for a living.

The search for flexible labour arrangements in an increasingly competitive global environment has led multinational firms to relocate different stages of or entire production processes from Nigeria in order to take advantage of differences in wage costs, factor endowments or congenial investment climates. Owing to these trends, there have been changes in the distribution of income and low decent work. ILO (2018) adds that the share of wages in total income declined between the early 1990s and the mid-2000s and during the same period, the income gap between the top and bottom wage earners increased. The decrease in the proportion of unionized labour has reinforced these trends. Access to labour markets and to decent work remains particularly limited for adults in Nigeria. For Nigeria to achieve its decent work potential, the priority is to realize labour market opportunities to create more and better jobs for women and men. Accordingly, the Nigeria DWCP II, which provides a framework for the Nigerian Government and the Social Partners to collaborate with various public and private sector stakeholders with technical and financial assistance from the ILO and builds on the lessons learnt from the Nigeria DWCP I (2005 – 2009). It aligns with national

development priorities as outlined in the Vision 20: 2020, Transformation Agenda and UN Development Framework of Assistance (UNDAF) in Nigeria (ILO, 2014).

The labour market in Nigeria has not reflected the impressive level of economic growth experienced from 2005-2013. Although the economy recorded an average of 9.8 percent of GDP growth per annum between 2008 and 2010, the official unemployment rate for the working age population ranged between 12 and 15 percent between 2002 and 2007. Today, half of the country's 170 million people live in urban areas with unsustainable conditions, including high rates of unemployment. With the official rate of unemployment of 19.7 percent, achieving the target of reduction of extreme poverty and hunger is a far cry in the country as more than 71 million people are still in the threshold of abject poverty. Nigeria is hardly on track to meet the MDGs, particularly the number one (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger). (Agu & Udoh, 2011)

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment (FMLE) play an interlocutor role between the employers' and workers' organizations and is the Chair of the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC). The ministry has been limited in its capacity in moving the agenda of the NLAC forward and also in dealing with labour issues. It has failed in its capacity to organize NLAC meetings originally scheduled to hold every quarter of the year and is weak in its role of a facilitator of tripartism and social dialogue and in its role as the coordinating body for the implementation of the DWCP.

The Nigeria Employers' Consultative Forum (NECA) was founded in 1957 as the umbrella organization of employers in the organized private sector of Nigeria. It represents the employers' organization as the tripartite member of the ILO. Though NECA remains the central organization for employers, there are other organizations that have been established, such as the Chambers of Commerce, and the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN). Accordingly, the NECA faces stiff competition in terms of members from these other organizations. On the other hand, in terms of the workers' organizations, there are two trade union organizations in Nigeria the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC). All these are statutory members of the ILO Governing Body.

The organized trade union movement dates back to 1912 when the Nigeria Civil Service Union was established. In February 1978, the NLC was formed

and now has 39 affiliates. On the other hand, the TUC was formed in 2004 and has 11 affiliates. The NECA and NLC are members of the National Labour Advisory Council while TUC is an observer. While there is a cordial relationship of the ILO tripartite members in Nigeria, the relationships has been weakened due to lack of regular meetings of the NLAC. The NLAC has not been meeting regularly and not fulfilling its role as an advisory body to the government on labour issues which is due to lack of funding by the government (ILO, 2014).

The government, employers' and workers' organizations in Nigeria have participated actively in the formulation, validation and revision of the DWCP I & 2. However, all the constituents have capacity shortcomings in their technical and financing capacities in terms of implementing key elements relating to their mandates in the DWCP.

The Nigerian government responses to the foregoing decent work deficits and development challenges have included economic planning studies, poverty response projects and action plans. Nigeria's development plans during the military regimes were in the times of major political upheavals and economic crises that necessitated transitory and sporadic actions from the incumbent administrations until 1999 when democratic governance was instituted (ILO, 2014).

In 2004, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document was developed. It was Nigeria's plan for prosperity outlining comprehensive action, goals and principles of a new Nigeria. The core of the strategy was to fight poverty, improve incomes and tackle social and political factors that lead to poverty. NEEDS was a strategy of wealth creation and by implication, employment generation and poverty reduction and the first government development strategy with a gender-sensitive lens. However, the achievements in the medium term from 2003- 2010 have not measured up to the huge expectation.

In the earlier part of 2011, a Presidential Employment Summit whose objective was to facilitate discussion amongst stakeholders on the strategies for employment generation in Nigeria was convened. The report from this summit is intended to provide the blue print for future employment creation interventions in Nigeria by both the Public and the Private sectors. Addressing the poverty challenge and the decent work deficits facing Nigeria will certainly continue to require policy reforms and large-scale investments in many key areas, but most importantly, targeted investments with regards to employment

creation, more commitments to fighting the scourge on human trafficking and child labour, reviewing the social security schemes in accordance to the social protection, funding initiative and building the capacities of government, employers' and workers' organizations to effectively be a voice in labour and economic issues; and promotion of gender equality (ILO, 2014).

The DWCP 1 ended in 2009 and as a prerequisite to the formulation of the DWCP II, there was a review of the DWCP I in March 2010. Key findings of the review were that: (i) the 3 priority areas namely: Job creation especially for women and youths through self-employment; elimination of human trafficking and child labour; and prevention and mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS in the world of work reflected the decent work deficits at that time as still significant. (ii) The DWCP 1 was formulated at a time unemployment, particularly youth unemployment had reached alarming dimension and was gradually threatening social cohesion, security and the nation's nascent democracy while the growing army of unemployed youths were increasingly alienated and finding ready 'employment' in anti-social activities. It was also pointed out that Nigeria was then blacklisted by the international community, for unprecedented number of Nigerians were trafficked to Europe and other parts of the world for exploitative labour while the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS was one of the highest in the Sub Saharan Africa; and (iii) the DWCP 1 priority areas were consistent with the national development priorities especially NEEDS 1 which focused on empowering people through creation of 7 million jobs by 2007 (ILO, 2014).

The DWCP 1 did not achieve much except the activities and outcomes from the technical cooperation projects being implemented by the ILO Abuja Office. The programme also lacked a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan encompassing the various underlying assumptions, indicators, and baselines on which the deliverables of the project activities would be assessed. While huge financial outlays were proposed in the budget, there was no resource mobilization strategy developed and no information on who was responsible for funding the DWCP programmes and activities. With respect to the institutional and operational arrangements of the DWCP I, the review also revealed that there was lack of awareness on the roles and responsibilities of the various implementing partners (ILO, 2014). In order to prevent the likelihood of similar problems arising in DWCP II, in April 2010, with the technical and financial support of the ILO, key stakeholders

were taken through a two-day workshop on steps and procedures in formulating DWCPs. Sessions included concepts and practice of results-based management; as well as an introduction to monitoring and evaluation. As the DWCP I priorities are still very much relevant today, the DWCP II builds on the lessons learnt of the DWCP I while priorities anchors on the DWCP 1 (ILO, 2014).

Though the Nigerian government adopted the SDG Agenda in New York in 2015, her effort in the direction of attaining the SDG 8, with targets as follows amongst others has not indicated success, sustaining per capita economic growth; achieving higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation including high value added and labour intensive sectors; 2030 set to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities and equal pay for work of equal value; 2020 date to reduce the proportion youth not in employment, education or training; eradicate forced labour, end slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment of and use of child soldiers by 2025; protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers and those in precarious employment

5. The Challenges of Decent Work in Nigeria

Decent work as advocated by the ILO may be an ideal but not a reality for most workers in nonstandard employment relations. In a country like Nigeria with capitalist driven profit motives, and where labour market is highly saturated, indigenous and foreign employers capitalize on this, decent work will be very difficult to achieve. Nonstandard employment relations is a worldwide phenomenon, however, in some countries, it is driven by choice not by compulsion to survive (Fapohunda, 2012).

Paradoxically, in the case of Nigeria, the practice is driven largely by compulsion to survive and not by choice. Of course decent work may be a journey, not a destination; it is a standard which each country strives to attain. In line with the four components of decent work such as creating employment, guaranteeing workers' rights, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue; the challenges shall be discussed.

According to Barrientos (2007) the employment challenge arises from the diversity of employment generated by global production systems. For a job to be decent it should be permanent, regular and secure in order to guarantee continuous income for a worker. However, even within the same firm there may be employment that is flexible, insecure and informal. Relating this within the context of Nigerian situation, it is evidential that the economy as presently structured and run is incapable of generating jobs for millions of able-bodied men and women willing to work. This implies that people are desperately searching for means of survival even if it means picking up any kind of job offered to them not minding the take home. Against this background, most employers, both local and expatriates usually capitalize on this desperate situation of the massive job seekers to exploit, oppress and dehumanize this category of people who are in nonstandard employment (Mokwenye, 2008; Abideen and Osuji, 2011).

The point here is that when concerted effort is not made by the government to create jobs or provide conducive environment for the people to create their own jobs, nonstandard employment relations will continue to flourish to the delights of the employers driven by profit motives. With this the decent job as advocated by the ILO will simply remain a mirage in relation to nonstandard employment relations in Nigeria.

Without collective power to negotiate with employers, workers are not in a position to access or secure other rights. In Nigeria, workers in nonstandard employment are denied of several rights. The Nigeria labour law does not empower this category of workers to join a trade union. When workers are not allowed to join trade unions in their place of work so many of their rights could be denied. In such situation, the employers dictate terms and conditions of work with little or resistance from the workers (Barrientos, 2007).

Also, because of inability to unionize, the nonstandard workers cannot negotiate or bargain collectively with their employers especially as it relates pay, hours of work, health and safety measures and such related issues (Adewumi, 2008). In a nutshell, any employment relations that will not allow workers to unionize or participate in decisions that affect their work and advance their right in the place of work is far from being a decent work (Okafor, 2010).

The social protection implication relates to the lack of access many flexible and informal workers have to a contract of employment and legal employment

benefits. They are therefore often denied access to other forms of protection and social assistance by the state (Adewumi, 2008). Within the Nigerian context, nonstandard workers do not enjoy any form of social protection either from their employers or the state. For example, these workers are not included in pension scheme by their employers neither do they enjoy any form employment benefits from the state even though the state can afford this (Okafor, 2010).

This leaves many workers in this category very vulnerable to economic shocks both in their places of work and in the large society. The implication here is that this category of employees in relation to social security are despised by their employers and rejected by the state. This hardly promotes decent job as advocated by the ILO which Nigeria is a signatory.

The social dialogue challenge arises from the lack of effective voice or independent representation of such workers in a process of dialogue with employers, government or other stakeholders. Relating this objective to the pervasive nature of nonstandard employment relations in Nigeria, this category of workers lack a very strong voice both within and outside the place of work due to their inability to unionize. Hence, their chances of engaging in social dialogue of whatever type with their employees and other stakeholders are very limited (Okafor, 2010). When the employers exploit and oppress their workers because the workers do not have real choice or alternative, the dedication, commitment and behaviour of such workers to their work, the organization and the state will be questionable. This has a very serious implication for productivity in both the workplace and in the large society (Okafor, 2010).

6. Prospects of Decent Work in Nigeria

Decent work is a standard which each country strives to attain. However, to make decent work a reality in a country like Nigeria, there is the need for total review of not only the labour law but also the practice of industrial relations to protect this category of workers from the greedy and lawless indigenous and multinational employers who take delight in violating labour standards to their own selfish advantage. The prospect of decent work is to promote opportunities for adults to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Employment promotion is a central objective of the decent work. The defense of rights at work necessarily involves the responsibility to promote the possibilities of work itself. Decent work is therefore concerned with the unemployed, and with policies to

overcome unemployment and underemployment, as it is with the promotion of rights at work (Fapohunda, 2012).

An enabling environment for enterprise development lies at the heart of these objectives. The goal is not just the creation of jobs, but also the creation of jobs of acceptable quantity. However, the quantity of employment cannot be divorced from its quality. It could relate to different forms of work, and also to different conditions of work, as well as feelings of value and satisfaction. The lack of decent work has been identified as the primary cause of poverty (Fapohunda, 2012).

7. Recommendations

- Based the ILO conventions on Decent Work arrangement for nations, organizations and employers, particularly the Nigerian State should be seen to pursue the implementation of the various documents it has ratified to create a peaceful and progressive work environment to allow for performance and effective productive process.
- Dignity of labour is a pride to employees who work in suitable work places, with robust remuneration and welfare packages. This is enshrined in ILO Convention on decent work, employment standard for member nations. It is advised that Nigeria should stand up to fulfilling these conditions for workers to enjoy ultimately as pivotal to their performance. Many employers repress workers from freedom of association and effective recognition of collective bargaining, the State is also guilty of this in the government owned workplaces, maybe the reason why she has not been able to regulate well on the employers found culpable. This requires the Nigerian State interference. However, it is suggested that this is addressed.
- The provision of good jobs in demanding quantity, security in such work as well as adequate pay are areas of concern to the teeming population of unemployed Nigerians. The Nigerian government is advised to address these issues with a view to improving the lot of unemployed people.

8. Conclusion

Decent work plays an important role in development and good standard of living, which is the key element of success in any economy. The preserve of pervasive and persistent poverty, unemployment and under-

employment lead to a static or retrogressive development. Decent work promotes opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work rather than discriminating on sex, ethics and age distribution. This implies that, the standard of living will be high and also it will overcome discrimination of employment in the labour market, including the progressive eradication of inequality between men and women in the world of work. Furthermore, it will also create conducive environment for development.

The FMLE requires further enhancement of its capacity in all the afore-mentioned areas and particularly to develop a comprehensive strategy in integrating the DWA into national development strategies and frameworks. The capacity also needs to be built to enable it spearhead the current employment creation initiatives of the government. The central place of decent work in the new development paradigm must not be underscored. Organizations must strengthen decent employment links between economic growth and aggregate poverty reduction, it must be prerequisite for creating decent employment including the transformation of the economy from low productivity, traditional Agriculture to labour intensive high value agriculture and agro-processing and to the growing industrial and services sectors by taking the advantage of globalization opportunities.

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