

THE IMPACT OF LABOUR LAW REFORM ON THE PRACTICE OF TRADE UNIONISM IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

The framework of the employment relationship is regulated by labour legislation. The relationship whether bipartite or tripartite in nature, is guided by some legal frameworks. The state is vested with the responsible for the statutory and legislative framework within which this relationship is conducted. The paper examined the impact of labour law reform on the practice of trade unionism in contemporary Nigeria through an extensive appraisal of various enactments, promulgations, legislations and amendments of labour laws in Nigeria from the colonial era to date with specific study of the Trade Union (Amendment) Act, 2005.

Primary and secondary data were obtained through the use of questionnaire and consultation with relevant publications. Simple random sampling technique was adopted for selecting trade unionists from trade unions affiliated to the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria respectively.

Apart from the review of relevant literature, the paper also examined various theoretical frameworks by looking at contending forces within the industrial relations system. The findings showed that there was no significant difference between responses of trade unionists randomly selected from the affiliates of Nigeria Labour Congress and Trade Union Congress of Nigeria in terms of government intervention in the industrial relations system in Nigeria. The respondents maintained a general view that government should limit her interventionist policy by adopting limited intervention and guided democracy in regulating the industrial relations system in Nigeria.

There was a general consensus by respondents that, sections considered anti-union or not labour friendly should either be reviewed or expunged from the Trade Union (Amendment) Act, 2005. The need for government or the state to also make consultation with trade unions and other social partners during the process of review or enactment of any labour law was also strongly expressed by the respondents.

This paper is an empirical study of the Trade Union (Amendment) Act, 2005, the act is still seen by trade unionists and labour intellectuals in Nigeria as anti-union due largely to the timing, content and the intention of government at that time. It is seen as an act too many in the anal of the history of Nigerian trade union movement in the contemporary times base on the perceived opinion in some quarters that it is capable of undermining the independence of trade unions and their capacity to wage a class struggle.

Key words: Labour law, interventionism, trade union, amendment, state, labour regulation

Methodology: Empirical study

Thematic area: Labour Regulation

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