

Surviving in the throes of Recession: The Civil Service and the Delay/Non-Payment of Wages in Nigeria

Toyin Abe

PhD, Department of Political Science, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, PMB 5363, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria,
Phone: +234-803-860-9848

Abstract: Since colonial times, the civil service has remained indispensable in the administration of government policies and programmes in Nigeria. Successive governments in the country have relied on this institution as a veritable instrument for both policy advice and implementation. However, shortly after the gubernatorial and presidential elections in 2015, the apparent reality that many states of the federation could no longer pay the salaries and wages of their workers, due to their insolvency became manifest. Although, this situation is not an entirely new phenomenon in the history of Nigeria, the widespread nature of the present scenario is not only unprecedented, but pathetic. The attendant implications have a number of existential crises on public servants generally, and civil servants in particular, who now finds it difficult provide the basic essentials for themselves and their families. The menace of delay and non-payment of wages to civil servants also impacts negatively on state contractors, state institutions and ultimately, the economy, compromising the national security of the country and retarding its development. The study therefore, recommends the drastic reduction in the number of political appointees, the overhaul of the civil service recruitment structure and audit mechanism, as well as the diversification of the economy among others.

Keywords: Civil Service, Historical Perspective, Non-Payment of Wages, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since colonial times, the civil service has remained indispensable in the administration of government policies and programmes in Nigeria. As such, successive government in the country have had to rely on this institution as a veritable instrument for both policy advice and implementation. This is borne out of the realization that the promotion of a viable and efficient governance structure, capable of transforming government's intentions and policies into tangible outcomes, requires a civil service that is not only efficient and competent, but one that is equally discipline and highly motivated.

However, shortly after the gubernatorial and presidential elections in 2015, it became apparent that many states of the federation had gone insolvent as it became increasingly difficult for them to pay the salaries and wages of their workers. While this situation is not an entirely new phenomenon in the history of Nigeria, the widespread nature of the present scenario is unprecedented. The situation is so pathetic that some state governments owed their workers between seven to seventeen months salaries arrears until the Buhari-led administration decided to provide a temporary measure of respite for the troubled states in the form of bail out.

Several reasons have been adduced as being responsible for this precarious situation that Nigeria found herself. Critics alleged that states' treasuries had been depleted over elections and campaigns expenses as sitting governors made spirited efforts to remain in power after the elections. Others argued that many of the states arrived at the present state due to the consistent profligacy of their governors. According to Akingboye (2016) the present economic and financial predicament

in many states of the federation can be attributed to the recklessness, lack of political will and drive to implement people-centred policies by the state governors. Most of these states are littered with white elephant projects carried out by their governors for the sole purpose of looting the treasury, without any regard for the welfare and wellbeing of the people. Even more striking is the governors' apparent lack of sympathy for the plights of their struggling workers.

Over the years, embargoes had been placed on recruitment into the civil service in many states of the federation due to paucity of funds and where people were absorbed; they were not paid wages for upward of ten to fifteen months. The payment of bonuses has not been consistent while wide margin exist in wages paid to workers in different parts of the country. For instance, a grade level 08 officer in Lagos goes home with a package of #65,000 after deductions while his Kwara State counterpart on the same level goes home with as little as #38,000 after deductions. There is also the disparity between the take –home pay of federal workers and their state counterparts. Some other states of the federation pay their workers wages while they owe them several deductions from their cooperative accounts knowing fully well that many of them have committed more than 65% of their salaries into the cooperative savings. While banks had been willing to come to the rescue of the workers, by offering them soft loan to cushion the effects of the harsh economic realities in the country since the workers draw their wages from them, the inability of state governors to remit workers' salaries to banks as at when due has made nonsense of the arrangement.

In many government establishments, workers have therefore, resorted to cutting corners by demanding gratification from the public for performing their statutory duties. Some of them stay in offices loafing around all day, receiving calls and sending text messages during office hours pretending to be busy but doing nothing. Others hawk articles in the offices during working hours while their primary responsibilities are left unattended to. Furthermore, since gratuities and pensions are often times not forthcoming after retirement, many would-be retirees have resorted to falsification of their dates of birth in order to remain in service thereby leading to a bottleneck of high ranking officers at the top who have refused to leave service and pave way for the younger generation because of the fear of the unknown outside of service.

Currently, many Nigerians are fed up with the federal and state government' failure to meet up with the delay in the payment of wages to civil servants with any degree of reliability and efficiency. There are many unresolved problems in Nigerian civil service, but the issue of the upsurge of delay and non-payment of wages is troubling. And the damages it has done to the polity are astronomical. The menace of wages delay leads to slow movement of files in offices, stigmatisation in the society, breaking up of families, nonchalant attitude towards staff duties, laziness among civil servants, ghost workers syndrome, among others.

Thus, it is believed by many in the society that delay in civil servant wages is the bane of Nigeria's calamity. Consequently, the issue keeps reoccurring in every academic and informal discussion in Nigeria. The issue will hardly go away according to the present Minister of Finance, Mrs Kemi Adeosun, who said that 'Nigerian economy is technically in recession'. Civil servants in Oyo, Osun, Cross River, Rivers, Abia, Benue, Plateau and Bauchi states have adopted different strategies to survive months of unpaid wages in their states. The strategies include begging for money from friends and relatives, securing loans from different sources and doing menial jobs to survive. Some state governments have been trading blame over the unpaid wages of civil servants on past governments.

This paper is structured into four sections. The first section, which is the introduction, explores the problematic of this discourse. The second examined the historical development of civil service and wage structure from colonial to post-independent period, tracing the genesis of delay and non-payment of wages in the civil service. The third, analyzed effect and damage caused by delay and non-payment of wages on workers in particular and the society in general. While the last section of the paper made prescriptions on how the identified challenges can be redressed for the good of civil servants and in the interest of the country..

2. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SERVICE AND WAGES STRUCTURE IN NIGERIA

The word civil service is derived from a French word 'civil' which means 'relating to law' and directly from Latin word 'civilis' which means 'relating to citizen' while the word service is derived from an old French word 'service' which means 'aids' (Anyebe, 2003). The Nigerian Civil Service has its origin in organizations established by the British living the colonial era. The historical antecedent of civil service in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era and the

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 4, Issue 4, pp: (32-41), Month: July – August 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

development of capitalist state between 19th and 20th centuries. Consistently, the historical development of civil service in Nigeria can also be linked to the genesis of contemporary Nigerian state (Ogunrotifa, 2012). Before the colonial era i.e. during the pre-colonial period, there were diversity in ethnic groups and the way people lived in the societies. These ethnic groups were living in empires and clans. Prior to the colonial rule, in the Northern Region, we have Sokoto, Kano, Kanuri and Borgu came together to form the Islamic Sokoto Caliphates. On the other hand, there also existed Western and Eastern regions with kingdoms and empires, for example, Oyo Empire, Benin Kingdom and different powerful communities (Fatile and Adejuwon, 2010).

Moreover, as a result of the development of capitalism in Western Europe due to industrial revolution that imposed national limitation to the economic growth (Ogunrotifa, 2012b). The effect later resulted to imperialism or imperial quest for colonies for trade and investment in form of cheap wages and labour for raw material and mineral resources to feed its burgeoning industries, as a way of strengthening its political and economic domination (Ogunrotifa, 2012b). During this period, the British colonial power indirectly involved different ethnic groups, kingdoms and empires that are under Colony of Lagos to establish indirect rule in 1861 and later created what we can easily refer to civil service in 1862 with the major reasons, the survival of capitalism in colonial Nigeria, and the stability of imperial or colonial capitalist state structure (Ogunrotifa, 2012b).

Due to this current issue, the British government established different positions like Governor, Chief Magistrate, Colonial Secretary and Senior Military Officers, Offices of Private Secretary to the Governor, Auditor for Public Accounts, Chief Clerk, and Collector of Customs (Ogunrotifa, 2012b). These structures can be likened to what is called modern system of civil service which later served as the foundation and important ingredient, livewire and sine-quo-non for the basis of pre-colonial state structure in Nigeria (Aigbokhan, 2000). Moreover, the coast area was merged with the colony of Lagos which later became the Southern protectorate in 1900. And according to Ogunrotifa (2012b) 'the whole of Southern Nigeria was brought under the same civil service with its headquarters in Lagos, while in the Northern Protectorate the colonial power established the indirect rule with the help of traditional rulers to control the affairs of the region serving as the middlemen between the inhabitants and the colonial civil service. Under this indirect rule system, the Obas and Emirs still maintained their Kingdoms and Caliphates including their titles and positions. The Obas and Emirs executed, implemented and carried out the British government's policy in their territories and they were under the authorities of the British government district officers who had the full authority. In addition, through the indirect rule system the caliphate assigned officials were later appointed backed up with salaried district heads and became, in effect, agents of the British government authorities, responsible for peacekeeping and tax collection in their respective domain without any formal power to initiate development projects to improve socio-economic development (Ogunrotifa, 2012a). During the colonial period, the power to delay and non-payment of wages and hire and fire rests with the colonial district official i.e. governor-general and the major responsibility of the colonial civil service was based on collection of taxes and maintenance of law and order within the colony (Nigeria). British colonial district officers had established a capitalist system in which the rail lines should be connected from Jos Plateau down to the coast in order to establish better transportation for tin, peanuts, and groundnuts from the northern protectorate. The British district officers' eventual face a lot of obstacles through their capitalist expansion in the Northern Region as a result of the budget deficit that later result into delay and non-payment of the wages of those colonial civil servants carrying out this viable responsibility (Salisu, 2001).

Furthermore, the first colonial governor-general of Nigeria, Sir Frederick Lugard tried to amalgamate the Northern Protectorate and the Southern Protectorate in order to offset this budget deficit and create budget surpluses that would help in providing a viable colonial administration and better colonial civil service (Adebo Commission, 1970). The establishment of rail lines from the two entities (Northern Protectorate and Southern Protectorate) later started as a result of exploitation of colonial civil servants in the area through the delay and non-payment of wages to those workers used in the construction of rail lines. Due to the small numbers available skilled colonial workers that would manage the colonial civil service, the British colonial district official strived to develop traditional or indigenous civil servants that would work for them for effective delivery of the colonial rule. In order to achieve this aim, western education was introduced to train colonial indigenous civil servants to become clerks, health workers, teachers, local inspectors and administrators. These are the proletariat (working class) and they worked directly and indirectly to promote the aims and programmes of the British government within the colony. In the Northern Protectorate, the colonial rule of Sir Frederick Lord Lugard was

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 4, Issue 4, pp: (32-41), Month: July – August 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

not really welcomed because its policies and programmes were full of exploitation and designed along the missionaries programme. According to Leba (2005), established colonial civil service school training programmes were permitted, but this colonial decision legitimatised complete feudalisation of Northern Nigeria where the emirs and the local ruling class entrenched Islamic training education in order to prevent exploitation, misrule and domination. By 1906, the British colonial government had established various departments in all the protectorates with full authority and instruments of law and order. Such departments include Department of Works, Department of Justice, Department of Prison, Department of Customs, and Department of Ports and Telegraph. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates took place under the colonial constitution of Frederick Lugard in 1914 (Anazodo, 2012). Sir Hugh Clifford established Colonial Central Secretariat in Lagos to oversee the affairs of the established provinces in Ibadan, Enugu and Kaduna in 1921 (Omoruyi, 1991). By 1939, the functions of the colonial central secretariat were extended to all departments created by the British colonial district officials and within the period of 1939 and 1955, there was the emergence of the Nationalist Nigerian Administrators which eventually resulted to what is known as Nigerian Civil Service (Ogunrotifa, 2012a). Between 1939 and 1955, there was pressure of colonial civil service reform in the Nigerian Political and Civil Service Structure due to delay in and payment of wages (Kester, 2006).

The delay in wages and non-payment of salaries had its origin in the public institutions established by British government during the colonial period. Succeeding colonial constitutional reviews increased the stake of indigenous colonial civil servants at the helm of the colonial civil service until independence in 1960. The Tudor Davis and Harragin Commission (1945 and 1946) and Miller Commission of 1947 set up under Sir Arthur Richard brought about unification in regional civil service between the Northern and Southern regions based on recommendations. The unification of regional civil services later led to the establishment of the Central Public Service (Federal Republic of Nigeria Public Service Review Commission Udoji Main Report, 1974). The Tudor Davis and Harragin Commission (1945 and 1946) primarily focused on the review of wages and general conditions of service. The Commissions made fundamental changes in the Public Service by establishing a "Senior Service" cadre. This led to the bifurcation of the Service into two rigid compartments: 'Junior' and 'Senior' Services while the Miller Commission of 1947 recommended the application of the principle of payment based on geographical location of workers, especially the daily paid ones. It went further to partition the country into six geographical zones with differentials in pay for workers. It categorized labour into three: general, special and semi-skilled. The recommendation (of geographically-based pay) was hinged on the notion that the cost of living was higher in Lagos and its immediate environs and so wages should be lower the farther a worker lived away from Lagos. The labour unions at that time protested against the implementation of the Commission's recommendation. They demanded some sort of uniform remuneration for the daily paid workers wherever they might be in the country. All this led to the setting up of a Minimum Wage Fact-finding Committee to resolve the ensuing crisis. Consequently, the regional governments in the East and West paid uniform rates while government, on the other hand, had to effect an across the board increase in staff salaries in 1949/50.

The Gorsuch Commission of 1955 set up by Sir John Macpherson was seriously affected by the issue of decolonisation and independent movement that cropped up as a result of the Second World War (WWII) and this had serious influence on the colonial authority who were ready to bequeath the legacy of colonial bureaucracies and thus established Federal Public Service Commission with autonomous power to 'appoint, promote, dismiss, and discipline junior civil servants (Ogunna, 1999). The Gorsuch Commission (1955) examined the structure and remuneration of the public service. It observed some defects in the rigid division of the service into 'Senior' and 'Junior' and the absence of a viable middle category. It, therefore, recommended five main grades, from the lowest established post upwards.

By 1st October 1960, the civilian government extended the authority of the Federal Civil Service to involve all grades in the civil service (Ademolekan and Gboyega, 1979). Elwood Grading Team and Morgan Commission of 1964 was the first post-independence Commission in the country whose focus was basically on 'junior' workers in both the public and private sectors. The general strike of September 27, 1963 had precipitated the setting up of the Commission. The outcome of its Report metamorphosed into the Elwood Grading Team which investigated anomalies in the grading and other conditions relating to all posts in the public service of the Federation, with a view to determining an appropriate grading system and achieving uniformity in the salaries of officers performing identical duties. This was one of the earliest times when pay relativities was mentioned in the country. There was no other Commission in the 1960s except that there were restrictions on the agitations of trade unions for increases in wages. The restrictions were in the form of a Trade Dispute

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 4, Issue 4, pp: (32-41), Month: July – August 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

(Emergency Provisions) Decree of 1968, which provided for the freezing of wages and prices, among other provisions, perhaps to permit the unhindered prosecution of the civil war. The Adebo Commission of 1971 addressed some of the problems facing the public sector, particularly the envisaged shortage of senior civil servants on account of their abysmally low remuneration package. It was observed that the last time senior civil servants had enjoyed wage increases was in 1959, courtesy of the Mbanefo Commission (1959). The Adebo Salaries and Wages Review Commission recommended the setting up of a Public Service Review Commission to exhaustively examine several fundamental issues, such as the role of the Public Service Commission, the structure of the Civil Service, and its conditions of service and training arrangements.

The acceptance of the recommendations of the Commission led to the setting up of the Udoji Public Service Review Commission while the Public Service Review Commission (Udoji Commission Report 1972/74) focused on the larger issue of increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the Public Service in the context of meeting the challenges of a development-oriented society. The Commission recommended, among others, a Unified Grading and Salary Structure (UGSS) which would embrace all posts in the Civil Service from the lowest to the highest (Grade Levels 01 - 17) and provide equal opportunities for officers to advance to the highest post in the Service, irrespective of their discipline, provided they had what it took to get there. The Commission placed emphasis on broad relativities in grading and pay for all jobs. The Commission also recommended merit as the major yardstick for determining the promotability of officers in the Civil Service. The Commission recommended a coordinated wage structure that would be universally applicable to the Federal and State Civil Services, the Local Government Services, the Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police, the Judiciary, the Universities, the Teaching Services and Parastatals. It also recommended the need to ensure that all Public Service employees received equitable treatment on pay and benefits in such a way that no individual component of the public sector would be at a disadvantage in respect of the recruitment and retention of employees.

To sum it up, the post independence period faced the problem of inadequate skilled civil servants that could not take over the administrative positions left behind by the British Colonial officials. They were later occupied by Northern political and administrative leaders that studied under the civil service training schools established by the British Colonial district officials while the civil service positions were dominated by the executive officers who were of Northern origin (Akhakpe, 2007). This lopsidedness in the recruitment into civil service was attributed to the preference of Islamic education to that of western education in the Northern region of Nigeria. Ayeni, (1990) paraphrased that the colonial authorities conspired with the Northern political administrators at the inception of colonial administration through the indirect rule to shield the Muslim north from being exposed to Western education and culture, and the consequential impact was that the north lacked the human capacity to run its administration at the eve of independence.

The post colonial Nigerian governments inherited administrative structures which were geared overwhelmingly to the requirements of the former British colonial powers whose concern were more with the exploitation of workers through rigid working conditions assigned to them. As a result, Nigerian government were not only confronted with the need to establish a whole machinery of government that would promote accountability, predictability, transparency, participation, efficiency and effectiveness but also change the focus of civil service from that of colonial legacy of delay and non-payment of wages—that was capable of assisting the new government to plan and accelerate the pace of Nigeria's socio-economic development (Ogunrotifa, 2012a).

The post colonial or pre-independence political Nigerian ruling class adopted the British colonial government bureaucratic legacy and expanded on package of imitative postcolonial reform that was full of inherited colonial legacy of non-payment of wages, delay in wages, despotism, hierarchical rigidity and urban bias (Olugbemi, 1979). The military incursion in 15th January, 1966 in Nigeria that later led to the collapse of the civilian administration and democratic government in first republic projected the importance and functions of civil service in the management of public institutions in Nigeria. Ogunrotifa (2012b) quoting Okotoni (2003) said that the 'top civil servants openly assumed political responsibilities. They were not only seen, but they were heard. They were in effect, responsible for policy formulation and implementation, while the military were preoccupied more with the prosecution of the civil war (Olugbemi, 1987). The era also witnessed the emergence of higher civil servants, dubbed 'Supper Permanent Secretaries'. The civil servants became influential 'political technocrats', around 1970 and 1975. Based on Ogunrotifa (2012b) submission, this period is thoroughly bureaucratic in the area of power when the coup de' tat that overthrown the military government of General Yakubu Gowon's administration on 29 July 1975 took place, and reduced the relevance and

influence of civil servants in the nation's governance. The obvious inference that can be drawn from the historical development of Nigerian civil service from the colonial period down to the modern period (i.e. post colonial period or independent period) is that civil service has been the administrative backbone of the Nigerian government (Davidson, 1993). It is responsible to the chief executive. It supports the chief executive and the government of the day in formulating, explaining and implementing policies; conducting administrative affairs; delivering public services; and undertaking law enforcement and regulatory functions. It serves the community, and contributes to the effective governance, stability and prosperity of Nigeria.

3. EFFECTS OF DELAY/ NON-PAYMENT OF WAGES IN NIGERIAN CIVIL SERVICE

The incessant delay and non-payment of workers' salaries and pensions by the federal government and several state governments in Nigeria have no doubt compromised the well-being of these workers and that of their respective families. The situation is made worse by the current recession in the Nigerian economy which has literally crippled nearly all aspect of the country's economy. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), 'Nigeria economic activity is projected to contract in 2016, as the economy adjusts to foreign currency shortages as a result of lower oil receipts, low power generation and weak investor confidence. The multinational financial institution also affirmed that Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted by 0.36 percent in the first quarter (Q1) of this year and the economy will record another negative growth in the second quarter of 2016' (Nigeria Today, 2016).

In the midst of recession, the non-payment of salaries has brought in its wake a number of existential crises on public servants generally, and civil servants in particular. It is becoming increasingly difficult for workers to provide the basic essentials (food, clothing and shelter) for themselves and their families. Keeping up with the normal requirements of maintaining a family under this condition has not only become a very herculean task, but a near impossibility. Many parents have had to withdraw their children from private and public schools and re-enrol them into vocational trade because they had no money to fund their education. Providing one square-meal a day has become very difficult, even as parents watch their children, especially female children, slide down the amoral hill in the quest to survive. Similarly, the situation has occasioned an upswing in solicitation of alms by both children and adults. Incidences of well-dressed persons accosting passers-by for pittance are becoming common place in major cities across the country.

Furthermore, the harrowing psychological experience that civil servants and their dependants are subjected to, are not only horrifying, but traumatizing. Many workers and their families are faced with medical challenges. The hospitals are filled with patients who are unable to pay meagre medical bills and many have died needless deaths as a result of their inability to contain sicknesses and diseases that could have been tamed promptly, if they had been 'privileged' enough to access medical attention in hospitals. For example, the National Labour Union (NLC) Oyo and Osun State Chapters reported that more than a hundred civil servants in the two states have lost their lives following their inability to get proper medical attention when they needed it (Akunnakwe, 2011). Some branch chairmen of the union, who expressed their worries to journalists in Makurdi recently, attributed the alarming death rate among their members to the severe hardship caused by the delay and non payment of salaries, coupled with the recession in the economy. For instance, civil servants in other states of the federations like Kogi, Nassarawa, Ekiti, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Benue, Kwara state etc have had similar experiences as they have had their wages delay as a result economic recession (Akunnakwe, 2011).

While it is not in doubt that there are many unresolved problems in the Nigerian political economy at large, the issue of the upsurge of delay and non-payment of salaries to civil servants is most glaring and its effects is troubling and the damages are astronomical. The menace of delay and non-payment of wages to civil servants impacts negatively on individual, families, state contractors, state institutions and ultimately, the economy. It compromises national security and retards national development. Since the non-payment of wages regime commenced in Nigeria, sales by the market men and women have dropped by about 63 percent (Okafor and Aniche, 2015). This is due to falling purchasing power of customers who are mostly civil servants. The purchasing power of a population has a direct impact on commercial activities of a place. Thus, delay and non-payment of wages has slowdown commercial activities in many states of the federation, which in turn undermines the prospects of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR). Also, agricultural inputs like fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and tractor hiring often source from states Ministries, Departments and Agencies in the states of the federation at a subsidized rate has gone up astronomically, well beyond the reach of average farmers.

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 4, Issue 4, pp: (32-41), Month: July – August 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

The delay and non-payment of wages further discourages honest effort and valuable economic activities; as it breeds inefficiency and corruption. It leads to possible information distortion as it cooks the books, while the high level of corruption makes public policies implementation ineffective (Okafor and Aniche, 2015). Above all, it tarnishes the image of the country. Nigeria's image within the international community is battered the more, owing to the country's inability to deal with the menace of delay and non-payment of wages.

Furthermore, contractors executing various contracts with State Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) in most states in Nigeria are heavily hit by the non-payment of wages to civil servants. As the delay and non-payment of wages administration commence, civil servants embarked on strike thereby shorting down all projects in the MDAs. This adversely affects the quantity and quality of services available to the public. It equally affects the volume of investment in the economy, growth, and government expenditure choices. As Aderemi (2014) rightly observed, the culture of non-payment of wages, delays or refusal of payment for services already done, are according to the Lord Bishop of Guilford, David Peck, scaring away British investors from Nigeria. He notes further that those who fail to pay workers for services rendered or done seem to forget that the life blood of any economy is its cash flow. Because of the widespread nature of this unsavoury phenomenon the international business community regards the whole of the states of the federation as a 'sinkhole that swallows their money with little or no return'.

Unfortunately, the states labour union chairmen who had sworn oath to defend the rights of the civil servants appear to be hands-in-glove with their state governments, thereby short-changing the interest of their members. Most states labour union chairmen and secretaries are competing to be in the good books of their governments and this partly accounts for the reason why the wage law has not been properly implemented in many states.

4. CONCLUDING REMARK AND THE WAY FORWARD

The issue of non-payment of workers is historical in nature in Nigeria. The British colonial commissions (The Hunt Commission (1934), Bridges Committee of Enquiry (1941), The Tudor Davis Commission (1945), The Harragin Commission (1946), The Miller Commission of 1947, the Gorsuch Commission (1955), Newns Commission, the Elwood Grading Team (1956), and The Mbanefo Commission of 1959) have traces of widespread illegality and non-payment of wages to civil servants (Oko, 2011). Thus, it has been ubiquitous in complex colonial societies from 1934 down to the present administration. Though, the issue of minimum wage remains a major problem among the states of the federation. The National Minimum Wage Act 2011 provides for a flat minimum wage structure of N18, 900 naira for organization employing more than 50 persons, it is poorly implemented across Nigerian states. Currently, about 20 states of the federation are not implementing the existing minimum wage structure leading to frequent industrial disputes. Between 1999 and 2016 there was over 120 strike actions involving over 15 million workers and about 400 thousand man-day lost across the country. It thus suffices that there is inherent flaw with Nigeria wage system, while wage administration has been a subject of immense controversy for several years in Nigeria. Of recent is the National Minimum Wage Act of 2011. Section 1(1) of the Acts which states that; "As from the commencement of this Act, it shall be the duty of every employer (except as provided for under the principal Act as amended) to pay a wage not less than the national minimum wage of N18, 000 naira per month for all establishments in the public and private sectors employing 50 workers and above" (Asodike and Jaja, 2012). However, the federal and state governments and the Labour Unions later in 2011 renegotiated the new minimum wage. On August 16, 2011 the two parties signed an agreement which revised the national minimum wage to N18, 900 naira. After it was passed 5 years ago, state governors of about 20 states in Nigeria have refused to pay the minimum wage. It is pertinent to note that there has not been a uniform application of the minimum wage by the 3-tiers of government in Nigeria. Each of them has a unique wage structure for its civil servants some less than N18, 900 naira. Consequently, this has drawn several industrial actions which lead to economic stagnancy and loss of productivity. With the disparity in Nigeria wage structure, it suffices that a major adjustment is required to bring about harmony in the labour market. Since the passage of the National Minimum Wage Act 2011, state governors could not commence implementation immediately until 2012 while others 2013 when the state governors accepted to pay civil servants in line with the Act. However, in 2013, full implementations become difficult as the wage bill became over bloated for state governments to handle. For example, wages of some state government workers alone geometrically increase to several billions of naira.

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 4, Issue 4, pp: (32-41), Month: July – August 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

The pains from delayed and non-payment of wages is self afflicted. The Governor of Edo State, Adam Oshiomhole (2016) described the delay and non-payment of wages of civil servants as a criminal breach of trust and urged other states governments to device ways of ensuring the regular payment of wages on a monthly basis. In order to address this gross laxity and wages arrears, there is the need for the states to drastically reduce the number of political appointees such as personal assistants, advisers and commissioners. For as Johnson (2016) rightly pointed out, political appointees remain a major drain channel in the resources of the states in Nigeria. Using the old Western Region as a reference, he noted that:

In the first republic, it is on record that the defunct Western Region (from Lagos to Asaba in Delta state), had only 12 ministers. The old Western Region now comprises 8 states namely, Lagos Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Edo and Delta states. Nearly all of these states currently have on average about 25 commissioners. It means there are about 200 Commissioners in a region that was formerly having 12 ministers to administer it. One wonders what a state is doing with 25 commissioners, and numerous advisers, when salaries and pensions of civil servants cannot be paid (emphasis added).

The situations in the other former regions are not entirely different. Reducing the number of political appointees would mean more money would be available in the purses of state government to meet other vital social needs like the payment of salaries and pensions of civil servants. Also, a total overhauling of the civil service is necessary. A committee should be set up to review the civil service structure in the country, examine the recruitment exercise, audit the personnel on the pay-roll, put in place effective performance review mechanism of workers and make recommendations for either transfer of service, promotion, recruitment, sanctions and retirement where and when necessary. A regulatory body should also be put in place to carry out regular monitoring and check-up on workers in order to address the issue of redundancy, ghost workers and inefficiency. State governors who fail to pay workers' salaries should be investigated, sanctioned and if need be removed from office in order to curb cases of industrial action and address the issue of executive lawlessness as currently seen in some states of the federation. The conditions of service of workers should be enhanced in all states of the federation while the disparity in the salaries of federal and state civil servants should be addressed to prevent a lopsided shift since the state civil servants buy from the same market, pay the same house rent, board the same public transport and send their wards to the same schools. It is hoped that if these measures are put in place, they would go a long way in addressing some if not all of the identified challenges.

Finally, various administrations both at the federal and state levels have paid lip service to the need to diversify the economy and provide credible alternatives to oil as our foreign exchange earner. The current recession leaves Nigeria with no alternative than to make good plans by coming up with a comprehensive, inward-looking policies to boost production and thus mop up the excess labour force in the market. The Federal Government must also focus on its policy of massive spending as a way out. As the purchasing power of the citizenry is low at the moment (due mainly to months of unpaid workers' salaries), government needs to enhance individual liquidity by spending wisely on agriculture, infrastructure and stimulating the manufacturing sector. More efforts must be geared towards payment of the backlog of workers' wages. Aggressive awareness is needed to encourage the consumption of locally-made goods and services; and export more to drive the economy. Federal and state governments should borrow from the capital market to finance revenue-yielding capital projects, ensuring that contractors are faithfully paid to enable them pay their workers. The economic policies of the federal government must also be shaped to attract foreign direct investment, not just portfolio investors. It is however, important to note that foreign investors will only be willing to invest in our economy when they see that our local investors are also investing and breaking even. The federal government has a duty to start addressing the core issues in the economy frontally, carrying stakeholders along. Nigerians must be reoriented to produce what they consume and discard their unwholesome preference for foreign goods. No country has ever created a great economy by depending on the industrial outputs of other nations. The task of rebuilding the economy is an assignment for all Nigerians.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adebo Commission (1970) Report of the Wages and Salaries Review Commission 1970-1971
- [2] Ademolekun, L and Gboyega, A. (1979). Leading Issues in Nigerian Public Service. Ile- Ife: University of Ife Press.
- [3] Aderemi, T.A. 2014. Welfare and Income Distribution Effects of Minimum Wage in Nigeria. An Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Economics, University of Ibadan

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences

 Vol. 4, Issue 4, pp: (32-41), Month: July – August 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

- [4] Aigbokhan, B.O. (2000) “Fiscal Federalism and Growth in Nigeria” in Fiscal Federalism and Nigeria’s Economic Development”, Selected Papers of Nigerian Economic Society (NES) Annual Conference
- [5] Akhakpe, I. (2007). “The Public Administration: Qualities, Functions and Constraints of Public Administrator, in Olojede, I. & Fajonyomi, B. (eds.), Essentials of Public Administration. Lagos: Segeprints
- [6] Akingboye, O. (2016) ‘Only Massive Diversification Can Bail Nigeria Out’, The Nigerian Guardian Newspaper 20 August 2016, <http://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/nigeria-between-economic-challenges-and-recession/> (accessed 20 August 2016)
- [7] Akunnakwe, K. (2011) “National Minimum Wage in Nigeria”, The Nigerian Bulletin, July 8
- [8] Anazodo, R.O et al. (2012) Civil Service Reforms in Nigeria: The Journey so far in service delivery. American Journal of Social and Management Sciences, vol. 3, no.1
- [9] Anyebe, A. (2003). The Nigerian Civil Service: Issues in Structure and Operation, Journal of Professional Administration, vol.5, no.11.
- [10] Asodike, J.D. and Jaja, A.S. (2012) “Civil Servants Perception of Minimum Wage Increase in Nigeria” Global Journal of Human Social Science 12 (9)
- [11] Ayeni, V. (1990). Managing Nigeria’s Civil Service in the 1990s” Nigerian forum September to October
- [12] Davidson, B. (1993). The Black Man’s Burden: Africa and the Curse of a Nation –State. Ibadan: Spectrum books limited
- [13] Fatile, J. O. and Adejuwon, K. D. (2010) ‘Public Sector Reform in Africa: Issues, Lessons and Future Directions’, Journal of Sustainable Development, vol. 12, no. 8.
- [14] Federal Republic of Nigeria Public Service Review Commission Udoji Main Report 1974, Federal Ministry of Information Printing Division, Lagos.
- [15] Johnson, M.A. (2016), ‘Rising Wage theft is agonizing’, August 9, 2016, <https://businessdayonline.com/rising-wage-theft-is-agonizing/> Accessed on September 19, 2016.
- [16] Jude Okafor, J. And Aniche, E. (2015) The 2011 National Minimum Wage Act Controversy and Trade Dispute in Nigeria: Problematizing Nigeria’s Fiscal Federalism, Public Policy and Administration Research, vol.5, no.9.
- [17] Kester, K. (2006). A Perspective on Wage Determination and Bargaining In Nigeria. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers Ltd
- [18] Leba, L. (2005). “Living Wage, Corruption and Crime Rate”, Vanguard Newspaper, July 18, 2005
- [19] Nigeria Labour Congress Demand for the Review of the National Minimum Wage and General Wage Review
- [20] Ogunna, A.E. (1999) Public Administration in Nigeria: Theory and Practice, Owerri: Great Versatile Publishers
- [21] Ogunrotifa A. B. (2012a) Federal Civil Service Reform in Nigeria: The Case of Democratic Centralism, Radix International Journal of Research in Social Science, vol. 1, iss 10.
- [22] Ogunrotifa, A.B. (2012b) ‘Weberian Bureaucracy and its Problems in Nigeria: Proposing Democratic Centralism in the Management of Public Institutions’. Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities, vol. 2, no.10.
- [23] Okafor, J. And Aniche, E. (2015) The 2011 National Minimum Wage Act Controversy and Trade Dispute in Nigeria: Problematizing Nigeria’s Fiscal Federalism, Public Policy and Administration Research, vol.5, no.9, pp.
- [24] Oko, S. (2011) “Minimum Wage not Feasible except there is Fiscal Federalism”, Champion Newspaper July 21
- [25] Olugbemi, S. (1979). The Civil Service: an Outsider View, in O. Oyediran (ed), Nigerian Government and Politics Under the Military 1966 – 1979. London: Macmillan press

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 4, Issue 4, pp: (32-41), Month: July – August 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

- [26] Olugbemi, S. (1987). The Civil Service and Development, in S. Olugbemi (ed) Alternative Political Future for Nigeria. Lagos: Nigerian Political Science Association.
- [27] Omoruyi, .O. (1991) The Reformed Civil Service in Transition Period and Beyond. Paper Presented at Civil Service Forum, Benin-City, 15th March.
- [28] Oshiomhole, A. (2016)“From Activism to Political Power: The Challenges of Democratic Governance in Nigeria” Paper Presented at Kukah Centre for Leadership in Abuja ,10 August
- [29] Salisu, M. (2001) ‘Incentives structure, civil service efficiency and the hidden economy in Nigeria’. Kayiri-Mugerwa (ed) Reforming Africa’s Institutions. Helsinki: UNU/WIDER publication
- [30] The Nigerian Today (2016), ‘Editorial: IMF and Nigeria’s economic crisis, Jul 25, 2016 <http://www.nigeriatoday.ng/2016/07/imf-and-nigerias-economic-crisis/> (accessed 20 August 2016)