

PARTICIPATION AND CONSEQUENCES IN TRADE UNIONISM: NIGERIAN WORKERS' EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the participation of members in union activities and consequences using Nigerian workers' experience as the unit of analysis. The study identified nine factors to be responsible for decline in members' participation in the union activities, identified six (6) factors to explain the loss of interest to participate in union activities by members and the consequences as well as the relationship between demographic characteristics of the respondents and major determinants of members' participation in union activities. Questionnaire was administered to 112 respondents selected through convenience sampling technique among the major unions in Nigeria. It was found that union leadership behaviour and government attitude towards the union were singled out among factors responsible for decline in members' participation in union activities likewise non-availability of alternative job and non-evidence of success and government attitude towards union were the potent factors identified for the loss of interest to participate in union activities by members and overall consequence of decline and loss of interest to participate in union activities by members was unfair labour practices in the world of work. Among the demographic characteristics of the respondents Age was positively correlated with union tenure, union commitment and union leadership behaviour but negatively correlated with willingness to participate and marital status has negative correlation with willingness to participate, union commitment and union leadership behaviour. It was concluded that labour environment in Nigeria is devoid of democratic values and recommended that union leadership should engage government on what unionism is all about in order to perceive it positively and believe that employees are partners in progress in the masters' job.

Keywords: participation, unionism, ideology, demographic factor, government attitude.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the colonial government heralded wage employment relationship in Nigeria and this brought about employer - employee relationship whereby employer is the master and employee as the servant. In order to strike a balance in this relationship, the colonial master allowed formation of trade union for the first time in Nigeria in 1912 and since that time, the development of trade union has undergone series of transformation although the objectives remained the same as many of the unions were born out of necessity (Oginni, Faseyiku & Ajani, 2019). The objectives were not limited to promotion of economic welfare of members, secure better life for members, defend members against any encroachment and injustice, to ensure fair labour practices devoid of prejudice, vendetta and antagonism. Considering the time of the formation of the first trade union which was during colonial era, all the union formed in Nigeria before independence added political emancipation i.e. political struggle for independence to the union's objectives and this endeared the struggle of the union to many people and their leaders were popular and synonymous with deliverer of the masses from the oppression of the colonial government (Olusoji, Owoyemi, & Onakala, 2014). It therefore, plays significant role in the realization of independence for Nigeria and remains as one of the oldest institution in Nigeria even though it has undergone series of reformations since Trade Union Ordinances of 1938 to Trade Union Act of 2005 Amendment (Ojomo, 2017).

The success recorded during the struggle for independence further placed the union in a vantage position to secure workers' rights, pursue the economic interest of members and participate in terms and conditions of employment negotiation at different levels and ensure fairness in labour practices, all these issues remained as the

main objectives being pursued by the union in addition to other services rendered to members such education and training, legal assistance, social, financial and welfare support (Olusoji, et al, 2014). In pursuant of these objectives, union often adopts militant and fraternal approaches depending on the issue at stake and circumstance surrounding the issue as well, however, Oginni et al (2019) opined that over the years, the labour union in Nigeria favours the use of militant approach over fraternal approach and that the fraternal approach has been relegated on account of the behaviour of employers towards union activities. The rationale behind this was evidence in the work of (Ojomo, 2017) when it was opined that behaviour of employers in the last two decades towards the requests of the unions towards fulfilling their obligations to members has been lackadaisical, suppressive and unfriendly. Despite this suppressive behaviour of the employer, the unions had survived and enjoyed active participation from members towards engaging employers for the purpose of actualizing their demands during colonial and post-colonial eras.

However, at the return of Nigeria to civil rule in 1999, the trends in successes recorded by unions in the wake of advancing the interests of Nigerian workers towards a remarkable quality of life could not be compared with what had been the in place before 1999. The success was largely due to members' participation because it was considered to be the surest way to survive and meet their collective needs even though not all members were favourably disposed to this collective struggle but majority of the members displayed favourable attitude towards unions' activities and those who stayed away often supported the course of the union by attending meetings whenever it called with maximum cooperation with the directives of the unions' leadership. Since the return of Nigeria to civil rule in 1999, the success recorded in terms of advancing members' interests was very low in comparison with what was obtainable between 1955 - 1999. In the study advance by Adeoye and Adebakin (2020) in the area of challenges confronting Nigerian trade union in the 21st Century, members' participation in union activities has gone low as a result of low level of interest and leadership lack of direction were among reasons adduced forward to explain the decline in members' participation in union activities. The results afterward made Nigerian workers to develop apathy towards unionism with drastic implication on involvement and participation in unions' activities (Adefolaju, 2013).

Considering the significance of members' participation in union activities as a united force towards improving the economic interest of their members as it was in the early days of trade union development in Nigeria has evident in the works of many researchers in the precolonial era and the first decade after independence, the current state of union members' participation in the activities of the union has become a point of concern for researchers in this area in the last two decades because members' participation is the vital ingredient needed for unions' survival and success in fulfilling their obligations towards members. Hence, this study. The study therefore set out to examine what was responsible for decline in the employees' participation in the union activities, loss of interest in union activities and the consequences on the economic conditions of members as well as the role of demographic characteristics in participation of members in union activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trade Unionism

Sydney and Beatrice Webbs in Ajasin (2018) coined industrial democracy to explain what trade unionism was all about in industrial workplace. Webs sees it as an extension of the principle of democracy in the industrial sphere i.e. trade unionism is not an instrument to overthrow the capitalism, but a means of equalizing the bargaining power of labour and capital. It is an art of engagement or involvement on the part of employees in the matters of the union towards realization of its primary and secondary objectives without any form of apathy. Singh and Chawla (2015) described trade unionism as a legislative system of organizing workers and an avenue to raise voices for economic and social benefits. It is a systematic process that provides a good platform for union's members to participate in union activities by responding to the dictate of the work environment and democratic process in industrial workplace. In the views of Adefolaju (2013), it is trade union movement in relation to how the union organizes towards actualizing their major objectives. Trade unionism provides a means by which workers overcome managerial dictatorship and express their voice in the determination of the conditions under which employees have to work (Oginni et al, 2019). In the world of work, trade unionism is seen as spontaneous reaction to the growth of mechanization ushered in by Industrial Revolution which put employers at vantage position i.e. exploitation of

workers thus, promoting the machinery to curb this exploitation. The views of Ojomo (2017) corroborated this, by asserting that trade unionism is a rebellion approach to protect workers' interests in the enterprise against aftermath of mechanization and automatization of industrial society.

Union Participation

Union participation is synonymous with trade unionism and it has been explained as a concept by many scholars. It is described as the involvement of members in the union activities through collective actions in the course of pursuing union's mandate (Olaseni, 2019). To Bhandri (2010) union participation is behavioural involvement of union members in the activities and operations of labour movement for the general benefits of members. Union participation can be summed up to mean collective action embarked upon by union's members in order to prevent employers' oppression or perceived injustice in the workplace especially in the area of terms and conditions of employment. The implication therefore is that the effectiveness of trade union action in pursuant of its objectives is to a large extent contingent upon the degree of participation it generates among present and potential members (Gani, 1992). The degree of participation of members towards collective action to pursue its objective has been found to be a function of many variables such as beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of members as well as structural determinants (Singh and Chawla, 2015; Yesufu, 2018) and these variables can be classified into two determinants i.e. personal and structural determinants. Aside the determinants, the participation can be classified into two different dimensions i.e. informal and formal participation, although McShane (1986) in Adefolaju (2013) opposed the classification thus, proposed a model with three dimensions (meeting, voting and administrative) using activity involved as basis of classification as against nature of activity (formal and informal) that other scholars had used. Since there is no universally acceptable classification in literature as at today, this study made use of the two dimensions classification of union participation i.e. formal and informal participation.

Formal Participation: this revolves around infrequent activities of the union as prescribed by the constitution guiding the activities of the union from time to time such as standing for election into offices, voting for and filing of grievances as well as attendance at meetings and serving on ad hoc committees of the union. The nature of these activities provided limited opportunities for members to display behavioural construct to show maximum participation, however, participation is measured through commitment to number of people in meeting attendance, vying for elective position, keeping abreast with matters affecting members and desire to serve on different committees of the union (Adeoye & Adebakin, 2020).

Informal Participation: early scholars (Tetrick, 1995; Heshizer and Lund, 1997) in this area, described informal participation to be less formal and structured but the frequency was very high and it revolves around helping members to file grievances, talking more about the union activities to family members, associate and friends as well as reading related publications on the union. Tetrick, (1995) sees informal participation as extra role behaviour put in place by members to show commitment and belief to the just course of the union. This extra role is beyond what is required and such an act portray members as one with the interest of the union and counted as active participation while Heshizer and Lund (1997) opined that it is more of rendering compliance with minimal role expectancies. It is usually not regulated by policies of union in relation to how members go about discussing the union matters and where the discussion in the defence of the union just course, the quantum of participation can be determined and vice versa.

Determinants of Union Participation

From the review of extant literature, there had been two major factors classified as the major determinants of union participation i.e. union commitment and demographic factors (Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson & Spiller, 1990; Sverke & Kurukvilla, 1995; Fullugar, Gallagher, Clark & Carroll, 2004). However, Singh and Chawla (2015) added union instrumentality, union ideology and pro - union attitudes as well as union support and socialisation processes. It was believed that between the two factors postulated before the addition of Singh and Chawla (2015), the former was more effective than the latter (Olaseni, 2019).

Union Commitment

This connotes the extent to which a member of a union is willing to identify with the course of the union towards actualizing its main objectives. It manifests in terms of strong desire on the part of the member to retain union membership without any form of prejudice to the union rather with strong belief in the objectives of the union, thus readily available to give support and put extra efforts to ensure success in the course of the union concern for improved economic interest. Gordon et al (1990) four - dimensional model on what constitutes union commitment seems to be more appropriate than the five - dimensional model postulated by Sverke and Kurukvilla (1995), two - dimensional model proposed by Friedman and Harvey (1986). The four - dimensional model by Gordon et al (1990) comprised

- a. **Union loyalty:** this was based on the sense of pride/belongingness because of benefits derivable from union membership. What will make an employee to participate as a union member is union struggle towards economic benefits of members is contingent upon the awareness of such benefits without any form of prejudice or vendetta.
- b. **Responsibility to the Union:** this is about the willingness on the part of the members to fulfill all obligations without leaving anyone unattended to both finance and moral obligations i.e. being a good union citizenship.
- c. **Willingness to work for the union:** this centres around the readiness of individual members to engage in the activities of the union beyond what is morally expected as a duty to the union. i.e. navigating through high and low to get support for the concern of the union, lobbying appropriate bodies to get behind the union in their demands for improved economic interests, politicking to influence for the purpose of getting results for the union etc.
- d. **Belief in unionism:** this is in relation to general support being given to the course of the union struggle for better standard of living through enviable terms and conditions of employment. The union idea must be imbibed by all and sundry for maximum support from time to time and must be without ambiguity for easy comprehension. i.e. maximum support for union matters.

Singh and Chawla (2015) posited that in most cases, employees as members of unions will only be motivated to participate in union action/activities provided there is a certain degree in the levels of commitment within the continuum of the four - dimensional model. On the basis of their work, it was concluded that union commitment helps to predict union participation and thus singled out union loyalty and willingness to work for the union as the major factors that can successful predicts this direction of union participation. This position was in agreement with earlier position where union loyalty was found to be a prominent and consistent characteristic of union commitment and the work Bolton, Bagraim, Witten, Mohamed, Zvobgo and Khan (2007) also affirmed this wherein it was found that the primary motivator of union participation is union commitment.

Demographic Factors

The demographic variables include gender, age, marital status, length of service, educational qualifications and these have been found to be predictive of membership participation in the union activities although research results in this area were inconsistent and inconclusive because of varying degree of outcomes with these demographic factors due to some unique country specific variables that influences the development of union (Bolton et al, 2007; Yesufu, 2018). Despite the degree of variations, it was evident that men were found to be significantly more likely to participate in union activities than the females, interested more in elective positions of the union for the purpose of administration than the females and females were found to be more loyal than males (Galleager & Clark, 2001; Metochi, 2002; Ajasin, 2018). Marital status also placed some restrictions on females than males because of the child care responsibilities and the roles of married women in the society (Olaseni, 2019). Metochi (2002) also found out that men are more likely to attend meetings than women while Yesufu (2018) corroborated this and added that militancy among female workers depended on the extent to which they held a feminist rather than a traditional role identity. In the views of Metochi (2002), as members advance in age so also is decline in the interest to be engaged

in the union activities i.e. members participation in the activities of the union is inversely correlated and that the best age for members participation was found to be mid - twenties to mid - forties which was also corroborated by Bolton et al (2007) and Olaseni (2019). Educational qualification is synonymous with exposure and the desire to participate in the union activities was found to be contingent upon the rationale behind the issue at stake. Where members believe in the issue at stake, to participate will come naturally without any iota of force or persuasion and vice versa (Yesufu, 2018). To participate in the activities of the union, it is more of personal decision based on the analysis of the union demands at a particular time than rational decision i.e. it is more goal and reward motives (Yesufu, 2018). Ajasin (2018) linked length of service with integrity of the union's leadership as experienced by members. The decision to participate in the union activities was found to be related to the behaviour of union leaders in the past which often times formed a lasting experience in the members' employment life history, thus, experience has been the basis to participate especially where betrayal is totally ruled out.

Union Instrumentality

This is about the perception of impact of the union on traditional and non - traditional work conditions that would invariably define what constitutes the employment relationship i.e. wages, benefits and job satisfaction etc. as members willingness to participate is borne out of benefits (instrument) than ideological identity or considerations. Union instrumentality is anchored on possible benefits that union could achieve for their members vis - a - vis the underlying goal, social and reward motives (Ghosh, Ragini, & AlkaRai, 2015). The degree and possibility of meeting their needs through union activities will serve as propensity and impetus to participate as advocated by Ajasin (2018) where it was posited that instrumental motives are those intentions that will drive members of union to participate on the basis of what they stand to gain by such participation. For example, financial support during strike, protection against the arbitrariness of employers, job securities and other psychological reasons. Yesufu (2018) sees union instrumentality as an extension of union commitment because the willingness of members to participate in the union activities was a function of perception what constitutes union's priorities and strategies adopted to obtain both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits. Olaseni (2019) also agreed with this position that the relationship between union's priorities and performance in getting the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for members from the employer was positively correlated i.e. the more members participated in union activities, the more the union obtains both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits. To this extent, union instrumentality is about cost - benefit analysis as members' participation and involvement in union activities will increase if members perceive reasonable payoffs from the union activities Adeoye and Adebakin (2020).

Union Ideology

Union Ideology can be interpreted in this context to mean the beliefs of union in the pursuant of its objectives for the betterment of members. The primary objective of union is the advancement of economic security towards its members and this is evident in all the union struggles in post - colonial or post - independence era in Nigeria (Ojomo, 2017) although the union ideology had been advanced beyond the primary objective of economic security by Ajasin (2018). Ajasin (2018) added another two - dimensional elements to include social and psychological reasons as part of the rationale behind members willingness to participate in union struggles and activities. These new additions were regarded as secondary objective of union which were equally found to be logically compelling as path desired by union members to fulfill the essence of job employment. Singh and Chawla (2015) supported this and opined further that union ideology reflects the solidarity orientation of members towards the union which shows the social and political aspects of unionism. Bolton et al (2007) in their study postulated that union ideology could be successfully sustained when instrumentality issues were being used to promote active support for union course while Adeoye and Adebakin (2020) argued that placing the sustenance of members participation on ideology of bread and butter unionism would not be able to sustain members participation over a period of time rather focus should be on ideology indoctrination whether the way of French or British unionism styles. In the earlier of work of Olaseni (2019), it was argued that personal conviction on how important goal being pursued by the union was rated, how their participation would ultimately make a difference and at the same time that others will participate to have one voice in form of esprit de corps thus, in unity, pursue the issue at stake. Hence, bread and butter unionism cannot in any way sustain members participation in union activities over a long period of time, therefore,

multidimensional ideologies to be incorporated into unionism in such a way that both primary and secondary motives would be enshrined in the modus operandi of unionism.

Pro - Union Attitudes

Attitude towards union is another important variable in understanding the rationale behind the decision of members to participate in union activities. Fullagar et al (2004) asserted that attitude to union is one of the best predictors of union participation and willingness to participation in union activities. To Singh and Chawla (2015) attitudes play an important role in shaping the behaviour of members toward participating in the union activities and where it is positive, it is known as pro - union attitudes and where it is negative, it is known as anti - union attitudes. Pro - union attitude is an overt behaviour showing a great zeal towards union activities, seeking good for the union and using every opportunity to promote and advance the course of the union without season and prejudice to the operational activities of the organisation. Olaseni (2019) posited that union action through members participation would be a success in any organisation where members demonstrate positive behaviour towards the pursuant of union's objective at any given time. For union members to develop positive attitude to the union activities, it entails issues such as exposure of members, experience from previous participation in union actions and integrity of the union leaders, role of union leadership, belief of the management, employer's underlying philosophy as well as members' goal through unionism (Ojomo, 2017). Adeoye and Adebakin (2020) also supported these issues and found them worthy of consideration in order to predict the level of members' participation in union activities, otherwise the labour environment would be filled with unfair labour practices and added government attitudes towards unions. Yesufu (2018) postulated that an organisation with enabling environment for pro - union attitudes entrenchment usually stands out to usher in many benefits to workers in the area of workers' protections, wins struggle for higher wages and better benefits, pacesetters for economic trends, Political organizing is easier, discourages individuality, hard to promote termination of workers. Yesufu argument was based on maximum cooperation from unions' members because of the enabling environment cumulating into active support for its objective.

Union Support

This is a reciprocal determining factor that is deeply rooted in the beliefs of members about the extent to which their union can go on account of derivable benefits for its members and this is evident in the value placed on them and their contributions (Singh & Chawla, 2015) i.e. it is about care of responsibilities. For example, where members have strong belief about this care of responsibilities from the union towards them, members will give in return their loyalty to the course of the union and constantly participate in all union activities. To Ajasin (2018) the need for union support stems from when union began to treat member with care, show love and empathy, identifying with their goals and values, listening to their complaints, interested in their satisfaction at work. It is a thought of mutual benefits on the basis of dependability in reciprocity i.e. give help when it is needed and necessary to achieve a course and reciprocate same when called upon. Although it is reciprocity by nature, the union is the first in the equation to start or initiate what the members will give back in terms of active or passive support.

Socialisation process

This is the process by which union members learn and adjust to skills, knowledge and expectations as well as attitudes and behaviour required to function effectively in unions activities. A learning process through which the history, philosophy and culture of the union are preserved for the purpose of sustainability and at the same time providing a good framework for union members to inherit and disseminate union norms, customs, values, and ideologies, thus, making members to be educated and understand the rationale behind union activities. It is a weapon that can be used to enable members acclimatize to the union environment and where it is used positively, it will make members to show willingness to participate in union activities and if otherwise members will find it difficult to understand their roles in union activities (Ojomo, 2017). It is the responsibility of the union leadership to orientate the newly recruited employees and make it a day worthy of remembrance from time to time. In the end, when new recruits are being socialized to the union environment, it will ensure union stability, get members commitment,

improve interpersonal relationship among members towards forging ahead to achieve common goals and identify the rebellious ones (Oginni et al, 2019).

Consequences of Participation in Unions' Activities

All the determinants discussed above plays significant roles in the understanding of elements upon which members' participation were contingent as noted by Olusoji et al. (2014) corroborated by Ajasin, (2018) that all the elements in the determinants of union participation were deeply rooted in perception. Ajasin, (2018) argument was anchored on the belief that members will be willing to participate if it is perceived that their involvement will lead to the satisfaction of their goals and the derivable benefits will offset all the associated costs involved. Olaseni (2019) who was in support of this position, opined that the perception about union influences the extent to which members participate and when this happens, the following are the consequences of union participation with implication on industrial relations in the views of Bolton et al (2007) and Singh and Chawla (2015);

1. that participation of union is the basis for performance improvement;
2. that improved productivity is the result of improved human relations;
3. that participation shows empathy from union leadership to the problems of members;
4. that union participation improves industrial peace and harmony;
5. that it leads to reasonable marked reduction in absenteeism and unrest in workplace;
6. that union participation represents voice through which management can understand workers' grievances and feel the pulse of union members;
7. that union participation gives a sense of belongingness, trust and mutual benefits to the course of the organisation;
8. that union participation boosts morale, reduces labour turnover and covert conflict at workplace;
9. that union participation shows congruence of interests among participatory members which helps to understand industrial work environment atmosphere and
10. that union participation helps to douse aftermath of downsizing, rightsizing or restructuring.

Nigerian Experience of Union Participation and Consequences in Trade Unionism

The position of Olaseni (2019) clearly depicted the accrued benefits and significance of members participation in union activities and this could be said to elude present Nigeria. The experience in today's Nigeria shows a complete deviation on account of decline in members participation. The prevailing atmosphere is partial or non-members' participation thus making organisations in Nigeria to be deprived of the benefits of union participation. What is responsible for this decline can be deduced from all the elements discussed under the determinants of union participation i.e. union commitment, demographic factors, union instrumentality, union ideology and pro - union attitudes as well as union support and socialisation processes. The peculiarity of Nigerian business environment made the list to be more than that and to include issues such as (Olusoji, et al 2014);

- a. poor perception by members
- b. union deception
- c. fading of union relevance
- d. no evidence in union struggle success
- e. unemployment situation
- f. non- availability of alternative job
- g. lost voice in bargaining process
- h. fiat wage fixation

Poor Perception by members

This is one of the major reasons behind the decline of union participation in Nigeria. Members perception of union was as a result of accumulated experience and these accumulated experiences are interpreted accordingly to give corresponding behaviour. In the two decades, the experience has not been palatable as members have lost trust in the leadership of the union and they could no longer be taken serious in union activities. Olaseni (2019) conducted a research investigating the reaction of union members on the proposed strike by the joint federal unions (Nigerian Labour Congress and Trade Union Congress) on the Federal government position on national minimum wage that was aborted two hours to the commencement of strike. The outcome of the investigation revealed union members were disappointed and decided to distant from any future participation and vented their anger on the union's properties by vandalizing many of these properties and labelled union leadership as corrupt i.e. the Federal government of Nigeria has bribed the union executive and that was why the strike was aborted despite the fact that their demands were not met. This has made members to develop apathy to union activities.

Union Deception

This stems from the belief of members on how union leadership have been carrying out the union responsibilities towards promoting economic welfare of members. The conclusion of members on the basis of what the union leadership have been doing was that the union leadership have not been serving their interest rather their own personal hidden agenda. Members truly have course to believe this self-serving agenda of leaders because upon leaving office, many a time, union leaders are found in government political offices. Sometimes when members yielded to their clarion calls to accomplish their demands, on many occasions, union leadership don't get anything for them but keep galvanizing around as if something spectacular have been achieved and to union members, union leadership is simply a platform to gain popularity by constantly criticizing the government of the day.

Fading of Union Relevance

This does not connote none relevance of union in promoting the economic wellbeing of members but the prevailing circumstance in Nigeria has made union to be losing its credibility as tool to protect members from employers' oppression and other forms of arbitraries. The aftermath of economic conditions in the country had further dented the relevance of union as members were dumbfounded to the unions' inability to protect or get something reasonable for members in the wake of retrenchment, downsizing and other forms of reorganization that may bring loss of job. Not limited to economic conditions, the unemployment situation in the country has equally inhibited the true relevance of union on account of employers' attitudes towards employees' demand for improve standard of living among other economic benefits. Employers now operate in the realm of 'hire and fire' since the prevailing condition in the economy has many employable and qualified personnel and at the same time sees union activities as unwelcome phenomenon in workplace. The Trade Union Decree of 1976 stipulated the condition to be followed by employers where number of employees in their employment has minimum of forty (40) members but not adhere to and none is sanctioned for this. Government is indirectly contributing to the non-relevance of the union as the union has not gain anything significant in the last one decade from the government and in most occasions, government used blackmail as a tool to dent the image of the union.

No Evidence in Union Struggle Success

The willingness on the part of members in the participation of the union activities would have been very tremendous if members could have track records of their struggle participation and corresponding successes either in the past or present. The evidence of union struggle and success was dated back to late 70s as illustrated by Ojomo (2017) and subsequent struggle had ended without concrete results in terms of benefits to members and sometimes worsened the situation. Government more often incapacitated the union' struggle for success by frustrating any agreement reached with them without implementation once strike is called off. The question on the lips of members has always been 'what is the essence of participating in union' activities without concrete results?' And the corresponding answer is participation in union activities irrespective of issues put forward is not worth investing ones' time. With this kind of belief, what will be the expected behaviour to be exhibited by union members? This non-evidence of success recorded has made union's members to refrain from or is constraint by this and confined the union activities solely

to the leadership of the union. In the real sense of success, union made appreciable feat in the negotiation process but the problem has always been implementation i.e. refusal on the part of the employer to honour and implement collective agreement and this has been the case for all agreement with the union.

Unemployment Situation

As discussed under fading of union relevance, this refers to a situation when a person who is actively searching for job is unable to find one. Sometimes it may be that those who are willing to work are unable to find jobs which impaired the economic level of production and organisational profitability. Aside this, unemployment represents economic distress and made employees to be at the receiving end or mercy of the employer. Employees are subjected to different kinds of working conditions that may not have been in place if there had been stability in employment. Employers used intimidation and threat of job loss to scare as well as coerce employees to turn their back against union, thus, making employees to be constantly afraid to participate in union's activities because of the likely implication from the employers.

Non- Availability of Alternative Job

This emerged from unemployment situation. A country that is under full employment will experience business boom and posterity which will invariably herald creation of utility in all the sphere of the economy leading to availability of alternative job in every part of the sector without limitations. The case of Nigeria is quite different as it is not under full employment rather experiencing various types of unemployment situations and this explains the dearth of availability of alternative jobs. As explained under unemployment, that in a situation like this, employees are always at the mercies of the employers wherein they accept all forms of unfair labour practices and the non-availability of alternative jobs added another dimension to further suppress the interest of employees in workplace. It serves as a fear factor to employees because the cost associated with loss of job is unbearable in the face of inflation which is considered to be very high. Employees would rather accept any form of maltreatment in order to meet basic needs than express their opinion and lose their jobs. The idea of coming together or regrouping for the purpose of fulfilling their roles which is promoting economic interests of members would be placated, relegated and somewhat suppressed. Members will only be interested in the true position of management on all issues relating to terms and conditions of employment, timid to challenge any unfair labour practice and refrain from anything that will jeopardize their survival interest in their places of work.

Lost Voice in Bargaining Process

Collective bargaining seems to be the nucleus of industrial relations and it is the machinery through which collective agreement is being reached. Oginni et al. (2019) described collective bargaining as the process of negotiation by which a group of representatives of employees on one hand and employer or a group of employers on the other hand over terms and conditions of employment. It is an avenue to reach agreement on issues such as wages and salaries, benefits, working conditions, right of workers in workplace, safety, work life balance etc. As at today in Nigeria, bargaining process is more or less at zero level because the terms and conditions of employment are set by government without much input from the union and where there is negotiated agreement by representatives of union and government (employer), it is often not implemented. Whenever union cried out to express their disappointment over non-implementation of agreements reached, the government will blackmail the union rather than addressing the issues being raised. For example, the Federal government reached an agreement with ASUU (Academic Staff Union of Universities) in 2009, up till now, it is yet to be implemented. On national issues that might affect members standard of living, unions are not consulted and when union reacted with a threat to embark on strike as a way to force the government for a dialogue, government will use apparatus of the State to subdue any form of protest. With all these experiences, union members will never see any need to participate knowing fully well that nothing positive will come out of it and any participation may even bring untimely death or lockup in the government prisons.

Fiat Wage Fixation

This can be said to be a fallout from the loss of voice in the bargaining process. It is a general consensus that wages and salaries should reflect the dictate of the forces of demand and supply in the economy to avoid inflation and other economic consequences, that is not the case in Nigeria because wages and salaries are unilaterally determined by the government under the pretext of minimum wage legislation. There is nothing bad in setting what should be minimum wage in a country through legislation however, it should be done under due consultation with all the stakeholders to ensure a balance between prevailing economic condition and reality in the ability of other employers to pay. The fallout from this minimum wage legislation has been poor absolute compliance despite the fact that it was gazette into law. The State government expressly informed the Federal government that there are no funds to meet the new obligation imposed and so also is the case of employers in the private sector. The union went on strike to press for implementation of the minimum wage but could not achieve anything as there were division and intimidation from different angles. Union members were not reluctant to participate on account that the leadership of the union are not sincere, cannot be trusted and using them to pursue their individual agenda.

The outcome of Nigerian experience of union Participation and consequences in trade unionism would be unfair labour practices as employees through organized process could not air their opinion or concern over terms and conditions guiding employment relationship in the world of work. it becomes a one-sided affair where only the interest of employer is paramount.

METHODOLOGY

The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data collection while cross sectional design was applied by using survey method. In addition, the study made use of qualitative and quantitative methods in the analysis to ensure effective and efficient communication of results obtained as well as comparability purpose with previous work. Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted, which validated the research instrument and the use of convenience sampling techniques and the choice of 112 respondents as the sample size taken from the membership of some selected main union in Nigeria. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument and it has three sections labelled A to C which were modified to take into consideration the peculiarity of Nigerian participants. Section A has information on the demography of the participants of the study, section B has information on the factors responsible for decline in the members' participation in the union activities and section C has information on the loss of interest in union activities. It was based on Likert Scale of five rating points that range from strongly agree to strongly disagree where strongly agree = 5 and strongly disagree = 1 in that descending order in the analysis and collection of data over a period of 22 weeks before sorting and analysis. Descriptive (mean, mode and percentage) and inferential statistics (correlation) were made use of in the analysis of the data.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Variables		Frequency Distribution	Percentage
Gender	Male	87	78%
	Female	25	22%
	Total	112	100%
Age Bracket	Less than 20 years	5	4%
		20	18%
		36	32%
	21yrs – 30yrs	42	38%
		9	8%
	31yrs – 40yrs		
	Total	112	100%
Union Tenure	Less than 5years	9	8%
	5yrs - 10yrs	23	21%
	11yrs - 16yrs	45	40%
	17yrs and above	35	31%
	Total	112	100%
Marital Status	Single	13	12%
	Married	87	78%
	Divorced	5	4%
	Widow	7	6%
	Total	112	100%
Educational Qualifications	M.Sc/MBA	9	8%
	B.Sc/BA/B.ED/HND	62	55%
	Professional Membership	12	11%
	ND/NCE	29	26%
	Total	112	100%

Table 1 showed that majority of the participants were male (78%), age bracket range 41yrs and above (46%) and those who had been part of union range between 11yrs - 16yres (40%) while the majority of the participants were married (78%) and majority of the participants had university education (55%).

Objective 1: Factors responsible for Decline in the employees' participation in the union activities in Nigeria

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of Decline factor in the selected Union in Nigeria

S/ N	HRMP Variables	Measurement Scales (Percentage)					N	Mean Scores	Standard deviation	Rank Score	Remar k
		SD	D	N	A	SA					
1	Union Commitment	5(4)	5(4)	9(8)	56(50)	38(34)	112	3.860	0.768	4	A
2	Union Ideology	22(20)	44(39)	17(15)	19(17)	10(9)	112	2.782	0.758	8	D
3	Union Support	–	10(9)	5(4)	59(53)	38(34)	112	3.325	1.152	5	A
4	Union Perception	–	–	–	87(78)	25(22)	112	3.962	1.035	3	A
5	Willingness to Participate	10(9)	47(42)	15(13)	10(9)	30(27)	112	2.904	0.909	7	D
6	Union Instrumentality	60(54)	27(24)	15(13)	10(9)	–	112	2.922	1.233	6	D
7	Union leadership Behaviour	–	–	22(20)	74(66)	16(14)	112	4.230	0.892	1	A
8	Pro union Attitude	22(20)	54(48)	16(14)	20(18)	–	112	2.771	1.226	9	D
9	Government attitude towards the Union	–	5(4)	10(9)	70(63)	27(24)	112	4.210	0.772	2	A

Remark where Agreement (A) = is ≥ 3.0 and Disagreement (D) ≤ 3.0

The Data for objective 1 was subjected to descriptive statistics with emphasis on mean, Kendall's W test was used to know the extent of agreement on the factors responsible for decline in members' participation in union activities in the selected union. Table 2 has descriptive statistical information on objective 1 in terms of percentage, mean and standard deviation as well as the measurement scales. Table 3 has information on Kendall's coefficient of concordance result.

Table 2, the scale of measurement was on Likert's 5 points scale where benchmark for agreement was set at weighted mean of ≥ 3.0 and disagreement criterion was set at weighted mean of ≤ 3.0 . The table showed that the mean score for leadership attitude ranked highest with score of 4.230 and standard deviation was 0.992, followed by government attitude towards union with 4.210 mean score and standard deviation of 0.772 and next was union perception with mean score of 3.962 and standard deviation was 1.235 and union commitment has mean score of 3.860 with standard deviation of 0.768 followed union support with 3.325 mean score and standard deviation of 1.152 and union instrumentality followed with a mean score of 2.922 with standard deviation of 1.233, next to this was willingness to participate whose mean score was 2.904 and standard deviation was 0.909, followed by union ideology while the last was pro union attitude with mean score of 2.771 and standard deviation of 1.226.

Therefore, leadership attitude with the highest mean score indicated that it was paramount as a matter of priority in the factors responsible for decline in members' participation in union activities and the low standard deviation showed that most of the responses were very close to the average which was an indication that it was not far from normal distribution. This was also supported by the agreement criterion which has mean score to be ≥ 3.0 and 90% of the respondents in the area of study agreed that for maximum participation of members in union activities, leadership attitude should be in conformity with the tenets of leadership in order to create enabling environment for good relationship and balance responsibilities with tasks. Followed closely were government attitude and union perception which also provided information on factors responsible for the decline in participation while union instrumentality, willingness to participate, union ideology and pro-union attitude were not considered to be among factors responsible for decline in members' participation in union activities as evident in the disagreement criterion which has mean score to be ≤ 3.0 . The implication is that these factors were never considered as the challenge and could be said to be adequate under present condition and will motivate to members to participate once

these factors (leadership attitude, government attitude towards union and union perception as well as union commitment and union support) are placed in the right perspective.

Table 3: Kendall's W Test and Mean Rank Statistics

<i>Decline Variable factors</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Kendall's W^a</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Asymp. Sig.</i>	<i>Rank Score</i>
<i>Union Commitment</i>	112	3.67	.330	614.157	8	.000	3
<i>Union Ideology</i>	112	2.51					9
<i>Union Support</i>	112	2.91					5
<i>Union Perception</i>	112	3.24					4
<i>Willingness to Participate</i>	112	2.77					7
<i>Union Instrumentality</i>	112	2.85					6
<i>Union leadership behaviour</i>	112	4.48					2
<i>Pro union attitude</i>	112	2.67					8
<i>Government attitude towards union</i>	112	4.54					1

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

Kendall's W Test was used to know the extent of agreement among the respondents on the factors responsible for the decline of members' participation in the union activities. In comparison of Table 3 with Table 2, the mean was not exactly the same as there were three variances although these variances were still within the agreement and disagreement region. Kendall's mean ranked government attitude as the highest followed by leadership attitude, union commitment, union perception, union support, union instrumentality, willingness to participate, union ideology and pro-union attitude was ranked last. All the variables met the benchmark criterion that was set for agreement at weighted mean of ≥ 3.0 for decision except union support although what was ranked highest in Kendall was second in weighted mean, what was ranked third under weighted mean was ranked fourth under Kendall mean and Kendall ranked union ideology last which was ranked eight under weighted mean. Since Kendall's W is the coefficient of concordance which is a measure of agreement among raters, it ranges between 0 (no agreement) and 1 (100% agreement) and the result is $W = 0.330$, $X^2 = 614.157$, $df = 5$ and $Sig. = 0.000$ which shows that even though there is statistical significance to imply agreement among the participants but this level of agreement is relatively weak. The implication is that all the factors identified to be responsible for the decline of members' participation in union activities are veritable and potent factors which can be said to be contingent upon period of time. This explains why the level of agreement was relatively weak as evident in the variation in the weighted mean and Kendall's mean.

Objective 2: Factors responsible for loss of interest to participate in union activities

All the variable elements identified as factors responsible for decline in members' participation in the union activities can easily be adduced forward as factors responsible for loss of interest in union activities in Nigeria however, the peculiarity of Nigerian business and labour environments provided deviation to this and identified factors such as;

1. members' belief;
2. deception by union leaders;
3. deception by government;
4. non-availability of alternative jobs;
5. unilateral bargaining and
6. non-evidence of success.

Table 4: Descriptive analysis of factors responsible for loss of interest in union activities in the selected Union

S/N	HRMP Variables	SD	Measurement Scales / Percentage				N	Mean Score s	SD	Rank Score	Remark
			D	N	A	SA					
1	members' belief	5(4)	10(9)	10(9)	67(60)	20(18)	112	3.532	0.992	4	A
2	deception by union leaders	5(4)	20(18)	3(3)	73(65)	11(10)	112	3.808	0.909	3	A
3	deception by government	-	13(12)	10(9)	62(55)	27(24)	112	3.468	1.035	5	A
4	non-availability of alternative job	3(3)	5(4)	-	68(61)	36(32)	112	4.162	0.768	1	A
5	unilateral bargaining	13(12)	20(18)	25(22)	43(38)	11(10)	112	3.326	1.152	6	A
6	non-evidence of success.	3(3)	18(16)	2(2)	61(54)	28(25)	112	3.984	0.758	2	A

Remark where Agreement (A) = is ≥ 3.0 and Disagreement (D) ≤ 3.0

Table 4 has descriptive statistical information on objective 2 in terms of percentage, mean and standard deviation as well as measurement scales. The scale of measurement was on Likert's 5 points scale and benchmark for agreement was set at weighted mean of ≥ 3.0 and disagreement criterion was set at weighted mean of ≤ 3.0 . Six variables were identified as factors responsible for loss of interest in union activities out of which non-availability of alternative job was ranked highest with a mean score of 4.162, standard deviation of 0.768 and 94% of the participants agreed that non-availability of alternative job made them to lose interest in the union activities. Non-evidence of success in previous struggle was ranked second with a mean score of 4.984, standard deviation of 0.758 and 79% of the participants agreed that non-evidence of success in previous struggle was a valid reason why they lost interest in union activities and deception by union leadership was ranked next to non-evidence of success in previous struggle with a mean core of 3.808, standard deviation of 0.909 and 75% of the participants agreed that deception by union leadership was a reason to be adduced for loss of interest in union activities while members' belief followed with a mean score of 3. 523, standard deviation of 0.992 and 78% of the participants agreed that members' belief towards the union accounted for lost of interest in what goes on in the union, deception by government was next with a mean score of 3.468, standard deviation of 1.035 and 79% of the participants agreed that deception by government in the implementation of agreements and proscription of union at will and unilateral bargaining was ranked last with a mean score of 3.326, standard deviation of 1.152 and 48% of the participants agreed that unilateral bargaining was responsible for lost of interest in union activities while 30% of the participants disagreed on this which was the highest among all the variables. All the variables identified met the agreement criterion set at weighted mean of ≥ 3.0 which implies that they are all potent forces as rationale behind the loss of interest in the union activities.

Table 5: Kendall's W Test and Mean Rank Statistics

Loss of Interest Variables	N	Mean Rank	Kendall's W	Chi – Square	Df	Sig	Rank Score
members' belief	112	3.13	0.6442	224.336	5	.000	5
deception by union leaders	112	4.15					3
deception by government	112	3.90					4
non-availability of alternative job	112	4.37					1
unilateral bargaining	112	3.02					6
non-evidence of success.	112	4.20					2

Kendal

I's Coefficient of Concordance

Table 5 has Kendall's W Test and mean statistics result which were used to know the extent of agreement among the respondents on the factors responsible for the loss of interest among union members in their participation in the union activities. The mean score of weighted average in Table 4 is somewhat the same with that of Kendall's mean score in Table 5 except that of members' belief and deception by government that were in reverse order. Kendall's mean scores as presented still ranked non-availability of alternative job highest among other variables and also for non-evidence of success followed by deception by union leaders while that of unilateral bargaining ranked last. The only variance in the ranking was in that of deception by government and members' belief. All the variables identified met the benchmark criterion that was set for agreement at weighted mean of ≥ 3.0 for decision without any exception and $W = 0.6442$, $X^2 = 224.336$, $df = 5$ and $Sig. = 0.000$ which shows that there is statistical significance to imply agreement among the participants and this level of agreement is relatively strong. It is about 64% level of agreement among the participants on factors responsible for loss of interest among members in the activities of the union. The implication of this result was that the presence of these factors in the labour environment in Nigeria, the interest of members to participate in the union activities will continue to dwindle with prejudice on the attainment of union objectives that could have been achieved through team spirit and one voice.

Objective 3 Demographic Characteristics in Participation of Members in Union Activities

Table 6: Correlational Analysis of Demographic Variables

Variables	G	AB	UT	MS	EQ	WP	UC	ULB
<i>Gender (G)</i>	1.000							
<i>Age bracket (AB)</i>	0.758	1.000						
<i>Union Tenure (UT)</i>	0.567	0.397	1.000					
<i>Marital Status (MS)</i>	0.876	0.845	0.573	1.000				
<i>Educational Qualification (EQ)</i>	0.776	-0.234	0.642	0.453	1.000			
<i>Willingness to Participate (WP)</i>	-0.228	-0.306	-0.285	0.598	0.684	1.000		
<i>Union Commitment (UC)</i>	0.773	0.034	-0.112	0.342	0.462	0.693	1.000	
<i>Union leadership behaviour (ULB)</i>	0.732	0.531	-0.224	0.762	0.661	0.774	0.644	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 6 provided insight into the nature of relationship that exists between demographic variables and some contents among the variables responsible for participation in union activities being the basic determinants. It was evident that Age is positively correlated with union tenure ($r = 0.397$, $p < 0.05$), union commitment ($r = 0.034$, $p < 0.05$) and union leadership behaviour ($r = 0.531$, $p < 0.05$) to imply positive relationship but negatively correlated with willingness to participate ($r = -0.306$, $p < 0.05$) to mean negative relationship. Union tenure is positively correlated with marital status ($r = 0.573$, $p < 0.05$) and educational qualification ($r = 0.642$, $p < 0.05$) which shows positive relationship but has negative correlation with willingness to participate ($r = -0.285$, $p < 0.05$), union commitment ($r = -0.112$, $p < 0.05$) and union leadership behaviour ($r = -0.224$, $p < 0.05$) indicating negative relationship. Willingness to participate is positively correlated with union commitment ($r = 0.693$, $p < 0.05$) and union leadership behaviour ($r = 0.774$, $p < 0.05$) while union commitment is also positively correlated with union leadership behaviour ($r = 0.644$, $p < 0.05$) to imply positive relationship.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of data obtained for objective 1 showed that factors identified by Fullagar, Gallagher, Clark & Carroll, 2004), Singh and Chawla (2015) and Olaseni (2019) to be factors responsible for the decline in members participation in union activities were also found to be responsible in Nigerian labour environment except the addition of government attitude towards union. The result indicated that not all factors could actually inhibit

participation in union activities such as union ideology, willingness to participate, union instrumentality and pro-union attitude and confirmed that government attitude towards the union, union leadership behaviour, union perception, union support and union commitment were the major factors responsible for the decline in the participation of members in the union activities in Nigeria which was also corroborated by the positions of Olaseni (2019) and Adeoye and Adebakin (2020) although government attitude was never identified by these scholars which happens to be the strongest indicating factor in this study.

On the objective 2, despite the dearth of literature with peculiarity to Nigeria on factors responsible for the loss of interest among union members in their participation in union activities. Seven variables were identified such as members' belief, deception by union leaders and deception by government as well as non-availability of alternative job, unilateral bargaining and non-evidence of success. Although Yesufu, (2018) identified loss of voice in bargaining process which is evident in unilateral bargaining as the reason for the loss of interest, Ojomo (2017) mentioned non-evidence of success in union struggle as the bane of the loss of interest which empowers employer to engage in unfair labour practice such as inhuman treatment at workplace, termination of employment without due process and deviance to process grievances as well as political discrimination in workplace, refusal to negotiate in good faith, refusal to bargain on labour matters and refusal to pay salary as at when due while Olaseni (2019) believed it was poor perception by members in relation to the manner by which union business is being conducted and this is responsible for members negative belief in the union. These three elements identified supported the outcome of this present study and three additional variables were identified including deception by union leaders, deception by government and non-availability of alternative jobs to be at the centre of factors responsible for loss of interest in the participation of members in union activities. The study however identified the potency of the variables and non-availability of alternative job contributed more to the loss of interest than the rest.

Objective 3 was on the relationship of demographic characteristics and variables in participation of members in union activities. It was evident from the result that males were more likely to participate in the union activities than females since labour environment was dominated by male gender. This was supported by works of Galleager and Clark, (2001); Metochi, (2002); Ajasin, (2018) although the position of Olaseni (2019) on marital status of union members contradicts the result of the study in respect of willingness to participate but supported restriction on union commitment. The result shows that the willingness to participate in union activities diminishes with advancement in age thus affects the level of commitment to union activities as once pointed out by Metochi (2002), Bolton et al (2007) and Olaseni (2019). The study also established relationship between union tenure and willingness to participate in union activities as well as union commitment and union leadership behaviour to be inversely correlated that is inverse relationship to imply increase in union tenure will reduce willingness to participate which negates the positions of Yesufu (2018) and Ajasin (2018).

From the extant literature available, the consequences of members' participation in union activities have always been positive as noted by Bolton et al (2007), Singh and Chawla (2015), Olaseni, (2019) to include but not limited to increase in employees' productivity, minimize overt conflict and labour turnover, boost workforce morale, enhance industrial peace and harmony which were also evident in Nigeria up till late 80s but the situation has changed as a result of apathy of members towards participation in the union activities. Ojomo (2017) corroborated by Adeoye and Adebakin (2020) had shown that loss of interest by members to participate in union activities has placed the workforce at the mercy of employer, thus empowers employer to dictate the terms and conditions of employment in a way that is not favourable to employees on account of unfair labour practices such as inhuman treatment at workplace, termination of employment without due process and deviance to process grievances as well as political discrimination in workplace, refusal to negotiate in good faith, refusal to bargain on labour matter and refusal to pay salary as at when due or payment of salary is benevolent act. The result of this study agreed with their positions and added non-implementation of collective agreement to the list of unfair labour practices.

CONCLUSION

The study set out to examine factors responsible for decline in the members' participation in the union activities, loss of interest in union activities and the consequences on the economic conditions of members as well as the role of demographic characteristics in participation of members in union activities. The study identified factors

responsible for decline in the members' participation in the union activities such as union commitment, union ideology and union support as well as union perception, willingness to participate, union instrumentality and union leadership behaviour, pro-union attitude and government attitude towards union wherein union leadership behaviour and government attitude towards the union were found vital to the decline in the participation of union members. The factors responsible for the loss of interest in the union activities were also identified to include members' belief, deception by union leaders and deception by government as well as non-availability of alternative jobs, unilateral bargaining and non-evidence of success out of which non-availability of alternative job and non-evidence of success in union struggles were considered to impact more. The role of demographic characteristics was also found in terms of their relationship with determinants of members' participation in the union activities. It was found that males were more likely to participate in the union activities than females since labour environment was dominated by male gender and willing to participate in union activities and also the willingness to participate in union activities diminishes with advancement in age thus, affects the level of commitment to union activities. Consequences of the participation in union activities as obtainable in Nigeria were also identified with negative implications embedded in unfair labour practices. Therefore, the labour environment in Nigeria is devoid of democratic values as unions members are denied opportunity to express their opinion or concern over terms and conditions guiding employment relationship in the world of work as a result of government attitude towards the union, non-evidence of success in union struggles and union leadership attitude.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the study were based on the conclusion of the study and if strictly adhere to, it will ameliorate the effect of decline and loss of interest in members' participation in the union activities and will include;

1. Embarking on leadership training for all the union leaders to improve interpersonal relationship and management of union affairs.
2. Ensuring socialization that will indoctrinate both new and old members about the ideology of the union
3. Gaining members' trust through collective responsibilities and actions
4. Making goals to be pursued by union leaders to reflect members' aspirations within the purview of terms and conditions of employment
5. Engaging government on what unionism is all about in order to perceive it positively angle and believe that employees are partners in progress in the masters' job.
6. Developing different programmes in form of support towards meeting the needs of members in their career ambitions, personal life and domestic affairs.
7. Ensuring leaders live above board so that when they are mirrored by members, the outcome will herald trust, confidence and commitment
8. Encouraging government to legislate against unfair labour practices with stiffen penalties on any violator.
9. Making government to realise the impact of non-implementation of agreements on the labour environment.

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