

## Modernisation or Modern Slavery: The Concept of Casual/Contract Labour and the Dilemma of Economic Growth in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Against the backdrop of all rationales, the consideration for profit maximization and quest to cut cost by the ownership of industries seems to be the core driver that is currently dictating paradigm shift of hiring in labour market particularly, among the private industries in Nigeria. Thus, the effect of widespread of casualization among the private firms has encouraged the emergence of casual/contract workers in the public establishments. This study argues that the supposed benefits of utilizing casual/contract workers by employers in Nigerian is inconsequential compare to its negative impacts on employees' socio-economic status, industries productivity and the economic growth of the country. This is so, because the rise of casual workers would automatically suffocate the existence of middle class, weaken the level of industries productivity as a result of deprivation, exploitation and job insecurity that usually occasioned casualization and create excessive burden on government welfare and infrastructural system due to inability of casual worker to add value to social, political and economic development of the country as result of lack of purchasing power.

**Keywords:** modernization, modern slavery, casual labour, contract labour, economy growth

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the evolutions of science and technology occasioned by industrialization and globalization pressure have led to both competition, quest for cheap labour, mass production and frequent disputes between employers and their workers in many organizations. The foregoing has provoked social protection of employee against undue vulnerability to high risk of working environment, exploitation by the labour union and other stakeholders in labour management. The potential benefit of workforce to both economic and political development of a country cannot be overemphasized given the interwoven relationships that exist between human resources and material resources.

Classical economists like Ricardo and Karl Marx reckoned with labour as the source of production, basis of consumption, vehicle of exchange, source of distribution and a critical instrument for development of economic growth. The unguided quest for profit maximization among private investors and the new invocation of public-private partnership,

coupled with the over-saturated labour market, employees' dignity and demands for dignified jobs in a conducive working environment has been mortgaged by many employers of labour in Nigeria.

Undoubtedly, the change that comes from the orthodox mode of permanent employment to contract/casual workforce has transited exploitation of those who want to provide labour. Thus, this new development has generated question such as how does a change in employment practice open the door to exploitation and affected economic growth? Consequently, the invention of machine in 1750 signaled Industrial Economy that ushered in the industrialization, modernization and globalization which led to increase in the number of job seekers.

However, prioritization of profiteering and efforts at reducing production cost has increasingly suffocating and sacrificing traditional permanent employment in favour of contract/casual recruitment in recent time. The crux of this study is to interrogate the current trends in contract/casual labour employment and

its implications for a long time economic development in Nigeria. Suffice to say is that, industries utilization of contract/casual workforce has grossly been mismanaged and conceived as cash cow to the owners of industries especially in private organisations. Not weighing its advantage and benefits compared to regular/permanent labour. Thus, there is existing paradigm shift in the labour market which is more favourable toward modernization of labour management relations.

As observed by Kazeem, (2004), it is not an exaggeration that exploitation of casual/contract personnel is more prominent in many organisations in Nigeria. Conventionally, labour exploitation is more evidence in terms of poor remuneration, meager wages and late payment of salary, lack of motivation and training, none or pseudo promotion exercise, lack of job satisfaction and abuse of workers' rights among others.

In same vein, casual/contract employment often creates disputes and acrimony which is prevalent in contractual agreements and interpersonal relations between contract/casual workers and their permanent staff counterparts. Given the foregoing background, this paper is divided into five sections which includes; introduction, conceptual/theoretical framework, phylogeny of casual/contract labour, casual/contract employment and the dilemma of economic development in Nigeria and conclusion/recommendations.

Casualization can be define as work occupations in which the demand for employment is highly variable such as port work, farm migratory work and other jobs of unskilled intermittent nature. Also, Casualization is a form of involuntary servitude for a period of time. Labour exploitation is pervasive in many organizations in Nigeria (Kazeem, 2004). It manifests itself in one form or the other including poor salary, wages and salary arrears system, training, promotion, motivation, sense of belonging, job satisfaction and dehumanization of work and workers.

Casualization is the other name for a temporary employment, which is manifest in industries, whether in transnational, multinational, public or private and in the informal sector. As Campbell, (2004) aptly notes, definitions of casual employment are often a site of confusion and controversy, marked

by tensions between vernacular, regulatory and contractual meanings.

Casualization can be define as work occupations in which the demand for employment is highly variable such as port work, farm migratory work and other jobs of unskilled intermittent nature. Also, Casualization is a form of involuntary servitude for a period of time Modernization is an encompassing process of massive social changes that, once set in motion, tends to penetrate all domains of life, from economic activities to social life to political institutions, in a self-reinforcing process. Modernization brings an intense awareness of change and innovation, linked with the idea that human societies are progressing. Historically, the idea of human progress is relatively new. As long as societies did not exert significant control over their environment and were helplessly exposed to the vagaries of natural forces, and as long as agrarian economies were trapped in a steady-state equilibrium where no growth in mass living standards took place, the idea of human progress seemed unrealistic ( Jones 1985; McNeill 1990). The situation began to change only when sustained economic growth began to occur (North 1981; Lal 1998). After 8,000 years of agrarian history, economic growth began to outpace population growth in a sustained way only with the rise of pre-industrial capitalism in sixteenth-century Northwestern Europe (North 1981; Hall 1989; Lal 1998; Landes 1998). As this happened, the philosophies of humanism and Enlightenment emerged. The idea that technological innovations based on human intellectual achievement would enable societies to overcome the limitations nature imposes on them gained credibility – contesting the established view that human freedom and fulfillment can come only in the after-life. Science began to provide a source of insight that competed with divine revelation, challenging the intellectual monopoly of the church (Weber 1958 [1904]; Landes 1998).

The idea of human progress was born and with it theories of modernization began to emerge. However, the idea of human progress was contested from the beginning by opposing ideas that considered ongoing societal changes as a sign of human decay. Thus, modernization theory was doomed to make a career swinging between wholehearted appreciation and fierce rejection, depending on whether the dominant

mood of the time was rather optimistic or pessimistic. Industrialization vastly expands technological human control over the natural environment. Humans spend most of their activities in an entirely man-made environment and are no longer helplessly exposed to the vicissitudes of natural forces. Everything, even the political order, seems to be a question of human engineering and all problems can be solved by science: everything, from economic growth to space exploration, is subject to human rationality. These perceptions in the industrial world favor the emergence of secular-rational values. The industrial phase of modernization links secular-rational values with conformist values that emphasize group discipline over individual liberty. The reason for this is the standardization of life in the industrial world. This is particularly true for the working class whose members experience little personal autonomy, spending most of their lives at the assembly line or in their apartment buildings, in homogeneous groups, living under strong social controls and group pressures. Contract labour is a significant and growing form of employment. The practice of employing contract labour is observed all over the world and has been in operation since ages. Contractor means, in relation to an establishment a person who undertakes to produce a given result for the establishment, other than a mere supply of goods or articles of manufacture of such establishment, through contract labour or who supplies contract labour for any work of the establishment. The advent of Contract Labour can be traced back to the emergence of the small scale industries which found it economically unfeasible to undertake all activities of production process themselves and therefore get some part of work done from workers hired through contractors. The contract workers generally belong to the unorganized sector as they lack bargaining quantum of power, have little or no social security and are often engaged in tedious tasks which are injurious to their safety. They have little or no security of employment. However, factors like lack of continuity of work, difficulty in ensuring closer supervision by the employer, higher output or productivity of such workers, cost effectiveness, flexibility in manpower deployment, facilitation for focusing on core competencies, etc, constitute advantage of the system of contract labour.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL CLARIFICATION**

### **2.1 Casual/Contract Labour**

Importantly, unambiguous and clarity of definitions of concept are necessary prelude to any meaningful academic discourse and analysis. Hence, this paper attempt to provide conceptual clarification to the following terms; contract/casual labour, modernization, modern slavery, and economy growth.

More often than not, both contract and casual employment are been use interchangeably although both concept portends slight different in meaning. For instance, both circumstances, employment are often specified the condition in which an employee must remain in the employment of the employer for a given period of time or, upon resignation from or termination of his employment by his/her employer. Succinctly put, both contract and casual employment refers to a situation in which employee is hired for a particular job and they are paid at a specific rate which may be different from other permanent categories of employees. Thus, both contract and casual employment is for particular time duration which does not extend beyond that stipulated period and are not entitled to certain benefits accrued to permanent staff.

Existing works on the subject matter have uses different terms to describe casual workers. In many occasions casual workers are referred to as; contract staff, contingent workers, part-time workers, dispensable workers and non-core workers (Hampton, 1988). To Buckley and Endewijk (1989) casual workers are described as labour only sub-contractors. According to Williams (1993) casual workers are also known as flexible workforce and peripheral workers. In developed economies of Europe and American, casual work is described as contract work, on-call work, part-time, fixed term contract and temporary work (Francoise, 1998).

The International Labour Organization ILO (2007) defines casual employment as workers who have an explicit or implicit contract of employment which is not expected to continue for more than a short period, whose duration is to be determined by national circumstances. Specifically, in Europe and the United States casualization is commonly described as non standard work arrangements (NSWAs).

In the same vein, Basso (2003) stressed that casualization may be associated with under-employment which connotes two different interpretations. It is often used loosely in international literature to refer to the spread of bad conditions of work such as employment insecurity, irregular work hours, intermittent employment, low wages and absence of standard employment benefits. Traditionally, casual labour referred to work conducted for defined periods and during peak business periods when individuals are called to supplement full time workers in times of high business activity, particularly in retail, but the situation has changed in the contemporary labour market. Similarly, O'Donnell (2004) argued that, in legal terms, casual employee is seen as a worker engaged for a period of less than six months and who is paid at the end of each day.

According to Okafor (2010), there are two forms of employment under casualization in Nigeria, namely; casual and contract labour. The terms and conditions of employment of this category of workers are not regulated by the Nigerian labour laws, in the sense that their status is not defined and no provisions are made for the regulation of the terms and conditions of their employment, hence the mass exploitation of these workers by employers.

Given the position espoused by Okafor and considering the focus of this paper, both casual and contract labour would be used interchangeable. Notably, the use of casual workers has been on the increase. It has spread across industries from manufacturing to services and other occupations, including construction workers, registered nurses, bankers, information technologists, and so on. Similarly, the number of companies using casual workers is on the increase as global competition increased and the urge to cut down on costs of undertaking businesses in order to remain competitive rises. According to Foote (2004), in the past three decades and beyond, there has been a worldwide upsurge in the number of organizations that use or employ casual workers. This has been attributed to economic uncertainty or turbulence (Greer, 2001). The use of casual workers can mainly be attributed to an increase in global competition and the urge to reduce the cost of doing business. Casual employment is perceived as resulting from continuous changes in the working arrangement around the world and has

become a key concern in the last three decades (Foote, 2004).

The usual attributes of casual works are the different in terms of hours of work, job security, payment system and even location of work from the traditional permanent employment jobs which has been a dominant feature of industrial relations in many developed economies and developing ones for much of the twentieth century (Kalleberg, 2000).

According to Okougbo (2004: 67) casual worker is describe as “work occupations in which the demand for employment is high. Such as in port work, farm work, farm migratory work and other jobs of unskilled and intermittent in nature” Okougbo further stressed that “contract labour is a form of involuntary servitude for a period of time” the type of employment that was experienced in the United States of America till the end of the 19th century with draconian laws to enforce its existence before its prohibition. In fact, causal workers are supposed to work occasionally and intermittently with any company, usually unskilled and always moving with seasonal fluctuating demands of the labour market.

In a more practical sense, casual labour has been categorized as follows; Part Time Casual labour (PTCL)- more often than not shares responsibility and protection like that of a full time employee with the difference in terms of the number of working hours. Part time employee generally has limited working hours which may or may not be clearly stated. They also have a fixed rate of payments which is often decided based on number of hours an employee work or work completed against the project. Fixed term Casual labour, they often have specified contract requirements which when completed leads to termination of employment. Agency Casual Staff- this is an employment provided by third party service. Mostly the agency recruited casual staff for an organization however; the payment, terms and conditions of casual staff are determine by the agency not the organization they are working for.

Voluntary employment – Here a worker works according to his/ her will. Most volunteers are not compensated but appreciated for their contribution towards the work. This type of work earns accolades and rewards which might not be beneficial in nature but highly satisfying. Zero Hour Contract: This calls for skilled labour

and is on call work. Here employment opportunities are available from time to time and the employees are called for a job pending. Once the work is done, the employees are at liberty to search for other employment opportunities. Safety is the major benefit employees receive when they are working. This kind of employment allows employees to look for other work due to temporary and uncertain nature of work.

Several factors associated with the administration of casual workers have been highlighted which may lead to higher-than-necessary rates of departure prior to contract end dates (Autor, 2001). As succinctly captured by Autor, these factors include perception of injustice, exclusion from decision making, inadequate socialization, unmet expectations for permanent work, limited motivation, lower age requirement and tenure, lower tolerance for inequity and low levels of commitment.

As observed by Kaleberg, (2000), casual employment is a significant part of that group of employment arrangements that are collectively known as nonstandard, contingent, atypical, precarious and alternative work arrangements in international labour law. Hence the traditional work arrangements were the basis of the framework within which labour law, collective bargaining and social security systems developed. In Nigeria this form of employment is not usually part-time or temporary; it is usually a long-term employment (Danesi, 2011).

## **2.2 Economy Growth**

From David Ricardo (1891) classical postulations of growth, to Robert Solow (1956), to a great extent economy has been described as a form of machine that produces economic output, through the process of some inputs such as capital, labor, and technology. Thus, augmenting different factors considered in growth models up to that time such as increasing capital, labor, education, better infrastructure, and better health were shown by Solow to explain a relatively limited part of the actual amount of observed economic growth since the Industrial Revolution.

Economic growth is a primary focus of macroeconomists, who rely on quantifiable metrics such as gross national product or aggregate income (Feldman, Hadjimichael, et. al, 2014). It has also been argued that the same ingredients that generate aggregate growth can

be counted on to deliver qualitative improvements in human welfare. They further argued that there is a strong correlation between per capita income and the Human Development Index (HDI), in the range of 0.95 suggests that the development and growth are interrelated (McGillivray and White 1995).

Paradoxically, it has been noted that the real sequence in terms of space and time and space for improving income must start with directly improving human welfare, will deliver the growth that will, in turn, deliver further improvements in per capita income, and subsequently better human welfare (see Barro, 1991; Dasgupta and Ray, 1986). Unconvincingly, professional practice in poor countries emphasizes direct improvements in welfare as the kick-started to growth, while in developed countries policy tends to emphasize kick-starting growth, based on the implicit assumption that growth will increase human welfare (Easterly, 2012).

In the classical definitions of growth, from David Ricardo (1891) to Robert Solow (1956), the economy is a kind of machine that produces economic output, which is a function of inputs such as capital, labor, and technology. The different factors considered in growth models up to that time – such as “augmenting capital and labor,” and including more education, better infrastructure, and better health -- were shown by Solow to explain a relatively limited part of the actual amount of observed economic growth since the Industrial Revolution.

In the opinion of Kuznets (1947), growth is a concept whose proper domicile is in the study of organic units, and the use of the concept in economics is an example of that prevalent employment of analogy... In another sense, the economic growth has essentially objective content which is relates to phenomena which can be defined and identified in terms of potentially measurable criteria. It implies an appraisal of economic performance in terms of criteria which reflect personal and social values.

The critical interpretations of the concept of economic growth are well documented in the works Kuznets (1955). He argues vehemently that “... economic growth is essentially a quantitative concept”, and hence if we are to make substantial progress in the empirical and theoretical analysis of the growth phenomenon, we must consider the quantitative aspect as

basic. In general, considering the overall aggregate welfare concept of economic growth, thus, it is clear that the measurement of growth and hence the operating definition of growth must involve the evaluation of economic activities in terms of its contributions to the flow of welfare generating and want-satisfactions.

### **2.3 Modernization**

The modernization theory is a product of the 'enlightenment era' with the belief that technological progress would give humanity increasing control over nature. Antoine de Condorcet (1779 [1795]) was among the first scholars to clearly connect technological innovation and cultural development, arguing that technological advances and economic growth would inevitably bring changes in people's moral values.

Similarly, Edmund Burke (1790 [1790]) formulated such an anti-modern view in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, while Thomas R. Malthus (1798 [1798]) developed a scientific theory of demographic disasters. Adam Smith (1776 [1776]) and Karl Marx (1858 [1858]) propagated competing versions of modernization, with Smith advocating a capitalist vision, and Marx advocating communism ideology. Competing versions of modernization theory enjoyed a new resurgence after World War II when the capitalist and communist superpowers espoused opposing ideologies as guidelines for the best route to modernity. Although they competed fiercely, both ideologies were committed to economic growth, social progress, and modernization, and they both brought broader mass participation in politics (Moore 1966).

More importantly, both sides believed that the developing nations of the third world would follow either the communist path or the capitalist path to modernization, and the two superpowers struggled to win them over. Modernization theory's career is closely linked with theories of underdevelopment. In the post-war US, a version of modernization theory emerged that viewed underdevelopment as a direct consequence of a country's internal characteristics, especially its traditional psychological and cultural traits (Lerner 1958; Pye & Verba 1963; Inkeles & Smith 1974). This perspective was strongly influenced by Max Weber's theory of the cultural origins of capitalism, which viewed underdevelopment as a function of traditionally irrational, spiritual,

and communal values – values that discourage human achievement motivation. From this perspective, traditional values were not only mutable but could – and should also be replaced by modern values, enabling these societies to follow the path of capitalist development. The causal agents in this developmental process were seen as the rich developed nations that stimulated the modernization of "backward" nations through economic, cultural, and military assistance. This version of modernization theory was not merely criticized as patronizing, it was pronounced dead (Wallerstein 1976).

Neo-Marxist and world-systems theorists argued that rich countries exploit poor countries, locking them in positions of powerlessness and structural dependence (see Frank 1966; Wallerstein 1974; Chirot 1977, 1994; Chase-Dunn 1989). Underdevelopment, Frank argued that, to the poor countries poverty has nothing to do with their traditional values rather it is the fault of global capitalism agenda.

In the 1970s and 1980s, modernization theory seemed discredited; dependency theory came into vogue (Cardoso & Faletto 1979). Adherents of dependency theory claimed that the third world nations could only escape from global exploitation if they withdrew from the world market and adopted import substitution policies. In recent years, it became apparent that import substitution strategies had failed. The countries that were least involved in global capitalism were not the most successful – they actually showed the least economic growth (Firebaugh 1992). Export-oriented strategies were more effective in bringing sustained economic growth and even, eventually, democracy (Barro 1997; Randall & Theobald 1998). The pendulum swung back. Dependency theory fell out of favor and the western capitalist version of modernization regained credibility. The rapid development of East Asia, and the subsequent democratization of Taiwan and South Korea, seemed to confirm its basic claims: producing low-cost goods for the world market initiates economic growth; reinvesting the returns into human capital qualifies the workforce to produce high-tech goods; exporting these more expensive goods brings higher returns and enlarges the educated urban middle class; and once the middle class becomes large enough and confident about its strength, it presses for liberal democracy – the natural political system of middle-class societies (Diamond 1993; Lipset et al. 1993). Evidence for this sequence discredited

world-systems theory. However, one should be aware that the dispute between modernization and dependency/ world-systems theory was not a dispute about whether modernization takes place or not. It was a dispute about its causes and the repeatability of the Anglo-Saxon model in other parts of the world. Dependency theorists and world systems theorists did not deny modernization took place, nor did they reject modernization as a goal for societies in the third world. They only claimed that the global power structure does not allow peripheral countries to modernize by integrating themselves into the international division of labor. They recommended dissociation from the world market and “autocentric development.”

## **2.4 Modern Slavery**

There is no universally agreed definition of ‘modern slavery’. The term is used to cover a range of exploitative practices including human trafficking, slavery, forced labour, child labour, removal of organs and slavery-like practices. According to United Nations Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and slavery, Geneva, 1926, Article 1, slavery is defined as *the condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised*. The definition of slavery was expanded by the 1956 *Supplementary Convention to the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery* to apply to slavery-like practices, including debt bondage, serfdom, servile forms of marriage and exploitation of children.

Modern slavery has also been define as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons, by means ‘of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person’, for the purpose of exploitation.

It is important to note that modern slavery can take many forms and in any place across the globe. The existing literatures on modern slavery (MS) have highlighted various forms of MS which primarily include forced labour, the trafficking of people, exploitative labour, servitude and slavery. Inter alia, the term modern slavery captures a whole range of types of exploitation of man by his fellow man. In

general, the exploitation can also include but not necessarily limited to: sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, domestic servitude, forced labour, criminal exploitation, and cannabis cultivation among others. Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, forced prostitution and the abuse of children for the production of child abuse images/videos. 34% of all reported trafficking victims in the UK are victims of sexual exploitation. Domestic servitude involves a situation in which the victim being forced to work in usually private households, usually performing domestic chores and childcare duties. Their freedom may be restricted and they may work long hours often for little or no pay, often sleeping where they work. 11% of all potential modern slavery victims in 2016 were subjected to domestic servitude.

Forced labour victims in the other hand, may be forced to work under poor condition for long hours with meager or no pay under verbal or physical threats of violence to them or their families. This practise usually happen in various industries such as, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, laying driveways, food packaging, hospitality, maritime and beauty (nail bars). More often than not, the victims are housed together in one dwelling for monitoring and security purpose. About 47% of potential victims of Modern Slavery reported to have been exploited in the UK are subject to forced labour. 18% of all reported forced labour victims in the UK are children – an increase of 62.5% since 2015. 81% of all reported victims of forced labour taking place in the UK are male.

Criminal exploitation is another form of modern slavery and it involves the process of luring or forcing another person to commit a crime by criminal gang. The atrocity usually take the form such as pick-pocketing, shop-lifting, cannabis cultivation, drug trafficking and other similar activities that are subject to penalties and imply financial gain for the trafficker. In the UK in 2016, 34 potential modern slavery victims were also involved in fraud or financial crime whereby perpetrators force victims to claim benefits on arrival but the money is withheld, or the victim is forced to take out loans or credit cards. Lastly, cannabis cultivation is the highest category of criminal exploitation with 33% of those being a minor at the time of referral, the majority being Vietnamese. In addition, there are other forms of exploitation which can include removal of vital organs, forced begging,

forced benefit fraud; forced marriage and illegal adoption.

In the same vein, modern slavery can also be identified by some prevailing indicator attributed to the victims. These indicators include; legal documents' is the victim in possession of their legal documents (passport, identification and bank account details) or are these being held by someone else? Victims will often be forced to use false or forged identity documents. Medical care -does the person have old or serious untreated injuries? Have they delayed seeing a healthcare professional, and are they vague, reluctant or inconsistent in explaining how the injury occurred? Appearance -does the person look malnourished, unkempt, or appear withdrawn? Are they suffering physical injuries? Do they have few personal possessions and often wear the same clothes? What clothes they do wear may not be suitable for their work. Behaviour -is the person withdrawn or appears frightened, unable to answer questions directed at them or speak for themselves and/or an accompanying third party speaks for them? If they do speak, are they inconsistent in the information they provide, including basic facts such as the address where they live? Do they appear under the control/influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work? Many victims will not be able to speak English. Fear of authorities -is the person afraid of the authorities? Are they scared of removal or what might happen to their families? Debt bondage -Does the victim perceive themselves to be in debt to someone else or in a situation of dependence? Context - victims may often encounter authorities whilst being trafficked from one area to another or if found in a situation that potentially criminalises them, such as a police raid or an immigration raid. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/638368/MS\\_-\\_a\\_briefing\\_](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638368/MS_-_a_briefing_)

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### **3. THE EVOLUTION OF CASUAL/CONTRACT LABOUR**

It is pertinent to note that there are no clear cut accounts in terms of the origin or historical underpinning of casual/contract labour apart from the reference that the term was first used by a government enquiry into the dock workers practices in Britain in the 1920s, where the use

of casual labour was the norm for unskilled workers. Although, more recently, studies have shown that this distinctive work relation has come to embrace both the semi-skilled and highly skilled labour force (Encyclopedia of Marxism, 2014).

However, despite the lack of accurate information on evolutionary account of casual labour, social analysts have placed the occurrence of casualization on globalization and emergence of new technologies. As observed by Atilola (2014) she opines that, the increasing wave of globalization and trade liberalization across the world have continued to impact on employment relationship. Thus, the need to cut cost remains competitive in the world market which has thrown up new forms of work, with attendant effect on workers' rights.

According to Dayo Lawuyi, President National Employers Consultative Association (NECA) the casualization has become a means of managing increasing labour cost in the face of hot competition. While, Duru, (2001a) further buttressed that, globalization is unarguably a major cause propelling the current global labour regime. This disposition owes its strength to the perceivable political, economic and social changes that has resulted in a more open and liberal world economy; as different national economies are now intertwined in the global economy and consequently the escalating level of competition existing among businesses operating in what has become an international market place.

Incidentally, the early 1750 witnessed a reform of the rules governing wage labour in England, with the removal of legal support for the guilds and the repeal of statutory wage regulation. In addition, the disciplinary labour legislation associated with the 'master-servant' model and a criminalization of breach of the service contract by workers quitting without permission or disobeying employers' orders was strengthened (Simon, 1956). Sadly, there was enactment of new forms of statutory control of the service relationship, which tilted the balance of power in favour of employers (Steinfeld, 2002; Hay, 2000).. Partly paved way for new forms of employment which eventually metamorphosized into the modern day casual or contract employment.

Historically, the terms "casual labour" was first coined by a government enquiry into dock labour practices in Britain in 1920, where casual

labour was becoming the norm for unskilled workers. It was in the fight against those conditions that the first great unions of unskilled workers were established, including the British dock workers in the early 20th century (Broad, 1995). The re-launch of an apparently rudderless administration according to Milne, (2008) turned out to be a return to the neoliberal certainties of Blairism, just at the point when the failure of global financial market was cutting the ground from beneath. Undoubtedly, it comes as a shock that Brown's government was trying to derail an attempt by Labour MPs to win equal rights for the 1.4 million agency and casual workers, whose growing exploitation goes to the heart of the casualization and security of Britain's labour force. Thus, the percentage of casual employment remains at a high level and it rose to nearly 32 percent in 2002 (Gonzalez-Rendon, 2004).

More precisely, in Nigeria, According to Ubeku (1984) the history of casualization is dated back to when the government resorted to the use of daily paid workers, particularly in the technical departments. Perhaps this explains why most of labour unrest at the time came from artisans and labourers in the construction, building and engineering departments. The most celebrated case was that of the staff of public works department who complained of having their salaries unceremoniously slashed overnight by the colonial Governor, Sir Mccallum, who argued that the existing wages as at then was too high. The introduction of this piece-meal payment structure marked the beginning of casualization of labour practices in Nigeria.

The growing literature as observed by Wandera, (2011) shows that casual employment grew exponentially over the last decade, accounting for 10 percent of net employment growth in the United States alone in the 1990s. The foregoing was supported by findings from some case studies and business surveys attest to dramatic growth in the outsourcing of functions to contract companies as well (Houseman, 2001). In general, casual employment is viewed as phenomenon of short-time employment, as a result of the consequence of a major push by governments and employers mostly in industrialized countries in order to promote more flexible labour markets and to cut down the labour costs (Golden and Appelbaum, 1992).

Arguably, Kalleberg (2000) concludes that, more often than not, casual jobs pay poorly, it

lack health insurance and pension benefits, are of uncertain duration, and lack the protection that trade unions and labour laws afford and in the end they are problematic for workers. Globally, there has been a dramatic increase in casual jobs owing to such factors as: massive unemployment, globalization, the shift from the manufacturing sector to the service sector and the spread of information technology among other factors. Thus, with the emergence of more and new technologies in the workplace, the unskilled workers become more liabled and vulnerable (Campbell and Brosnan 1999).

Meanwhile, Australia has the second largest casual workforce in the world, after Spain. This has triggered considerable debate as to whether government intervention should be used to improve job security for the growing number of casual workers (Munn, 2004). For instance, the number of casual employees has witnessed a surged over the past 15 years, from 18.9% of all wage and salary earners in 2008 to 27.6% in 2011. Munn (2004), further stressed that In 1998, 69.9% of the net jobs created were casual positions... that most casual workers are part-time, with casual workers currently representing 13.8% of all full-time employees and 60.4% of all part-time employees.

Ironically, in Nigeria, apart from introduction of new technologies and globalization pressure on workplace and national economy, corruption, unemployment, inflation and economic instability have forced many able bodies to be willingly ready to compete for casual/contract works. The forgoing situation has encouraged the employers to develop the incentive to utilize casual/contract workers for exploitative, oppression and servitude purposes which are detrimental to sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

#### **4. CASUAL/CONTRACT EMPLOYMENT AND THE DILEMMA OF ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NIGERIA**

There is a general notion that, casual/contract employment is a kind of contract used in labour law to attribute rights and responsibilities between employees and employers in order to strike bargain. Thus, such bargains in more often than not are always unequal terms which tend to favour employers. The contract is between an "employee" and an "employer". It has arisen out of the old master servant law, used before the 20th century. There is a general notion that, the casual/contract of employment

denotes a relationship of economic dependence and social subordination of employees to employers. Arguably, both terms 'casual' and 'contract' are often used interchangeably and in a confusing manner. Thus, many sorts of casual employment involving one person working for another for the purpose of earning wages is usually on contract basis. Instead of being considered an "employee", the individual could be considered a "worker" (which could mean less employment legislation protection) or as having an "employment relationship" (which could mean protection somewhere in between).

Consequently, the epoch of globalisation has given rise to profound changes in the way labour is utilised, specifically in terms of employment patterns as well as the related issues of earnings, job security, unionization and so on. In effect, the way the worker is used by the firms in the industry is determined solely by the dictates of capitalism, that is, the profit motive. In Nigeria for instance, unemployment and underemployment are the main features of the labour market occasioned with weak and unstable economy unable to absorb all those willing to be engaged productively (Damachi, 2001; Onyeonoru, 2008; Okafor, 2011). However, the account of accurate unemployment rates is very difficult in Nigeria due to undocumented figure of people working in formal and informal sectors.

Undoubtedly, the problem of casual employment is very pervasive in many establishments, whether in indigenous, transnational or multi-national firms and also common in both public and private industry. Particularly, in telecommunications sector, oil and gas sector, power sector, banking sector (both old and new generation banks), and education sector among others. (see Okougbo, 2004; Onyeonoru, 2004; Okafor, 2007; Idowu, 2010; Aduba, 2012).

The period from 2014 and 2016 saw rapid waves of global economic pressure and intense economic recession inter alia with its associated uncertainties on economic growth, low productivity and loss of jobs which paved ways for increase demand for cheap labour among the employers and such situation also cause surge in the labour market. Sadly, the prioritization of cost effectiveness in terms of cutting down the cost of production and service provisions have continue to drives many employers of labour for utilization of casual and undocumented workers

which are considered to be reasonably cheaper than the workers on documented and permanent basis.

Ironically, in spite of the Nigerian enormous natural and human resources with recurrent laudable electioneering promises of political leaders, the achievement of impressive economic growth and decent employment remains a mirage. Sadly enough, from a cursory look at the Nigerian data on employment level and real GDP, it appears that the recent economic growth trends and patterns have been insufficient to make any appreciable impact on employment generation and poverty reduction, but this has not been sufficiently investigated empirically in the literature (Oni, 2006; Patterson et al 2006).

According to Sodipe and Ogunrinola (2011), the high rate of labour force growth vis-a-vis the low and dwindling rate of formal sector job growth has made the labour market in developing nations to exhibit some peculiar characteristics. First is the widening of the informal sector where many who would have remained in open unemployment take up low-wage jobs or even self-employment while still hoping to pick up formal sector job when available. Second, the unemployed in the labour market in poor nations do not enjoy any form of unemployment insurance or any social benefit from the government. Third, the reported unemployment rates in official documents are usually very low due to high rate of disguised employment and underemployment in the informal sector. Fourth, self-employment, part-time employment, and unpaid employment in family enterprises have a disproportionate share in total employment. All these are pointers to the need for a search for solution to employment problems in developing nations.

More historically, contract employment/hiring became a key feature of the Nigerian Labour market in the late 1980s, particularly, with the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under the General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, then the Military Head of State. This was in line with neo-liberal policies prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Hence, contract staffing/hiring became an idea of employability of neo-liberal ideology which conceived casual/contract staffing as a moral obligation on human organisations to maximize their cost advantage in labour market.

Several major industries in Nigeria are predominantly saturated with casual/contract workers; especially in firms that have more than two thousand workers. In such situation, about one thousand five hundred of the work forces may be casual/contract workers. Unfortunately, as observed by Okougbo, (2004) many local industries particularly within the informal sector, virtually all their employees are casual staff despite of the fact that some of the casual workers have either professional or administrative skills such as higher education qualifications, skilled technicians, experienced drivers, clerical staff with administrative skills among others.

As postulated in the Dual Labour Market model, generally, organizations are made up of two major groups of workers: the core (or primary) group and the peripheral (or secondary) group. Core workers are mostly —standard or permanent employees. Thus, the peripheral group is mostly nonstandard or casual workers (Connelly and Gallagher, 2004). The core employees work under the standard employment relationship (SER), which has some typical characteristics such as continuity of employment, which gives the workers a certain level of security regarding their working situation; working in the employer's workplace and receive employer's supervision among others (De Cuyper et al. (2008).

It is important to note that, the casual/contract types of employment are quite different from the standard employment in terms of fringe benefits and supervision, working hours and their terms of the contract. Most of the companies have a certain number of casual workers as a way to deal with periods of decreased productivity or lower demand of products. Given the foregoing explications on casual/contract employment, as observed by Wandera (2011) there are basically three major justifications why employers make use of casual workers such as: flexibility of staffing, reduction of costs and ease of dismissal processes.

#### **4.1 Staffing Flexibility**

The pervasive increase in competition among companies and the growing innovative in science and technology have propelled many companies to established policies of flexibility and adaptation to the economic changes for the purpose of maintain high profit (Kalleberg, 2000). Given that employment situations all over the world has become more competitive

and unstable, many companies and organizations have inclined to present more flexible employment conditions, focusing on prospective tribulations (such as lower demand of the market) and the possibility of lay-offs (OECD, 2002). Most companies experience variable demands of work. For instance, when demand for company products or services are high, the usual response is overtime work and sometimes the company can augmente their attempt to meet up with the demand by recruiting casual workers (Graham and Benett, 1995).

#### **4.2 Reduction of Costs**

According to Allan, (2002) the major benefit in utilizing casual employees by most companies is the potential to cut down recruitment costs. The foregoing is common especially with 'agency workers' recruited by employment agencies, instead of their eventual employers (Forde, 2001). Recruitment of workers via agency reduces employee costs and it represents a critical aspect of strategic human resource management due to competitive global market. For instance, in a survey of 979 workplaces conducted by Atkinson et al. (1996) it was revealed that 59.4 per cent of the employers used casual workers for short-term cover whilst staff members were away on holiday or sick leave. Long-term and short-term recruitment costs may be kept at a minimum by using casual workers.

#### **4.3 Ease of Dismissal**

Casualization of worker offers an opportunity for ease of their dismissal by the employers. Undoubtedly, the lack of costs linked with laying-off casual workers, it became an attractive option in USA and other highly industrialised countries (Gunderson, 2001). It is also common practise in many organizations that operated in the unpredictable market of workload (Allan, 2002). In the UK, a strategic use of casual workers was to adjust the workforce to match demands. This gave organizations an advantage in terms of numerical flexibility, employing just in time workers to cope with increased or decreased demand without resorting to making permanent employees redundant.

However, the effects of utilization of casual/contract employees have encouraged the use of casual/contract employees among the public organizations in Nigeria with

manifestation in lukewarm approach to employees' rights and welfare and the emergence of ghost workers which has resulted in gross corruption in Nigerian bureaucratic system. Thus, in the long run, the supposed benefits of utilizing casual/contract staff to industries and the Nigerian economy at large could result into backlash that would automatically overturn such benefits due to deprivation, exploitation and job insecurity among other challenges that usually occasioned the status of casual/contract workers within the organization. By and large, the incessant job loss, labour right abuse, economic disempowerment and the psychological lack in sense of belonging on the part of casual/contract workers are all detrimental to sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

Similarly, Okafor (2007) argued that losses suffered by casual employees include: abysmal low wages, absence of medical care allowances, no job security or promotion at work, no gratuity and other severance benefits, no leave or leave allowance, jeopardized freedom of association, no death benefits or accident insurance at work, no negotiation or collective bargaining agreement. The foregoing situation as presented above by Okafor also manifest in terms of low commitment, low autonomy and lack of opportunities to develop skills.

In addition to some of the problems associated with utilising casual/contract workers, permanent employees may not like the extensive use of casual workers, especially if they feel their employer would like to substitute them with more precarious working arrangements. This was found in the USA by Pearce (1993), who states that the employment of contractors resulted in negative attitudes towards the organization by permanent workers. These negative attitudes have also been extended to US-based nurses employed with casual and agency nurses and with UK permanent call centre workers working with agency workers (Biggs, 2003).

Importantly, the question to be asked is who loses and who benefited in the utilization of casual/contract employment? Without gainsaying, there is no clear beneficiary in utilising casual/contract hiring particularly, between the casual employees and the employers. However, there are clear losers in the whole process and the losers are casual/contract employees, employers and

economic growth in Nigeria. On the part of employees, Okafor (2007) argued that, losses suffered by casual/contract employees include: abysmal low wages, absence of medical care allowances, job insecurity or lack or delay in promotion at work, no gratuity and other severance benefits, no leave or leave allowance, jeopardized freedom of association, no death benefits or accident insurance at work, no negotiation or collective bargaining agreement. The precarious condition of casual workers makes them vulnerable to exploitation.

It is also important to note that, in nearly every economic sector, good jobs are falling prey to corporate cost-cutting moves at the expense of the working families. Too many jobs are being outsourced, contracted out, or reclassified under a barrage of legal definitions designed to keep pay down, benefits low, and unions out. Such precarious situation affects worker experience at work, how he or she makes decisions about work and political issues and how such individual relates to the broader labour market.

The growth in irregular work has changed the nature of employment from a labour relationship to a commercial relationship, with the worker taking all the risks. There is now a sharp worldwide rise in casual employment and a parallel rise in the gap between wages and benefits of permanent and casual workers. The number of casual workers in Nigeria is hard to pin down. In every full-time work there are four casual workers. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (using trade union figures), the estimated ratio was about three to one. Formal workers, called "regular" company employees, are hired directly by the company. In addition, the negative consequences for individual casual employees and instability that follow leads to economic insecurity for the workers and their families.

On the other hand, the employers that is utilising casual/contract worker may also suffer some losses as observed by Okafor and Rasak (2015), such losses range from unscheduled turnover, low morale of workforce and low levels of employee productivity. Such situation may also follow by lack of commitment by workers, lack of initiative autonomy and poor communication between the employees and employers among other challenges that are not favourable to organization survival and growth.

Casualization however brings in numerous consequences on the employer. One of it is job

dissatisfaction which Udeozor (2007) identifies as the bane of poor employee commitment and lower productivity. It could also lead to increased level of indiscipline on the side of the employees. The rise in fraud perpetrated in banks in the country could be connected to the rampant cases of casualization of staff by the financial institutions. Again, casualization could also lead to employee turnovers. It also creates the challenges of continuity and process inconsistency as turnovers will mean constant distortion of organizational activities, socialization of new employees and their training as well. These processes as short as their duration may seem will create gaps in the organization's activities with its attendant cost.

Apart from the issue of casualization is the country high level of unemployment and coupled with widespread poverty. These two issues have bred a dangerous work environment and have given much aid to the prevalence of casualization of workers, as many desperate job seekers in the labour force are willing to take any job no matter how dirty or degrading it is. Casual workers occupy a precarious position in the workplace and society and they represents new set of slaves and underclass in the modern capitalist economy.

With regard to national economy growth, the casualization of workers has great tendencies destruct economic growth in a gradual but consistent manner. Consequently, the country would be dominated with large number of retirees who have over-worked themselves with little earnings and low or no savings to sustain their retirement period, which would result in the surge of population who still depend on the government for survival and create burden on both the government welfare strength and the society at large.

As rightly observed by Hall (2000) casualization may have untold negative effects on key aspects of national economic performance such as skill formation and development. Within such framework, the labour force of the nation will continue to suffer and be greatly affected. Hall further stressed that casualization of workers has potential to underminel economic progress due to incessant agitations, industrial actions, breakdown in production and services that usually occasioned casualization mode hiring.

There is a general notion that casualization may also increase the rate of brain drain and capital flight in the country, since the nation labour

force will begin to run to other countries with perceived better employment conditions and working environment as has been witnessed in Nigeria. More so, it renders the citizens who are supposed to be the major beneficiaries of economic investments impoverished and completely hopeless. Again, it leads to disparity among households over time

Given the fact that economic growth requires robust and effective tax regime, casualization do not contribute to the economy growth, due to absence of tax from the earnings of casual workers. Casualization it is not subjected to any form of tax, and so they do not contribute to economic development of the country” (Enoghase: 2007). Similarly, casualization equally creates recurring poverty and disruption of family life. For instance, most of the youths engaging in casual work often end up in irregular jobs: as their job as soon as securing the job which makes them more vulnerable to social vices that could expose them life threaten diseases such as HIV/AIDS. In the same vein, companies have also scaled down education and training as a way of cutting costs that lead to skill reproduction insecurity, which will affect industry and the whole economy in the long run.

More importantly, economic growth of any nation would suffer a great setback especially, when the middle class is fast approaching the state of extinction or when they are suffocated by the political system. The existence of a robust middle class in developed economies of the world has contributed immensely to their economic growth, unlike in their developing world counterpart. In the former, middle class status is the norm, with a reasonable standard of living enjoyed by the bulk of the population, while in the latter, an estimated 3 billion people, around half of all inhabitants in the developing world, remain poor, living on less than US\$2 per person per day (measured at purchasing power parity).<sup>1</sup> <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/index.htm>

Similarly, the growth of the middle class itself has remained a key driver of the development process in developed economies, with widespread benefits to labour markets and the broader economy. In essence, the role of middle class in economic growth cannot be overemphasised as argued by many scholars. According to Amoranto et al. (2010) the middle class hold values associated with higher rates of economic growth, such as greater demand for

political accountability. Likewise, Loayza et al. (2012) find that a growing middle class improves democratic participation, reduces corruption, increases spending on health and education as a percentage of GDP, and leads to reduced tariffs on international trade. In the opinion of Easterly (2001) stressed that there is a “middle class consensus” which is defined as having neither strong class differences nor ethnic differences, which is a critical driver of differences in the pace of economic development, leading to higher rates of growth, more human capital, infrastructure accumulation, and more democratic societies.

As noted in the report by the African Development Bank (2011) which revealed that growth in the middle class is an important medium and long-term development indicator in Africa, as its growth is strongly linked with faster rates of poverty reduction. Banerjee and Dufflo (2008) and Chun (2010) argue that because of the skills, income and values characteristic of the middle class, growth in this group leads to widespread gains in living standards, as middle class workers are able to invest in productive activities with broad benefits to economies. In this sense, there is a reflects on the middle class as a source of entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as a driver of domestic consumption, which results in product differentiation, expanded investment in production and marketing of new goods (Kharas, 2010).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

There is a wide spread of casualization of workers virtually in all sectors of Nigerian economy and the unprecedented increase in the casualization mode of hiring is gradual becoming acceptable norm of labour practice in Nigeria. The forgoing trend of labour practise has become an issue of great concern to stakeholders as result of palpable fear from workers about their jobs security, wages, conditions of work and the long term negative consequences of casualization on overall economic growth in Nigeria. Notably, casualization of workers regime becomes more prevalent particularly, in the decade that follows privatization, downsizing, contracting out and restructuring policies in Nigeria. However, the supposed anticipated benefits by the industries that are utilising casual/contract workers have the potential to produce some backlash that

would outweigh its benefits for employers and the larger market.

Importantly, the question to be asked is who loses and who benefited in the utilization of casual/contract employment? Without gainsaying, there is no clear beneficiary in utilising casual/contract hiring particularly, between the casual employees and the employers. However, there are clear losers in the whole process and the losers are casual/contract employees, employers and economic growth in Nigeria.

Thus, for casualization as mode of hiring of workers to offer any benefit to employees, employers and the Nigerian economy, its usage must be, regulated, standardised, targeted at mutual benefits of employees, employers and the economy. The process should be design as a step for acquiring requisite knowledge particularly, by potentially inexperience workers, non skilled workers and students that are seeking temporary job either for financial benefits or skills acquisition purposes. In addition, their wages, conditions of service and terms of contract must not be obscure and should be reasonable enough for dignity of human existence and there must be a justifiable means of redress in case of infraction on the rights of casual/contract workers.

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