

OIL AND GAS WORKERS' INDUSTRIAL ACTIONS AS PRECURSOR OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: NUPENG and PENGASSAN are trade unions in Nigeria functioning to protect workers in the oil and gas sectors. Since the formation of these two labour unions, they have embarked on a number of industrial actions against the management of the oil and gas organizations and against the government to press their demand of interest. These industrial actions have earlier been established to have negative impacts. However, this study have utilised these oil and gas workers industrial actions to elucidate how the actions have resulted to positive development in Nigeria. It is therefore the position of this paper that oil and gas workers' industrial actions enhance development. The study solely relied on secondary sources of data that were carefully selected and logically utilised to explain the cases of development.

Keywords: Industrial Action, Development, Oil and Gas Workers.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, the oil and gas workers unions have since inception embarked on myriads of industrial actions to make their demands on the government and the various oil and gas organizations which the oil workers union members belong. These industrial actions have seemingly been taking as precursor to development in Nigeria. Industrial action as a form of organisational conflict is known for its negative impacts on relevant organisation and society. On the other hand, industrial action can also generate development. Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2005:357) aptly stressed that it is a truism of course, that some conflict situations have negative impacts, other conflict situations, may however, produce positive benefits if they are used as instruments for change or innovation, this making it functional for relevant organisation and society. The oil and gas industry is known for its support in terms of economic development. This makes the oil and gas workers unions occupy a strategic position in the circle of industrial relations.

The National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Works (NUPENG), and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) are the trade unions in Nigeria functioning to protect and advance the interests of workers in the oil and gas sector, (Obono, 2011:105); Ogunbodede, Ilesanmi and Olurankinse (2010:9). The two workers unions are trade unions that have clear objectives that guide their daily operations.

NUPENG gave its objectives as follows:

- To protect and advance the socio-economic and cultural interest of the community and such other objectives as are lawful and are not inconsistent with the spirit and practice of trade unionism.
- To promote and encourage fraternal relations with bodies having the interest of petroleum and gas workers.

PENGASSAN on the other hand has the following as their mission statement.

- To safeguard and protect the jobs of her members.
- To ensure safe and healthy working environment for its members.
- To improve the terms and conditions of employment.
- To support and promote legislation in the interest of her members in particular and Nigeria in general.
- To render assistance to other trade union organizations in the spirit of cooperation and solidarity.

These objectives given above are a testimony to the fact that trade union objectives differ from that of the government and the goals of employers. Adebisi (2004:13-16) upholds the view that in the present era, industrial activities occur in a setting in which individuals are different in terms of values, interests and also have differences in the social relationship between employees and employers. Oil and gas workers unions in their interests are conscious of their class consciousness as opposed to the employers, and government's class consciousness. These varied interests of labour and capital can make the industrial relations unhealthy. Korn Hauser et al (1954) in Cowman and Keating (n.d), stressed that employees can withdraw effort and cooperation to express conflict in their relations. This implies that there are times when disunity exists and lack of cooperation thrives among employees represented by NUPENG and PENGASSAN and their various organisations and the government.

In addition, as observed by Paul, Usman and Ali (2013), Trade Union as a movement has grown beyond the stand of being a mere vehicle to unite workers and champion their rights only. They stressed that the situation in modern society has changed and that any progressive trade union plays a wider role. Zulpilip (1992:1) averred that the trade union movement is not a passive bystander but rather acts as an active participant in national development process. Similarly, Thomas (1999:1) maintained that the labour movement has a pivotal role to play in sustainable development, Paul, Usman and Ali (2013) observed that "trade unions as a large organized group in civil society can bring a unique contribution to the development community." This stems from their involvement with the economic systems of production and distribution; in which way course and content of employment and social riot excluding economic policies could be influenced by them.

The aforesaid elucidation of varied interests and union as an active participant in development process also applies to NUPENG and PENGASSAN. These two unions have since formation embarked on industrial actions different times in which bid they had contributed to national development. Okotie (2013:13) in Paul, Usman and Ali, lends credence to the later point in its assertion that the interest of unions in Nigeria was to promote national development. Infact, as expressed in Paul, Usman and Ali (2013), the socio-political and economic transitional development of Nigeria is tied to the labour union movements. From our observations of the industrial actions embarked on by NUPENG and PENGASSAN, certain developmental strides are recorded as outcomes of their industrial actions. This goes against earlier studies on oil and gas workers industrial actions as factors necessitating negative impacts on commuters (Badom, 2018). The fact that these oil and gas workers industrial actions have necessitated commuters' payment of increased fare, lead to commuters time cost, have also caused commuters cancellation of trips and high cost of commodities paid by commuters, does not mean that the oil and gas workers industrial actions cannot be studied in another perspective. In this case the study focuses on oil and gas workers' industrial actions as a precursor of development in Nigeria. Drawing from this title, one would convey the hypothesis been put in the null form that "industrial actions of oil and gas workers do not cause development in Nigeria."

2. THE NOTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The concept, development is widely perceived by different authors and discipline; as a result, there are varied definitions of development. Badey (2009:167) opined that the term "development" has attracted a lot of debates and discourse in the academic and non-academic spheres. This points to the complexity of the usage "development". Development has attracted a multiplicity of possible meanings owing to varied strands of thought. Different intellectual disciplines in the opinion of Anikpo (1996:5) characterize development in different forms. According to Anikpo, Economists, especially of the classical persuasion define it as growth in income and infrastructural build up. Political scientists view it as emancipation from sheer oppression and political instability. Medical professionals in terms of development are geared towards the reduction in mortality rates and how diseases are eradicated. Educationists' view of development is hinged on the eradication of illiteracy. Some sociologists contend that development "is progress towards desired goals". In the next

place, engineers and technologists argue development to be the acquisition of powerful technology. Anikpo, further argued that these viewed definitions of development are all geared towards the same direction, all the definitions are concerned with the transformation of the physical and social environment within which humans operate, in order to enhance the standard of living of humans.

These definitions are agreed, on the notion that it demands human effort in removing the hindrance of human and societal goals. Anikpo further gave his definition as “the consistent attempt by human beings to emancipate themselves from both natural and man-made obstacles in order to achieve a more fulfilling life” (Anikpo,1996:6).

Similarly, Naanen (2015:5) defined development as “the incremental improvement in the quality of human life”.

These two definitions are similar in meaning “emancipation from natural and man-made obstacles” in Anikpo is synonymous with “incremental development” in Naanen. “In order to achieve a more fulfilling life in Anikpo corresponds with Naanen’s “in the quality of life”.

These two definitions constitute our meaning of development. It is pertinent to stress that development is geared towards the goals and satisfaction of people. It entails doing things that promotes the standard of life from the former level. Development could be infrastructural in nature; in this case, the infrastructure put in place will enhance the quality of human life. Development as a concept also entail economic growth, although, Naanen (2015:5) averred that economic growth must be combined with development. He added that development cannot take place without growth, but economic growth can take place without development, development can also be termed social and in the opinion of Naanen, social development has some recent indices of measurement. These according to him include access to the basic needs and conveniences of life, education, sanitation and health, portable water, electricity, mortality rate, environmental quality, and gender equality.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Owing to the exploration of oil in commercial quantity in Nigeria, there was the need for employers to work in the sector. The organisation of work in the oil organisations demands the effort of employees and the employers who are in control of the workforce. The government is also a party in the industrial relations in the oil and gas sector because of the reliance of the country on oil and gas as an area that produce wealth and sustains the economy of Nigeria. This points out that “industrial relations is a dynamic socio-economic process. It is a designation of a whole field of relationship that exists because of the necessary collaboration of men and women in the employment processes of industry,” Dale Yonder (1965) in Srivastava (1982:3). Industrial action does not take place in a vacuum; it is a process that results from the relationship in the oil and gas organisations owing to the work caprices of the capitalist economic mode. “Trade dispute is a common occurrence in both private and public sector owing to the fact that the goals and objectives of staff and management in any giving organisation defers. The continuous desire of each party (employee and employer), to achieve individual or collective objectives may end up in trade dispute” (Philip and Adeshola, 2013:60).

NUPENG and PENGASSAN as trade unions through which these oil and gas workers possess the structural power to act in the labour relations, have embarked on industrial actions several times to press their demand on the employers of the oil firms they belong, and on the government. Some studies have been conducted on the disfunctionality of these industrial actions. Badom (2018) studied oil and gas workers’ industrial actions and impacts on commuters in Rivers State. The study found that oil and gas workers’ industrial actions cause commuters’ time cost, commuters’ cancellation of trips, and increment of fare and also caused increase in the cost of commodities paid by commuters. Similarly, Ekwoaba and Ikeije (2016) in their study contend that NUPENG and PENGASSAN strikes affect every segments of the Nigeria economy and that business activities are crippled owing to these strikes. They contend that just like other sectors that suffered because of the strike, transportation crumbled with its cost rising to about 120%. Besides, Okiriti (2013) in his study; “the effects of oil and gas union strike on the Nigerian economy, found that oil and gas workers strikes affect government and its revenue”. These are only few of the studies conducted on oil and gas workers industrial actions causing negative impacts – they tend to observe oil and gas workers industrial actions as a sort of confrontation that does harm.

However, Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2005:357) argue that even if some conflict situations produce nothing positive, other conflict situations may however be beneficial. In spite of this, people do not see any good thing coming from these actions. Intellectual response concentrates attention on the negativity of NUPENG and PENGASSAN

industrial actions. To the best of our knowledge there has been little or no effort to explain how oil and gas workers industrial actions cause development in Nigeria, and with what benefit for the livelihood of Nigerians. This does create a Lacuna, and this study attempts to fill the gap by explaining how NUPENG and PENGASSAN industrial actions act as a precursor to development in Nigeria.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopts the Marxist political economy approach in elucidating the oil and gas workers' industrial actions as a mechanism for national development. This framework is preferred owing to its explanation of society using the material conditions, particularly economic reasons, which incorporates development. It is apparent that owing to the adoption of the capitalist economic mode, man must work in order to sustain his livelihood. Oil and gas workers who possess their labour power have sold it to the capitalists who in most cases are represented by its managers. It therefore becomes a collaboration of oil and gas workers and capitalists in representation of its managers. It is pertinent to stress that the interests of oil and gas workers as a union differ from the employers and government's interest in the labour relations. These differing interests existent in a capitalist economic system have therefore orchestrated in the oil and gas workers a feeling of class consciousness. Managers of these oil workers are economic warriors who adopt every legal means to accumulate wealth and bring back the wealth to their families. The greatest asset he has is his absolute belief in his interests and in his desire to succeed (Onyeani, 1990:18). The oil and gas workers are paid meager salaries; they are threatened with sack with polite reasons. They are mostly not willing to do what will be of benefit to the oil and gas workers.

It is necessary to add that the capitalists – managers of these oil and gas firms do not act alone. They are together with the government in their exploitation of these workers. The workers are kept in a condition that is appealing to the capitalists. This condition reveals a class condition. The emergence of classes is associated with the emergence of a class structure (Anikpo, 1995:15). The Nigerian State is characteristically seen as peripheral capitalist and interventionist and is therefore implicated in the class contradictions prevalent in the nation (Onimode, 1983; Ake, 1981; Alavi, 1982 in Girigiri (2002:20). Marx and Engels (1844:5). In addition, the capitalists have established new classes, and new conditions of oppression and new forms of struggle in place of old ones. Oil and gas workers have taken on a new form of struggle against these bourgeoisies in order to advance their economic standard. As a trade union they answered the Union call of Marx; they are united under the aegis of trade union. Most of the policies of management and government are against the workers, which have often met with NUPENG and PENGASSAN industrial actions. Hence just like Marx opined, this class struggle has thus become a political struggle. NUPENG and PENGASSAN in 1994 embarked on a nine months strike in order to overthrow the military government that had ruled and mismanaged the economic resources of Nigeria. The oil workers wanted a return to civilian rule where public opinion could stand and only then could development be recorded. Furthermore, NUPENG and PENGASSAN had often times embarked on industrial actions against the management of their respective organisations owing to retrenchment of oil workers. They had stood against exploitation.

This stems from the fact that an unemployed man is a hungry man whose lack of ownership of object of labour worsens his penury. NUPENG and PENGASSAN are aware of their positional power against the management of their organisations and the government, often times, the oil workers embark on industrial actions, their aims are mostly achieved in spite of arrests and incarceration as it happened in 1994 when the two chairmen of the labour unions were arrested and detained. This results often to the victory of the oil and gas workers. This is so because as opined by Obulor and Nwosu (2009:112), national development should entail a total liberation of the socio-economic lives of the people.

5. OIL AND GAS WORKERS INDUSTRIAL ACTIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The oil and gas workers represented by NUPENG and PENGASSAN had embarked on industrial actions severally to wage war against their employers and the government. Industrial actions in the opinion of Scott and Marshal (2005:298) refer to certain sanctions available to groups of workers and employees in dispute with each other over employment conditions. These industrial actions could be expressed in different forms including strike, work-to-rule, lock in/out, overtime ban, picketing, work-out etc. These industrial actions were not without noticeable development to the Nigerian nation. "The labour movement has a major role to play in sustainable development. Thomas, (1999:1) maintained that trade unions as large organized groups in civil society can bring unique contribution to the development community."

Nigeria had long lived under the dictatorial regimes of military heads-of-state. The military had intruded into political governance and its impact on the political economy is adverse. Ake (1996:153) in affirmation of the position of the World Bank's blueprint on Africa stressed that "quality of governance can be a serious obstacle to development." The military had been known for its attendant corruption and underdevelopment of Nigeria. Anikpo (1996:20) argued that the military had taken hold of political power for so long that necessitates the embrace of a new military sub-culture; thus every young military officer assumes that political power and clinging to political position through coup-d'état is a sure means of acquisition of material wealth. The era of the military rule in Nigeria has brought enough hardships; underdevelopment and possibly denial of rights of citizens as stipulated by the constitution which are not in force during military government. The military in power thus form the elite group that dominates the ordinary Nigerians who are not affluent. The conditions made necessary by military government is very detestable to ordinary citizens and which contradicts with the principles of national development. "National development would first and foremost, entail total liberation of the socio-economic lives of the people" (Obulor and Nwosu, 2009:112). The military according to them form elites group which approximates to Pareto's "elite of lions", and characteristically obtain power forcefully. Kukah (2011:235) in his condemnation of military rule aptly stressed that the military itself proved to be extremely criminal in terms of the looting of state resources than the civilians they overthrow. These facts have relegated the military in governance and citizens thus clamour for civilian government. In 1993 when the country anticipated a civilian government, the then President Babangida Ibrahim did set up an independent electoral body to conduct election to usher in a civilian government. The then Presidential election popularly known as June 12, 1993 Presidential election which was widely acclaimed to have been won by M.K.O. Abiola was annulled by the government of General Ibrahim Babangida. However, that election was declassified as the most peaceful and most free election in the political history of Nigeria.

Okougbo (2013:146) stressed that "it is in historical records that NUPENG Liberated Nigeria from the shackles of military dictatorship. It was a long struggle for democracy in the country and this was fought in collaboration with the press and other civil rights organisations. Okougbo states further that NUPENG and PENGASSAN played formidable roles in redefining the traditional role of the military oligarchy in Nigeria. The prognosis and metamorphosis of that struggle contributed greatly to the restoration of democracy on May 29, 1999, (Okougbo, 2013:146); Ejorh (1994:23). How did the contribution come about? NUPENG embarked on a nine – week strike which started on the 4th of July, 1994 in its bid to restore the country to democracy which is believed to being elements of development. Okougbo asserts that the union soon became a social phenomenon in the class and political struggle in the country. This longer months strike resulted in the incarceration of Ovie Kokori, and Kojo Agamene, NUPENG and PENGASSAN Presidents respectively. This strike was also found by PENGASSAN. They were resolute and dogged in their claim, towards democracy in Nigeria which in the opinion of Okougbo caused the military handing over power to the civilian government in May 29, 1999. It should be understood that it was strikes by these oil and gas workers that hastened the military government's decision to hand over power to a civilian government. A civilian government breeds development because of the applicable principles of social democracy. The citizenry will endeavour to work towards the incremental improvement in the quality of their lives through their elected leaders, unlike what prevail in the military system of government.

Furthermore, these oil and gas workers unions have through their incessant strikes stalked the hike in the prices of petroleum products since it was unfavourable to the majority of the citizenry. Nigeria is a country blessed with petroleum resources. The citizenry is of the opinion that they will enjoy their natural resources as a blessing. Thus, the high cost of litre sales of these resources are met with stiff opposition. Owing to our incapacity in refining our natural crude to meet up the estimated quota which is expectedly put at 2.5 million barrels daily, Nigeria has to import petroleum products, this is also in addition to the fact that the local refineries are not working. Therefore, Nigeria exports its crude for refining abroad.

The government had for some period of time salvaged the cushioned effect of inflation and to control the prices of petroleum products. However, this subsidy utilized by the government to calm the pains of high cost of petroleum products prices on its citizens seems to be high for government and as well had gulped amount of dollar that cannot be truly accounted for, thus necessitating corruption. Amadi (2015:36) stressed that the subsidy is estimated to have gulped an average of 900 billion naira each year over the period of four years. There have been widespread protests and resistance against successive governments of Jonathan Goodluck to reduce or remove subsidies. This in general parlance means extra cost on the price of petroleum products. The Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulatory Agency (PPPRA) in June, 2003 made an attempt at increasing the prices of petroleum products by more than 50%. This was resisted. It should

be understood that this condition of paying over 50% increase in the prices of petroleum products are sure signing of economic downturn and associated poverty to the masses which are clear signs of under-development. NUPENG and PENGASSAN announced a strike action despite the earlier strikes by Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the government quickly gave a compromise. The oil and gas workers unions have always have a loud say in matters of interest in Nigeria because of its lucrative position as oil workers. In similar way had the government failed to remove subsidy in January 2014 owing to the stiff resistance by NUPENG and PENGASSAN. It is an observed fact that most decisions taking by government are not considered in terms of how it contributes to the progress of the society. How convenient and comfortable a law abiding citizen feels over the decision of government should supersede every other reason. NUPENG and PENGASSAN considered how the majority of Nigeria would wallow in dire need owing to the subsidy removal, hence they resisted it. They anticipated a stable socio-economic progress as outcome of government's decision and policies.

In the next place, the oil and gas workers unions have secured the employment of many Nigerians through their industrial actions. It is a truism that unemployment on a large scale affects the economy of a country. Often time, oil and gas workers have stood firm in industrial actions against laying off of employees of their oil companies. In a missive written by NUPENG to the Minister of Labour, the members of NUPENG were bold in reporting the economic situation at AP Plc and Zenon Petroleum and Gas Limited in which the two named companies massively retrenched members of NUPENG and also the poor and vague marketing climate of the downstream sector. In its revelation, NUPENG stressed that the two named oil companies have retrenched more than 500 employees in the past one year due to massive losses incurred on foreign exchange devaluation for imported petroleum products in 2008 (Okougbo, 2013:272). AP Plc and Zenon Petroleum and Gas Limited also alleged that they have lost an approximate 150 billion Naira on the said foreign exchange devaluation. The two companies also alleged that the situation is worsened by the Federal Government of Nigeria's Policy on import and subsidies and therefore did not create a level playing ground for them; hence there is the need for them to retrench their workforce. Owing to this said condition, 500 employees of these two companies were retrenched. In response to these actions by the oil workers' management, NUPENG mobilized its members nationwide for strike action, and gave the following prayers to the oil companies and government to salvage the situation:

- "The Federal Government should stop the two companies from further retrenching our members because of their bad economic climate.
- The Ministry of Petroleum Resources and the PPPRA should revisit the AGO issue and create a level playing ground for indigenous investors like AP and Zenon Petroleum and Gas to do business, and recover their lost ground.
- The cost of AGO to users presently is prohibitive and can cause a revolution if such issues are not timely addressed.
- The scarcity of kerosene in the consumer market is an ill-wind that blows no one any good and as such should be expeditiously tackled by the government.
- The Minister of Petroleum Resources and other Federal Government agencies should show concern and practically demonstrate it through urgent intervention.
- The Federal Government's fledgling petroleum policy should be objectively reviewed to create enabling environment to stakeholders in the downstream mostly AP Plc and Zenon Petroleum and gas Limited so that "ceteris paribus" supply would equate with demand and the citizens would continue to rely and have faith in government.
- If within fourteen days the authorities turn a blind eye like Emperor Nero who fiddled with Rome burnt, we will be forced to call petroleum workers especially our members in the downstream sector including tanker drivers to withdraw their services."

Although it was not easy an encounter, most of the prayers of the oil workers union were attended to and that saved the job of numerous oil and gas workers who would have been made redundant. This is another contribution to national development:

In similar role, NUPENG in Okougbo (2013) averred that in response to a letter from MRS Plc dated 17th August 2011, threatening to lay off 100 NUPENG members for whatever reasons the company advanced, warned the company of the consequences which the company's actions would have on the company in question and as well reverberating across the entire Nigeria economy. Owing to the decision by NUPENG to picket and subsequently embarking on a nationwide strike

in protest, the 100 NUPENG members were reinstated, thus making it a contribution to national development. This stems from the opinion that these reinstated workers' means of livelihood are sustained and will attract a contribution to the economy of the country instead of contributing to unemployment which when recorded on a large scale will aggravate poverty and economic decline. In other words, NUPENG and PENGASSAN have through their industrial actions reduced the culture of arbitrary sacking of workers, most especially in the oil and gas sector.

In another developmental stride, NUPENG and PENGASSAN have utilized their industrial actions to press on the government to provide basic amenities and infrastructural development, and influenced legislation in Nigeria. Daily Trust, Sunday 8 March 2015 reported of an industrial action embarked on by NUPENG and PENGASSAN which lasted for three days. The paper reported the negative circumstances that arose from the industrial actions – long queues were seen in plethora of petrol filling stations around the country. In the report, it was gathered that the bone of contention was the oil workers demand for the passage of the petroleum industry bill, overhauling of the oil sector, maintenance of oil refineries in the country and the poor state of the roads in the country which according to them hinder transportation in the country.

For any country to be developed, it must have good roads to facilitate its transportation. NUPENG and PENGASSAN are aware of the role of good roads in enhancing transportation. This may not be unconnected with the pivotal role of transportation in a nation's development. "Globally, Nigeria ranks low in the quality of its infrastructure which impacts the ease of doing business. Low investments in transportation have resulted in the current infrastructural deficit" (Igwe, Oyelola, Asiboshin and Raheem, 2013:168). Woke (2000) asserts that transport sub-sector contributes to the Gross Domestic Products.

When the GDP of Nigeria is contributed to by its transport sector, it is only when the roads are working. Transporters and commuters utilizing the road transport will certainly suffer hindrance of movement of goods and services if the roads are dilapidated. This has thus given the oil workers concern to the plight of commuters, and an encumbrance to development. Okougbo (2013:151) asserts that Nigerian roads in spite of billions used in financing the transport sector, for more than nine years of our nascent democracy is still deplorable. The oil workers have therefore urged the federal government to rehabilitate these public highways to make them smooth for vehicles and for easy accessibility by heavy duty trucks especially tanker drivers. Even if the government has not rehabilitates all the roads in the country, they have seen the true picture of the deplorable roads and have given attention to some of them.

In another dimension, these oil and gas workers have adopted a method to affect the process of law making by the National Assembly and State Assemblies (Amadi, 2015:38). The principle of separation of powers gives the legislature the power to make laws in a country. Laws are made by the legislature too, to regulate the oil and gas industry. NUPENG and PENGASSAN as trade unions have adopted lobbying of the legislature to affect the law as it affects the oil and gas sector. One of such laws is the federal law that prohibits pipeline vandalisation in the country. In addition, NUPENG and PENGASSAN have always through its actions advocated that the vandalised pipelines which transport crude are rehabilitated. This is because they think and act towards what will enhance the development of the nation. It is a well known fact that Nigeria relies on petroleum for its sustenance. Therefore, the destruction of the pipelines will reduce the quantity of the crude.

Furthermore, it is in the habit of the state to implement policies which seems good to them. It has been observed that most policies taken by the state is geared to benefit the elites who are in government or those close to the seat of power. The leaders or elected officers of the state only think towards their self enrichment even when certain policies and decisions of government inflict pains, suffering and poverty on the majority of the citizens. They only reason like the core capitalists who think of themselves and their families alone. This kind of situation is regular in Nigeria, as the government has often times taken decision which were against the opinion of majority of Nigerian citizens. Sweet, a review of the Nigerian Energy Industry, Weekly, October 12, 2016, reported about NUPENG and PENGASSAN's showdown with the Federal Government of Nigeria and averred the latter's proposed sale of critical national assets, including the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas, NLNG Company. According to the source, NUPENG vowed to shut down the country over the move, while PENGASSAN threatened to cripple the nation's economy through strike if the government continues with its decision.

From indications, this was skullduggery for government officials to sell these public assets which generate wealth for the nation, to themselves. The fear of NUPENG and PENGASSAN's industrial actions saved the country of such plan by government. The NLNG plant is a veritable source of pecuniary advantage to the country. Infact, it contributes a larger percentage to the wealth that sustains Nigerians.

NUPENG and PENGASSAN are quite aware of the contributions of NLNG Company to the offer of Nigeria. The oil unions decidedly protected the property from being sold by the government. This is to ensure that it enhances the monetary strength of the country that facilitates development. Oil workers in this bid have also through its industrial actions contributed to national development.

6. CONCLUSION

A new dimension has been taken in the discourse of trade unionism in Nigeria using oil and gas workers industrial actions which had recorded series of development in Nigeria. A cursory glance reveals how NUPENG and PENGASSAN industrial actions have influenced development in Nigeria. A democratically elected government gears towards development of a country unlike military government which is infamous for corruption and underdevelopment. NUPENG and PENGASSAN through its 1994 industrial actions facilitated the advent of democratic government in Nigeria. The oil workers unions have also through its actions secured the livelihood of many Nigerians who would have been retrenched by their oil companies. This has thus reduced the spate of unemployment, and enhanced staff welfare and other workers interests availed the oil workers of sustaining their employment. This would have deterred their economic fulfillment and inconveniences. The oil and gas sector is a major source of Nigerian development. The accruable revenue generated by this sector aids the economy of Nigeria. This sector is sustained by confrontations towards the adoption of a secure policy that will enhance the sustenance of the sector. Development is fostered through different approaches. The major fact is that an organization should be conscious of its vision and mission. NUPENG and PENGASSAN are apprised of their role even when it costs them of their freedom owing to the capitalist coercive power against them.

From indications, it was a skullduggery for government officials to sell public assets which generate wealth for the nation, to themselves as attempt at privatization. The feat of NUPENG and PENGASSAN's industrial actions saved the country of such plan by the government. The NLNG plant is a veritable source of pecuniary advantage to the country. Infact, it contributes a larger percentage to the wealth that sustains Nigerians. NUPENG and PENGASSAN are quite aware of the contributions of NLNG Company to the coffer of Nigeria. The oil unions decidedly protected the property from being sold by the government. This is to ensure that it enhances the monetary strength of the country which facilitates development. Oil workers in these ways, through its industrial actions have contributed to national development.

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