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## DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS AND THE CHALLENGES OF HARMONIOUS INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Harmonious industrial relations have been identified as one of the major ingredients of economic development in contemporary societies. The occurrence of dispute and the eventual mechanisms of settlement goes a long way in determining the nature of interactions and relationships among the stakeholders in the world of work. While there are series of statutory dispute settlement mechanisms and their acclaimed efficiency, industrial conflict are still permanent feature of work organizations in Nigeria. This situation threaten harmonious industrial relations in the country. Consequently, this paper is a contribution to the existing literatures on dispute settlement mechanisms and also a means of improving harmonious industrial relations in Nigeria. The paper observed that the existing dispute settlement mechanisms in Nigeria's industrial relations system are not effective enough to ensure harmonious industrial relations in the country and thus recommended for the strengthening of such ineffective mechanisms.

**Keywords:** Industrial harmony; Industrial relations; Labour union; Employees

### Introduction

Dispute is one of the basic consequences of social living, the Creationist story of Cane and Abel and that of Joseph and his paternal siblings are reflections of the fact that the occurrence of dispute is as old as human existence. Historically, dispute prevention and management has been part of the focus of interest for disciplines such as moral philosophy, legal science, Jurisprudence, Political Science, Sociology, Industrial Relations etc. Specifically, one of the first interests of study in industrial relations study is work place dispute resolutions techniques because incidence of dispute among the parties that made up the work organization is inevitable. Dispute according to Orifomo (2008) is inevitable in the work organizations not only because conflict is inherent in human nature but also because, such dispute is necessary in some instances in order to bring about the good of all the parties involved in the work settings.

Globally, scholars of industrial relations have identified the importance of dispute studies in industrial relations. For instance, the Marxist school of thought are of the view that industrial dispute is necessary in order to foster the welfare development of the employees, and that industrial dispute is necessary to attain equilibrium level in

industrial relationship (Marx & Engels, 1932; Hyman, 1975). Specifically, the conception Karl Marx is that industrial dispute is the ultimate industrial action that would bring about a balanced egalitarian society (Marx & Engels, 1932). Others such as Maslow (1956) and Robbins (1974) are of the view that though industrial dispute might be beneficial in some instances but its disadvantages far outweigh its advantages. Such scholars buttressed their arguments on the examples of strikes and lock downs which most often result into low productivity and general economic breakdown.

Following the global trend, in Nigeria, scholars of industrial relations have also examined the phenomenon from different angles using differing disciplinary perspectives. While many of such studies are tailored towards the global perspectives, some have examined it using the local indigenous industrial experience as the basis of their analysis. For instance, Yesufu (1996), Anyim, et.al. (2012), Dahida & Adekeye (2013) discussed the inevitability of conflict in a typical work organization. Similarly, Imberman (1979), Ubeku, (1983), Adebisi (2013) is of the view that industrial dispute is highly detrimental to the survival of the work organization. These scholars at the global and indigenous levels though have divergent views in many areas of their analysis but virtually all of them are of the conviction that dispute is inevitable in every work organization. In realization of the fact that dispute is an inevitable fact of industrial relations, series of dispute settlement mechanisms have been initiated so that harmonious industrial relations would be achieved.

However, despite the introduction of several dispute settlement mechanisms such as mediation, reconciliation, arbitration, litigation etc, it is a thing of worry that industrial dispute is still a common occurrence in developing countries such as Nigeria. According to Atilola & Dugeri (2012), litigation, which is often adopted in the resolution of disputes in most formal work organizations, has proven to be in-effective in resolving all labour dispute issues. According to Anyim (2009), Kannike (2011), Adebisi (2013), prevalence, occurrence of dispute between and among employees and employers has been one of the problems of industrial relations in Nigeria. The devastating effects of such dispute is manifested in series of negative and counter-productive work behaviours such as low job moral (Dahid & Adekeye, 2013), prevalent labour turnover, (Ofala, 1983), lock outs, go slows, strikes and other counter-productive work behaviours which have further culminated into other social problems such as unemployment, criminality, economic breakdown and so on (Ubeku, 1983 Ofoele 1986, Ifedi, 1994, Orofomo, 2008; Chidi, 2010).

What could be inferred from the above is that the existing dispute settlement mechanisms are likely not effective enough for fostering harmonious industrial relations necessary to effect industrial development in the country. In other words, the contention of this paper is that there is the need to re-examine the existing dispute settlement mechanisms and consider possible alternative dispute settlement mechanisms in the Nigerian work organizations in order to attain harmonious industrial relations effective enough to bring about the enviable industrial development in the country.

### **The Meaning of Industrial Relations**

Industrial relations is a broad sub-discipline of knowledge which has its focus of inquiry on the improvement of harmonious relationship between the employees and their

employers. This philosophy of industrial relations is based on the premise that, if sound and harmonious relationship does not exist among all the parties involved in work organization, then the longrun objective of the work organization would be jeopardised. It could be further conceived that the level of industrialization of a nation in contemporary world will be determined by the level of industrial relations witnessed in such societies. Conceptually, there has not been an exact definition of what is industrial relation, the definition and scope of industrial relations is a subject of controversy mainly to the ideological or intellectual persuasions of those trying to define or conceptualize it. Therefore various schools of thought attempt to define the scope of industrial relations based on these factors.

According to Adebisi (2013), the main ideological positions that influence the conceptions of industrial relations are: the Systems Models of John T. Dunlop; the Oxford School of Allan Flanders; the Behavioural School of C. J Margerison; and the Marxist school of Richard Hyman. In line with the Systems Model, Dunlop (1958) cited in Ootob, 2000:18) describes industrial relations in the following ways:

... industrial relations is regarded as comprised of certain actors; certain contexts and ideology which binds the industrial relations system together and body of rules created to govern actors at the workplace and work community.

What could be inferred from Dunlop's conception of industrial relations is that industrial relation is the process through which the major actors in industrial activities relate with one another in harmonious way. Similarly, the Oxford School of Allan Flanders (Flander, 1965) conceived of industrial relations as the study of the institutions of job regulation. His argument is based on the position that the only aspect of business enterprise that concerns industrial relations is the employment, the relations between the enterprise and its employees and among the employees themselves. In other words, the conception of the Oxford school is that industrial relations is about how the employers would make sure that they take the issue of employees' welfare and personal development serious, that if the employers always consider the employees when making decision on the work process, by that, they are engaging in a typical industrial relations.

In addition to the above, the Behavioural School of C.J. Margerison is of the view that the main focus of industrial relations is to devise ways and means through which the work behaviour of the employees could be improved in such a way that the organizational objectives could be realized. According to this school, industrial relations as a subject should be interested on how to minimize misunderstanding, dispute and conflict between or among all the parties involved in the organizational structure of the work environment.

Lastly, the Marxist Approach of Richard Hyman (Hyman, 1975), states that the emphasis on the institutional school on rule-making rather than the sources or causes of conflicts was a disservice to our understanding of industrial relations. According to him, the state had always sided with the employers of labour in capitalist societies, so as to protect the interest of the bourgeoisie. In doing this, the workers interests are left unprotected (Adebisi, 2013). By and large, what could be deduced from the varying scholarly conceptions of industrial relations so far is that industrial relations is about the

### *Dispute Resolution Mechanisms and the Challenges of Harmonious Industrial Relations*

maintenance of harmonious relationship among all the parties involved in industrial system, this is because of their conviction that a harmonious industrial relations among the stake-holders is necessary for industrial relations in any country.

#### **The Concepts of Dispute and Labour Dispute**

Ordinarily, the term dispute could be used to refer to any form of misunderstanding or conflict between two individuals, among group of individuals or social groups. Dispute is an inevitable fact of social living. Dispute could occur between person to person, group to group, community to community, state to state or nation to nation (Robert 1981 cited in Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). Coser (1956) defines dispute as a struggle over values or claims of status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the disputing parties are not only to gain desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. To a great extent, the fact of dispute occurrence has been one of the facts that have shaped human history; this could be the reason while Karl Marx concluded that the history of all hitherto existing societies is a history of class struggle. Albert (2000:33) notes that 'conflict pervades human existence, because not only are there always wars in one part of the globe or another, interpersonal conflict occurs in any human group and business organizations are certainly not exempted'.

Inferring from the above, labour disputes could be defined as all employment dispute relating to employer and employee relationship either in their relationship as individual employees or in their collective employment relations (Chandi, 2012). In Nigeria, section 47 of the Trade Dispute Act defines a trade dispute "as any dispute between employers and workers or between workers and workers, which is connected with the employment or non-employment, or the terms of employment and physical conditions of work of any person. Ubeku (1983) maintains that, labour disputes may be grouped into two types, namely: disputes concerning an individual and disputes concerning the group i.e. the union. In some cases, the dispute that begins as an individual dispute can develop into a collective dispute. The individual dispute may arise when an individual feels that the management is deviating from the laid down procedures and rules that governs workmen, and has deprived him/her of his/her right, while the collective dispute is concerned mainly with the economic matters, except in cases where individual disputes develop into collective disputes. According to Orofomo (2008), industrial dispute is a common occurrence in both private and public sectors in Nigeria owing to the fact that the goals and objectives of staff and management in any given organization defers. For instance, the employees tend to seek for improved welfare while the management may desire high turn-over and improved productivity. The continuous desire of each party (employee and employer) to achieve individual or collective objectives may end up in trade dispute.

According to Hyman (1975), labour dispute is an unavoidable fact in today's work organization, particularly in large ones. He asserted further that industrial dispute as it is been experienced today is a product of industrialization, this is because the nature of modern work relations themselves are inevitable source of dispute. This according to him is because the work organization is made up of people from different socio-cultural backgrounds coupled with the fact that the employers and employees who made up the work organization are different opposing parties which each party striving to be at the

vantage point in the employment relations. Iwuji (1982) stressed that the conflict taking place in industrial relations is a feature of capitalism, majorly caused by the incessant zeal of the bourgeois to maximize economic profit, a fact which is the major determinant of class relations in capitalist societies generally.

#### **Effects of Industrial Dispute**

Industrial dispute is classified as a negative social phenomenon due to the adverse effects it has on the general structure of the work organization. Though, some are of the conception that a minimal occurrence of dispute is necessary for the development and growth of every all and sundry involved in employment relations but they all also agreed on the fact that a higher occurrence of dispute is definitely detrimental to the general dynamics of the work organizations. According to Chandi (2012), whenever an industrial dispute occurs, both management and workers try to pressurize each other. The management may resort to lock-out and the workers may resort to strike, picketing, etc. A practical look into the issue of trade dispute would reveal that industrial dispute is catastrophic to the general development of the individuals as well as the general economic conditions of the entire society. Disputes in any organisation may result into situations where the employers develop counter-productive work behaviour such as low job moral, absenteeism, lower work moral, incessant labour turnover etc.

On the long run, it might not enable the organisation to achieve its set objectives if it is not properly managed. Hart (2000) asserted that successful organisation in the future must create the capability to absorb dispute during the organisations life cycle. According to Anyim et.al (2012:1), '... the costs of industrial dispute range from problems such as lower output; disruption in essential services; capacity under-utilization; scarcity; unemployment; manpower contraction amongst others. They also asserted further that an economy in which there is high level of industrial dispute is not likely to attract foreign investors because this index is one of the very vital considerations of foreign industrialists and multinational corporations. Thus, it could be right to say that whether a specific labour dispute is adjudged to be successful or not, it is obvious that some damages must have been done and the parties involved as well as the public have to bear the costs in a way or the other.

The negative effect of industrial dispute could be classified into manifest and latent effects, while the manifest effects can be physically seen; the latent effects are usually hidden and mostly psychological in nature. Examples of such latent forms of conflicts are pilferage; lateness to work, absenteeism, sabotage, poor quality of work, sick leave abuse, restriction of output, loitering from one floor or office to the other, trading within the office, peddling rumour, staff leaving office before closing hour, inciting staff against management policies, over time ban, etc.

#### **The Act and Art of Dispute Resolution**

Dispute settlement is one of the most discussed topics in dispute and conflict studies. From theology to philosophy, to legal science, political science to sociology, the study of dispute resolution has been an important topic of discussion. In all of these disciplines, it has been generally agreed upon that dispute is inevitable in social relationship and that settlement of dispute is necessary in order to maintain peaceful co-existence and to keep

the human race from extinction. Conceptually, dispute resolution could be described as an effort (formal or informal) initiated by a person or group of person in order to settle conflict or misunderstanding between two parties. Dispute settlement is almost a unique feature of the human animal, because, there is no other known creation that has initiated a system of dispute settlement as that of human being.

Dispute settlement is an act because it involves activities, it could also be described as an art because it also needs styles and strategies that must be employed of which if appropriate method is not employed, there will be higher possibility of not resolving or settling the dispute. In realization of this, most modern government has initiated formal means through which dispute could be settled among the populace and among the workers specifically. According to Kotze (2000), dispute management in general and dispute settlement in particular requires that the meddler possesses certain experience and intelligence necessary for effective resolution of the dispute (cited in Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). Inferring from the above thus, it could be said that labour dispute resolution is the act of finding a temporary or permanent solution to the problems of misunderstanding that occur in the workplace either between employee to employee or between the employees and employer or between the two and the government of the nation.

### **Mediation**

According to Ajayi & Buhari (2014), mediation is one of the oldest methods of conflict management. Olaoba (2011), described mediation as a method of dispute resolution that had been so critical to traditional societies. Mediation is a situation whereby a third party or parties interfere in dispute occurring between two persons or parties with the aim of peaceful settlement or improving mutual cooperation between them. According to Adam (2000), mediation is a non-coercive process of intervention and eventual settlement carried out by the mediators(s), called third party either to reduce or bring conflict to peaceful settlement. The mediators usually endeavoured that peace and harmony reigned supreme in the society at whatever level of mediation. The common saying 'no victor no vanquish' is a term usually employed by the mediators to create psychological equilibrium for the two parties involved in the dispute (Isurmona, 2005).

A mediator could be any person or persons close enough to the parties and it is necessary a mediator be a individual or group of individuals capable of managing the parties involved in the dispute. In traditional societies, such mediators are sought from within the communities or societies of the parties concerned. Most times, elders are usually regarded as being appropriate mediators because they are being respected as trustworthy mediators because of their accumulated experiences and wisdom. Mediation includes include activities such as pressurizing, making recommending giving assessments, conveying suggestions on behalf of the parties, emphasizing relevant norms and rules, envisaging the situation if agreement is not reached, or repeating of the agreement already attained (Bright-Brock, 2001:11 cited in Ajayi & Buhari, 2014).

With regards to labour dispute, mediation though not a very formal mechanism used in labour dispute settlement, it has been one of the common type mechanism used. In many instances especially on labour dispute occurring between the labourers and the government in Nigeria, there is always the mediation system and this most often usually

used to end many of such disputes. Current example of industrial disputes settled through mediation is the ASSU/Federal government labour dispute which was mediated upon by the some stakeholders in the federation, another example is the national industrial strike embarked upon by labour unions with the removal of fuel subsidy in 2012.

### **Negotiation**

Negotiation is a dispute settlement technique whereby a level ground is created in order to harmonize the interests of the parties concerned. Thus, even when the conflict involves a member against his or her society, there is an emphasis on recuperation and reinsertion of errant member back into its place in society. The recovery of a dissident member can just as well be seen as the restoration of the harmony and integrity of the community, as the assertion of value consensus and social cohesion, so that the management of the conflict favours the concerns of both parties.

### **Reconciliation**

This is the most significant aspect of conflict resolution. It is the end product of adjudication (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). After the disputants have been persuaded to end the dispute, peace would be restored. This restoration of peace and harmony was always anchored on the principle of give a little and get a little. This idea buttresses the idea of the disputing parties to give concessions. A feast was usually organized to confirm the readiness of the conflicting parties towards reaching points of compromise (Ibid). According to Ootoba (2005), conciliation as a process of peace – making in industrial relations aims to bring about the speedy settlement of disputes without resort to strikes or lockouts and hasten the termination of work stoppages when these have occurred.

### **Adjudication**

Adjudication is another prevalent method of labour dispute settlement. According to Chukwu (1995), arbitration is semi-judicial means of settling disputes in which both side agree in advance to be bound by the decision of a neutral arbitrator or panel of arbitrators. Adjudication is another form of dispute settlement that has been developed since the traditional period (Olaoba, 2005). Adjudication is a more formal dispute settlement mechanism and it involves bringing all disputants in the conflict to a formal meeting in a specific environment such as a panel, a tribunal or a court. Adjudication in some instances could take the form of dialogue. Akpala (1982) remarked that when conciliation fails and internal machineries for settlement have been exhausted, the matter could go to arbitration in between the disputing parties.

### **Arbitration**

Arbitration has been defined as a procedure for the settlement of disputes under which the parties agree to be bound by the decision of an arbitrator whose decision is in general final and legally binding on both parties (Orojo & Ajomo, 1999). Arbitration is a very formal mechanism of settling disputes in any formal work organization. Formal institutions have been established to formally look into any form of labour dispute; some

of such institutions are the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN) and The Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP).

It could be inferred from the foregoing that the desire of all and sundry to achieve industrial harmony is the reason why these dispute settlement mechanisms are established, thus, it could be said that the whole concept of industrial relations revolves around the principle of dispute prevention and management which is the key to the establishment of harmonious relations between labour and management. A vibrant industrial relations is thus very necessary as one cannot conceive of any society completely oblivious of some sort of friction between labour and management.

#### **Problems of Dispute Resolution Mechanisms for Attaining Harmonious Industrial Relations in Nigeria**

The foregoing discussions have pointed to the fact that there has been concerted effort in the past on how to maintain harmonious relations between or among the parties involved in industrial organization, though these mechanisms have been used to settle series of disputes between the key players in industrial setups but the increasing rates of dispute occurrence is a thing of concern (Anyim, et.al, 2012). The increasing trends experienced in dispute occurrence in the Nigeria public and private work organizations is not only catastrophic but could be largely held responsible for the poor economic productivity of the country at large. Therefore, the thrust of argument in this paper is that the consistent conflicts between the major actors in the industrial setup in Nigeria (labour and management) cannot be contained without looking for ways to put in place an effective, technical, quick and result-oriented means of settlement of disputes. In other words, there is the need to re-examine these existing mechanisms not by eradicating the existing mechanism but by improving on them so that dispute occurrence in work organization would be minimized and even when it occurred, settlement of such dispute would be easier and fast-tracked.

As could be deduced from the earlier discussions on the existing mechanisms of dispute settlement, it could be said that these mechanism are almost the mechanisms used in maintaining harmonious industrial relations in many countries of the world, the questions arising therefore is, why are these mechanisms not working effectively in Nigeria? In other words, there is the need to re-think these mechanisms. One of the very first ways to achieve this is by looking into some of the factors that could be held responsible for this ugly trend.

#### **Time**

In Nigeria, history has shown that one of the major dispute mechanisms used in settling industrial dispute is the formal mechanisms such as the Industrial Arbitration Panel and the National Industrial Court (NIC). As for the IAP, experience has shown that the IAP takes up to 12 months or more to make its decision known to parties, thus creating room for erosion of confidence and frustration for the parties (Anyim, et.al 2012). According to Fashoyin (1992), whereas the IAP has 42 days within which to make its award normally, this duration is hardly complied with. Such a delay in many instances usually brought about delay in the justice process thereby destructing the settlement process both on the short and on the long run.

#### **Parties involved in the settlement**

Due to the fact that the government is the highest employer of labour in Nigeria, the government as a stake holder in industrial relations plays very important role in the management and settlement of dispute in the Nigerian work organizations. However, the insincerity of the government in terms of policy implementation and fulfilment of pledges and promises is one of the major factors that made the existing dispute settlement mechanisms not effective in settling dispute and improving harmonious industrial relations in the country. According to Adebisi (2013:692)

... the highhandedness of the Nigerian government in respect of labour matter had made nonsense of these mechanisms or procedures for dispute settlement. More often than not, the Nigerian government fails to honour its own agreement with labour, thereby setting poor standards for employers in the private sector. It has violated more agreement reached out of collective bargaining than any other institutions in Nigeria or the world over. A case in point is its failure or reluctance to honour a number of agreements with the Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, and the Nigerian Labour Congress, NLC. Consequently, the Nigerian industrial relations system today is replete with case of violation of negotiated agreements as a result of executive lawlessness...

In addition to the above, government pronouncements, policies and directives on labour dispute settlement most times lack credibility, firmness and the finesse they should have (Anyim, et.al. 2012). Furthermore, the fact that government most times make unilateral determination of terms and conditions of employment relations is another factor that made the efficient workability of the existing dispute settlement mechanisms not working. According to Fashoyin, (1992), the inequities associated with unilateral decision-making and the unwillingness of the public employer to use the bargaining machinery has made strike to be the means of ensuring favourable employment conditions in the public sector crucially important (cited in Anyimet.al, 2012:2)

Another means through which the government are making nonsense of the existing dispute settlement mechanisms is that labour- management negotiations is achieved through informal means or through political pressure mounted by the unions. The existing statutory machinery for the settlement of disputes as could be found in the Trade Disputes Act 1976 and all subsequent amendments has not been effective in terms of delays experienced by aggrieved parties as well as cumbersomeness of the procedure. Oftentimes, judgements drag on for years and justice delayed is justice denied. More so, the statutory dispute settlement procedure has not fostered industrial harmony to a large extent (Chidi, 2010).

#### **Place**

Connected to the problem of time is the problem of place. That is the place in which the settlement is taking place. As has been observed earlier in this write-up, dispute settlement is not only an act but also an art, it is an art because many factors should be considered in order to achieve the desired goal of quick and long lasting dispute settlement in work organizations. In this regard, the nature and extent of dispute should always be considered before choosing the place of settlement, a dispute that is

supposed to be settled internally within the members of the organization should not be exposed to external bodies and vice-versa. As it is been said in Yoruba adage that 'it is not all laundries that placed in under the sun' labour disputes that are not complex in nature should be settled internally and issues should not be referred to litigation and arbitration unless there is the extreme need to do so.

#### Non-consideration of cultural factors

According to Olatunji, Lawal and Raji (2013), African societies are 'culture bound' and as such African cultural contexts should always be considered when initiating and implementing dispute settlement mechanisms. According to Ajayi & Buhari, (2013), the system of conflict management in modern Africa has not always been mindful of the need to consider the adaptation of local and international cultural factors in the management of dispute between erring parties. However, this factor is necessary not only because of the afore-mentioned but also because there has been a traditional method of settling dispute in African societies generally.

In this regard, African industrial relations scholars could look inward into the African cultural system of dispute settlement and find ways of adapting same to labour dispute settlement. For instance, one of the philosophies of dispute settlement in Africa is the 'win-win' orientation (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014) as against the 'win-lose' orientations that characterised the western inter-group relations model. According to Airuch & Black (2013:16) "it is quite dangerous to relegate culture to the background in conflict resolution". In other words, the fact that Nigeria industrial relations model is tailored towards the western model without much input from the indigenous cultural system could be one of the reasons why the existing dispute settlement mechanisms have not been working well to improve harmonious industrial relations in Nigeria. Truth, confidence, mutual respect, trust, justice and humanity are some of the basic features of the African dispute management system that is generally lacking in today's dispute settlement process. In addition, the traditional rulers are the custodian of people's culture and the trust and respect the populace accord to them make them one of the important stakeholders that should be considered in the dispute management in labour and non-labour related issues in the society.

#### Insincerity, subjectivity and bias

One of the general features of Western culture is that it is regarded as being highly individualistic and this individualistic orientation in most instances is apparent in its statutory methods of settling dispute. As a result of the fact that the Nigerian industrial relation system is modelled towards the western system, the stake holders in industrial relations in Nigeria are generally subjective and grossly biased in many instances. It is not uncommon in Nigeria to see instances where the employers and employees accused each other of being selfish, biased and subjective. A point in case in this regard could be cited of NUT, ASUU and other education-related unions that are always been accused of being selfish of embarking on indefinite strikes without considering the negative effects of their actions on the youth population. Similarly, the unions in most instances have also most times accused the employer's especially the government in reneging in most of the promises they make with the employers.

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, what could be inferred from the discussion thus far is that the existing statutory machinery for the settlement of labour disputes has not been effective. More so, the statutory dispute settlement procedure has not fostered industrial harmony to a large extent due to some challenges inherent in the making and implementation of the existing labour dispute settlement mechanisms. The concern of this presentation therefore is that there is the need to rethink those mechanisms by looking into some of the problems raised in the work and find ways through which some of the inherent problems could be addressed so that harmonious industrial relations necessary for industrial development could be achieved in the country.

In terms of place, parties involved in dispute should always choose the best place in which the dispute could be amicably resolved. As regarding the parties involved, the stake holders in dispute should be objective in their claim and should be rationally considerable in their decision. In addition, the government should be faithful to its statutory role of an impartial arbiter who should not meddle unnecessarily in the disputes resolution procedures. Furthermore, dispute should be attended to as soon as it is been noticed because many things happen to a cause and to parties in a dispute by the simple passage of time. Delay in settlement or disposal of conflicting claims is a primary enemy of justice and peace in a community. Further still, African indigenous system of dispute settlement should be given priority in dispute settlement based on the inherent credibility of the system. Also, the government as an important stakeholder in industrial relations should lead other employers in its policy implementation. The government restructured the trade unions in both the public and private sectors to enhance the effectiveness of the existing dispute settlement mechanisms in order to experience the much cherished harmonious industrial relations and sustainable industrial development in the country.

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