

# Research on How ZATUC Promotes and Protects Workers' Rights in Zanzibar: An Analytical Study Based on Effectiveness and Challenges

Nassor, Nassor Suleiman\* Professor, Sun Qi Gui  
School of Public Affairs, University of Science & Technology China, Hefei, Anhui (230026) P.R C.

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank all people participated in this work and their contributions are really appreciated. Special thanks go to my supervisor for his tireless help. This work is supported by University of science and technology of China and Chinese Scholarship Council.

## Abstract

The focus of this study was generally to assess how Zanzibar Trade Unions Congress (ZATUC) promotes and protects workers' rights in Zanzibar based on its effectiveness and challenges. The careful attention was in data collection and was collected personally through well-designed questionnaires from the respondents which involved the members of the Affiliates and ZATUC staffs who are the direct concern of the study. Data analysed through SPSS by applying simple statistical analysis and descriptive analysis. The study revealed that ZATUC uses various negotiation approaches that have the countless influence on its effectiveness of promoting and protecting the workers' rights. Furthermore, the study found that ZATUC facing many challenges on operating their duties and lack of funds and technical facilities are the main. Lastly, based on the discussion, the authors have come up with the conclusion and recommendations with the future directions which the authors believe that will both help the researchers to conduct further researches and the practitioners in the relevant subject will be benefited from this study.

**Keywords:** Trade Union, ZATUC, Affiliate, Workers' rights, promoting and protecting, approach.

## 1. Introduction

A Trade union or Labour union can be defined as an association formed by workers from related professions with the aim of protecting and promoting their common interests of its members. According to Cole (1938), the trade union is the association of workers in one or more professions carried on mainly for the purpose of protecting and advancing the members economic interests in connection with their daily work. Webb (1894), defined trade union as a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining and improving the conditions of their working lives. From these definitions, we observed that the key functions of the trade union are protecting workers' rights and solving their problems such as working hours, their benefits (wages, bonuses etc.) and regulate relations between employees and employers. Trade unions are there to represent workers and negotiate with their management on behalf of them (Jochem, 2000).

The origin of Trade Unionism originated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Britain during the industrial revolution, where the rapid expansion of industrial society took place and drew women, children, rural workers and immigrants into the workforce in large numbers and in new roles (Webb. et al.,1920). Throughout this time, the workers in the factory spent a lot of hours in dangerous work and working condition. By the years 1800s, workers (unskilled and semi-skilled labour) became more active in politics and joined together in voluntary smaller associations but remained periodic and in 1810s, the first trade unions were formed (Cole, 2010).

The history of a trade union in Zanzibar arose during colonial rule through to the establishment of cloves and coconut plantations to replace the slave trade after its abolishment. The poor working condition from the processing factories and the influence of the returning soldiers of WWII encouraged other people to engage in the movement after getting experience on the impact of discrimination and exploitation in the war and by that time Zanzibar was very low economically led to few post of employment and from that workers did not get any benefit or entitlement from their employers. Therefore, workers movement slowly started through informal information (ZATUC Documents, 2010).

In 1948 the employees from porters/seamen's sector decided to strike against bad conditions of their work and lack of equal scale of salary compared to the work they were doing. The strike helped to create awareness to the employees and saw that there is a need to establish the union officially. And in same year British colony established labour office in which one among the duties was to deal with the labour issues in Zanzibar. The first union in Zanzibar was the Seamen's Union which established in 1955. The Federation of Zanzibar and Pemba Trade Unions (ZPFL) was founded with assistance from Tanganyika Unions, whereby in the 1960s, the Zanzibar Labour Movement flourished. In 1964 revolution, the labour movement collaborated with peasants to overthrow the Sultan (Mbwana, O.2007).

The current structure of Trade Unions in Zanzibar is highly attributable to the Tanzania Parliament decision of 1998, Trade Union Act of 1998 that prohibited the historical marriage between the workers of Tanzania Mainland and those of Zanzibar under the pretext that labour issues were not accommodated in Union matters. Consequently, the Zanzibar House of Representatives was compelled to enact the Zanzibar Trade Union Act No. 4 of 2001, which allowed registration of Trade Unions in the isles (ZATUC, 2009). Subsequently, in 2002 ZATUC was formed from a merger of 9 unions in the Zanzibar region and affiliated with the International Trade Union Confederation with the aim of serving in defending and protecting the rights and conditions of work through good policies, social dialogue and technical service (ICTUR et al., 2005). Those 9 trade unions under the umbrella of ZATUC are Zanzibar Conservation, Hotels, Domestic and Allied Workers Union (CHODAWU-Z), Zanzibar Communication and Transport Workers' Union (COTWU-Z), Zanzibar Telecommunication Workers Union (TEWUTA-Z), Zanzibar Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers (TUICO-Z), Zanzibar Financial Institutional and Commercial Workers Union (ZAFICOWU), Zanzibar Public Service Workers Union (ZAPSWU), Zanzibar Seafarers Union (ZASU), Zanzibar Teachers' Union (ZATU) and Zanzibar Union for Public and Health employees (ZUPHE).

The basic objective of this research is to assess how ZATUC promotes and protects workers' rights in Zanzibar, keeping in view the approaches uses and its effectiveness in handling various issues among their members which led them to be violated in the essence of human rights and the workers' rights. According to (ZATUC Secretary General), from 2009 there were about 11 cases reported and 9 cases have been solved in favour of workers. The cases have been increasing up to 2015 and were about 32 cases which were not solved. Therefore, despite the establishment of ZATUC which established for the purpose of protecting and advancing the interest of its members in the workplace but still the number of cases concerning violation of workers' rights is increasing, thus there is a need to investigate the effectiveness and the challenges of ZATUC in promoting and protecting workers' rights as (Moeti-Lysson & Ongori, 2011) identified that workers are the backbone and foundation for bringing the development and growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in a country.

This study is extremely significant as the main focus of this study is to assess how ZATUC protects and promotes workers' rights in Zanzibar as it is quality services that help to satisfy the membership needs and achieve workers social and economic development and the country as a whole. Moeti-Lysson and Ongori (2011) identified that the survival of Trade Unions is determined by its ability to represent their members according to their expectations. Therefore, this research is needed particularly to conduct a detailed analysis of the various roles and functions of ZATUC to understand how effectively these basic functions are taking place to its members that expecting much assistance from the Congress. To improve the impartiality of this study we picked the General Secretaries from the Trade Unions, their members and ZATUC staff as a basic unit to collect data by assuming that is almost the reality and they are a direct concern of this study.

## 2. Research Methodology

The main purpose of this study was to assess how ZATUC promotes and protects workers' rights in Zanzibar. Subsequently of this aim, the study focused on what approaches they used, how the effective is ZATUC and what challenges facing in promoting and protecting workers' rights in their duties at the same time in this study, therefore, to collect the related and valuable data, we selected Secretary General of ZATUC, Secretary General of COWTU, Branch Secretary of TUICO working at ZSTC, members of Trade Unions (COWTU- Z, TUICO) and ZATUC staffs, these were direct part of this study. The data was collected personally through a well-designed closed-ended questionnaire from 326 members from the Affiliates and ZATUC staffs based on the content of the study, also in-depth structured interview was used to collect the data from the 3 key informants. Data analyses were made through SPSS software for statistical data analysis, and also Microsoft Excel used in summarising data to be used in SPSS for additional thorough analysis.

Simple random sampling and Purposive sampling techniques were used to collect data from the sample population and in total were 329 respondents from the total number of 1860 study population that involved and displayed a willingness to fill the questionnaires and to be interviewed. The researchers personally administered these questionnaires and remained present during the completion of the questionnaire to clarify any confusion to them as they were highly busy in their daily working responsibilities.

## 3. Data Analysis and Empirical Results

In order to analyse the findings obtained from the data collection, we applied simple statistical analysis which shows the results regarding various study objectives of how ZATUC promotes and protects the rights of workers, the effectiveness of ZATUC and the challenges facing in their daily basis responsibilities. The sample size was 329, whereby 238 respondents equivalent to 72.34% were the ones who answered the questionnaires, only 3 respondents which are equivalent to 0.91% were interviewed and 88 did not return the questionnaire which is equivalent to 26.74% respondents. To get high percentage was very difficult but this was good for the research because it gave the clear picture of the corporation and support between the affiliates members and ZATUC

management.

The findings discovered that there are several approaches used by ZATUC in promoting and protecting workers' rights in Zanzibar. 224 respondents equivalent to 94.1% respond to this question and 14 respondents did not answer this question which is equal to 5.9% and 3 individuals were interviewed. According to the findings, 49 respondents equivalent to 20.6% showed Collective bargaining approach, 34 respondents equivalent to 14.3% revealed collective agreement, 36 respondents equivalent to 15.1% responded this question, similar answer stated from interviewees that ZATUC provides education to its members from different affiliates. Then, the findings has revealed that 51 respondents equivalent to 21.4% respond that among the approaches used by ZATUC is by Solving problems / solving labour disputes and the last two approaches found are monitoring of employees at the place of work and conducting meetings whereby 16 respondents equivalent to 6.7% revealed monitoring of employees at the place of work and 38 respondents equivalent to 16.0% revealed that meetings as means of promoting and protect their rights.

The study revealed that, about 159 respondents which are equivalent to 66.8% strongly agreed, 58 respondents which are equivalent to 24.4% agreed that ZATUC can protect and promote workers' right, 12 respondents which is equivalent to 5.0% disagreed, 1 respondent which is equivalent to 0.4% strongly disagreed that ZATUC cannot protect and promote workers' rights in Zanzibar and 8 members did not respond to this questionnaire which is equivalent to 3.4%.

About 238 respondents which are equivalent to 100% answered the question on the effectiveness of ZATUC and the promotion of workers' rights in Zanzibar. According to the findings, 47 respondents equivalent to 19.7% agreed that ZATUC can solve workers problems and disputes, 38 respondents equivalent to 16.0% have seen that provision of education is effective, 48 respondents equivalent to 20.2% agreed with ZATUC in Protecting workers' rights and interests of the members of different affiliates, 46 respondents equivalent to 19.3% stated that ZATUC is effective in improving working condition. Nevertheless, findings show that 30 respondents equivalent to 12.6% seen that ZATUC promotes freedom of association and 29 respondents equivalent to 12.2% show that, building a good relationship is one among the effectiveness of ZATUC. This means that members from different affiliates appreciate the effectiveness of ZATUC and the promotion of workers' rights.

The study found that ZATUC and its affiliates facing many challenges while both want to promote and protect workers' rights, 225 respondents equivalent to 94.5% answered this question and mentioned different challenges but the common ones are lack of funds, lack of participation in decision making, lack of understanding and lack of motivation whereby 13 respondents equivalent to 5.5% did not mention any challenge. Other challenges are losing members, members are not reporting their problems or delays in reporting, contracts are not in favour of workers, management information system is weak and lack of coordination between ZATUC and its Affiliates.

#### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

Bhango (2006), argued that the role, need and importance of trade unions has increased manifold to protect the economic as well as the non-economic interest of the working class and society from the onslaught of globalization. Relevant to that, (Edwin, 2011) clarified that trade unions have been protecting workers economic rights as their main responsibility, for that they make sure that workers are paid reasonably in a worker's friendly working environment. The first aspect of this study to focus on how ZATUC promotes and protects the workers' rights and its effectiveness, approaches used and challenges facing.

The primary outcome of this study, we have noted that ZATUC has the significant effect on promoting and protecting workers' rights which means that majority of employees agreed that trade unions particularly ZATUC are there to safeguard their rights and to voice their demands at their working place as Mohanan (1999) observed that in his study. Frank Tannenbaum (1935) in his theory argued that the employees join the unions because of their belief that it is an effective way to secure adequate protection from various types of exploitation and income uncertainty. However ZATUC facing challenges in implementing its duties, still they achieve their objective through different approaches. For example, through the provision of training to its members as the way of solving the employee's problems which according to Moeti-Lysson (2011), reported that Training is one of the major functions of trade unions all over the world. Training of their members and officials is essential to strengthen the organization and improve its various functions.

Another key finding of this study is that the effectiveness of the ZATUC on promoting and protecting the workers' rights influenced over the approaches that used in their handling workers problems which means that there are clear strategies for handling the problems and it depends on the nature of problems as identified by (Webb, et al., 1920 and Holopainen, 2009), for example, ZATUC has a role in organizing workers in fighting for their rights and interests, to represent workers in bipartite and tripartite negotiations which may result as agreements or collective bargaining for the benefit of both parties (employers and employees). Secondly, ZATUC uses problem-solving approach to ensure that the rights of its members are protected and promoted as

explained in The Labour Relation Act No 1 of 2005 is extremely explicit on regulating labour relations and labour dispute handling, prevention and resolution. Section 72 of the act allows the establishment of dispute handling machinery which is already been established. The act further allows for the steps to be taken in resolving labour related disputes through conciliation, mediation, and arbitration in case of unresolved disputes. Another finding is that ZATUC uses Collective bargaining approach to negotiate with employers (ZATUC, 2009), also they use meetings as stipulated in the Labour Relation Act No 1 of 2005 Section 35, Subsection (1), (2) and (3) as approach in promoting workers' rights whereby ZATUC and its Affiliates sit together and discuss issues about work and workers in general. Last but not least, ZATUC uses collective agreement approach (Holopainen, 2009) reported that the provisions of collective agreement affect the employment relationships between the members of the signatory parties, thus ZATUC solves problems between employees with their employers' whereby both parties shall agree upon.

Challenges facing ZATUC is noted that the needed achievements are hindered mainly by lacking funds and facilities to operate their programs and activities due to the insufficient sources of incomes where they depend only on the contributions from their members (ZATUC Strategic Plan 2015-2019), from this ground lack of understanding among the members about different issues concerning their working welfare is a problem towards protecting and promoting their rights, also lack of motivation to the members for affiliates shown as an influence that cause number of members to decrease because they complain that ZATUC does nothing to motivate them as well as for the members to motivate other workers to join trade union, in addition to that lack of participation in decision making appeared to be the set back on creativity to solve workers dispute and reduce the opportunities for workers to present their problems. Bhabatosh, Sahu (1985), explained the point by saying that "whatever steps are taken to involve worker's representatives in the decision-making process at higher management levels, they must be supplemented by arrangements for associating rank and file workers with decisions that are taken at the shop floor level and that affect them directly". Finally, we summarize that as it found in this study that ZATUC promotes and protects workers' rights and it is significantly effective on it even though faces many challenges because members of different affiliates are satisfied with the help and services they got when they have problems at their place of work.

## 5. Conclusion

The most substantial conclusion of this study is that to a certain magnitude ZATUC and its Affiliates help to solve worker's disputes, protecting their rights and interest and improving working condition of the employees through their collective bargaining approach, collective agreement, monitoring and educating the workers but still there are some issues have to be concentrated to make them in a suitable system. Lack of funds and technical facilities hinder ZATUC to implement most of their activities successfully like training their staff and members and improving the understanding of what ZATUC protect and promote, also lack of transparency and unaccountability among trade union leaders delays the whole process of improving working condition and settle the disputes.

The effectiveness of ZATUC in protecting and promoting the workers' rights has been noted interrelated and interconnected which means that both employers and employees under the ZATUC umbrella have an influence on each other. Though the influence of political and economic environment raise its severity to the extent of achieving the desired effect of promoting and protecting the workers' rights, for example, improving working conditions, promote mutual relationship and solving disputes.

We finally conclude that ZATUC should try to adjust to the changes occurred and build up an additional value added to its members and non-members on the work they perform to achieve the basic objectives of the Congress in promoting and protecting their members common interests, increase legitimacy of Trade Unions as well as ZATUC as Institutions and finding new members and retaining the existing ones through different kind of motivation (financial incentives and non-financial incentives).

## 6. Recommendation

Based on this study we would like to recommend the ZATUC office and its Affiliates that they should create and set new means of having enough funds to improve their financial capability and other services which will help them in developing the Congress as well as solving other challenges that the Union facing in protecting and promoting the workers' rights in Zanzibar. This is highly essential as this will assist the union and its affiliates to be able to motivate their workers and encourage them to participate fully in different activities that will help both ZATUC management and members of its Affiliates.

Our second recommendation is also to the ZATUC to formulate a concrete work relations policy with full clarity and then to implement that with full involvement of employers, employees and their concerning union to bring the real workers freedom and promote work efficiency, so that this will achieve peaceful atmosphere among all parties and promote significant relationship and cooperation and help the Congress to avoid any kind of complication in protecting and promoting workers' rights.

Our third recommendation is that for the members and their unions to be effective it needs to improve their abilities in delivering services for the better work conditions and services, ZATUC must provide awareness, education and training on solidarity, democracy and good governance to its Affiliates and their members according to the real needs of the organization as Mohamedi (2014) and Edwin (2011) recommended in their works. The Congress must keep the provision of education to its members on top priority, as in a broader sense, this is the real base for protecting and promoting workers' rights and economic development of any society, that will increase the knowledge of their rights and reduce the number of cases and disputes.

Finally, the researchers should focus on conducting a comparative study based on the public and private sector members of the Congress to get an additional understanding about the mechanism used in ensuring the benefits of the workers. Moreover, a comprehensive research is needed to analyse the performance of affiliates specifically on their functioning on a modern basis.

## References

- Bhabatosh, Sahu. (1985). Objective of participation management, Findings of empirical studies, Indian Management, All Management Association, India.
- Bhangoo, Kesar Singh. (2006). Trade unions in globalized economy of India Vol. 41, Journal of Industrial Relations, New Delhi, India.
- Cole (2010). Attempts at General Union: A study in British Trade Union History, 1818-1834. Volume 11. Routledge Library, Editions Series. Cole. (1938). History of British trade Unionism, available at [www.amazon.com/s](http://www.amazon.com/s).
- Edwin, Babeiya. (2011). Trade Unions and Democratization in Tanzania: End of an Era, Journal of Politic and Law Vol. 4, No. 1; University of Dar es Salaam –Tanzania.
- Holopainen, T. (2009). Establishing and doing Business in Finland. Edita Prima Oy. Helsinki, Finland. [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/trade\\_union](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/trade_union). <https://www.britannica.com/topic/trade-union>.
- ICTUR et al. (2005). Trade Unions of the World (6th ed). London, UK: John Harper Publishing.
- Jochem, Sven. (2000). Nordic Labour Market Policies in Transition, West European Politics, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Labour Relations Act No 1 of 2005 of Zanzibar, enacted by the House of the Representative of Zanzibar accessed from [www.zanzibaremploymentservices.go.tz](http://www.zanzibaremploymentservices.go.tz).
- Mbwana, O. (2007). The History of Trade Union Movement in Zanzibar.
- Moeti-Lysson & Ongori, (2011). Effectiveness of Trade Union in Promoting Employee Relations in Organization, Global J. of Arts & Management. Gaborone-Botswana.
- Mohamedi, Shida. (2014), Trade Unions, Achievement and Challenges, the University of Dodoma, Tanzania. (Unpublished paper).
- Mohanan, S. (1999). Some aspects of Industrial Relations since New Economic Policy, Southern Economist, New Delhi, India.
- Webb, et al, (1920). History of Trade Unionism. Longmans and Co. London. Ch. I.
- Webb. (1894). Theories of Trade Unionism Available at [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com)
- ZATUC. (2009). Survey on union membership and collective bargaining in Zanzibar. (Unpublished Report).
- ZATUC. (2010). History of Zanzibar Trade Union (Unpublished Document).
- ZATUC. (2015). Strategic Plan 2015-2019, Strategic approach, Targets and Indicators. (Unpublished Report).