

# **GLOBALISATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF WORKPLACE: NEED FOR NEW FORMS OF TRADE UNION ORGANISING.**

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## **Abstract**

The advent of globalization has led to fundamental changes at the work place. With the drive towards profit maximization on the part of employers world wide, employment has radically been restructured. For instance full time employment is increasingly on the decline due to the introduction of technology, relocation of production to areas that pay low wages and crowding out of investments due to deregulations. All these have eventually led to retrenchments, outsourcing of 'non core' functions and non filling of jobs. Increasingly employers are creating non- standard employment with less or no benefits e.g. part time work, independent contracting, home work, temporary work, seasonal work, working through labor brokers etc. In pursuit of cheap labor, employers have opted to recruit more women workers in all aspects of production. While factories, mines and farms continue to be the main places of employment and work, the homes and streets have also emerged as work places. Further to this, some workers find themselves working in workplaces that are not owned by their employers. Labor broker workers and workers doing outsourced services are very good examples in this respect.

These critical transformations in the world of work have implications on trade union organizing. While a few trade unions having recognized the challenges posed by these fundamental changes have attempted to experiment with new ways of organizing in the broader context of globalisation, majority of trade unions have not started to reflect on these contemporary trends and raise the need to rethink on the current trade union structure and the manner trade union organizing is traditionally being carried. This paper examines the trends of work in the broader context of globalisation and explores new ways of trade union organizing that may be adopted as a way of responding to the above mentioned fundamental changes.

## **Methodology**

The study shall basically use two methods that are outlined below:

- **Desk research:** A large part of the study shall involve reviewing published materials on Globalization, Neo-liberalism, Employment Trends and Trade Unionism, Workers' Rights etc. There shall also be deliberate effort to draw experiments of new forms of organizing being tried by a few trade unions across the globe e.g. in South Africa, Uganda and Argentina among others.
- **Interviews:** Interviews with the leadership of trade unions in Southern Africa if funds allow (if not then the interviews will be confined to the trade union leadership in Malawi where the author is based) will be done to find out how trade unions are directly responding to the changes in the world of work with much emphasis on organizing.

**About The Author**

Paliani Chinguwo works as a full time researcher at Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU). MCTU is a federation of 20 trade unions in Malawi with a membership of about 300,000 workers. He is also a researcher for the African Labor Research Network (ALRN). ALRN brings together trade union linked researchers from all over Africa to undertake joint research and publications towards developing alternatives to neo-liberal development path.

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