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## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT POLICY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: NIGERIA AS A CASE STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reviewed understudies public transport approach utilizing factors such urbanization, populace development, vehicle proprietorship, and utilization. With changes in the social, political and economic climate of Nigeria, this study looks at how these changes have affected transportation request and supply, transport arrangement and directions, and parts of economic aspects and fund identified with public transport. Conservation and enhancing of existing modes, effective utilization of people in general transport administration framework, executing appropriate transportation measures, and empowering a move towards reasonable modes were suggested. Review of government policies towards public transportation was undertaken and it shows that if developing nations like Nigeria are to achieve their economic transformation blueprint such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they require a functional, reliable and effective transport system to, among other things, connect people, places, services, opportunities and all these can only be derived by properly formulated and implemented policies with the aid of all relevant private, academic and government bodies working together.

**Keywords:** Public Transport, Policy, Traffic Management, Public Private Partnership,  
Intermodal Transport

## **1. Introduction**

Public transportation in developing countries is in a state of crisis. The public transportation system is characterized by high level of congestion, increased travel times, stifling air contamination, lethal traffic accidents, and insufficient public transport are the standard (Jacobs &Greaves, 2003). With billions of dollars in economic productivity lost because of wasted time in traffic congestion, air and noise pollution extremely impeding wellbeing and personal satisfaction, the poor lacking affordable or comfortable mobility and transportation likewise a major contributor to climate change, representing 25 percent of worldwide discharges (IEA, 2003) in developing countries. All these combined emphasize the need for an efficient public transportation system in developing countries. The public transportation challenge in developing countries like Nigeria is to such an extent that the same road space is shared by buses, cars, motorbikes, three-wheelers, bicycles, wheelbarrows, trucks, throngs of pedestrians on foot, street dwellers, and vendors that always come surprisingly close to disaster, the railway option is a dangerous alternative while the air and water transportation alternative are costly and to a great extent inefficient.

Public transportation is undoubtedly an imperative catalyst for activating and stimulating the beat of economic, social, political and strategic advancement of any society. To accomplish this, public transportation infrastructures must be soundly developed to guarantee the movement of people and goods rapidly, economically, securely, easily and in an environmental-friendly way (Sumaila, 2012). According to Oni (2004), transport is a key

component in the social and economic improvement of any country. Basically, along these lines, Nigeria's transport strategy has two major thrusts, namely: that transport services are adequate to meet the social and economic needs of the country and to provide an effective instrument of national development; and that the transport system ensures the most efficient use of resources within the transport sector and a sustained improvement of the sector's productivity.

Public transport policies can be defined as standards, principles, and rules formulated or adopted by the government to accomplish its long term goals of efficient public transport system. The public transport policies also serve as regulatory framework which guides all activities in the sector. The need to develop a national transport policy that is responsible to the needs of the country and its people is essential in developing countries like Nigeria. The National public transport policy therefore provides the guidelines for planning, development, co-ordination, management, supervision and regulation of the transport sector with its fundamental goal of developing an adequate, safe, environmentally sound, efficient and affordable integrated transport system within the framework of a progressive and competitive market economy. This will involve Public Private Partnership (PPP) in public transport sector projects with goals of economic, social and environmental growth. Also, there is need for ports and inland waterways development, management and reforms.

The Federal Government is responsible for the national highways which constitute only 17% of the existing road network while the state and local government covers the rest. In addition, the Federal Government through its Agencies is also responsible for Inland Waterways/River Ports, Sea Ports, railways, airports and pipelines. The Nigerian railways network includes approximately 3,500km of narrow gauge lines. The network has been extended by a narrow

gauge line between Onne and the Enugu-Port Harcourt line and a yet to be finished 320km standard gauge line from Ajaokuta to Warri. The Nigerian Railway system has the potential to provide a proficient and cost effective method for transport, especially on long distance routes serving high density traffic flows. Tragically, due to past disregard, the Nigerian railway system has not possessed the capacity to address its intended purpose. It has deteriorated in all areas, and got caught up in an endless loop of declining traffic, endemic deficits, diminishing ability to serve its clients bringing about further loss of income to its operators. In short the railways have stopped to be economically viable. The air transport option is no better in Nigeria. In view of the high cost in the running of the airplane terminals and the generally low income, just three of the air terminals operate at commercial self-sufficiency level, while the others operate at a significant loss there by making them very inefficient for public transportation. All these challenges present a need for government to speed up actions on a national public transport policy to rectify these anomalies.

The prologue to the National Transport Policy document of 1993 states that "At present, the Nigerian transport system functions in a crisis situation", and one of the foremost causes, it identified was "a major imbalance between the needs of Nigerian society and economy for adequate transport facilities and the ability of the transport sector to meet such demands". This statement stays substantial today, in 2010, in regard to majority of the transport system. The imbalance in supply and demand for transport capacity overall, and in the development of the different modes of transport, has in fact increased over the period since 1993 but still remains largely deficient. Nigeria remains in critical need of a national transport policy that can define the degree of government and private sector involvement, build a compelling inter-modal transport system, and in addition elucidate vehicular usage of the different

transport infrastructures among others within the country. Right now, the country has no transport policy that can address the nitty gritty of public transportation, including transport infrastructure and other issues that need to do with transport regulation (Usman, 2015).

Nigeria is currently ranked 127th among 144 nations of the world in global competitiveness of their transport systems. According to Oyesiku (2015), government policies have dependably been exceptionally rare and where and when they exist, two noteworthy issues would negatively impact them which are policy somersault as a result of changing government/administrators and the lack of articulation of these policies with virtually all the agencies charged with implementing the policy doing things haphazardly with several policies coming from different agencies on the same issue due to lack of coordination. The national transport policy should be developed to give a satisfactory, moderate, safe, environmentally sound and efficient transport system with regards to a dynamic and aggressive market economy. To accomplish the goals of this policy, a specific institutional framework which incorporates the Federal Ministry of Transport with its varieties of offices and parastatals with comparative set up at the state levels and local government levels, the Federal Road Safety Commission, the Police, the Directorate of Road Traffic Service (DRTS) and its states equivalent just to mention a few were established yet the policy have not possessed the capacity to accomplish its set objectives.

According to Oyesiku (2004), the prime of such a policy is the provision of an affordable, sufficient and productive transport system. The national transport policy accordingly recognizes this requirement for introduction of the principle of market economy into the nation's transport sector, with a specific end goal of pulling in private investment and activity and beyond what many would consider possible, to exchange obligations regarding the

operation of the transport system from government to the private sector (Weir & McCabe, 2012). This does not mean the relinquishment of government obligations, yet rather a focus on the part of the government leading to a genuine public – private sector partnership (PPP), with both the private and public sector carrying out their function properly; this is the primary objective of the present national transport policy for Nigeria.

A productive transportation system is critical for a nation's advancement. However urban areas in developing countries are regularly characterized by high-density urban areas and poor public transport, and in addition absence of properly designed road pavements, parking facilities, road user discipline, and control of land use, bringing about contamination, congestion, accidents, and a host of other transportation challenges (Hudgson, 2012). Despite the fact that developing countries have more extreme transportation difficulties and necessities than developed countries, it is anticipated that by 2030, developing countries will have a larger number of vehicles than developed countries (Ashish & Ramanayya, 2014), this in itself is a major challenge yet an appropriately drafted and executed public transport policy will take out the challenges. The viability of public transportation depends vigorously on the type and condition of vehicles under use, the road condition, the driver's competence, the attitude of the driver to traffic engineering, control, administration and in addition the policy guidelines that give directions to the whole transport system (Oyediran & Aregbesola, 2008). Most urban areas in Nigeria don't have urban road design policies and those that claim to have, had too many obsolete and inconsistent designs that are at variance with current global realities.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Public transportation in Nigeria is one of the numerous sectors that have not seen the required improvement, progression and development (Aderamo, 2012). Truth be told, as a sector capable for employing a large number of the nation's unemployed youth populace, specialists' assessments show that the area has remained to a great extent undiscovered and unharnessed. From marine, through land and railroad to air transport, the minutest of infrastructural coordination is apparently ailing in the Nigerian transport system. The bulk of the fault is put on the presence of close medieval laws which debilitate, or out appropriately refuse private sector participation in the nation's core transport investments. With several bills on public transportation at present before the National Assembly, it is expected that would have been sent for enactment by the Federal Executive Council (FEC), these bills have failed to change into policies for use in the public transportation sector. Some of the Bills include the National Transport Commission Bill (2015); the National Roads Fund Bill; the Federal Roads Authority Bill; the Nigeria Ports and Harbor Authority Bill (2015); the National Inland Waterways Authority Bill (2015); and the Nigerian Railway Authority Bill (2015).

The Nigerian government has failed to activate an inter-modal transport policy that would see to the successful and proficient operation of all modes of transport in the country. Presently, the roads are conveying far beyond their ability and that is the reason we have dilapidated roads everywhere. The railroad that should carry the loads away the road is still epileptic since what we have is the narrow gauge. What we require today is the wide gauge that can convey more load and travel longer distance. The ports are in an unpleasant and unsatisfactory state though it has been concessioned by government recently; it is still working far below the desires of the general public.



In Nigeria today, there is no functional, integrated transport system like "Rail-Road-Water system" or "Air-Rail-Road-Water System" as can be found in advanced countries, for example, Britain, France, and U.S.A. There also exists a poor interface between Rail and Road, consequently making it hard to appreciate the ease and advantages of Inter-modular transport systems (Nwanze, 2002). Table 1 below highlights some of the issues and problems prevalent in the Nigerian public transport system.

**Table 1:** Issues and Problems in Nigerian Public Transport System

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Air</b>	<b>Maritime</b>	<b>Rail</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Inland Waterways</b>
Infrastructure	-Many Uneconomic Airports - Poor airport Facilities - Poor and inadequate Maintenance	- Uneconomic Seaports - Old Port Facilities - Poor Port Access -Unmaintained Terminal Facilities	- Old, narrow Gauge - Poor gradient, many curves - Dilapidated Rail Stations - Poor Communication and Signaling System	- Poorly Maintained Roads - Poor Rural Access and Interchange Facilities - Poor Road Complimentary Facilities	- Shallow channels - Seasonal water Levels - Presence of sand bars - Numerous wrecks and weeds

Vehicle	Ageing Aircrafts - Low Fleets	Preponderance of Foreign Vessels	Ageing Locomotives and wagons -Unavailability to spare parts	Numerous small capacity Vehicles -Old Rickety Vehicles	Unsafe Local boats
Operations	Low Level of Indigenous Participation -Funding problems .heavy debt burdens	low Level of Indigenous Participation -Poor Handling -Excessive Government Participation	-Poor Operations and Management -Poor Funding -Large staff Strength -Huge Pension	- Numerous operators - Inadequate skills - Increasing accidents and high Fatalities	- Unorganized Operators
Policy/ Planning	-Absence of integrated Policy - Institutional Conflicts	- Institutional Frictions - Excessive Bureaucracy - Poor Plan Implementation	- Absence of Road Policy - Poor planning	Uncoordinated Road Development -Erratic Funding	- Poorly Integrated

**Source:** Sumaila, 2008

All the above stated issues and problems in the Nigerian public transport system exists largely due to poorly drafted and implemented public transport policies and this is as reflected in public transportation challenges as reflected in Fig 1.





**Fig 1:** Lack of Public Transportation Policy leading to Transportation Challenges

Thus, this paper evaluate public transport policy in Nigeria by reviewing the national transport policy as it affects public transport, identify succinctly agencies involved and identify challenges affecting it with a view to proving a roadmap for its effective implementation.

## 2.0 Review of literature

Nigerian roads are the most important means of transportation in the country, carrying about 80% of the population and goods. Nigeria has a road transportation network made up of about 193,200 kilometers (Federal: 34,123 km; State: 30,500 km, and Local Government: 129,577 km). Of these, there are 60,068 km of paved roads, which follow a grid system of North - South and West – East, the railway gauge is presently narrow, the inland water way, airports and seaports as shown in Fig 2 and all these transport networks requires policies to guide and enable them function efficiently.

The National transport policy by helping to explain Government's decisions and actions in the transport sector by espousing the goals and principles that guide it; identifying existing gaps and short-comings and how to address them; showing how actions in the different modes are linked in pursuit of common goals; providing the basis for a system of monitoring and accountability; and Ensuring consistency in the application of policy principles across all modes and in pursuit of different objectives and a good public transport policy will help facilitate financial assistance towards improving urban mobility.

The benefits of public transportation policies include the following: It allows the standards by which the transport sector is governed to be set down, comprehended and followed by everyone involved, Common strategies are utilized for everyone involved in the public transportation sector and in this way expanding operational proficiency, Control frameworks are set up in the operational environment inside the public transport sector, The transportation policies represent the techniques needed to get the maximum benefits in the minimum time, they are important to train newcomers to the public transport sector and to keep other members completely informed of the agreed policies.

As indicated by Okoroji (2013), while formulating public transport policies, it is important to consider every facet of the transportation unit. The principle areas to be covered in the transportation unit incorporate the following; introduction which gives the reason and the decision behind the formulation of the policies, the transportation administration, the instruments and the language utilized, the rules governing every day operations, procedures and controls governing the transport sector, established and systematized thought on different theme which have been acknowledged for growth and development in the public transport

sector .

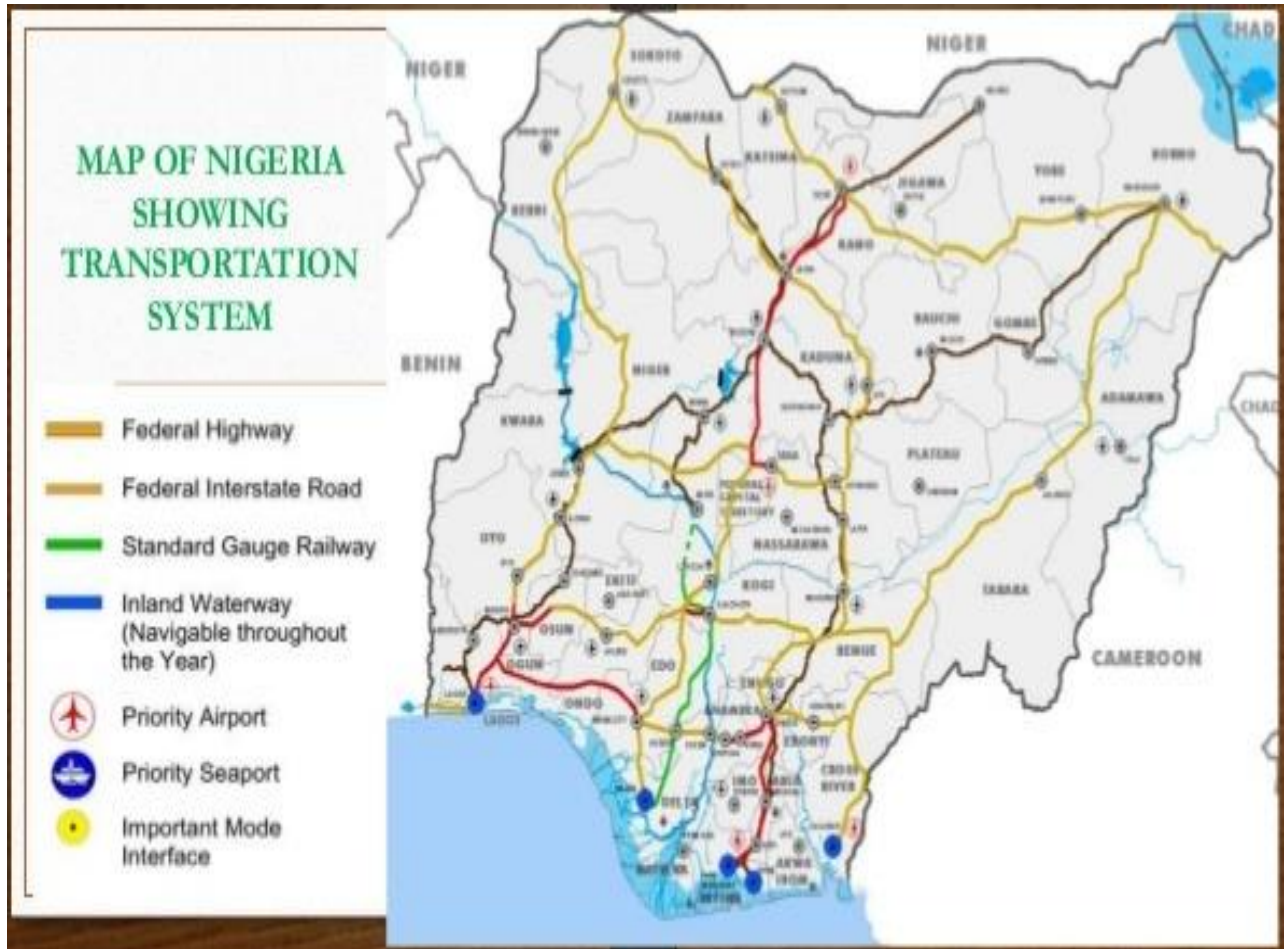


Fig 2: Map of Nigeria Showing the Transportation System

## 2.1 Overview of Nigeria's Transport Policy

The Nigerian Public Transport policy observed the dominance of the road in the transport sector of the country and the increased demand for road transport. The policy likewise acknowledge the large number of small administrators in the sector because of high costs of vehicles, their poor condition of upkeep and the over-burdening characteristics of the vehicles all of which constitute different hazard to wellbeing on and of the roads.

There are two particular classes of transportation services according to the Nigerian public road policy needed to bolster a viable and efficient country, the first manages the arrangement of the offices to manage the daily workings of the country itself, road streets, public transport services and myriads of ancillary facilities required to provide for the different movement of people and services essential for the operation of any urban region. The second classification of transport services are those required to permit the country connect with other areas of the country Nigeria and in addition the world in satisfying its national functions – air services, inter regional highway and trucking services are the major component of the total transport system. The network comprises of peripheral and traverse expressways, parkways, transit way and arterial collectors and local streets. The combination of these systems has created a very comprehensive highway system bounding the major development sectors and defining their outer limit. These are provided to ease movement of commuters, as well as pedestrian and goods.

Public transport policies in the past had likewise hampered formulation, development, regulation, control and implementation of urban transport guidelines. These have to some degree made the idea of the policy difficult and the appraisal of the policy document incomprehensible before implementation. Moreover, the process of formulation of the policy alienates the stakeholders, particularly private sector operators of the transport system as well as the ordinary transport users or riders. The fact that there was little consultation with stakeholders made the previous efforts of putting together national transport policy on exercise destined for the shelves. Closely associated with the problem of inadequate data and poor consultation, the approaches of government in the evolution of transport policy are the inability of even government stated policy statement to change overtime. A good regulatory

and control system, like a transport system itself must be subjected to modification and review. In spite of such a great amount in the writing of public transportation policy, even in several developing countries, practically all – urban centres in Nigeria don't have a public transport policy arrangement except Lagos which has one but not properly updated

### **2.1.1 Appraisal of Agencies involved in Public Transportation Policy**

#### **Federal Ministry of Transport**

This ministry is in charge of policy formulation and coordination. The federal ministry is supposed to issue, modify and cancel policies and laws relating to traffic efficiency.

#### **Federal Ministry of Works**

The Federal Ministry of Works is charged with the responsibility of highway construction, federal roads and making regulations as to the use of such roads. They are backed by various decrees such as the federal highway Decree No. 7 of 1971 and as amended by Decree No. 6 of 1977 and Decree No. 33. of 1988. The Federal Ministry of Works, highway division has the responsibility for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of all federal government roads.

#### **The Federal Road Safety Commission**

This government agency was set up by Federal Government Decree No. 45 of 1987 with the following functions:

- (a) Making the highway safe for motorists and road users;
- (b) Recommending works and devices designed to eliminate or minimize accidents on

the highway and advising the federal ministry of works on the localities where such works and devices are required; and

(c) Educating motorists and member of the public on the importance of discipline on the highway, with other duties as may be assigned to them.

### **The National Conference of Road Traffic Services Directors/Chief Vehicles Inspection Officers of the Federation**

This conference is an annual event of Directors of road traffic services/chief vehicles inspection officers of the federation. It is a policy review conference whose objection is to afford items of the various state road traffic departments opportunity to rub minds, share experience, consider new proposals on road traffic management in the country and proffer ideals and proposals that may assist government at all levels, motorists and the general public towards greater safety on our highway.

### **3.0 Conclusion and Recommendation**

It is noteworthy that to make sensible success in public transportation policy, the production and implementation process must be done with input from all relevant fields of occupation involved and this involves fetching a handful of highly trained professional personnel to conduct a systematic study of the transportation system. Then based on the study report, planning and policy making process can then be initiated in accordance to the laid down procedure and implemented thereafter.

Nigeria's current policy framework for public transportation should acknowledge the country's unique mobility challenge as a major force that will shape economy and society, a societal change that public transportation policy has to adopt in the future alongside the



other modern challenges arising from globalization, urbanization, and high technology explosion. For a successful National transport policy the following among other things should be considered –integrating land use and transport planning, equitable allocation of road space between motorized and non-motorized transport systems for efficient inter- modal transport, priority should be given to public and urban transport, quality and pricing of public transport infrastructures should be upgraded and adequate use of technology should be employed in the public transport development. Nigerian policy makers would also need to support more policy based researches and empirical studies in policy formulation, design and implementation strategies for public transport development.

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