

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN OBÀLÉNDÉ LAGOS, NIGERIA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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**ABSTRACT:** *Challenges of transportation in Obàléndé area of Lagos Nigeria can only be felt and experienced by its ever increasing commuters and the numerous vehicles plying the road facility. Though the status quo of transportation in that area cannot be outrightly written off, the prospect of keeping in view possible transport infrastructures into the transport system and executing it at the adequate locations in the said area is a feat that is worth researching into. This research looks into the actual transportation challenges faced by Nigerians in Obàléndé area of Lagos, with every possible conceivable solutions that is practical. The data gathered for this research will be via literature review and structured interview. The interviews will be conducted using purposive sampling methods and the data analysis will be done using coding and content analysis. From the information obtained it is recommended*

**KEYWORDS:** prospects, BRT, LAGBUD, transportation, challenges, Obàléndé , Lagos, Nigeria

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### INTRODUCTION

Transportation challenges in most urban centers has been on the increase since independence. This is due to rapid increase in population in urban areas, which is not matched with improvement in transport facilities such as road network, transport complimentary facilities, transport services and traffic management techniques. Thus urban transport problems have increasingly been noted since 1960, to be characterized by inadequate and inefficient services, long waiting time at bus stop, environmental pollution, traffic congestions and bad roads, shortage of vehicles and the use of motorcycle as a means of urban passenger transport system. (Ogunbodede, 2008)

The Nigerian transport systems, right from inception, were poorly designed and are unable to scale up to meet greater demand, a design flaw which causes traffic congestion on roads, overstressed railways, faltering airfields, and mass-transport blind spots. (Igwe, 2013)

The nature of urban public transport challenges in Nigeria specifically, Obàléndé area of Lagos, can best be appreciated by looking at the trends of its development. In this paper a cursory attempt was made to review transportation challenges and prospects in Obàléndé area of Lagos.

### Definition of transportation system

According to (Boyce, 2009) transportation system is a system of moving people or goods. It divides itself into three components. These are *vehicle* (equipment); *guideway* and *operation plan*. The term *vehicle* refers to whatever conveys objects or people to required destination. The term *guideway* refers to, on what the vehicle moves upon. *Guideway* further refers to links and nodes, that inherently form a network. Links form route when connected. While a *node* can accommodate a terminal where traffic is transferred from one means of transport to

another. The term *operation plan* defines the way traffic are contained and vehicle are moved over the guideway. This article will look into transport system in Obàléndé by way of these three components.

### **Constraints to the General Development of Public Transport in Lagos**

The problems in the sector can be summarized in a statement extracted from the Lagos Development Plan 2012 -2015;

*“The transport system is inadequate for the growing urban population in the State. All modes of transport have challenges. The bus public transport operation suffers from high levels of fragmentation and inadequate regulation. The rail transport has few existing rail corridors and the existing corridors are grossly under-utilised. In the water transport, there is no coherence amongst water transport regulatory agencies (LASWA, NIMASA and NIWA). In the nonmotorized transport, infrastructure facilities are extremely limited throughout the State. Finally in the paratransit mode of transportation (okadas), there is indiscipline and regulations are not effectively enforced.”*

### **Report of The Vision 2020 on Transportation**

The report was prepared in 2009 recognizing efficient transport system as a key factor in socioeconomic development of the nation and improving of transport infrastructure as a necessary precondition for achieving the Nigerian Government’s 20:20:20 Vision. The aim of the report is to evolve an integrated and sustainable transport system that is safe, intermodal and in line with global best practices by year 2020. (OSHODI, 2016)

### **Lagos State Strategic Transport Master Plan**

The plan developed by thr Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMAT) is a strategic long-term path aimed at transforming the Lagos transport sector beyond its current challenges. The plan identifies possible transport infrastructure and services required for meeting travel demand by

2032, 7 years above the projections of Lagos State Development Plan 2012-2025. (OSHODI, 2016)

### **Lagos Road Traffic and Administration Law 2012**

The law cited as Lagos Road Traffic Law 2012 expanded the responsibility of Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) on control and management of vehicular traffic in the state to include general regulation of traffic on public highways, prohibition of certain mode of transportation on specifies areas and regulation of conduct of operators, especially the drivers.

### **Methods of Study and Organization of the Paper**

This paper adopts exploratory method of research to examine and discuss relevant issue of interest regarding the prospects and challenges of transportation in Obàléndé area of Lagos. Thus the paper reviews existing literature on transportation in Lagos especially Obàléndé area. The writers conducted interviews at Obàléndé area of Lagos using purposive sampling. They also rely on information Obtained from data analysis using coding and content analysis after conducting the interview to ascertain the transportation status quo.

The paper is organized in ??? sections apart from the introduction and method of study. These are:

Defining the terminology transport system and breaking it into components.  
Through literature review

### **Location of Obàléndé in Lagos Nigeria**

Obàléndé located in Eti-Osa LGA. It is strategically placed between Lagos Island and Ikoyi.

Lagos Island is comprised of: Banana Island, Ikoyi, Lekki Peninsula, Marina, Obàléndé , Onikan, Victoria Island, Eko Atlantic City. Obàléndé is one of the most popular bus stops in Lagos- Obàléndé . It is one of the major gateways into what is now referred to as 'The Island ', a term used to describe the most important and influential districts in Lagos outside of its capital on the mainland, Ikeja. These are Lagos Island, Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Lekki. It is a major terminus for buses coming from the mainland to the Island via the 3rd Mainland Bridge which is Africa's longest bridge, 11.8km long.

This strategic location makes Obàléndé one of the most important transportation hubs in Lagos where you can find buses to practically every location in the city. Many people from outside Lagos coming to trade enter the Island via Obàléndé . Hence, there are many interstate buses especially to other cities in Southern Nigeria.

Another reason for Obàléndé 's popularity is its proximity to the former seat of political power in Nigeria, Dodan Barracks, the former Federal Secretariat and Police Baracks. This made it a must for many civil servants to commute through it to and from work when Lagos was still the political capital of Nigeria. Lagos stopped being the political capital of Nigeria on 14th November, 1991 when Abuja became the new capital. However, this move did not really affect the vibrancy of Obàléndé and by extension Lagos as commercial interests ensure their importance and continued influence (Olatunji, 2015). One of the important components to meet the travel demand needs of a city is well-organized transport infrastructure including public transport buses, bus terminals, bus stops, roads and intelligent transport systems. (Private, 2012)

### **Historical Background of Obalende**

The Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF) made up of predominantly Hausa Men were initially camped on the land where King's College, Lagos is situated. Then, a need arose for the use of the land and the Oba of Lagos pressured the Governor of Lagos to resettle the RWAFF men, and sold virgin land in what is now Obalende to the British Colonial Government. After resettlement in the purchased land, the RWAFF men named the place Ibi ti Oba le wa de, which translated from Yoruba means "the land the Oba of Lagos drove us to

According to (Ikoyi-Obàléndé LCDA, 2017) during the British colonization and their occupation of Lagos Ikoyi was sparsely inhabited. The increasing expansion of Lagos Colonial Administration, led to the bid to acquire more land for development. These acquired lands included the swamps of Obàléndé. Governor Macgregor, the then governor of the Lagos Colonial Administration, cut a canal through Lagos island. Thus, separating Lagos Island from Ikoyi. The canal was named after him. After a long history, Ikoyi- Obàléndé Local Council

Development Area and other thirty-six (36) were created on October 2003. This was in response to massive population increase in the State of Lagos. Ikoyi- Obàléndé Local Council Development Area of made up of five (5) electoral wards, of which Obàléndé is included a ward "A". (Ikoyi-Obàléndé LCDA, 2017)

### **Historical Background of Public Transportation in Lagos**

After the commissioning of the Carter (1901), Eko (1975) and Third Mainland (1991) bridges which connect Lagos Island to Lagos Mainland. Road transport became primarily the most important means of transport in Obàléndé . In the 1920s, Mrs Charlotte Olajumoke Obasa and W. A. Dawodu were the two Nigerians that initiated road based transportation. Before a company owned by Levantine expatriate dominated the Lagos transport scene. In 1958 Lagos Town Council acquired the buses owned by this company to form the Lagos Municipal Transport Service. (Naptu2, 2013)

Obàléndé has been transformed by different government administration.`

Many operators went into the transport business in the 1960s. Bolekaja emerged as the name given to the transport vehicle at that time ,though it was later ban. This name literally translates to "come down and let's fight" in the Yoruba language. After the ban of Bolekaja, Molues took the stead of Bolekaja. Molue is Mercedes Benz 911. The transport operators fitted it with locally made passenger compartment and painted it yellow and black. It is a large commercial passenger bus. Operators of Molue fare charges a far cheaper when compared to other smaller commuter buses, because it transports more passengers. This transport vehicle is so popular that afro-beat maestro, Fela AnikulapoKuti and other 1980s groups had to sing about it. Paying tribute to the king of the road in their songs. The 1970 witnessed the emergence of Danfos. Danfo is a mini commercial passenger bus. These buses are often of the make Toyota Hiace, Nissan Urvan, Mitsubishi L300 etc. It has become the main means of commercial transport in Lagos because it plys virtually all bus routes. In the early 1980s, the government decreed the all Danfo and taxi drivers must be members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and display their NURTW identity cards. The Lagos State Transport Corporation (LSTC) was a state owned company that ran transport services in Lagos. The buses were mainly mercedes benz buses which were painted red and white (Naptu2, 2013)

The Federal Urban Mass Transit System is a system the arose in 1988 due to increase in the selling price of petrol. By this system the federal government bought buses. This buses were distributed to nominated transporters and organizations. This buses were high capacity buses, which were eventually painted in the color of the organization that owned it, instead of the Lagos State commercial colours.

### **Notable Roads in Obàléndé and its features**

The Third Mainland Bridge is iconic to Obalende. On arrival to the Lagos Island the first port of call is Obalende. Obalende opens up into Ikoyi, Falomo, Bourdillon, Victoria Island and Lekki. These places are the highbrow areas in the lagos megacity. (SAMSON, 2017)

Odo street is a moving spot for suya business. Suya sellers share similar boundaries with commercial motorcycle operators, popularly called okada riders. They are at beck and call of customers who need a ride to any part of the area in Obàléndé and outside it. The growing patronage of suya has also caused increase in the number of okada riders, who milled around Odo street. (Shosanya, 2012)

### **Mode of Transport According to Level of Occupancy**

The mode of transport consists of High Occupancy Vehicles (HOD) regulated buses (Bus Rapid Transit)- BRT and LAGBUS, High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) unregulated buses otherwise known as Molue buses, Low Occupancy Vehicles (LOV) otherwise known as Danfos, motorcycle taxis otherwise known as Okadas, tricycles (Keke Marwa), cabs, ferries, boats (Makoko), trains and private vehicles (cars). Others are articulated vehicles of different used (fuel tankers, container laden trucks and sand tipping trucks among other) (OSHODI, 2016)

### **TRANSPOTATION CHALLENGES AT OBÀLÉNDÉ Inadequacy of Formal Modes**

Formal public transportation as a mode cannot meet the demand of Lagos residents, as it only contributes 2.75% to the daily mobility of the city. For this reason semi-formal and informal operators from mini buses (danfo), motorcycles (okada), tricycles (keke marwa) and boat sectors will continue to fill the void. This operators are mostly formally unemployed youth and other categories of the population set out to look for other means of livelihood. In actuality they are contributing to the traffic chaos and the unethical behavior they inflict on the common road users. (OSHODI, 2016)

### **Road Safety, Environment and Social Concerns**

Poor driver behavior, public transport operators indiscipline, unsafe vehicle conditions, unven road conditions, poor street lighting, lack of pedestrian facilities and poor traffic enforcement all combine to produce an accident rate that is probably among the highest in the world. The environmental concerns include vehicle emissions, improper waste oil disposal and high traffic noise level. Expensive transport fares, high accident rates, unreliability of the transport system and forced evictions due to expansion of transport infrastructure constitute the major issues. (OSHODI, 2016)□

### **Inefficient Land Use Pattern**

Since over 70% of development in Lagos is in form of slum and informal settlements (Lagos Development Plan 2012-2015), the land use pattern is also reflection of informalities. Self allocated land system and self built housing systems are predominant in the city with large scale consequential compromise of road infrastructure standard and delivery. Detailed observation of city architecture revealed that navigation in many communities can be most possible through low occupancy transport equipment and this explained proliferation of informal mini buses (danfo), motocycles (okada), tricycles (keke Marwa) as major component of transportation in Lagos. The scenario leaves about 52% of households in Lagos (2,275,837 households) with lack of access to adequate transportation (Lagos Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Correction of land use pattern in many communities to accommodate expanded transport infrastructure are often through force evictions. (OSHODI, 2016)

### **Lack of Robust Platform to Attract Organized Transport Companies**

Within the city of Lagos, there is obvious absence of organized private sector driven transport companies. The city transport landscape is largely dominated by self procured transport equipment such as mini buses (danfo), motorcycles (okada), tricycles (kek marwa) and boats.



There is no vibrant local or statewide transport policy that could stimulate, encourage or support organized private transport companies to operate and participate in the intra-city market despite the large population and huge daily mobility demand. The existing organized private transport companies operate intercity journeys with take-off points from individually owned transport stations. (OSHODI, 2016)□

### **Non-Standardization of Fares**

Within the city, transport fares depends on certain factors such as the bargaining power of the passenger, the weather condition in the city, period of the day, condition of the vehicle and psychomood of the operator. There is no fare standardization within the system except for the recently introduced BRT and LAGBUS systems which currently accommodates less than 3% of daily mobility in the city.

### **Consistence Lock Down of City Due to Scarcity of Petroleum Products**

In the recent years, the city has witnessed regular lock down, sometime up to six months in any particular year. This is due to perennial shortage of petroleum products which reduce mobility by keeping many vehicles of the road and formation of vehicular queues around petrol filling stations with attendant traffic bottleneck. Many of the filling stations are located along the primary and arterial corridors in the city. □ (OSHODI, 2016)□

### **Low cost Recovery**

The transportation system characterized by inadequacy and poor infrastructure, proliferation of informal sector operators, weak modal integration, inefficient land use pattern, restricted network and absence of organized private sector operators will most possibly result in low cost recovery and inefficient collection systems. That appears to be the situation in Lagos as the rate of poverty in the city can be reflected in the transport equipment in the city portrayed by poor maintenance, low safety rate and poor quality service. (OSHODI, 2016)

### **Lack of Maintenance Strategy and Capacity**

In the intra city transport market operations, there is one common factor both in the formal and informal sectors, lack of maintenance. This is clearly reflected in both the infrastructure and mobility equipment. Often, this manifest the sector as underdeveloped, compromise passenger safety and security, and contributes to the aesthetic depletion of the city, Lagos. □ (OSHODI, 2016)□

### **Inference on Lagos Road Traffic Law**

The Lagos Road Traffic Law 2012 has intention of controlling and managing the vehicular traffic in the city-state but unfortunately it remains a stop gap measure towards resolving transportation problem in Lagos. □ (OSHODI, 2016)

Many of the provision of the law portray Lagos as a city under emergency rule where citizens are in extreme disagreement with government institutions. The provision that offenders will forfeit their vehicles to the State which will in turn dispose the vehicle, after one month, failed to take into consideration the precarious poverty index of the residents of the city. In the process of using the law to outlaw the operations of motorcycle taxis (okada) and tricycles (Keke Marwa), the situation becomes a keen struggle between policy's declared illegality and livelihood of the citizens. (OSHODI, 2016)

Since commencement of implementation in August 2012, it has set a situation whereby the city and its residents are in regular combat made on transportation with high level of mutual suspicion rather than increased level of mutual collaboration. The law has continued to provoke variance between the State and the residents. Its implementation led to a protest by members of the Nigerian Bar Association, Ikeja Branch, over the incarceration of a member at Badagry prison in May 2013, on allegation of traffic offence. The protest led to withdrawal of the case against the charges member by the State (The Guardian, 2013). Other alleged traffic rules violators were not so provident. (OSHODI, 2016)

Section 38 of the provided that Commissioner may empower any Authority to fix time table for stage carriages on any route, determine stopping times at stands and stopping places and determine the day and hours during which stage carriages may ply for hire on any specified route among other responsibilities. This provision shows introduction of confusion into transportation in the city where any agency can be called upon to deal with sensitive and intelligence part of transportation. Despite enormous demand from the residents on compliance, the law does not recognize transport infrastructure especially adequacy, conditions and quality of roads as part of traffic control and management problems as it completely exonerates the State and its officials from any compulsion to make this available to the residents. The law missed an opportunity to empower residents to demand Accountability on damaged roads for long period of time. The traffic law seeks to curb the excesses of informal operators and other classes of vehicles by prescribing jail term and exorbitant fine as penalty for traffic offence. However, it presented Lagos to any discerning investor as a potential conflict point between the city and its residents. If the city want to join the league of global cities, imbibe the principles of new urbanism, inclusive, compassionate and smart city, there is need to urgently amend the Lagos Road Traffic Law 2012. (OSHODI, 2016)

## **TRANSPORTATION PROSPECTS AT OBALENDE**

These yellow minibuses for many years have been a major means of public transport for Lagosians. The Strategic Transport Master Plan for Lagos is Planning to replace them with medium and high capacity buses. These yellow minibuses is know in Lagos parlance as Danfo (OGUNMODEDE, 2017)

This decision was taken by Governor Ambode at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture of the Centre for Value (CVL) at MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos Island.

Stakeholder are having mixed reactions on this decision. Commercial bus operators perceive the step will force them out of business, while commuters are pessimist that this decision will worsen public transport in the city.

Governor Ambode claims these commercial vehicles ( Okada, Danfo, Molue, etc...) are not befitting for a mega city and as a result this culminate to a faulty connectivity. Thus Banishing the yellow buses is part of the solution of addressing the issue of connectivity to make people move around with ease.

The Governor propose that since the money to achieve this feat is not available, investors can be encouraged if the government go to the capital market and then improve on the technology of collection of fares. According to the Governor, it is estimated that 86 immigrants enter

Lagos every hour and this immigrants have no plans to leave. This figure is the highest in any city in the world. (OGUNMODEDE, 2017). As such, the Lagos government will on its toes to provide facilities for the Lagos population.

The Lagos populace, including Obalende, have been rest assured that the Bus Programme (BRP) will create jobs rather than throw the drivers into the unemployment market. To this end the Ministry of Transportation is working out the logistics with the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and Road Transport Employers' Association of Nigeria (RTEAN). The would be drivers or operators of the high-capacity buses will be educated, sensitized and pass through refresher courses, when these buses arrive. (OGUNMODEDE, 2017)

These new buses will be fitted with Intelligence Transport System (ITS) gadgets. It is worthy of mention, that the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LAMATA) is developing a control base where buses in transit can be monitored. This will enable the manager to detect infractions – route diversion and abuse – on the part operator, who eventually will be called to order.

## **ROAD TRANSPORTATION IN NIGERIA**

Much of the problems associated with the erosion of roadways are compounded by the lack of adequate drainage infrastructure, they do have to deal with intense seasonal rain. (Igwe, 2013) Young men can often be seen filling city pot holes with dirt and rocks. In return for their unsolicited service, road users often tip these unofficial public workers. (Igwe, 2013)

Poor urban roads can cause bottlenecks in traffic and contribute to traffic congestion. (Igwe, 2013) While this action probably improved traffic flow in certain parts of the city, it clearly violated the human rights of the people affected by the removal process. (Igwe, 2013) there is presently a thriving market in Nigeria for used cars, many of them imported from other parts of the world (like Europe). Given the cost of new cars (and imported used cars), many people fix cars that would be discarded in more affluent societies. (Igwe, 2013)

Government efforts to provide public transportation have been mostly failures [DrummondThompson, Phillip,]. Thus, those without cars requiring long-distance urban transportation are forced to turn to the private sector. Taxis, "danfos" (small vans that hold about 10-15 people), and scooters provide urban transportation for many urban residents. (Igwe, 2013)

Issue to consider with respect to cost of transportation is the cost of fuel. It is ironic indeed that an oil-rich country such as Nigeria often has a scarcity of fuel. Two factors contributing to a discontinuous supply of oil are the reduced production capacity of Nigerian refineries and price controls imposed by the federal government. Low refining capacity means that Nigeria often has to import much of its petrol. (Igwe, 2013)

## **RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

Rail transportation offers much potential because of its relative safety, reliability, lower cost to the users and being singularly capable of transforming the national economy through mass



movement of people, goods and services (Igwe, 2013) . But there is no rail transportation in Obalende. Though the closest is ????? (Igwe, 2013)

## WATER TRANSPORTATION

The waterways have been deemed unsafe for commercial transportation due to surge in criminal activities by kidnappers and pipeline vandals in coastal communities. The closest coastal area to Obalende is ????????

The only body of water that is inherent to Obalende is the Macgregor canal. The Third Mainland Bridge is known to be the longest in West Africa. Macgregor canal is below this bridge. Sir William MacGregor, a medical doctor and the governor of Lagos colony (1899 - 1904) dug this canal to drain the swamps. This was his way of combating the prevalent malaria in the region. (SAMSON, 2017) In this present day Obalende, aquatic life is non-existent in this canal. The canal used to be a passageway for canoes back and forth the Lagos Lagoon. It used to be a good spot for fishing. The canal is no longer basking in its past glory. The water stinks, due to piles of rubbish abundantly swimming in it. The canal is now an emergency toilet to members of the public. All thi make it unpleasant for canoes to stream the canal. Though presently, effort has been make to keep the under bridge and canal clean and no aquatic life nor canoes have been sighted in it.

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