

**THE IMPORTANCE OF TRICYCLE TRANSPORTATION IN THE
URBANIZATION OF IPAJA- AYOBO, LOCAL COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT
AREA OF LAGOS STATE**

Austin U. Igwe

*Department of History and International Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka*

&

Ugochukwu Samuel Osisima

*Department of History and Strategic Studies
Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo Ebonyi State
ugochukwuosisima@gmail.com*

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Abstract

Transportation is very crucial to urban development and the conurbation of cities. This has aided the growth and expansion of suburbs, creation of new cities and economic development. Tricycle mode of transport helps to facilitate rural development as dwellers moved to areas which are accessible and motorable. In Alimosho local government especially in Ipaja Ayobo Local Council Development Area which is one of the Local councils that makes Alimosho, tricycle business has helped the town to flourish, open it up to other cities and Ogun state. This study examines the nexus between tricycle transport and urbanization focusing on Ayobo Ipaja Local council area. It focused on Alimosho, tricycle routes and how the nexus in urban regeneration. The study adopts primary and secondary sources and interview were conducted to gather information in this paper. The findings show that transportation is the livewire of any societies, a major boast to city development and critical to the creation of city

Keywords: Urbanization, Tricycle, Suburb, Planning

Introduction

There are overwhelming evidences to show that cities of today depend on transport for efficiency.¹ For instance, food items and raw materials must be conveyed to the different places where they are needed. Food items are moved to residential areas, and raw materials to industrial land-use. Waste generated must be collected and removed. To pay for the food and manufactured materials, people must work. Manufactured goods

produced must be distributed. The urban residents must be on the move constantly in order to make urban activities and functions among others possible; and this movement is allowed by a mechanism known as Transport. Transport therefore remains a non-negotiable instrument of city development and functioning. Tricycle transport has been a mode of land transportation that has contributed significantly to the development of Ipaja Ayobo Local council development areas and its environs. The opening up of the ancient town of Alimosho and the reconstruction and dualization of state roads helped to booster the influx of transportation and this in turn accelerated the growth in the area.

In Nigeria of today, every urban centre is confronted with transportation challenges that seem to grow worse as these areas continue to grow. In Nigeria, urbanization has a fairly long history. Historical perspective reveals that extensive urban development in Nigeria is a feature of 19th and 20th centuries.² In other words, extensive urban development predates the advent of colonization. The Hausa-Fulani Empire of the Northern Nigeria for instance had some large cities, which served as administrative and religions centres of the emirate. According to Akin Mabogunje Kano had a population of about 30,000 around 1855, while Zaria had a population of about 45,000 in 1925.³ Other noticeable cities in the 19th century in the Northern Nigeria include Yauri, Gumel, Katsina and Sokoto whose growth and development was attributed to trade and administration⁴.

The increase in the rate of urbanization and the growth in the number of cities are not as alarming as the scaring and unsatisfactory situation in the cities. The alarming situation of urban transportation in the wake of ever increasing growth and level of concentration of cities in the country is of great concern and discussed next.

In this paper, the effect and nexus between tricycle transport and urbanization will be examined. The importance of tricycle transport in the functioning of urban centre, urbanization and attending transport problems are critically examined as prelude to the understanding of issues in tricycle transportation and urban challenges in Alimosho area.

Theoretical Framework

Transport has been described as the basis of how cities work⁵. The city of today is very complex. It is made up of living, functioning and interacting parts. It covers large expanse of land and accommodates varied activities. In order to allow the necessary functional inter-relationships among the different land uses in urban areas, cities are served with transport facilities. Noah Olatunde⁶ argues that transport systems are the veins and arteries of urban areas; linking together social areas and functional zones. Intra-urban transportation in particular functions to integrate various parts of the city: work, school, recreation, into a unified whole. The urban centres as we know today are therefore not

possible until transport allows the movement of people and goods that make them function.

Urbanization refers to a process of concentration of the population in large numbers in an urban centre and transformation of the society involving migration and economic changes. According to Oyesiku⁷, it is essentially a settlement process, in which a new set of settlement pattern emerges as a result of shift in sectorial economy and changes in intra-sectorial composition of the economy. Urban centres are known to have been in existence for several thousand years, though their sizes were relatively small and varied spatially.

The world population was first estimated in 1650 to be about 500million people; rose to 1.1billion in 1850 and 2.5billion in 1950⁸. Between 1950 and 1980, the population increased to 4.5billion and by the turn of the beginning of the last century there were estimated 6.25billion people on the world⁹ and it has reached 8.0 billion people at the end of 2022¹⁰.

Two important remarkable changes are noticed in the above world population growth pattern. The first is the increasing rate of urban population growth and the second is the increasing rate in the number and sizes of cities. This dramatic change and conurbation of towns as a result of transport and population explosion greatly impact the geography of Ipaja Ayobo local council.

Ayobo Ipaja Local Council Development Area

Ayobo is a suburb in Alimosho Local Government area in Lagos state, Southwest Nigeria. Ayobo is the last town in Lagos West boarding Aiyetoro, Ogun state. Ayobo is a town with about 10 sub-towns under it. Megida, Isefun, Olorunishola, Bada, Sabo, Kande-Ijon, Orisunmare-Ijon, Jagundeyi, Alaja.¹¹ Megida and Isefun are the most prominent towns under Ayobo. It is the capital city of Ayobo.

Iyana Ipaja/Ayobo route is one of the most prominent routes in the entire Alimosho Local government area. Iyana Ipaja is a community settlement with the Mosakus and the Alaagbas facing each other at the centre of the bus-stop. There are also the Okis and the Alaguntan, also in Iyana Ipaja. Initially, Mosaku and Alaagba were under the same local government council. But, with time, the Mosakus remained with Alimosho Local Government Area with largest local government area in Lagos state, while the Alaagba found themselves in Orile-Agege council. Iyana Ipaja is one of the most congested area in Alimosho Local government. It is very popular and notorious for street gangs, area boys, and commercial activities¹². Tricycle operators commence operation along Iyana Ipaja-Ayobo road because of the need to expand the frontier of transport services in the interior.

The major road leading to Ayobo was a one-way road until 2009, the Babatunde Raji Fashola administration (2007-2014) took up the responsibility by expanding the road network of five kilometers and dualised it with a separate walk-way for pedestrians. As a result of this, tricycle operators mobilized to the area. In 2007, the first tricycle operator in the area was Afeez Kolaosho¹³. The Senator representing Lagos West Senator Olamilekan Adeola (Yayi) was still a member of Lagos state House of Assembly representing Alimosho 01 constituency. As part of their support to the constituents and voters, he purchased fifty (50) tricycles to support youth empowerment in the area. He approached the Lagos State Town Planning and Ministry of Transportation for an approval for the operation of tricycle on the road. In 2008, tricycle operation became legal on the road. This landmark breakthrough motivated other merchants to purchased tricycles in large numbers and sold it up on higher Purchase to unemployed youths in the area. Mr. Chimobi Arinze was the first tricycle merchant in Alimosho¹⁴. He started operation in 2009 and rolled out over 100 tricycles to youths on higher purchase. Wasiu Adekunle also joined the business in 2010. He also enlisted over 60 youths on higher purchase in the area. The growth and expansion of tricycle business further expanded the scope and frontiers of transport business in the Alimosho environs.

Importance of Tricycle Transport to the Growth of Ayobo Ipaja LCDA

Tricycles are less visible in major highways in Alimosho and its environs. Being smaller in size, they are used in short-distance travel, and are most commonly seen on the side streets, subdivisions, smaller cities and towns. In some instances, tricycles are hired to ferry people and merchandise from the market. You can ride tricycles along with other passengers, and pay an average rate, or you can ride it privately, which they also call “special”, where you pay a higher rate or the equivalent rate of the number of passengers

Door to Door Service: The greatest advantage of road transport, that makes it the core lifeline of the transport industry, is its ability to provide door-to-door, from source to destination, warehouse-to warehouse, doorstep services. This is something no other mode of transport can provide. This naturally reduces cartage expense, loading and unloading expenses, and other associated feeder transport costs.

Service in Rural Areas: Road transport is most flexible and adaptable with an outreach into the most remote areas that are inaccessible by rail, air or water. Hence, road transport is most suited for carrying goods and people to and from rural areas which are not served by rail, water or air transport. Hence, transport of cargo between large towns and small villages is possible only through road transport.

Flexible Service: In road transport, routes and timings can be adjusted and changed to suit individual requirements with ease. This naturally gives road transport a great edge over all other modes of transport that follow rigid and inflexible time and route schedules.

Suitable for Short Distance: Road transport is the only transport that is viable, economically and otherwise, for short distances. It is way more cost effective and quicker to cart goods and people over short distances by road. Also, delays in transit of goods, due intermediate loading and handling, can be avoided as goods can be loaded direct into a road vehicle and transported straight to their place of destination. In other words, intermediate handling costs and feeder connectivity costs can be eliminated.

Lesser Risk of Damage in Transit: The risk of damage to goods is considerably lessened due to the elimination of intermediate loading and handling of goods. Hence, road transport is most suited for transporting fragile goods like chinaware and glassware, which risk getting damaged or broken easily during the process of loading and unloading. One time loading and unloading is the desired format for fragile goods. And road transport is the ideal transport for this.

Saving in Packing Cost: The process of packing in road transport is less complicated and much less elaborate. Cargo transported by road transport does not require to be over packed to go through intermediate handling. Hence, less to no major packing is needed. Here again the packing costs are much lower in road transport than in other modes of transport.

Rapid Speed: Road transport is most suited for speedy delivery. Water transport is very slow. Air and rail transport requires too much documentation and formalities and packaging. Also booking of the goods, and taking delivery of the goods, in case of railway, air and water transport, takes up too much time and is very tedious. In contrast road transport offers a quicker and a much more flexible and hassle free option.

Less Cost: Road transport is highly cost effective as compared to other modes of transport. It requires a much less initial capital investment and also, the cost of operation and maintenance is also relatively much less. Even though the rates charged by motor transport companies is a little higher than that charged by the railways, the actual cost in the bigger picture, falls much less when transporting goods by motor transport. This is because road transport helps in saving in packaging costs, in the expenses of intermediate handling charges, and in the feeder connectivity charges.

Maneuvering: Since a tricycle has a shorter length, it is easier to maneuver and turn around. This flexibility can be more appreciated in a tight and heavily trafficked road. The driver needs to carefully watch that it won't hit anything when changing lanes because it tends to have a whipping effect. For instance, on Ipaja Ayobo road, during rush hours,

tricycles take one side of the road but easily maneuver in event of available space. On a busy working days, it could take tricycle over 40 minutes to move from Iyana Ipaja to Ayobo- which is just 5 kilometers. While it takes just 5 minutes to move from Iyana Ipaja to Ayobo when the road is not busy.

Smoke: Tricycle do not remit smokes like other mode of toad transport like buses and truck. It has a flexible system capable of suppressing smokes because its engine is too small. Tricycle has provide numerous impact to the people of Alimosho local government. Its adoption as a means of transportation contributed greatly to socio economic development and urbanization in the entire Lagos state. According to the secretary of tricycle operators and Owners Association of Nigeria, there are over 15,000 tricycles across Lagos and Alimosho alone account for over 5000 tricycles. The reasons for this is not for fetched. Alimosho local government is the biggest in Lagos state in term of landmass and population. It is divided into six local council development areas namely; Alimosho local government, Agbade/Oke-odo, Mosan-Okunola, Ipaja Ayobo, Egbe-Idimu, Igando local councils development areas. All the local council's branches of Tricycles Union which operates on a road networks of 40 kilometers, apart from restricted routes¹⁵. It is important to note that apart from Iyana Ipaja to Ikotun which tricycle activities are being restricted, all other routes especially Trunk B roads which belongs to the state government allows the operation of tricycles.

Tricycle helps to promote employment opportunities for youths. Apart from those riding tricycles, the tricycle union in itself also employ boys who helps in the collection of levy from the operators. Each local councils also assigned staffs to strategic routes to collect levy from tricycle operators. For examples, Ipaja Ayobo routes alone has over 20 boys collecting levy from tricycle operators. This is applicable to other local council's areas too in the local governments

The adoption of tricycles also helps to lesson crime rate in the area. Prior to the expansion of the routes in the area, crime rate were very high as incident of robbery and other social vices becomes a norm. Politicians in those areas therefore start to purchase tricycle and distribute it to people to engage them instead to forestall joblessness¹⁶. For instance, Senator Olamilekan Yayi representing Lagos West senatorial district in the Nigerian senate purchase over 50 tricycles and distribute it across local governments that constitute Lagos west. Hon. Adefemi Adebajo who is on his second term as Federal lawmaker representing Alimosho also purchased 20 tricycles and distribute it to people. Apart from politicians, several schemes were setup in Alimosho that provides interested people an opportunities to secure loan or purchase tricycles¹⁷.

In some areas in Alimosho local government, the only accepted mode of transport is tricycles. For example, in Ile-epo, tricycle is the only accepted means of conveying passengers from one destination to another. Ile-epo comprises of a major market which served the entire Command, Katangowa, Iyana Ipaja down to Oke-koto, traders depend largely on tricycles to convey passengers to those destinations because of its sizes, affordability and easily maneuverable. It is also adopted because while yellow commercial buses would stop at authorized bus-stops, tricycle helps to convey commodities to the residence of the person who hired it.

Tricycle poses a lot of benefits and advantages to the people in the area. During the Endsars campaign of October 2020, while there was lockdown across the state, and people could not go out to their various places of work, tricycle operators still operate and make money to feed their families. Tricycle provides enormous opportunities to people. It fuel usage is very light in such that operators can purchase N100 fuel to work, depending on the durability and the condition of the tricycle¹⁸.

In the area of revenue generation for both local and state government, tricycle is dependable source of revenue. It helps operators to provide support for families and meet domestic needs. For instance, Alimosho local government generate N500, 000 monthly from sales of tickets to operators¹⁹. Ipaja/Ayobo local government which major routes tricycles plies en mass with approval from government generate over N700, 000 monthly²⁰. Mr. Femi Adeogun posits that the local government is looking for ways of expanding the roads, rehabilitating streets so as to allow for more passages for tricycles²¹.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Tricycle transportation played pivotal role in the urbanization of Ayo Ipaja Local council development Areas. It is important to the socio-economic development of nations. Essential in towns and cities is tricycle transportation which caters for the movement of people for the different human activities. As the size and population of Ayobo Ipaja grow, the demand for passenger transportation gets more complex and difficult to satisfy. People begin to spend unnecessarily longer time in their bid to catch a tricycle to their destinations. Businesses suffer, school children get to school late, workers get late to work, and so many activities are paralyzed. In the end, this affects the general economic condition of the people and the political economy of Ipaja Ayobo. It is undisputable that despite effort by government and private individuals to invest in the transport sector, there is still much to be done as the population of people in Ayobo Ipaja began to grow astronomically.

Government needs to expand the roads especially the Ipaja Ayobo roads which is the major link to Command, via Ogun state. Government also needs to purchase several tricycle and conduct surveys on the population of the areas so that proper planning can be done. Government also needs to invest in other form of transportation so that it can be easier for people to move from one place to another. There is the need to decongest Ipaja Ayobo local councils and this can only be possible if government developed adjoining countryside so that people can move, live and do business in that area too.

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