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Exploring Options for Public-Private Partnership in Road Safety in Nigeria

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Abstract

The Government of Nigeria recognizes the crucial role of private sector in bridging the resources gap in investment and improving the operational and managerial efficiency in the transport sector generally. This is why in the last one decade Nigerian Government has introduced various schemes of Public -Private Partnership (PPP) to address capacity problems in the sector. In line with this, this paper therefore explores the options for adopting PPP in promoting road safety in Nigeria. The paper therefore examines various PPP options available and possible areas of road safety activities where private sector can be involved. It finally draws conclusion that if the areas identified are adopted and implemented by the government they would help greatly to promote and improve general level of road safety in the country.

1.0

Introduction

One of the major challenges of transport development globally is traffic accidents. Traffic accidents emanate from the use and operation transport. Although the rate of traffic accidents differs from one mode to another, the level of its occurrence and severity is often associated with the rate of speed of each transport. The higher the speed of transport mode therefore, the higher is the risk of accident. The traffic accident particularly road accidents, have become a global concern as millions of lives are lost annually to road traffic accidents.

Globally, between 20 and 60 million persons are injured while not less than 5 millions people are permanently disabled by road accidents globally. By 2020, road accidents and injuries are predicted to become a leading contributor to the global

burden of disease and injury (Murray and Lopez 1996). Furthermore, The World Bank (2008) reported that low- and middle-income countries bear about 90 percent of the current burden of road deaths and injuries. The road safety performance gap between poor and rich countries is huge and widening, and this trend will continue unless new global, regional, and country initiatives are taken. The Bank projections indicate that between 2000 and 2020 road crash fatalities will increase by more than 80 percent in low- and middle-income countries, but will decrease by nearly 30 percent in high-income countries

In Nigeria, the road traffic situation is worse; table 1.1 shows the road traffic accident trends in Nigeria between 1997 and 2006.

Table 1.1 Reported Road Accident Record in Nigeria between 1997 and 2006

Years	No of cases	Persons killed	Persons injured	% reduction	% increase
1997	17500	6500	10786	-	0.4
1998	16046	6538	17341	8.3	-
1999	15873	6795	17728	1.0	-
2000	16348	8473	20677	-	2.9
2001	20530	9946	23249	-	25.5
2002	14544	7407	22112	29.1	-
2003	14363	6452	18116	1.2	-
2004	14279	5351	16897	0.5	-
2005	8962	4519	15779	37.0	-
2006	9114	4944	17390	-	1.7

Source: FRSC 2007

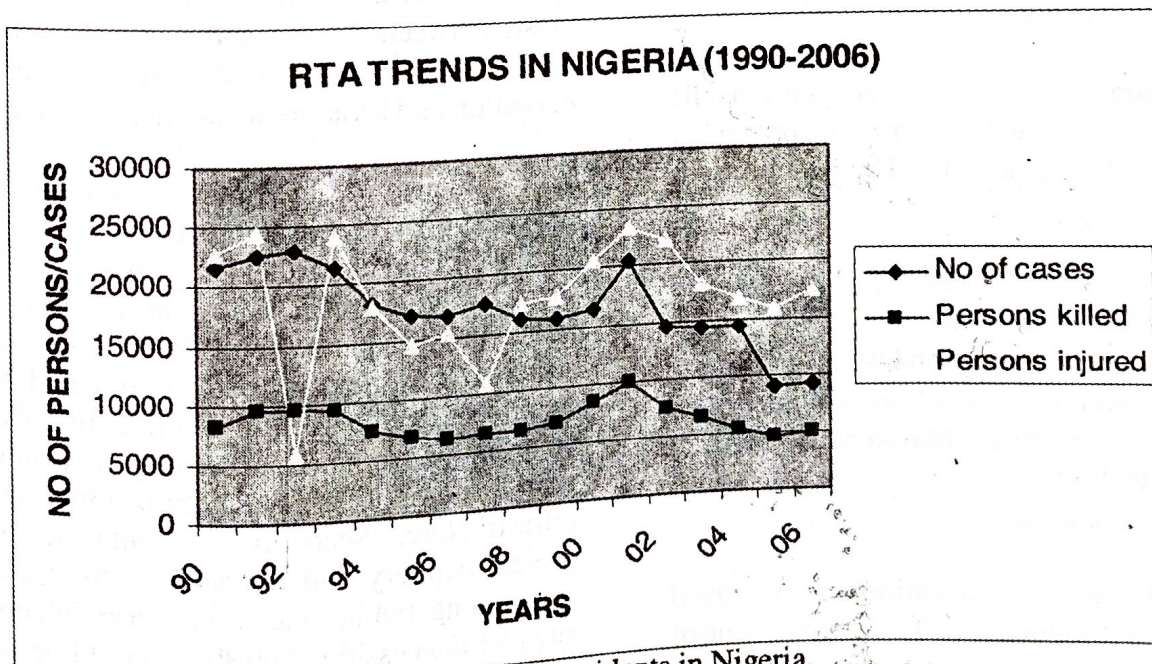


Figure 1.1 shows the trend of road traffic accidents in Nigeria.

From the above table, although, there seems to be general reduction in the numbers of reported cases of road accidents, the number of persons killed or injured has been on the

steady increase from 1997 to 2002. This negative externality of road transport brings about the concern for safety not only in Nigeria but globally.

2.0 Public concern for Road Safety in Nigeria

Due to the grievous consequences of road transport in Nigeria, road safety therefore becomes an issue of concern. According to World Bank in 1988, Nigeria ranked the second after Ethiopia as the country with worst accident records in the whole world. The need to reduce carnage on Nigerian roads brought about the establishment of Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC).

The commission was charged with the responsibility of reducing road traffic accidents and also mitigating against its effects on road users. The commission discharges its duties through six (6) strategies.

- Enactment
- Education
- Evaluation
- Enlightenment
- Engineering
- Enforcement

In addition to FRSC, there are other public agencies established to carry out some other Federal Safety functions. The organizations include:

- Nigerian Police Force; Motors Traffic Division
- Vehicle Inspection Office
- Motor Vehicle Administration
- Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA)
- The Courts

Each of these organizations is involved directly or indirectly in the improvement of road safety in Nigeria. In spite of the establishment of these organizations, the road accidents still continue to occur at alarming rate. It therefore, becomes necessary that road safety improvement

programmes should be pursued by both public and private organizations in order to curb the menace of road accidents on Nigerian roads. Efforts to reduce road accidents no doubt need one form of partnership or another.

3.0 Partnership for Road Safety Improvement

The term Public-Private Partnership (PPP) refers to form of cooperation between public authorities and the world of business, which aim to ensure the funding, construction, renovation, management, or maintenance of an infrastructure or the provision of a service. PPP is a partnership between the public and private sector for the purpose of delivering a project or service which was traditionally provided by the public sector

In road safety improvement programme, PPP refers to any form of cooperation that exists between public and private in reducing road traffic accidents or mitigating against its effects. It is a partnership that exists between private and public with the aim of promoting road safety culture, education and awareness among the citizens.

3.1 Types of Partnership for Road Safety Improvement Project

The main type of partnership that is feasible for improving road safety in Nigeria is public-private partnership (PPP). Private sector involvement in road safety could be by project development with direct financial contribution from private sector participants; such as outright sale of safety facilities and infrastructure. Secondly, it could be by project delivery and operation with shared risk among public and private participants; such as concession. Thirdly, it could be by private investment in transit-supportive development. Such as leasing, contract management etc.

Forms of Public- Private Partnership

There are various forms of partnership that exist which can be adopted for road safety improvement programmes in Nigeria, they include the following

Built-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT)

This is a form of partnership where government allows private sector to invest in building or developing certain transport infrastructure which were hitherto solely built or developed by the public authorities. The private sector is only allowed to build, but also given the right of ownership and operation, after a period of concession is over these rights are transferred back to the public authorities. An example is the concession arrangement between the ministry of works and Bicourtney road services on the concession of the Lagos – Ibadan expressway, and the concession of Melbourne city link (Australia).

Built-Operate-Transfer (BOT)

This is a form of private- public- partnership (PPP) whereby private sector is allowed to build the transport infrastructure /facilities operate for a period of concession and when concession is over right of ownership and operation is finally transferred to the government. For example the federal Airport Authority and Bicourtney limited on the concession of the Lagos local airport (MM2)

Build-Lease-Transfer (BLT)

This is another variant of PPP whereby a private financier provides the required funds to build transport infrastructure/ facilities, the operation is however leased to another private group who has the technical know-how to operate the facilities and pay back rents to the financier or the builder of the facilities through the government who may have stood as a guarantor for the operator in accessing the funds. During the period of concession, the government retains the right

of ownership but allows the operation to be undertaken by the concessionaire. After a period of gestation, the right of operation is transferred to the government.

Build-Own-Lease-Operate-Transfer (BOLT).

There are schemes where government allows the private groups to build, own, lease, operate transport for a period of time and finally transfer the ownership and operation back to the government when concession period is over.

Build-Transfer-Operate (BTO)

This type of partnership scheme allows private sector to build, transfer the ownership to the government and operate the services while government control, manage and maintain the infrastructure.

Build-Own-Operate (BOO)

This is a form of market deregulation where private operators are allowed to build their own transport infrastructure/ facilities, own them and operate them without transferring the ownership to the government at any given time. An example is Autotrade road network Italy.

Looking at these various forms of partnership, some of them can be adopted to promote road safety improvement programmes in Nigeria. Their adoption however, varies from country to country depending on the nature of the economy and prevailing social-economic and political circumstances of the country. The schemes no doubt will help in realizing the National Road Safety Policy Goal for Nigeria.

3.2 Benefits of Partnership in Road Safety

- A number of benefits will accrue as a result of private sector participation in the promotion of road safety. The most obvious benefits are;

- Expansion of road safety infrastructure and services.
- Upgrading of road safety technology,
- Improving the quality of road safety infrastructure services and lowering the costs and prices of services.
- Raising of capital needed for road safety development
- Increasing the level of road safety awareness
- Improving the quality of road safety services
- Diminution of the role of the state in the economy
- Promoting domestic investment in road safety development programmes
- Creation of employment opportunities through effective allocation of resources
- Increasing productive capacities through efficiency and absorption of new technology
- Enhance overall road safety project cost-effectiveness
- Better use of resource/assets.
- Restructuring unprofitable state owned enterprises (SOEs)

4.0 Areas of Public and Private Sectors Partnership in Road Safety

The following areas constitute the identifiable areas that public and private sector can partner in improving road safety in Nigeria.

4.1 Road Safety Enforcement.

Although the enforcement of road safety rules, standards and regulation is a primary responsibility of public agencies, such as FRSC and V.I.O, these organizations can partner with volunteer groups or strengthen their relationship with existing volunteers groups like Special Marshal, Road Safety Club, Red Cross and other NGOs. The

partnership can be entered to carry out certain enforcement of traffic rules and regulations.

4.2 Driver Education and Training:

Private sector can be licensed to establish standard driving schools where standard curriculum and instructions are taught. Such schools could be established by the FRSC and managed by private operator. The schools may also be established under a public and private arrangement to ensure standards.

4.3 Road Infrastructure Maintenance and Rehabilitation

Road is one of the major factors of causing traffic accident. The deplorable road condition across the country is a serious concern to all road users. The roads in Nigeria are not only a death trap but a grave yard for road users. In order to guarantee safety on Nigeria road there is need for public private partnership. The partnership can be through concessioning of some roads and other transport infrastructure like motor parks to private sector to manage. This may likely guarantee improved maintenance and rehabilitation of roads. Tolls can be collected on behalf of the government on such roads, the monies collected can be spent on rehabilitation and maintenance of the roads even though in the past it was practiced but was marred by malpractices it can be restored and done with proper checks and controls that would make it work.

4.4 Involvement of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) in Road Safety Campaign

One of the strategies for enhancing traffic safety is public enlightenment and campaign. The need to raise the level of public awareness in the area of speed limit, dangers of overloading, wrongful overtaking drinking alcohol while driving and violation

of other traffic rules are very crucial to the promotion of road safety culture. The public agency in charge of this assignment particularly FRSC can partner with many NGOs to launch aggressive and nationwide campaigns in order to raise citizens' awareness.

The campaign should not remain at state capitals but also to the grass root, so that its impact can be felt. The print and electronic media can be used to achieve this.

4.5 Financing of Road Safety Projects

There exist various forms of partnership in the area of financing. Private sector can be encouraged to provide funds for executing road safety projects. Financial institutions such as banks, insurance companies should be involved in the financing of road safety improvement projects.

For instance, the insurance companies are by law authorized to collect insurance charges on vehicles being operated on Nigerian roads whether comprehensive or third-party policy. It will be good for insurance companies to invest in the promotion of traffic safety. A general improvement in the road safety level will reduce the number of claims being paid by insurance companies.

In addition, the amount of human loss is colossal that can not be readily quantified monetarily. Payment of insurance claims to clients is not a guarantee of safety but investing funds on preventive measures is much more important and beneficial to the society as a whole.

5.0 Collective Approach to Achieving Road Safety Goal

It is very important to emphasize that safety is a common goal of any transport policy thrust. It is a common knowledge among transport professionals that without safe

arrival transport has not really taken place. If a movement from an origin to a destination does not end in a safe arrival, a meaningful movement has not really occurred.

In a social and economic space, transport is usually demanded to fulfill other desires of man. If these desires are not fulfilled through transport, the objective of transport is therefore not achieved. Safety is therefore considered as a paramount issue. To achieve the desired level of safety in Nigeria, it requires a holistic and a collective approach. The holistic approach demands that all measures of prevention and mitigation should be developed and implemented. Collective approval requires that every member of the society should be involved.

The task of achieving traffic safety goal is not only a government responsibility but a duty of all. This is why safety education should be promoted right from primary schools in order to raise citizens with good road safety culture.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has dealt so far on the issue of road traffic accident as one of the negative externalities associated with modern transport. This externality is the root of public concern for road safety globally. The efforts of government to reduce the menace of road traffic accidents have also been examined. It is observed that in spite of all these efforts, road accidents still occur unabated. The paper therefore discusses various partnership options that could be explored to improve the current level of road safety in Nigeria.

It is believed that if these options are adopted and implemented it will help to improve the level of road safety in Nigeria.

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