

INTER-CITY PARKS AND VOLUME OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FLOW IN ADO-EKITI, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Intercity parks are motor stations established for public transport operators (commercial) for the purpose of loading and off-loading of passengers moving and out of town to different towns and cities in a region or country. Without their existence it will be practically difficult if not impossible for passengers to connect vehicles that are meant to convey them out of town to their various destinations. In areas where these parks are properly located and well coordinated, they enhance and promote smooth transportation system but where they are haphazardly located they impede smooth and free flow of intra-urban transport. This paper on inter-city parks and volume of vehicular traffic flow in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria has the objective of identifying the location of intercity parks, determining the volume of vehicular traffic moving in and out of the parks and identifying the destinations of the vehicles moving out of the parks. Data for the study, was collected from the primary source. Physical survey and personal interview methods were employed to collect data. Findings from the analysis revealed that majority of the intercity parks in the study area locate along the busy township roads and constitute black spots impeding smooth flow of vehicular traffic in the metropolis. The paper recommends the need to construct standard intercity parks with all the requisite facilities preferably at the outskirts of the city along the major routes connecting the city for sustainable public transport system in the city.

Keywords: Inter-city, Parks, Volume, Vehicular and Traffic.

1.1 Introduction

Transport is so key and important in the socio-economic development of any nation or region. It is so key in that virtually all human endeavours in any society can hardly function without it. Fulani (1982, 2005) rightly observed that the socio-economic development of any society depends to a large extent on the nature and structure of the transportation network of the society since it provides the arteries through which the economic life stream of society flows (the people, information, raw materials and finished products) which help to build and maintain the society. Arosanyin (1998) also documented that the transport sector of the economy provides the means of interaction and integration of various regions and sectors of any country's economy. Looking at the role transport plays in the production process, economists have suggested that transport can be equated to the other four agents of production namely: land, labour, capital and entrepreneur. It is a fact that even if these factors of production are in place and transport is lacking, production might not be possible. Hence, Adeniji (2000) opined that transport can be likened to the human blood circulatory system whose healthy functioning is a necessary condition for the existence of human life. Leinbarnch (1983), Ogunleye and Ibitoye (2006) and Ogunleye (2013) observed that a non-existent or inefficient transport system perpetuates subsistence lifestyles and limits the space of a country's economy.

Considering the importance of transport in the society, government at all levels have taken it upon themselves to provide functional and dependable transport system at various levels of human endeavour to facilitate the movement of people goods and services in and around the globe. Arosayin (1998) for instance, documented that for India to meet the supply of raw materials for improved industrialization, the government in her 5th Development plan spent twenty percent of the development funds on transport. This was done through the improvement of the railways and ports and by increasing the shipping capacity of the nation while also increasing the number of roads. In Nigeria, government at all levels have not taken the issue of transport development lightly.

It is disheartening to note that despite huge investment in the provision and maintenance of transport facilities by governments in developing countries of the world, vehicular traffic flow has been problematic in most of their cities. John et al (2005) documented that the use of crisis to describe transport problems in European and American cities seems a misnomer compared to what is experienced in the cities of developing countries. The various associated problems of

inefficient traffic flow such as environmental pollution, noise, traffic fatalities and injuries, etc are more severe in the developing world making the problem quite modest in the developed world by comparison (Gakenheimer, 1999). Commenting on transport problems in Cameroon, Ambe (1997) opined that some of the most serious problems facing development planners and policy makers in the country reside in the transport sector. He attributed the worrisome congestion always experienced in Duda and Younde (the two largest cities) to the colonial urban transport that was designed to serve colonial economic and administrative objectives and continually propagated by successive government of the country. According to John et al (2005) and Aderemo (2012), developing countries have several factors in common that contribute to the severity of their transport problems. Over population and increasing urbanization have led especially to the rapid growth of larger cities, which have been overwhelmed by the sudden jump in travel demand. The supply of transport infrastructure lagged far behind demand. Public sector finances in general are so limited that funding for transport improvements is woefully inadequate.

Gwillan (2011) also attributed some of the transportation problems confronting cities in developing countries to increasing and rapid urbanization. He opined that Africa's cities are experiencing rapid population growth (typically between 3 and 5 percent) per year over the past decades and the growth had been driven by anemic conditions in rural areas rather than by burgeoning wealth in cities, with the people fleeing rural areas to escape failing crops, national disasters, poverty and conflicts. All these have continually put pressure on urban transportation.

It has been observed that one of the contributing factor to vehicular traffic flow problems in cities is the use and location of inter-city parks. Intercity parks are motor stations established for/by public transport operators (commercial) for the purpose of loading and off-loading of passengers moving in and out of towns and cities in a region or country. Without their existence, it will be practically difficult if not impossible for passengers to connect vehicles that are meant to transport them out of town to their various destinations. In areas and cities where these parks and properly located, in most cases at the outskirts of the city, along the major routes leading to various settlements, they enhance and promote intra-vehicular traffic flow because the various black spot that are always created and used illegally for the loading and off-loading of passengers would have been eliminated. Hence, this study on intercity parks and volume or vehicular traffic flow in Ado Ekiti is set to achieve the following objectives: identify the locations of intercity parks in the city; determine the volume of vehicular traffic; moving in and out of these parks;

determine the destinations of the vehicles moving out of these parks and recommend options for appropriate location and operations of inter-city parks in the city of Ado-Ekiti.

1.2 The Study Area

Ado Ekiti, an ancient city in Nigeria is located between latitudes $7^{\circ}34^1$ and $7^{\circ}41^1$ north of the Equator and Longitudes $5^{\circ}11^1$ and $5^{\circ}16^1$ east of the Greenwich Meridian, the history of Ado-Ekiti dates back to a period before the advent of Ewi dynasty in 1310 AD. It grew to a town of repute about 700 years ago when the 'Oba Ado' otherwise called the 'Elewi' joined the princely adventure instituted by several children of Oduduwa (from Ile-Ife) to found their own territories (Ebisemiju 1993). It became the headquarters of Ekiti Divisional council in 1916 and rose to the status of a state capital on October 1, 1996. It has a total population of 157,519 people going by the 1991 population census, with the upsurge in urbanization trend in the region, the estimated population of the city could be put around 300,000 people. Geologically, Ado-Ekiti lies entirely within the pre-Cambrian Basement Complex rock group, which underlies much of Nigeria. It falls within Koppen's 'A' climatic belt that is tropical wet climate. The city is strategically located in Ekiti land at the convergence of major roads forming a radial pattern. These roads are Ado-Ekiti - Akure road passing through Ijan-Ekiti and Aramoko Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti - Ikare road passing through Ijan-Ekiti, Ilumoba, Aisegba Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti, Ilawe road and Ado-Ekiti - Ifaki road. Educationally, Ado-Ekiti is in the forefront. It has about 14 public secondary schools among which are, Christ's School, Mary Immaculate, Ado Grammar School, four notable tertiary institutions are located in the city to give qualitative education to the people; they are the Ekiti State University, Afe Babalola University, the Federal Polytechnic, Ekiti State Technical College and the State School of Nursing. Economically, Ado-Ekiti is undergoing tremendous transformation. No wonder that commercial banks such as the Unity Bank, Union Bank, First Bank, Sky Bank, United Bank for Africa (UBA) etc. locates in the city to further boost commercial activities. Hotel and Rest House such as After '7' Guest House, Anisulowo Hotels, Spotless Hotels, Fem Guest House, De link Motel, Owena Motel, Fabian Hotel, Olujoda Hotels etc locate strategically in the city to offer recreation and Tourism opportunities to people. As a result of economic, social and political transformation that is taking place in Ado-Ekiti in recent times, the city continues to witness physical expansion in terms of buildings, transportation network (roads) duplication of market places social activities religious activities and an below average level.

1.3 Method

Data for this study was collected from the primary source. Physical survey and personal interview methods were employed to collect data. The researcher identified the location of the various inter-city parks within Ado Ekiti metropolis and asked for leaders/executive members of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and other sister unions in individual parks for the purpose of oral interview. Questions were asked specifically on: (a) the operations of the park (b) the number of vehicles (Buses and Cars) accommodated in the parks and (c) The destinations of the vehicles when they eventually load passengers. Responses from these leaders/executive members were directly recorded in the field book. Data were later processed, analyzed and presented.

1.4 Data Presentation, Analysis and Major Findings

From the field survey embarked up by the researcher it was discovered that ten (10) inter-city motor parks can be found in Ado Ekiti. The inter-city motor parks and their characteristics are as follows:

1. FAJUYI MOTOR PARK ALONG IWOROKO ROAD

Number of Cars - 36

Number of Buses - 12

Destinations: Ifaki, Ido-Ekiti, Otun, Oye, Isan, Otun-Ekiti, Kwara State, Ilupeju, Ikole, Omuo Ekiti

2. ST JUDE ANGLICAN CHURCH PARK ALONG IYIN ROAD

Number of Buses - 14

Destinations: Ilesa, Ibadan, Lagos

3. OLD TEXTILE PARK ALONG IYIN ROAD

Number of Buses - 13

Destinations: Ibadan, Lagos.

4. BASHIRI SAWMILL PARK

Number of Buses - 09

Destinations: Ibadan, Lagos.

5. GENERAL MOTOR PARK BESIDE JESUS CATHEDRAL ALONG IYIN ROAD

Number of Cars - 42

Number of Buses - 16

Destinations: Iyin, Igede, Aramoko, Efon/Alaaye, Ijero, Ilesa, Oshogbo.

6. ATIKANKAN PARK

Number of Cars - 14

Number of Buses - 19

7. OLD GARAGE (MUGBAGBA) PARK

Number of Cars - 42

Number of Buses - 21

8. OLD GARAGE (OPPOSITE SKYBANK) PARK

Number of Cars - 39

Number of Buses - 17

Destinations: Buses Ibadan, Lagos

Cars: Ifaki, Ido, Oye, Isan, Otun, Kwara State, Ilupeju, Ikole, Omuo.

9. NEW GARAGE PARK

Number of Cars - 11

Destination - Lagos

10. TOSIN ALUKO PARK (OPPOSITE MARIA ASUMPTA HOSPITAL) IKERE ROAD

This is the only major central Motor park in Ado-Ekiti: This park is fenced and enjoys a fairly well organized operations.

Number of Buses - over 150

Number of cars - over 100

Destinations: Ikere, Akure, Supare Akoko, Ibilo, Owo, Akungba Akoko, Ondo, Ore Benin, Onitsha, Warri, Port-Harcourt.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Fieldwork exercise revealed that apart from the Tosin Aluko part, all other parks locate along the major roads in the city of Ado-Ekiti.
2. The location of the parks along the major roads constitute black spots that add and contribute to the problem of vehicular traffic flow in Ado-Ekiti.
3. The Tosin Aluko park that is fairly well constructed and operated lacks basic facilities befitting a standard park. Toilet facilities are in poor condition and electricity supply is lacking while the park is not tarred.

1.5 Recommendations and Policy Implications

1. There is the need for the construction of standard motor parks with the template of the Tosin Aluko park along Iyin road and Iworoko road. These parks will cater for the various traffic along these routes. The parks should be located at the outskirts of the city.
2. Mini parks should be constructed along Ijan road and Ilawe road to relocate the parks servicing these routes from the city centre.
3. The Tosin Aluko park should be given a face-lift. The various facilities that can make the park a befitting one should be provided without further delay.
4. Government should introduce collection of park levies in the region of between N50 and N100 per vehicle and trip in these parks provided the parks are constructed in a standard manner and the various facilities expected of the standard park put in place. This will further improve the internally generated revenue of government.
5. Efforts should also be made to put in place proper monitoring of major township roads with the aim of discouraging the return of the illegal parks along these routes immediately standard motor parks are built. The Ekiti State Traffic Management Agency (EKSTMA) and other transport related agencies should take up the monitoring task.
6. There should be regular traffic education on radio, television, newspaper, and even workshops and seminars on the need to promote efficient urban mobility in the study area. Public transport operators should be made to understand the advantages of making use of motor-parks as they carry out their operations.

1.6 Concluding Remarks

Inter-city motor parks are essential and indispensable facilities in towns and cities if effective and public transport system of urban centres is to be guaranteed. For smooth and efficient operation of the public transport system in Ado-Ekiti, all hands must be on deck to provide efficient and sustainable inter-city parks without further delay.

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