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Transport Planning In Nigeria: A Plea for Incorporating the Gender Factor

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ABSTRACT While there have been an increasing number of efforts to incorporate gender perspectives especially into the health, education and agricultural sectors, much fewer attempts have been made in the transport sector. Thus, this paper addresses the case of transport and gender in Nigeria. Also, this paper evaluates the gender allocation of transport planners/ providers/traffic management agencies at the management level in Nigeria and states the need for integrating gender issues into transport planning and policy in Nigeria. Data were obtained from Government agencies such as Nigeria Police Force, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA), Lagos State Ferry Services Corporation and Alimosho and Ikeja Local Government Areas (Traffic Management Units). The result of this paper shows that the proportion of women among transport planners in Nigeria is insignificant and that women are not adequately represented among transport planners/providers and traffic management agencies in Nigeria. The findings also reveal that there is no single woman among the traffic management unit (TMU) personnel in Alimosho and Ikeja Local Government Areas of Lagos. The consideration of gender in transport planning is essential to ensure that transport is equitable, affordable and provides access to resources and opportunities required for development in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Transport-related issues such as access to jobs, markets and social/educational facilities play an important, but under-appreciated role in perpetuating women's disadvantaged position in society (San Salvador 1999). Major differences in the basic mobility needs of women and men are grounded in the gender-based division of labor within the family and community. Men's stereotypical role in almost all societies is the one of the income-earning breadwinner, who leaves the house for work in the morning and comes back in the evening. Women, however, usually perform triple roles as income earners, home-makers, and community-managers. As a rule, they take shorter, more frequent and more dispersed trips during the day. Women also frequently carry shopping bulky loads and are accompanied by children or elderly relatives. However, existing transport systems are not adequately geared towards the needs of women. Rather, most systems are biased towards the travel needs of male breadwinners. In order to alleviate women's disproportionate transport burden in society, a variety of factors need to be addressed. Among the most important are access to modes of transport, the sitting and routing of facilities and infrastructures, and the timing/frequency of services.

Over the course of the last decade, transport planners, geographers, economists and policy makers all over the world have increasingly recognized that the differences in travel and activity patterns between men and women are a central and recurring feature in transportation systems all over the world (Deiker 2002). A growing body of academic literature has emerged over the last few years addressing the complex relationships between transportation/mobility and gender in developed and developing countries.

Major development institutions such as the World Bank, UNDP, the Swedish SIDA, the Canadian CIDA, are now increasingly producing research, manuals and other written materials on gender and transportation. Much of it is still "grey literature," that is academic studies, consultant reports and/or other not widely distributed writings produced mostly for internal use.

Gender disparities in transport responsibilities are particularly striking in rural Sub-Saharan Africa. Much of rural Africa walks and carries its burden, mainly on heads/ shoulders/ arms and most of this burden falls on women and girls. In

many African countries, women and girls carry up to four times as much as men.

Internationally, gender has begun to feature as a recognized issue in transport policy and planning while transport has begun to feature on the agenda of gender policy and planning (Elizabeth 1999). The fact that men and women very often have different transport patterns and different transport needs is slowly being recognized, but as yet this recognition is accepted only in the rural transport sub-sector. "Gender and Transport" is sitting, therefore, on something of a new professional ground. At present in Nigeria, there are no systematic gender inclusion procedures for transport either in terms of training of professionals, the participation of users or the design and planning of systems, services and equipment.

GENDER AND TRANSPORT IN NIGERIA

Gender refers to culturally- based expectations of the roles and behaviors of males and females. The term distinguishes socially constructed roles from biologically determined aspects of being male and female. Gender roles and responsibilities transform over the life cycle and can change overall, sometimes quite quickly. However, there cannot be a meaningful definition of the concept of "Gender" without accepting that the aspect of differentiation of sex should be made. In addition, it is to be seen that culture, environment, assigned roles, values, norms are additives to a balanced exposition on the gender question (Olagbemi 2005).

Women in Nigeria as it is in most developing countries undertake a greater burden of domestic and commercial activities. If less time is spent on travel, more time will be available to carry out daily activities resulting in increased productivity. And as women are rarely represented in decision-making, they are unable to impress their needs on planners. Most transport infrastructure planning in Nigeria is planned without considering women's needs.

Women bear heavy responsibilities regarding transportation, although this is hardly recognized by planners. For instance, women in developing countries like Nigeria are adept load carriers. They are accustomed to transporting 25kg or more on their heads or backs daily over considerable distances. Women's greater domestic responsibilities coupled with their weaker access to household resources have significant consequences for their transport and travel status. The lower the household's income, the more probable it is that women will experience greater transport deprivation as compared to men. In Lagos, the transport deprivation takes the form of women's use of inferior modes of transport, longer waiting time, inability to struggle for a space in public transport buses (because she carries a baby on her back and load on the head), and at times it takes the form of customary or legal constraints on women's night travel or to use a particular transport mode (Oni 2007).

According to Odeleye (2001), urban transport provisions, planning and development in Metropolitan Lagos is not gender sensitive. Rather, it is more masculine than being feminist. Women in the metropolitan area are out rightly denied access to decent, comfortable and reliable intra-urban movement services, because the existing system is largely unregulated, inadequate, rowdy and characteristically unconventional. For instance, standardization in urban transport vehicles designs and operations are virtually not considered important by the authorities. As a result, women are manhandled, as well as being victims of pick-pockets, muggers while transiting in the metropolitan. As an alternative, women do attempt long walking hours, as well as patronizing the ubiquitous, reckless and ill-mannered commercial motorcyclists at their own peril. Notwithstanding, they are being relatively denied access to the larger urban economic benefits. This problem, however, persists due to the poor planning procedures in urban transport operations in the metropolitan, as well as inexistent of versatile and dynamic urban transport policy.

INCORPORATING GENDER ISSUES INTO TRANSPORT PLANNING AND POLICY-MAKING IN NIGERIA

Inadequate provision of transport infrastructure and services provides a basis for explaining the incidence of poverty across various Nigerian communities in both urban and rural areas. The categories of transport problems that can be identified are: bad roads, fuel problem (high fuel price, shortage of fuel supply and consequential high transport cost), traffic congestion (long waiting time, bad driving habits, hold-ups), inadequate high passenger capacity/mass transit vehicles and overloading, high cost and short-

age of spare parts, poor vehicle maintenance and old vehicles (Olomola 2003). It is established that inappropriate planning, inadequate transport facilities and services as well as the constraints imposed on the mobility and accessibility of people to facilities such as markets, hospitals and water sources have grave implications on deepening poverty levels.

In Nigeria, gender analysis needs to be incorporated into all transport planning, so that gender impacts are studied and considered before project implementation. Most importantly, gender analysis challenges the traditional, neoclassical analysis which looks at households as black boxes and assumes that household behavior reflects the preferences of all its individuals, regardless of the power structures and gender relations within these household units. In this sense, gender analysis is part of a general re-orientation of transport planning away from a focus on facilitating the movement of motorized vehicles to a people-centered perspective that starts with an analysis of the basic household mobility needs.

When presenting the overall rationales for addressing gender issues in transport, a combination of equity and efficiency arguments can be advanced. The core finding of all existing evidence is that women are responsible for a disproportionate share of the household's transport burden while at the same time having more limited access to available means of transport. It is important to recognize that this is not a mere equity question. Gendered transport and mobility patterns have measurable detrimental economic consequences first of all for the women themselves, but as a consequence also for their respective household units and ultimately for society as a whole. In the past, gender issues were typically dismissed by economists, planners and policy-makers as "soft science" arguments that did not produce measurable variables for use in "hard science" economic analysis such as cost benefit studies. Even World Bank project managers trained in mainstream neoclassical economic analysis are currently asked to rethink that notion. Recognizing gender issues as economically consequential of course does not mean that economic incentives targeted towards women will by themselves restore the balance. The underlying causes for women's inequality remain deeply rooted in society (Deike 2002).

In order to understand how transport services, non-motorized devices and safety issues affect men and women differently, it is important to disaggregate the data on: (a) who uses the services and if women are not, why? (b) if road accidents involving pedestrians are more numerous among women than men, why? and (c) if the rural and urban poor are using non-motorized transport, such as bicycles and carts, do men and women own them equally or at least have equal access? Without clearly acknowledging and documenting women's multiple roles in society, transport planning is unlikely to meet their travel and transport needs. Transport planning methodologies need to become more gender equitable and give justice to the totality of today's urban fabrics.

With limited access to individual means of transport, the vast majority of female residents in Nigeria and other developing countries are dependent on either walking or on public means of transport. Beyond the basic yet grave problem of urban gridlock, poor route planning for public transport then tends to exacerbate the situation of women. Women often trip-chain: they combine their various domestic and care-taking responsibilities with wage earning trips. Transport systems targeted only at peak hour male commuter trip patterns do not serve their needs. They typically have to make multiple stops, pay multiple fares, and travel during off peak hours, when service is less reliable and waiting areas are less safe. Walking remains a predominant mode among rural and poor urban populations, with women typically accounting for a disproportionate share. In Nigeria, infrastructure planning continues to primarily cater to the needs of the car- or motorcycle-driving, largely male majority. By focusing on planning interventions that directly target the particular transport problems of women in Nigeria; much could be done to alleviate their burden. Systematic procedures should be put in place to give women a greater role in the planning and management of transport projects. Also, local stakeholders must be involved, which may require affirmative action (setting aside a certain percentage of the participants), to ensure women participate. Conscious inclusion of women in training and employment programs will improve understanding of gender issues and concerns, allow for them to be articulated more appropriately in policies and projects in all transport sub-sectors in Nigeria.

Table 1: Gender allocation at the Federal level (Nigeria)

Traffic management agencies/Transport providers	*Total number of people at the management level*	*Total no. of men*	*Total no. of women*	*Percentage share of women*
Nigeria Police Force	7(1 Inspector general and 6 Deputy inspector generals)	7	-	0.0 %
FRSC	20 Management staff 37 Sector commanders	19 34	13	5.0% 8.1%
NRC	12 Management staff 20Board members	11 19	11	8.3% 5.0%

Note: FRSC- Federal Road Safety Corps, NRC-Nigerian Railway Corporation

METHODOLOGY

In order to suitably portray the issue of gender and transport in Nigeria, secondary data were collected from the following government agencies: Nigeria Police Force, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA), Lagos State Ferry Services Corporation and Alimosho and Ikeja Local Government Areas (Traffic Management Units). The various data collected were analyzed using percentage and presented in Tables 1-3. Relevant information was also obtained from textbooks and internet.

The following secondary data were utilized in this study:

- Traffic management agencies/transport provider gender allocation at the federal level-Nigeria (Presented in Table 1)
- Transport planner/provider gender allocation at the state level-Lagos (presented in Table 2)
- Traffic management unit gender allocation at the local government level- Alimosho and Ikeja Local Government Areas (Shown in Table 3).

RESULTS

Women play a major, but frequently unrecognized or under-valued role in the transport sector. However, in Nigeria, the percentage of women involved in transport planning, management and policy making is insignificant. Secondary data collected on gender allocation at the federal level in Nigeria presented in Table 1 shows that the proportion of women among traffic management agencies/transport provider is small. There is no woman at all among the 7 people at the management level in the Nigeria Police Force that consists of 1 inspector general and 6 deputy inspector generals. Out of the 20 management staff of FRSC, only 1 woman is among them(5 percent), in addition, only 3 women are sector commanders of FRSC out of a total number of 37 sector commanders (36 states plus the Federal Capital Territory). Nigerian Railway Corporation management staff of 12 only has 1 woman (8.3 percent) while their board (NRC board) also has 1 woman out of a total number of 20.

At the state level the transport planner/provider gender allocation shown in Table 2 reveals that LAMATA has 28.6 percent of women at the management level while the remaining 71.4 percent are men. The Lagos State Ferry Services Corporation has no woman at all at the management level that comprises 7 men.

For the local government level, data collected on Traffic Management Unit gender allocation at - Alimosho and Ikeja Local Government Areas presented in Table 3 shows that there is no woman at all among all the Traffic Unit Management personnel. Alimosho Local Government Area is divided into 6 Local Council Develop-

Table 2: Gender allocation at the State level (Lagos State)

Transport planner /provider	*Total number of people at the management level*	*Total no. of men*	*Total no. of women*	*Percentage of women*
LAMATA	7	5	2	28.6%
2.Lagos State Ferry Services Corporation	7	7	-	0.0%

Note: LAMATA-Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority

Table 3: Gender allocation at the Local Government Level (Alimosho and Ikeja Local Government Areas)

Traffic Mana gement Unit (TMU)	*Number of TMU personnel*	*No. of men*	*No. of women*
Alimosho LGA			
Igando-Ikotun LCDA	17	17	-
Egbe-Idimu LCDA	11	11	-
Mosan-Okunola LCDA	17	17	-
Akowonjo-Ali mosho LCDA	21	21	-
Ayobo-Ipaja LCDA	18	18	-
Agbado- Ok -eodo LCDA	7	7	-
Ikeja LGA			
Onigbongbo LCDA	13	13	-
Ikeja LCDA	15	15	-
Ojodu LCDA	15	15	-

Note: LGA-Local Government Area, LCDA-Local Council Development Area

ment Areas which are: Igando-Ikotun, Egbe-Idimu, Mosan-Okunola, Akowonjo-Alimosho, Ayobo-Ipaja and Agbado-Okeodo Local Council Development Areas. Also, Ikeja Local Government Area has been divided into 3 Local Council Development Areas which are Onigbongbo, Ikeja and Ojodu Local Council Development Areas. Alimosho Local Government Area has a total number of 91 TMU personnel while Ikeja Area has a total number of 43 TMU personnel without a single female.

DISCUSSION

Tables 1- 3 revealed that the percentage share of women among transport planners/providers and traffic management agencies in Nigeria is very low. At the Federal level, the percentage share of women among the management staff of the Nigeria Police Force is 0.0 percent, Federal Road Safety Corps has only 5.0 percent of women at the management level and 8.1 percent of women among the sector commanders. Nigerian Railway Corporation has 8.3 percent of women among its management staff and 5.0 percent of women among the board members (see Table 1). In Lagos State, the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority has 28.6 percent of women among its management staff while the Lagos State Ferry Services Corporation has no woman at all at the management level (see Table 2). Furthermore, all the Traffic Management Unit personnel in Alimosho and Ikeja local government areas of Lagos State are all men (see Table 3). This ought not to be because women should be part of the transport planners and decision makers in order for them to impress their needs on planners who plan transport infrastructure without considering women's needs.

Women bear heavy responsibilities regarding transportation, although this is hardly recognized by planners. Travel pattern of women and men vary extensively due to varying and unrelated trips undertaken. Men's trips are more single-task oriented whilst women's trips are multi-task based. These dynamics are most of the time not factored into transport planning. Transport planning and management put much emphasis on 'peak hour' and neglect social needs of women.

Some of the problems encountered by women when they board public transport in Nigeria include exorbitant fares, lengthy duration of travel time due to heavy traffic congestion, inability to secure a seat when they carry load, apathy against women during the rush/peak hour, occasional suffocation, harassment from male-fellow passengers (rubbing of body parts), and inability of women to struggle with male counterparts.

Man and women have different constraints and transport priorities. However, women are also subjected to heavy time burden due to the need to balance their productive, social and reproductive roles in societies that subject them to socially imposed constraints that further limit their opportunities to improve their economic conditions and/or enjoy equal access to human capital and employment. Thus a better insight and understanding of gender dimension will significantly contribute towards economic growth as well as to equity and sustainable objectives by ensuring that both genders share in the transport infrastructure benefits.

CONCLUSION

Women's transport needs in Nigeria are hardly sufficiently documented, let alone

- There should be facilitation, integration and institutionalization of gender into transport policies through gender-related researches, consideration and dissemination of best practices, and promotion of dialogue with government and other stakeholders such as Community Based Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigeria.
- There is the need for gender mainstreaming in transport and the collection of engendered transport data.

- There should be mechanism to bring researchers, policy makers, transport planners and providers together to enhance synergies and guidance on decision-making.
- A well-structured capacity building programme on gender awareness has to be developed.
- Government should identify instruments and establish appropriate mechanism or system to remove social and economic isolation and discrimination
- Government agencies should review training manuals and curriculum to ensure a gender -responsive training programme.
- Transport planners and government agencies should collect and disseminate information to women on potential employment and business opportunities.
- There should be systematic inclusion of gender concerns at the policy, institutional and project levels in Nigeria.

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