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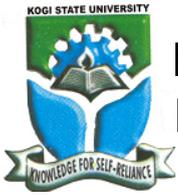
The Impact of Transportation on the socio-economic Development of Rural Areas of Gwagwalada Area Council, Nigeria

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The Impact of Transportation on the Socio-Economic Development of Rural Areas of Gwagwalada Area Council, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The paper examines the impact of transportation on the socio-economic development of rural areas in Gwagwalada area Council of the Federal Capital Territory. The study covers about 5 villages in the Area Council. The villages were selected using a systematic sampling technique. About 200 respondents were also selected and administered a set of questionnaire using the systematic sampling technique also. Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis of the data gathered. The findings of the analysis reveal that (32.1%) of the respondents are farmers. It also shows that 57.3% roads in the study area are earth roads and seasonal. They are mostly operational during the dry seasons. Hence the commonest means of transportation in the area is motorcycle. The study also discovered that the lack of good road in the study area makes it difficult for the respondents to access good markets for their farm produce as more than 86.6% of roads in the area are very bad. This was discovered to have affected the socio-economic activities of the people thereby increasing the level of poverty in the communities in the study area. Recommendations were drawn to improve rural roads in the area to enhance the socio-economic activities of the rural populace.

Keywords: Rural transportation, Socio-economic activities and Rural areas

Introduction

One of the fundamental problems of man since antiquity is that of overcoming the friction of distance both in space and time. Man has been on the move from one place to another seeking for a means of survival. The emergence of modern means of transportation in the world and most importantly in developing countries like Nigeria has a remarkable influence on the socio-economic development of rural areas.

Transportation to some in the urban settings is a choice not a concern. However, in rural setting the availability of transportation is often limited if provided at all. Transportation enhances the process of economic growth in rural areas by making needed services available to rural dwellers.

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Rural residents need to receive essential social services such as medical care, go to work, purchase food and household items, attend school events and access many other services just as their urban counterparts. However, frequent accessibility is restricted or limited because of the distance to those services and even when transportation is available, the transport networks are in bad condition. Most a times special needs that can be alleviated through medical facilities, social service, educational programmes are forgone because of distance to be travelled. Lack of good motorable roads in

many rural areas in Nigeria has been the main hindrances to rapid development. This affects maximum exploitation of natural resources, expansion of trade between communities, neglect on development of human resources which all result in isolation, and under-development of the rural areas (Ahmed et al, 1992).

Todaro (1981), view development as a multi-dimensional process involving change in structure, habit attitude and institution as well as acceleration of economic growth. There is a significance relationship between transportation and development process. However, the nature of interaction is still a subject of debate between scholars who say development depends on many factors such as availability of resources and level of technology. In all, transportation is of great significance to development in any society. An efficient transportation system is in many ways, the bedrock of any social and economic system in terms of improving the quality of life for the common person. Owen (1987) and Kishiue, *et al* (2005), have demonstrated direct relationship between transport and development. He opined that the nations of the world may be divided into two groups: The mobile; and immobile. These two groups are categories into five stages as follows:

Period of immobility and traditional society; Period of internal improvement and growth of trade; Period of greater mobility and higher standards of living reflected in transportation, mechanization and industrialization; Development of motorization and the new mobility; and The air-age and conquest.

Roads are clearly a critical enabling condition for improving living conditions in rural areas. However, the distribution of socioeconomic benefits resulting from a rural road is a separate issue, and there are no guarantees or inherent mechanisms to ensure that these benefits will be distributed equitably between the poor and the non-poor in communities (Asian Development Bank, 2006). The rural

areas suffer poor accessibility which in turn has strong negative effects on the people's economic activities. Most of the rural dwellers are farmers much of their farm produce are lost when they cannot be transported to the markets, cities and other urban centres (Starkey, 2001). This dampens their productive efforts and also restricts demand for food crops among villages. Since virtually all the villages are themselves food crop producers, the effect of this spatial restriction creates an artificial local glut. This therefore depresses prices of agricultural produce and has a very strong negative impact on the villagers. Transportation leads to economic development through the linkage of area of production with area of consumption (Abegunde *et al*, 2005). If an area increases accessibility due to increase in transportation a linkage, its market potential also increases. Transportation facilitates the movement of raw materials from rural areas to urban areas as well as the evacuation of finished goods to the consumer and reduces waste from over production and stabilizes prices.

Recent studies show that Gwagwalada has had an improvement in road density but the concentration is mostly in the main town and most rural areas have remain inaccessible (GAC, 2007). In the absence of roads, farm produce are lost and production reduced to a minimal level. Therefore, the study intends to assess the effects of lack/inefficiency of road transportation on socio-economic development rural areas in Gwagwalada Area Council.

The objectives of the study among others are to:

- a. Determine the socio-economic activities of the area'
- b. Determine the effects of poor transportation network on the economic activities of the study area;
- c. Identify the present state of road networks in the study area.

Methodology

The study covers about 5 villages in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT. The villages include Alipi, Giri-Dakaci, Gwako II, Ledi, and Tsauni. The villages were selected using the systematic sampling technique. The 5 villages were selected from two wards in the area council. The target population was the household heads in the settlements

About two hundreds respondents were selected using the systematic sampling technique. Combinations of open and close ended questionnaire were administered to the respondents .The distribution of the questionnaire is presented in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Settlements

Village	Number of respondents	Percentage
Alipi	35	17.5
Giri-Dakaci	37	18.5
Gwako II	47	23.5
Ledi II	43	21.5
Tsauni	38	19.0
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

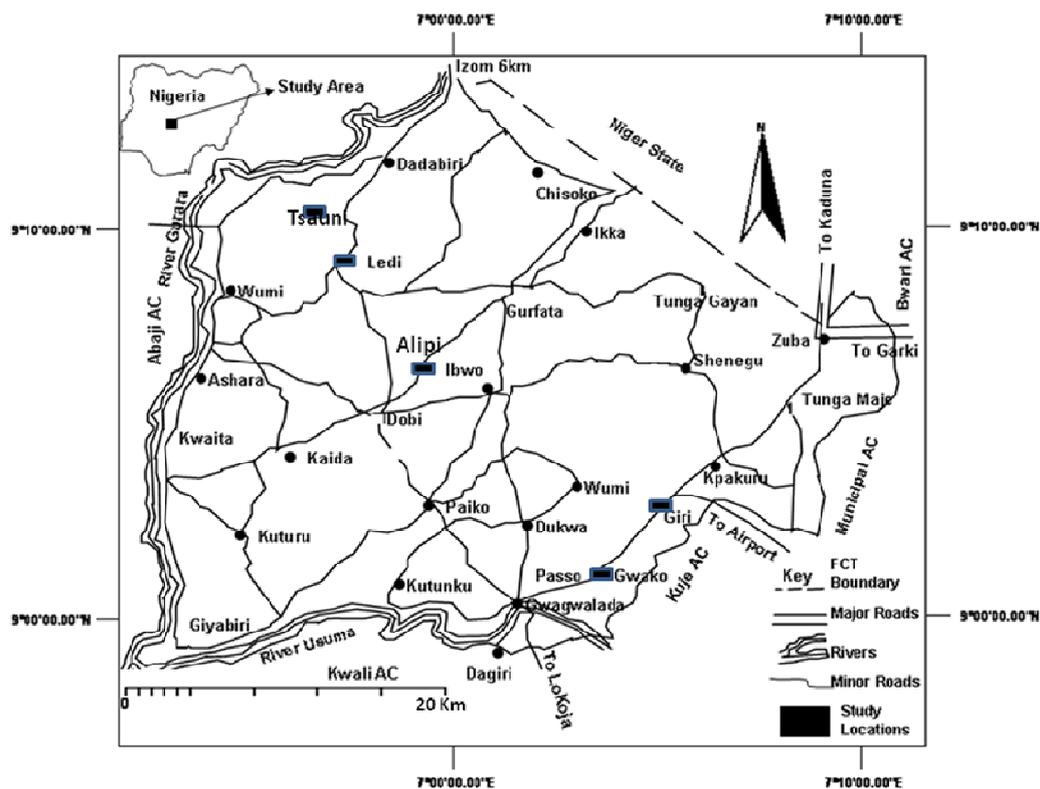


Figure 1. Map of Gwagwalada Area Council Showing The study Sites

The Study Area

Gwagwalada Area Council is one of the Six area councils in the Federal Capital Territory. The area Council covers a land mass of about 1,043km² (Figure 1). The Area Council has a population of about 157,770 (NPC, 2007).the major occupation of the people in the area is farming and common crops grown include: yam and groundnut, others are guinea corn, maize, beans and beniseed. The major indigenous population include the Bassa, Gbagyi, Koro among others.

Data Presentation Analysis

This section deals with the analysis and presentation of data collected from the field. Out of the 200 questionnaire administered, only 187 of the questionnaire returned and analysed. The result of the analysis is presented below. The presentation of the analysed data is into section: socio-economic characteristics of the respondents; modes of transportation available in the study area; types of routes; condition of the roads network and obstacles to accessibility in the study area.

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Information on the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were collected, analysed and presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 reveals that majority (84.0%) of the respondents are males while their females counterparts constitute about 16% of the

sample population. The Table also reveals the age structure of the sample population indicates that 5.3% of the sample populations are between ages 15-19, 25.5% (20-29), 29.4% and 26.7% are between ages (30-39) and (40-49) years respectively while 13.4% fall between ages 50 and above.

Table 2: The socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Sex		
Male	157	84.0
Female	30	16.0
Age		
15-19	10	5.3
20-29	47	25.1
30-39	55	29.4
40-49	50	26.7
50 and above	25	13.4
Marital status		
Married	125	66.9
Single	35	18.7
Divorced	9	4.8
Widowed	10	5.3
Separated	8	4.3
Educational Qualification		
No formal education	14	7.5
Pry/quranic education	56	30.0
Secondary education	70	39.4
Post secondary education	47	25.1
Occupation		
Farming	60	32.1
Trading	44	23.5
Civil servant	35	18.7
Handicraft/Artisan	20	10.7
Others	28	15.0

Source: Field survey, 2010

The younger adult groups 15-39 years constitute the bulk (59.8%) of the rural labourforce in the study area while the older adult (40-50 and above) constitute (40.2%) of the respondents in the study area. This is due to the location of the study area in the FCT which receives most of the younger adult (youths) migrants to urban areas in such of greener pasture from difference part of the country.

Out of the 187 respondents, about 18.7% are single adults while majority (66.9%) is married adults. Those who are divorced, widow and separated constitute 4.8%, 5.3% and 4.3% of the respondents consecutively.

Information on the educational status of the population was also gathered analyzed and presented also in Table 2

above. The table reveals that about 7.5% of the study population has no form of formal education. About 30.0% of the population has primary education as their qualification while 39.4% have post primary (secondary school) education. Those with post secondary education constitute 25.1% of the respondents in the study area. This implies that literacy rate is high in the study area.

Data on the occupation of the respondents in the study area was also collected, analyzed and presented in the Table 2 above. The summary of the The analysis shows that majority (38.5%) of respondents use motorcycle as their means of transportation. About 16% of the respondents utilizes bicycle as means of transportation while 5.3% of the study population uses truck as means of their transportation. About 32.1% use car/bus as means of transportation in the study area and about 8.2% use foot for the transportation.

Types of Transportation Routes Available In the Study Area

Data on the types of road available to the respondents in the study area was collected and presented in table 3 below. The table reveals that 16% of the respondents have access to tarred road. This may be the case for those settlements

Table2: Means of Transportation of Respondents

Mode	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Motorcycle	72	38.5
Bicycle	30	16
Truck	10	5.3
Car/bus	60	32.1
Foot	15	8.2

Source: field survey, 2010

Table3: Types of Routes Available In the Study Area

Type of Routes	Number of Respondents	percentage
Tarred	30	16.0
Untarred	92	49.1
Footpath	15	8.2
All of the above	50	26.7

analysis shows that about 32.1% of the respondents are farmers, civil servant constitute only 16.7% While trading/business account for 23.5% of the respondents. About 10.7% are artisans while others such as drivers, tailors among others constitute 15.0%.

Means of Transportation use by Respondents

Data on the various means of transportation available to the respondents was collected, analyzed and summarized Table 3 below.

that are close to the main roads like Zuba –Gwagwalada road and Gwagwalada – Paiko road. Such settlements include; Gwako II and Giri-Dakaci among others. The Table also reveals that most (49.1%) of the respondents roads are untarred and in some places seasonal. About 8.2% stated that they do not have neither tarred road nor untarred but foot path which makes it difficult for them to access market for their farm produce. Furthermore transporting the farm produce from the farm to the house is always very difficult. About 26.7% of the respondents have tarred roads, untarred roads as well as footpath in their settlements. This implies that about 26.7% of the respondents do not have problems of transportation in their communities.

Source: Field survey, 2010.

Table 4: Condition of Roads in the study Area

Condition of road	number of Respondents	percentage
Good	10	5.3
Fair	17	9.1
Bad	160	86.6

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Condition of Roads in the study Area

Information on the condition of the roads in the study area was also sought for from the respondents. The information gathered was analysed and presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4 above reveals that majority (86.6%) of the respondents stated that the roads in the study area are in bad conditions. Most of the roads are untarred and seasonally. Even the tarred roads that are mostly within the township and the Zuba-Abaji road are in bad state. About 9.1% of the respondents were of the view that the conditions of the roads are fair while 5.3% said the roads are good. The bad conditions of road in the study area according to the respondents make it difficult for them in transporting their farm produce from the farm to the house and from the house to the market. Furthermore, accessing social amenities, health facilities and good school are made very difficult by the condition of roads in the area.

Having established the conditions of roads in the study area, it was also important to know the factors responsible for the nature of the roads in the study area. Therefore information on these factors were collected, analysed and presented in Figure 2. The figure shows that majority (60.4%) of the respondents were of the view that lack of proper construction of

the roads by those constructed the roads is responsible for the bad nature of roads in the study area. It is been alleged that most roads were constructed using sub-standard material to maximized profits by these selfish contractors. About 20.9% attributed the bad nature of the roads in the study area to lack maintenance while 13.4% opined that rain is responsible for the bad state of roads in the area especially during the wet season. Others unclassified causes accounted for 5.3% of the respondents view on the bad conditions of road in the study area.

Obstacles to Accessibility in the Study Area

Data on obstacles to accessibility by respondents in the study area was also obtained and presented in table 5 below. The table reveals that 53.5% of the respondents stated that poor motorable prevent them from accessing markets for their produce. About 21.4% of the respondents viewed high cost of transportation as hindrance to accessibility to market infrastructure for the farm produce. About 9.1% of the respondents said distance is one of the major hindrances to accessibility in the study area. All these according to the respondents affect their socio-economic activities thereby increasing the poverty level of the communities in the study area.

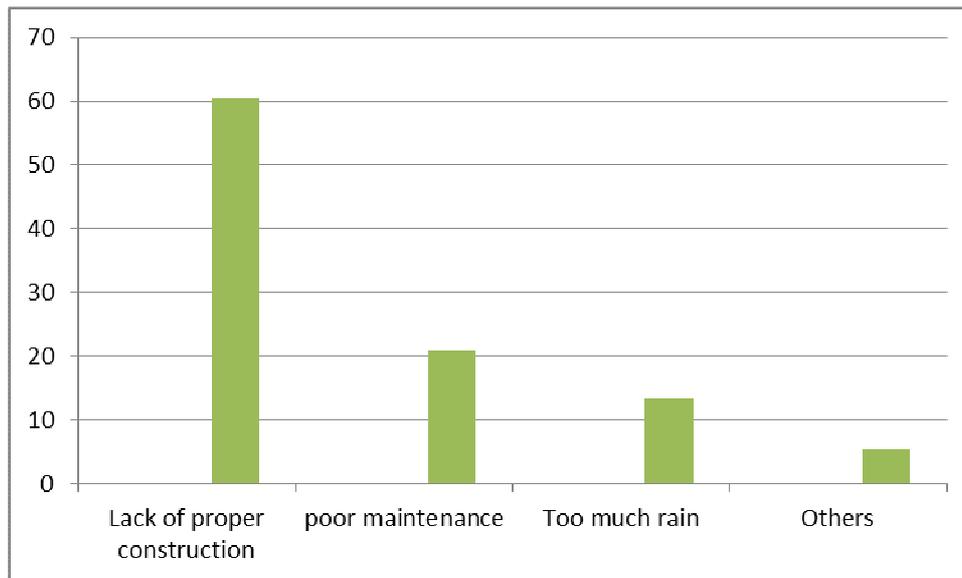


Figure 2: Factors Responsible for Bad Condition of Roads in the Study Area

Table 5: Obstacles to Accessibility in the Study Area

Obstacles	No of Respondents	Percentage
Poor motor able roads	100	53.5
High cost of transport	40	21.4
Distance	30	16.0
Others	17	9.1

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Table 6: Suggestion for Enhancing the Socio-Economic Activities of Rural Communities

Suggestion	Number of Respondents	
Percentage		
Construction of good rural roads	82	43.9
Proper maintenance of roads	39	20.9
Access to good market	48	25.7
Integrated development of rural areas	18	9.6

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Suggestions to Enhance the Socio-Economic Activities of Rural Communities

Opinions of the respondents were sought on how to improve the socio-economic activities of the ruralites in the study area. The information captured was analysed and presented in the Table 6 below. The table reveals that about 43.9% are of the opinion that construction of good roads in the rural areas of the study area will greatly improve the socio-economic activities of the people thereby enhancing their well being.

About 20.9% stated that if the roads are properly maintained it will brings about improvement in the economic activities of the people in the area. About 25.7% advocated for access to good markets for the farm produce of the rural Communities while 9.6% see integrated rural development as the sure ways for enhancing the socio-economic activities of the rural communities in the study area.

Conclusion

From the findings of this paper it can be established untarred/seasonal roads and foot track dominates in the study area. Lack of good roads in the study has great negative impacts on the socio-economic

activities of the rural communities. The study also concludes that improvement in transportation by given priority in road development will no doubt enhance the socio-economic activities of the study area thereby improving the well-being of the people in the area.

Recommendation

Most of the journeys made by the rural poor are for subsistence tasks. For them, access to local facilities and the primary transport network is critical during times of need, especially for health, social and economic reasons. Improvements to the primary village network of paths, tracks, culverts, and access routes that reduce the burden of basic household and productive tasks, as well as the increased availability of intermediate modes of transport with larger carrying capacity are likely to have a greater initial impact on the well-being of the poor in the study area. Therefore, improving transport within a village is as important to the poor and very poor as providing access to markets outside the village.

Market roads should be designed to follow the Christaller's traffic principle and accordingly pass through the largest possible number of villages. Each incoming hinterland to market road ought

to have a complement of dendritic feeder roads branching out into the various villages.

Access to good markets for rural communities to dispose off their farm produce should be considered a matter of urgency by the government. This will no doubt enhance the income level of the people thereby reducing the level of poverty in the rural areas especially in the study area.

The poor require genuinely integrated programs of support right through the cycles of production, transportation, and sale. The poor need support to make use of the opportunities that rural roads may bring. For the poor to travel for productive purposes, the provision of transport services must be linked to some livelihood and income diversification activity that builds on or supplements their existing subsistence activities. Therefore an integrated rural development will be an inevitable path of success for the rural communities.

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