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The Distribution of Road Infrastructure in Ekiti State, Nigeria (Pp. 379-384)

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Abstract

The provision and development of road infrastructure in any setting is to ease the movement of goods and services. In Ekiti State, the distribution of both Federal, State and Local Government roads are lopsided in favour of some areas at the expense of others. A lot of findings were identified as militating against the facility and recommendations, were made to move the development of this infrastructure to the next level.

Introduction

Road infrastructure plays a significant role in the growth and development of settlements. It aids movement of people, goods and services from one area to another. It also opens opportunities for innovation of new ideas and technology. In a book published by Development Policy Centre in (2002) it reported that as at June 1996, the country had 193,200km of roads comprising 32,100km (17%) of federal roads, 30,500km (16%) of state roads and 130,600km (67%) of local government roads.

Ekiti State is one of the states in Nigeria that has both federal, state and local government roads. In the survey carried out by Bankole (2006) the study it revealed gross disparities and inadequacies in the distribution of road facility across the entire region. For instance, out of 32,100km of federal roads in.

Nigeria, only 298.5km were found in Ekiti State. This in a way attests to some forms of inequality compared to other states that were better served with the facility. See table 1 for the distribution of federal roads across the country.

Statement of the Problem

Ekiti State was carved out of the defunct Ondo State in 1st of October, 1996. The state has not fared so well in the provision of road facility as most of the settlements are basically rural and lack the infrastructure. This statement was corroborated by Chisma (1992) that rural communities are seriously marginalized in terms of basic elements of infrastructure. This again was supported by Fisbein (2001) when the scholar argued that inefficient and unpredictable nature of infrastructure affects the generality of Africans and the Nigerian rural areas in particular. This fact was also emphasized by DFID (2002) that about 1 billion populations in developing countries have no access to all weathered roads. This draw back disallows evacuation of farm products from the points of harvest to neighbouring market centres. To amplify this problem further, Barwell (1999) asserted that in Burkina Fasso, Uganda and Zambia 87% of the rural residents carried out their daily activities by walking due to the poor state of roads in these regions. This scenario is not different from what happens in Ekiti State as most of the rural roads are dusty during the dry seasons and impassable in the raining seasons.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main thrust of this work is to find out the distribution of road facility in Ekiti State while the specific objective is to compare the distribution of road amongst the three senatorial districts of Ekiti North, Ekiti Central and Ekiti South. The study is also to consider the constraints being faced by the people in their respective communities.

The Study Area

Geographically, the state is located between longitudes 4^o, 45' to 5^o 45' East of the Greenwich Meridian and on latitudes 7^o 15' to 8^o 5' North of the equator (Adebayo, 1993). The region experiences distinct wet and dry seasons. It shares boundaries with Kwara State in the north, Kogi State in the north-east, Osun State in the West and Ondo State in the South and South-east.

Research Methodology

All the three Senatorial districts of the State were used as field laboratory for the study. The sampled population was based on the population of each of the

districts. For instance the 350 respondents were chosen from a population of 705,971 from the north, 300 respondents out of populations 876,109 in the central and 250 sampled opinions from a population of 692,646 from the south. The selection of respondents was done by the random sampling procedure. The inference, drawn from their responses is presented in the various tables shown in the work.

Length of Federal Roads in Ekiti State

The total federal roads in the state are presented in table 2 for all the three senatorial districts of Ekiti State. Information from the table shows that the distribution of federal road in the state is not even. There are 90km in the North, 130km from the central and 78.5km coming from the south. In all, there are 298.5km of both paved and unpaved Federal roads in the State.

Federal Roads: Paved and Unpaved

This information was obtained in order to ascertain the total number of kms of roads that were tarred and those that were yet to be completed.

From table 3 it was revealed that the North had 71km of paved roads out of the total length of 90kms while the remaining 19kms were under reconstruction. There has been remarkable progress in the road facility from this zone. In the central district, 100kms were tarred leaving the remaining 30km in bad condition. This particular portion that is in bad shape runs between Igede Ekiti through Efon to Ijebu-Jesha, Osun State boundary. The entire 785kms in the southern district are well tarred and maintained regularly by the Federal Government. The conclusion drawn from the table shows there is disparity in the maintenance of these roads in the state. This of course is taking its tolls on the economy of the inhabitants of the study area.

Roads Distribution in kilometers

Efforts were made to find out the total no of roads that are existing in all the zones under investigation and the result of the study is presented as seen in table 4

The inference had drawn from the table shows disparities in the ownership of the road infrastructure. For instance, there are 846kms of federal, state and local government roads in the northern district while from the central districts however, there are 626 km and 512km from the southern districts respectively. Based on the investigation conducted, the bulk of these roads were earth roads. Most of which cannot be plied through out the year round.

Problems of Existing Roads

The inhabitants of various communities in the study area were contacted and came up with some of the problems presented in table 5

A cursory look at the table indicated that the roads have hampered the respondents in many ways. First, in the northern senatorial district, 42.6% responses affirmed that the roads in their domains have contributed to high cost of transportation fares among rural communities. Another 28.6% responses from the central supported the argument while 30.0% responses from the Southern district also shared similar views with the first and second set of respondents.

Furthermore, another group of respondents complained bitterly on the time they took to board vehicles and moving along the rough roads in all the senatorial zones. On this, 21.6% responses were from the north, 31.3% responses were central residents while 39.4% came from the southern senatorial region. Another group of respondents from the study area were of the opinions that the nature of roads in their respective domain have impacted negatively in their interactions in the area of diffusion of new ideas and technology. This figure varies with each of the district. For instance, 18.7% responses came from the north, 24.1% responses were living in the central and 20.2% opinions were from the southern senatorial region.

Finally, the opinions of respondents were also sought on their health status in journey through the rough roads in the study area. Their experiences are presented as seen in table 1.5. For example, there were 17.1% responses in the north, 16.0% opinions came from the central and 10.1% responses lived in the south. Virtually all the opinions of respondents in the three regions were the same as majority of them have had one problem or the others that have affected their health conditions. Some even blamed the road mishaps being witnessed in some parts of the state to the poor nature of the facility under investigation.

Findings and Recommendations

The first area that came out prominently was the gross disparities in the distribution of the facility. Some areas were well linked while others were deprived (Abumere S. L, Okafor S. I. and Oluwasola O. 2002).

It was at the instance of the study that revealed the 298.5kms of federal roads for the whole state. This was considered too small compare to some neighbouring states in the same geo-political zone.

Furthermore, there was difficulty among farmers to transport their farm products to neighbouring towns and villages most especially during the wet seasons as most area become flooded and water logged which impede smooth vehicular movements. Most of these farm crops were disposed off at ridiculous prices in order to avoid spoilage on transits.

The revelation from the study also showed some decay effect as respondents found it difficult to interact together on regular basis. On this the transmission of new ideas and innovations were partially cut off. This of finding in the modern world posits a dangerous signal to human survival and development.

It was equally discovered in the course of this work as revealed in table 3 that there were more unpaved road which was just earth roads in all nocks and crannies of the state. These in effect have changed the faces of corrugated iron sheets to brown and thus become an eye sores in some localities.

Moreover, the high transportation fares being experienced are a product of rough and impassible routes in some communities. This has made most people to engage the services of Okada riders (cyclists) as alternative mode of movement to perform their daily economic activities. Finally, the road facilities in some parts of the state were not properly maintained while some are turning to mere foot paths due to total abandonment as found in the remotest part of the state.

Recommendations

It is expedient to establish a separate ministry of infrastructure and development in order to urgently rehabilitate and reconstruct the existing roads in various communities of the state.

The principles of equity and fair play are to be employed for the state to increase the allocation of federal roads to the state. Efforts are needed to take over some roads or to open up new ones for the state to rank among its equal in the comity of state in Nigeria.

The Ekiti Road maintenance Agency EKROMA is to be strengthened to live up to expectation by filling of potholes in some major towns and villages. The agency should as a matter of urgency move round the entire state to have data of un-tarred roads. The information along this line would assist them to plan for total road revolution programme in Ekiti State.

Finally, more funds are to be injected to the appropriate ministries and relevant agencies in charge of infrastructural facility to procure state of the earth equipments for the proper maintenance of existing roads across the state. In addition, the direct labour approaches are to be introduced to get some youths employed in the maintenance of these roads from various communities of the state.

Conclusion

The importance of road facility to any society cannot be over emphasized as this serves as pivot of development. The road infrastructure is the most common among other means of transport as it is very flexible and can even link the remotest parts of a region to the more prominent urban centres. Efforts are therefore needed by the government and other relevance agencies to make the facility a well packaged approach where people would have direct positive benefits in terms of access, quality and distribution.

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