

Assessment of Tricycle as a Tool of Poverty Alleviation in Maiduguri, Borno State, Northeast Nigeria

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Abstract: *This paper assessed the socio-economic importance of Tricycle (Keke Napep) as a tool of poverty alleviation. It is service industry task with the role of commuting passengers and their light freight across a geographical space. The full weight of the transportation medium was exerted on the study area with the ban of motor cycle operations. It forms part of many socio-economic activities taking place in Maiduguri. Multi stage sampling techniques were used in collecting the primary data. Maiduguri was stratified into densely, moderately and sparsely populated areas. Table of random numbers guided selection process of sample from stratum after mapping the existing Tricycle stations. The primary data were obtained through interview schedule, observation as well as trip count. The respondents were also selected systematically at regular defined interval. Findings were analysed using descriptive statistical tools. It was revealed that the operation of Keke Napep come into effect in full pledge with the ban of Motorcycle as a means of transportation in Maiduguri. It absorbs large number of productive male gender into the trade as operators while the females only surfaced as owners of the vehicles. It is par with other economic activities in terms of employment and income generation. The operation of the new medium of transportation was hindered to larger extent by the insecurity bedevilling the state. In addition to the security threat, double and over taxation were also forces of retardation.*

Keywords: *Tricycle, Transportation, Economic and Maiduguri*

I. Introduction

Recently, a new means of transportation tricycles “Keke Napep” was introduced for poverty eradication which was created to empower the poor, jobless and underemployed Nigerian to the next position in economic status. It was also meant to make transportation cheaper for inhabitants replacing the commonly used motor bike believed to cause a lot of accidents on major roads (Sun, 2009). However, some states in Nigeria have decided not to adopt it as a commercial means of means of transportation (Josiah, 2008).

It is noteworthy to mention that majority of the commuters use buses, taxis and tricycles for movement. The increased in human population, particularly those residing in areas far away from the city centre needs the services of flexible mode of transportation. Some passengers however prefer tricycle to motorcycle as a result of its relative affordability, availability and safety (Sun, 2009).

In most cities in Nigeria, it is such that the city centre is congested with business premises while the fringes are occupied by low and medium income earners. Faced with this, commuters are forced to make longer trips on vehicles and trek longer distance of a consecutive estimate of two trips per person. With the above, it is clear that there is impending crisis arising from demand/supply gap. The emergence of various modes of transportation gave rise to tricycles especially in view of its flexibility and the need to cope with socio economic trends.

Aim and objectives

The aim of this research is to assess Tricycle (Keke Napep) operations as a tool of poverty alleviation. The specific objectives are to:-

1. Unveil the characteristics of the people involved in the operations of Tricycles.
2. assess the socio-economic importance of the medium of transportation to the operators.
3. highlight the factors militating against the smooth operations of the medium of transportation.

The Study Area

The study is on the socio-economic importance of Keke Napep as a tool of poverty alleviation in Maiduguri. The area has 11°46'18" N to 11°53'21" N and 13°03'23" E to 13°14'19" E as it latitudinal and longitudinal extension (Figure 1 and 2). It is founded in 1907 following the defeat of tyrant ruler Rabeh, when the capital of Kanem Borno was finally shifted from Dikwa to Maiduguri by Lord Lugard as an administrative

centre. According to the projection from the 2006 population census, the area has a projected population of 1.2 million people as at 2012(NPC, 2013).

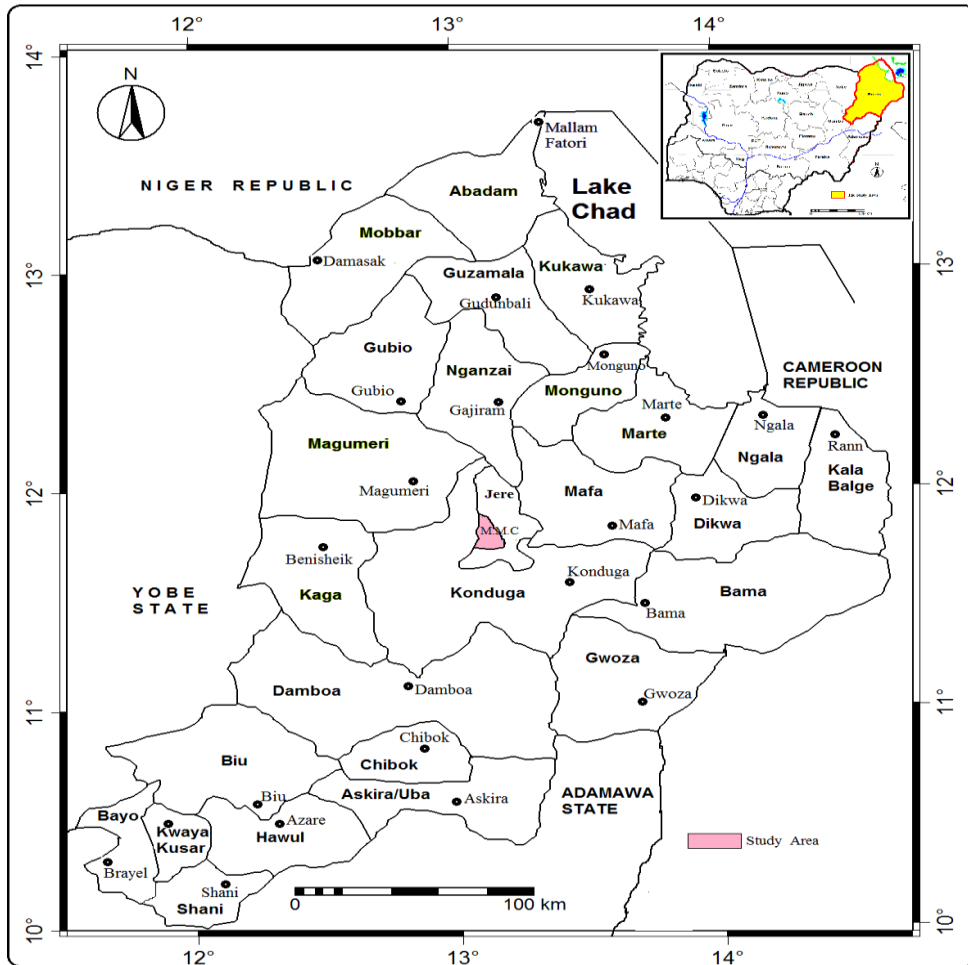


Fig. 1. Borno State showing Study Area.

Source: Cartography lab, Dept of Geography, University of Maiduguri, 2012.

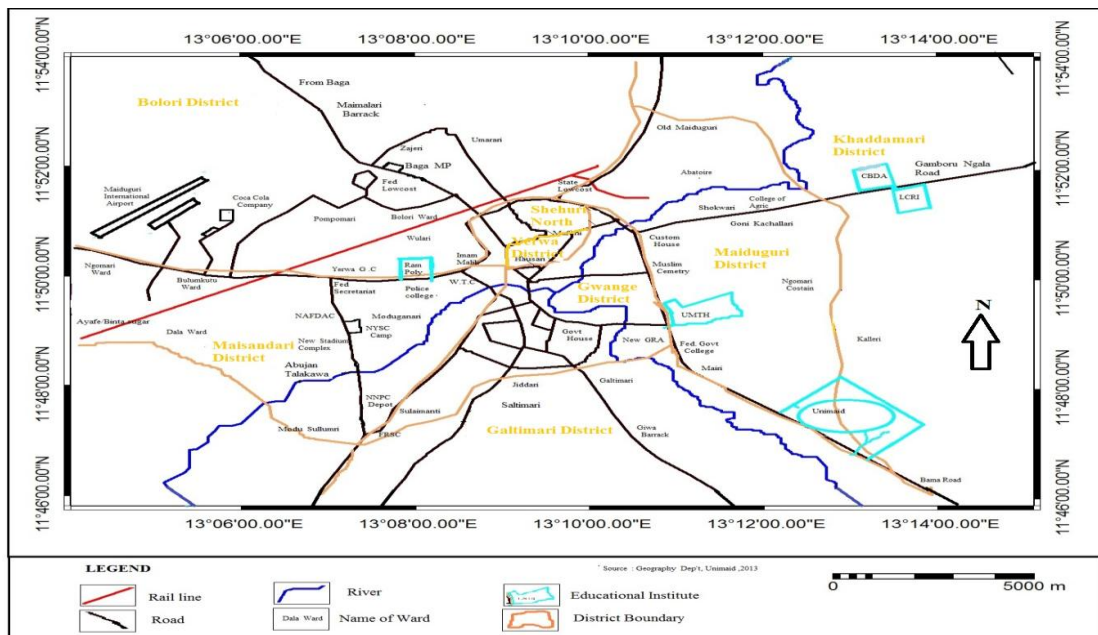


Fig.2. Maiduguri Metropolis.

Source: Cartography laboratory, Dep't of Geography, University of Maiduguri 2012.

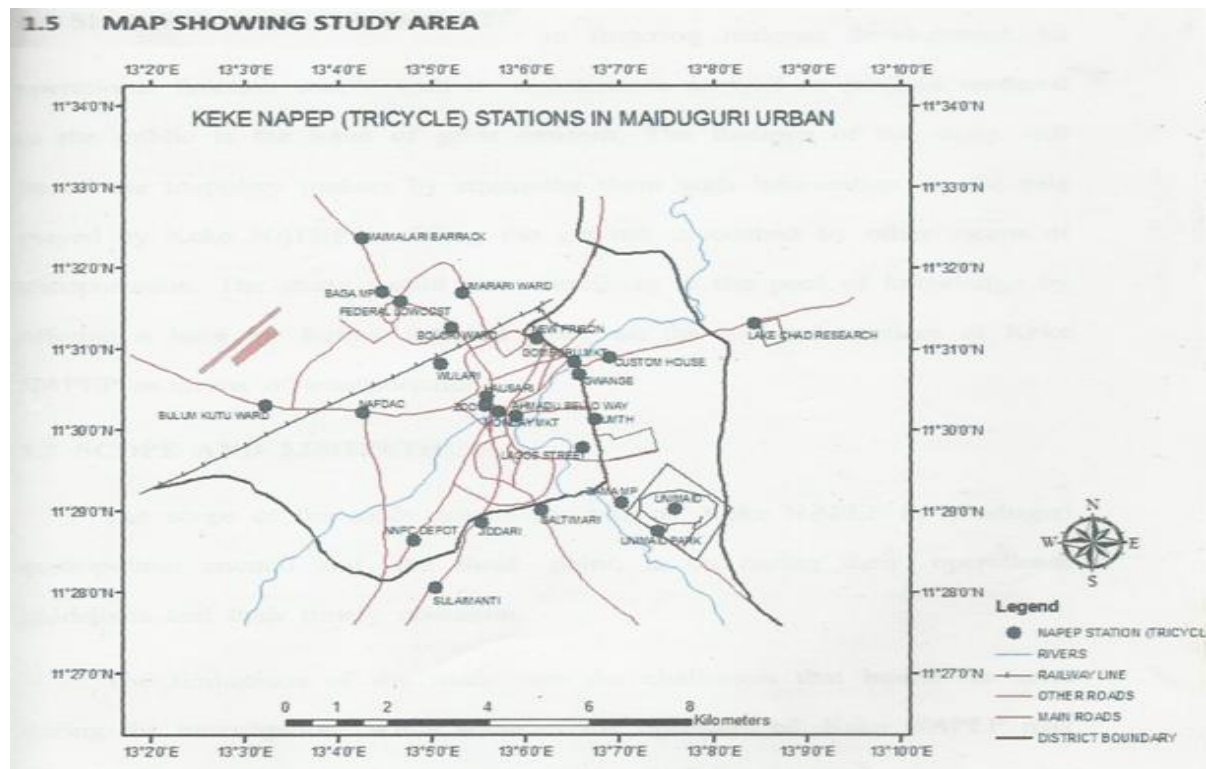
The arrival of the first vehicle to Maiduguri dated back to 1904(Waziri, 1995). Since then the volume of traffic in Maiduguri keep on increasing. Max lock (1976) revealed that one hundred and nineteen (119) of every one thousand (1000) people in Maiduguri own a form of modern transportation. Break down of this figure shows that 18% own motorcycle,12% car,3%lorry and others, the rest goes to bicycle. Dar Al Hadassah (1981) in their comparative study showed that vehicle ownership in Maiduguri increases at a growth rate of 15%.73246 new and used vehicles were acquired between 1980 and 1996. Motorcycle has the greatest percentage of 52%, followed by private cars which has 28.2% and commercial vehicle account for 19.2 % (License office, 1996).Right from inception to date, a total of 6422 Keke Napep (tricycle) were registered with Borno state license authority (License office, 2013).

II. Material And Methods

Two major sources of data were identified; these are the primary and the secondary. The primary data involves the collection of data required by empirical means. It has to do with the direct contact with the commercial operators of tricycle and tricycle operators' union officials. Interview schedules containing open and close ended questions were administered. The interview schedules administered to the operators sought information on their socio-economic characteristics, mode of operation, cost, routes ply and their opinion on the use of this mode for intra-urban public transport. The route being ply by the commercial tricycles were identified with a reconnaissance survey to major routes of the study area and their major terminals identified .One third of the major terminals were randomly selected with reference to the table of random numbers. Borno Express terminal, Baga motor park terminal, Tashan Bama terminal, University of Maiduguri terminal as well as custom market en route to Muna Motor Park were among the selected ones. Field assistants were posted to the various terminuses to administer the interview schedule using random sampling procedure. They were closely monitored by the primary researcher with the aim of authentication of the findings. The Union officials' interview schedules were conducted at the Headquarter of the body along Shehu Laminu Way as well as the offices of the sampled terminus. Out of the130 interview schedules meant for the research 120 were properly filled and returned. The secondary information were generated from the published and unpublished data source, these include journals, book of reading as well as records of tricycle union. The empirical data were subjected to descriptive statistical tool.

III. Result And Discussion

Tricycle as a mode of transportation was first introduced to Maiduguri in 2007. As observed by the chairman of the Motorcycle and tricycle union in Maiduguri, the introduction was in response to the high cost of transportation by taxi at that time and with aim of meeting the flexibility to all routes.



Initially, the operation was comprised of part time and full time operators. As the number of the operators grew, the problems of operating the system grew. One of these was the increasing rate of accidents and the attendant “harassment” from the law enforcement agents (specifically the police). There then grew the awareness of the need to form a union that would take care of the welfare of the operators. Thus, Tricycle operators joined or formed part of the existing Motorcycle Riders Association. The objective of the association is to provide cheap and efficient transport service to augment at a period when available resources could not meet the existing demand. Theoretically, several factors can be adduced for explaining the evolution of transport in any environment. On a regional scale, Kenneth and Joseph (2004) have shown that population and economic of transport in Nigeria and Ghana. On a micro-scale, Janelle (2002) has shown that the basic factor is the increased demand for accessibility, occasioned by the introduction of transport system and its spatial effect.

Characteristics of Operators

Table 1: Ages of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	%
10-19	05	4.16
20-29	29	24.2
30-39	46	38.3
40-49	39	32.5
50 and above	01	0.83
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

70.8% of the respondents are of the ages 30-49 years. They are captured within the productive age bracket of the international labour organisation. The age group captured stands to affirm Ali maszrui assertion that in times of economic biting jobs that are classified as inferior are taking up as the main job and redefined.

Table 2: Reasons for operating Tricycle for public

Reasons for operating	Frequency	%
To improve self -standard of living	67	55.8
To provide self-employment	24	20.0
To assist in solving urban mobility problems	16	13.3
For leisure	13	10.8
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 2 show that 75.8% of the respondents ventured into the business for the purposes of improving their standard of living through gainful employment. The information gathered indicates that some of the respondent entered the trade to provide alternative means of transportation to the city’s population. There are also population that in the trade for leisure, they are mostly seen in the evening hours.

Table 3: Educational attainment of respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	%
No formal Education	56	46.6
Primary School	26	21.6
Secondary School	23	19.1
Tertiary Education	13	10.8
Professionals	2	1.66
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

The high percentage of the operators of tricycle have not acquired formal education, this may be connected with shaky welcomed to western education in most of the rural areas. It is the likely cause of high rate of accidents they involve due to recklessness. The high rate of accidents is attributed to their inability to understand road signs. The high percentage of primary and secondary leavers confirms the submission of the chairman of their union that one of their objectives is to provide jobs for school leavers who are unable to go for further education or gets a job. Investigation on cost of tricycle shows that most of the tricycles are bought as brand new at an average cost of ₦440, 000:00 in order to avoid the misuse of what they describe as “costly working instrument”. 25% of the operators, operate their own tricycles while others operate for some “big time” owners paying an average of ₦ 2000:00 per day, depending on the agreement. Some civil servants lease their tricycles to these youth to operate and return the proceeds daily .The role of the Ministry of poverty alleviation has also helped in absorbing substantial number of the agile population. The educated operators found this job attractive since it provides a stop gap until a means of sustenance is secured.

Table 4. Monthly Income of the operators

Income(₦)	Frequency	%
7000-12000	14	11.6
13,000- 18,000	36	30.0
19,000-24,000	40	33.3
25,000-30,000	30	25.0
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table 4 portrays the information on income generation by the operators of tricycles. 88.4% of the respondents are earning between ₦13, 000 to ₦ 30, 000 monthly. The upper limit of the range it translate to one hundred and fifty dollars per month(\$150:00). With this monthly income, the trade is par with other economic activities. It has surpassed ₦ 18,000 minimum wage set for the government establishments. This implies that to the operators, business is booming when there are fewer taxis, buses and other alternative mode of transport. It is a trade worthy venturing especially for the teeming youth roaming the streets of the study area.

Factors militating against the smooth running of the trade.

All human innovations are likely to encounter problems or setbacks in the line of operations. The author of this research had noticed during the course of investigation that the operators were into drugs in order to meet up with the daily targets. This will in turn cause damage to the health status of the operators. A popular analgesic (Tramadol) is the prominent drug being taken by the operators. Based on my physical assessment, those that are into such drugs turn out to be addicts and they are mentally distorted.

The operators had raised alarms that they were constantly harassed by security personnel. This may not be connected with the security strife (Boko Haram) unflinching their angers on innocent people. The checks and balances is meant to bring to an end such terror activities. They also complained of over and double taxation by tax collecting bodies.

IV. Conclusion

The result so far indicates that the adverse economic situation of the country has forced the operators into this business, and not the interest of meeting the demand created by inadequate transport facilities. In a nutshell, the activity is worth engaging in and is on a par with other economic activities.

V. Recommendations

1. Government should go on partner with private sector in order to boost the trade thereby increasing the geographical frontier of coverage.
2. Federal road safety corps should intensify efforts in checking the excesses of the operators.
3. The National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should rise to its task of checking those who are into drugs in order to increase their productivity.

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