INTERMEDIATE MEANS OF TRANSPORT (IMT) AND TRANSPORT SYSTEMS (TSS): THEIR RELEVANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TRANSPORT SYSTEM (RTS) IN IDEATO-NORTH L.G.A OF IMO STATE.

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ABSTRACT: The paper examined various roles played by Intermediate Means of Transport (IMT) and other transport systems (TSS) in Mbanasaa clan (Ideato-North L.G.A). The problem of the study is that rural areas of Imo state especially in Ideato North L.G.A lack adequate motorable roads that hampers effective government and private public vehicular transport participation. This affects mobility of human efforts, goods and services for effective rural transformation. The objectives of the study is to examine the roles played by IMT and other TSS in the movement of people, goods and services. Data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. The field data were collected with the aid of structured questionnaire and the authors experience of the area and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with stakeholders. Data were analyzed using percentages. Result show that other TSS and IMT have played very significant roles in providing means of transport for the people of the area devoid of trunk A and B roads network that link the communities. The study concludes that despite the nature of the roads, the Okada riders brave the monotonus poor minor roads and routes to convey people, goods and services to their various destinations and recommends that government should maintain rural roads and encourage the use of IMT by providing loans to the people to purchase one mode of IMTs or the other, provide spare parts and train local technicians for sustainable rural transport system (RTS).

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INTRODUCTION

Transportation involves movement of people, goods and services from one point to another. Transportation is considered as a rational way of achieving an economic man's reaction to varied economic means spatially scattered to foster economic differential and development between different areas.

Road infrastructure is a fundamental requirement for facilitating industrial, agricultural, and socio-economic development (Akpan, 2010, Owei 2003). Inadequacy and poor road infrastructure are implicated in rural transport system (RTS) and hamper economic development. Mbanasaa, Ideato-North L.G.A of Imo State receive fewer attention and infrastructures than urban areas in other parts of the state. The implication is that poor road infrastructure affects the progress of the area and increase levels of poverty. United Nations (UN) 1996, 2000) emphasized the importance of provision of social equity in the treatment of individuals and groups. Most indicators of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are evident in the Nigerian economy. Although these have been put in place the roles played by road transport in rural setting are not squarely pursued, hence many rural areas where goods and services are produced are not effectively linked to urban areas with good motorable roads. The result of this absolute neglect in provision of public transport system by government give way to the people to tackle the transport problem by resorting to use IMTs and other means of transport system. In this study IMT is defined as motorized cycle used to transport person, goods and services as against bicycles, trucks, wheel barrows, etc and highly developed vehicular transport system such as cars, buses, train, etc.

The IMTs used in Ideato- North L.G.A and especially in Mbanasaa include, motorcycle popularly known as Okada, other means of transport include hand drawn wagons and trucks, wheel barrows and head porterage (CBN, 2000).

Mbanasaa consists of seven towns that claim a common ancestry, language, customs and tradition. It is located in Ideato-North Local Government Area. The towns that make up the clan are: Osina, Uzii, Umualaoma, Urualla, Akokwa, Obodoukwu and Akpulu (now split into Isiokpo and Akpulu). The people of this are enterprising. They are traders, artisans, civil servants, etc. and in place are arable fertile land and industries (Ume, 2005). The only major road that passes through the area is the Orlu-

Awka road whose segment pass through Urualla past Osina to Akokwa. On the northern part of the clan it is bounded by Aguata L.G.A in Anambra state, in the east by Arondizuogu, in the west by Ideato-south and in the south by Orsu L.G.A. All the towns within this clan are connected by community roads and paths which are not passable and feature minimum use during rainy season due to sheet and gully erosion, pot holes and truncation of the roads making them impassable. It is this condition of the roads within the clan that motivates individuals and people to embark in movement of goods and services using IMTs which are flexible and fast but with tendency to suffer accidents due to poor nature of the roads and inaccessible areas (Adesoji et al, 2003). The objectives of the study stems from lack of adequate roads and public transport system, the roles played by IMTs and other means of transport in facilitating transportation of goods, services and personnel. The socio- economic background of the users and operators, the cost of transport, income of operators, etc were also examined.

METHODOLOGY

The research is a survey of Mbanasaa clan in Ideato-L.G.A of Imo State. A questionnaire was designed and administered to randomly selected operators and users of IMTs and other TSS from seven (7) communities that make up the clan. In each of the seven communities 100 questionnaire were administered to the operators and users of IMTs, giving a total of 700 respondents. The Questionnaire solicited information on socioeconomic characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, ownership of IMT, users of IMT, and other TSS, education, income, and etcetera. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also used to ascertain the reliability, performance and assessment of roles of IMTs and other TSS in the lives of the indigenes. The experience and knowledge of the area and the authors assessment of the RTS in Mbanasaa helped to justify the findings of the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of the stakeholders in IMT and other TSS.

Gender

Over 75% of the operators of Okada motorcycle are males while 25% of the females uses wheel barrows, hand drawn truck and head porterage. The preponderance of males over females as operators of Okada is pivoted in the culture that permits males freedom to ride and operate public transport system than females who are forbidden by tradition to perform such acts in the clan. During the study November 2010-Januaray 2011 female users of motorcycle are strictly private. Findings show motorcycles as major means of transport in the area.

Age

The age of operators of Okada lie between 20-55 years. Those who use wheelbarrows and hand drawn wagons/truck are children of age 8-19 years and female adults of over 50 years of age.

Literacy level

The number of literate operators of IMTs and other TSS users has academic qualifications classified as post primary and post secondary (Table 1). Operators and users in this group are Okada riders, teachers, farmers, food sellers, etc and they constitute 20% of the sample. On the other hand 35% are semi-literates which include mostly farmers, traders and students and 45% of the stakeholders in IMT and other TSS are illiterates. These groups consist of those who cannot write or express themselves in English, but can understand and communicate in pidgin English. They are mostly old men and women farmers, wine tappers, cobblers, etc.

Table 1 Gender, Age and literacy levels of stakeholders

Male	525	75%
Female	175	25%
Total	700	100%
Age	**Number**	**Percentage**
8-19	10	1.4%
20-55	525	95%
56 & ABOVE	25	3.6%
Literacy level	**Number**	**Percentage**
Literate	140	20
Semi literate	245	35
Illiterate	315	45
Total	700	100%

Sources: field data, 2010.

Table 2 show ownership and users of IMTs and other TSS. The table shows that 550 or 78.7% of the respondents own or use motorcycle for transportation of goods, services and personnel; 100 or 14.4% own motorcycle for private use, 5 or 0.8% own or use taxis/cars/buses/bicycle, 35 or 5.0% own and use wheel barrows, 1 or 0.1% move their goods with wagon trucks, 2 or 0.2% operates trucks drawn with handle or rope while 5 or 0.8% carry their goods over distance on their head while they trek. There were no users of tricycle or tricar in the area. Infact, transport and locomotion in the area are facilitated by motorcycle and other various low modes of transport.

Table 2 types of IMTs and other TSS

Type	**Number**	**Percentage**
Motorcycle (Okada)	550	78.7
Motorcycle (private)	100	14.4
Cars/taxis/buses/bicycle	5	0.8
Wheel barrow	35	5.0
Wagon trucks	1	0.1
Hand drawn trucks	2	0.2
Manual /Head portage	5	0.8
Tricycle	-	-
Tricar	-	-
Total	700	100.0

Sources: Field data, 2010.

Table 3 shows cost of transportation of goods and services, income of operators and income of users.

Table 3 cost of transport, income of operators and income of users

Cost (N)	**Number**	**Percentage**
50-90	60	8.58
100-140	240	34.28
150-190	300	42.86
200 and above	100	14.28
Total	700	100:00
Operators per day income (N)	**Number**	**Percentage**
Less than 200.0	30	4.28
200-500.0	540	77.16
500-1000.00	100	14.28
Above 100	30	4.28
Total	700	100:00
Income of users (N) Perannum	**Number**	**Percentage**
1000:00	20	2.90
1000-5000	150	21.40
5000-10000	330	47.10
10000-15000	100	14.30
15000-20000	70	10.00
Above 20000.00	30	4.30
Total	700	100.00

Source: Field data, 2010.

Cost of transport

About 8.6% of the respondents pay between N50.00-N90.00 pertrip, 34.3% pay between N100-N140.00%, 42.9% pay between N150.00- N190.00 while about 14.3% pay between N200.00 and above to move both goods, persons and services.

Income of operators per day

Thirty (30) or 4.28% of respondents earn income of less than N200 perday, 77.17% earn between N200.00-N500.00 per day, 100 or 14.28% of the respondents earn between N500.00-N1000.00 perday. From the table the income earned by operators range between N200.00 to over one

thousand Naira per day and the most common income earned by operators, lie between N200.00-N500.00. This translate to $1.30-$3.30 USA dollars. The implication of this is that most of the Okada operators live within and above poverty level standard of $1.00 USA dollars per day using $1.00 USA dollars as poverty level indicator.

Income of users per annum

The income range of users of IMT and other TSS lie between less than N1000:00 to above N20,000:00. Twenty (20) or 2.9% of each of the respondents made a total annual income of less than N1000:00 while 43% of the respondents earn over N20,000:00 per annum, only 10% make between N15,000.00-N20,000:00 per annum, from the table average annual rural income of users of IMTs and other TSS lies between US$ 6.5 and US$ 130.70. This depicts abject rural poverty of the people of Mbanasaa. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) added impetus to the findings of this research as discussants agreed with the views expressed by the respondents. The FGD throws more light on the variability or discrimination of transport pricing and cost. This is so because the Okada riders, the barrow pushers, etc give their charges according to the distance covered. On the average a distance of less than one kilometer cost N60.00 while longer distances depends on what the operator and users of his service bargained.

Result also shows that IMT in the clan is flexible as one can stay around one's house and obtain the services of IMT operators. The IMT operators with experience and knowledge of the area will avoid areas along their route that are dangerously bad. On the other hand the flexibility of motorcycle makes it possible to reach far distances despite the rough nature of the roads. Hence the IMTs are used for inter and intra community linkage for procurement of agricultural produce to periodic markets in the area. The IMT operators generate more incomes on market days especially on Eke-Obodoukwu and Orie Akokwa market days. Also more incomes are generated during weekends when indigenes living abroad or outside the clan returns home. The operators and users of IMTs are satisfied with their business and services rendered respectively. Most of the operators did not see any good reason for the demand by the communities for developments and maintenance of rural network roads since such action will lessen their proceeds when operators from public motor transport system engage in inter and intra community services. It was found that the absence of tricycle and tricar in the area is because state government do not permit the use of these means of transport in rural areas expect in Owerri the capital city. However operators were of the opinion that they are willing to buy these means of transport if law permits its use in the rural areas.

Box 1 Contributions of IMTs in rural development

- **Reduction in Rural poverty.**
- **Reduction on number of unemployment.**
- **Help beef up security and formation of cooperatives.**
- **Help identify questionable persons.**
- **Help in distribution of rural produce and goods.**
- **Improved the living standard of operators.**
- **Has lessen hardship associated with long trekking.**
- **Flexibility, door to door service, migration, etc.**
- **Has helped local empowerment and settling disputes.**
- **Mobilization and utilization of rural resources, etc.**
- **Evidence of new houses and shops owned by operators.**
- **Presence of cottage industries owned by operators.**

Source: Field data, 2010.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Intermediate means of transport (IMT) has played significant roles in movement of people, goods and services. The operators and users are satisfied with their incomes and services rendered. IMTs in the clan are flexible with cost of transportation depending on distance covered. The operators have formed IMT cooperative societies, which oversees the activities of operators, punishes the offenders and settles disputes. The daily contribution inform of thrift are loaned to people and members with little interest. The contributions are shared during December period.

Despite the nature of rural roads the IMTs brave all odds to perform their services but lament on scarcity of spare parts and non-government encouragement in form of offering loans to prospective IMT owners and future owners. On this the study recommend that both state, Local Government and Local Government Development Authorities should come to the aid of IMT operators in Mbanassa, Ideato-North L.G.A. Since the IMT operators pay taxes and traffic license government should provide level ground for their operation such as creating parks, establishing technical workshop for maintenance of IMTs and provision of both personnel and spare parts.

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