

**AN EVALUATION OF THE ACCEPTABILITY OF ROAD  
TRANSPORT SAFETY STANDARDIZATION SCHEME (RTSSS) IN  
JOS.**

**BY**

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**BEING A SUMMARY OF POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA PROJECT IN  
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## ABSTRACT

*Transportation is the vehicle of socio-economic development of any country. The country has experienced an increase in the vehicles (commercial and private) plying the roads. Road transportation comes with attendance consequence of road traffic crashes leading to colossal loss of lives and properties. This study aims at evaluating the acceptability of road transport safety standardization scheme (RTSSS in Plateau State with a view to making suggestion that will help in improving the performance level of the policy and the corresponding benefit associated with it. The researcher adopted a survey method design for the study to get the information needed, a total of 262 samples were used; and the responses generated from the administration of the questionnaires was presented in tables and charts from which analysis and interpretation of the data was done. The study finds out that 55.4% of the transport companies registered with the scheme have safety managers that manages their safety units of their transport companies, only 79% the transport operators say that the enforcers visit their terminals on a daily basis, 79% of the transport companies average made the requirement for registration under the scheme, 65.5% of the transport operators shows that non of their drivers have been involved in any traffic crash in the last one year, 68% of the drivers asserted that they travel within the speed limit (not above 199mk/h) and 79% of the transport operators asserted that they carry out routine maintenance on a monthly basis. Also recommendations were made among which are; public awareness to be intensified, recruitment of more FRSC staff should be allowed by the federal government for monitoring of the terminals on a daily basis, only safety managers should manned the safety unit of any registered transport company under the scheme, all drivers with 5 vehicle and above in their fleet must registered with the scheme, all transport companies having less than 5 vehicles in their fleet to harmonize with others of same problem to form a transport company and register, all safety facilities at the terminals must be put in place and stakeholders meeting frequently is also encouraged. Plateau State Government to make available a virgin land for all transport operators so as to decongest the business area of traffic hold ups. The Plateau State Government to also provide logistic support to the Federal Road Safety Corps.*

## INTRODUCTION

Road transportation has been the most accessible means of moving both people and goods from one location to another. Transportation is performed by various modes, such as road, rail, water, pipeline, and air. Transportation plays important part in economic growth of society. It is the vehicle for socio-economic development of a nation. In Nigeria, the management of road transportation had largely been the discretion of operators who group themselves into unions and transport companies like National Union of Road Transport Workers, (NURTW), Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN), ABC transport, Big Joe transport etc with loose supervision from the coordinating bodies like Nigeria Police Force, Federal Road Safety Corps and the Vehicle Inspection Officers. This noticeable lack of standards and professionalism in road transportation is seen as being one of the remote cause of or factors contributing to the spate of road traffic crashes in Nigeria. It is in response to the need to streamline and regulate road transport management and activities that the Road Transport Safety Standardization Scheme (RTSSS) emerged.

Steps were taken by the FRSC to make the scheme acceptable by having regular meetings with all stake holders involve in the Road Transport Business where minds were robbed for the stakeholders to understand the purpose of the scheme and what to be achieved in view of the traffic crashes trend.

To ensure a successful implementation of the scheme, it invoked section 115 of the National Road Traffic Regulations (NRTR) 2004 which makes it compulsory that fleet operators, as one of their minimum requirement, should establish a safety unit and appoint a competent safety manager. The safety manager is to among other things ensure compliance with all safety standards in order to reduce incidents of Road Traffic Crashes (RTC). The problem of road transportation management before the introduction of RTSSS is better summarized in the words of the Corps Marshal and Chief Executive of FRSC, Osita (2007)

*"While seeking to meet the challenges of human movements and freight haulage, fleet operators acquired a plethora of vehicles which are loosely managed without the required standards and control. The lack of professionalism by owners and the absence of proper regulation of fleet operators, have overtime, resulted in poor management of fleet operations in Nigeria. Thus, road transportation became the engagement of all-comers. This situation led to the lack of common front for a National Road Transport Policy that could have substantially eradicated some of the numerous problems encountered daily on our roads today."*

This is the antecedence upon which the RTSSS was nurtured and launched on 11 September, 2007 by the then President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria Alh. Umaru Musa Yar'adua. Under this scheme, fleet operators with 5 vehicles or more in their fleet are under obligation to comply with specified safety standards set by FRSC calls for a comprehensive enquiry.

It will interest you to know that the RTSSS is a policy initiative of the FRSC. It was conceived to regulate and control the activities of road transport operators through the institutionalization of safety standards for the operators, drivers and vehicles.

The design is to have vehicle transport operators with 5 vehicles and above in their fleet register and comply with regulatory safety standards in order to minimize avoidable Road Traffic Crashes on our roads.

Available statistics from the FRSC Plateau State Sector Command shows that there are 65 transport operators identified in Jos out of which only 29 have registered with the scheme. Also, the Road Traffic Crashes report from the FRSC Plateau State Sector Command shows that there is a gradual reduction in the road traffic crash rate; with the commencement of the scheme in 2007, one would have expected the road traffic crash rate drop faster than that. This is the crux upon which this paper is situated hence constitute the very essence of this write-up.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Data Collection**

The study collected data on:

- ❖ Number of transport companies that have registered under the scheme in Jos.
- ❖ Number of transport companies that are in Jos.
- ❖ Proportion of registered vehicles under the scheme affected by road traffic crashes vis-à-vis the vehicles affected on RTC not registered

- ❖ Number of transport companies who have competent safety managers.
- ❖ Number of fleet operators that have safety facilities at their terminals.

Information relating to the study was collected from several sources, these include:

- i. FRSC who are the enforcers saddled with the responsibility monitoring the activities of the transport companies that have registered with the scheme from 2007 to date in Jos.
- ii. The fleet operators/safety managers
- iii. The drivers of fleet vehicles.

### **Data Analysis**

All the collected data were coded and analyzed by simple descriptive statistical tool of percentages. The frequency of the responses and the percentages they represented were highlighted on graphs or charts.

### **Analysis and Findings**

The data collected in the course of conducting the research work was analyzed, variables related to evaluating the Road Transport Safety standardization scheme (RTSSS) of transport operators registered with the scheme in Jos were examined and the following findings were found.

- i. The road transport safety standardization scheme (RTSSS) is acceptable as majority of the fleet operators registered with the scheme rate it as being successful, though some of the fleet operators rated it as not acceptable by saying the scheme is not successful, it could be that the awareness about the scheme did not get any wide coverage.
- ii. Though the RTSSS policy provides that the safety unit of the fleet should be manned by a competent safety manager, some fleet operators registered with the scheme have some other officers manning the safety unit along side their official schedule in which they were employed to handle.
- iii. The policy document of the RTSSS gives the enforcers of the scheme (FRSC) the powers to check the management of the fleet operators to make sure the fleet operators are following the policy guideline in the operation of their vehicles, the FRSC officials are suppose to be at the terminals daily before these vehicles embark on any trip but unfortunately because of lack of manpower on the part of the enforcer (FRSC). They can visit all on a daily basis
- iv. A large number of these fleet operators carry out routine maintenance of their vehicles that may be the reason why the crash rate involving the vehicles of fleet operators registered with the scheme are negligible when compared with the accident rate in the Plateau as a whole.

- v. The researcher found that some of the drivers of fleet operators don't have driving license, one will be tempted to ask "how were these drivers employed to drive vehicles in a transport company that is registered with the RTSSS? Though a large number of drivers possess valid driving license (83.7%).
- vi. The researcher again found out during the course of the research that some of the transport companies don't train their drivers on the use of the highway in the last one year as 48% of these drivers are involved in road crashes which is not a good one for the transport companies. However, the researcher discovered that the crash rate of transport companies that trained their drivers on the use of the highway shows that rate of crashes is minimal as only 34.5% of the drivers are involved in road crashes.
- vii. Out of the 65 transport companies discovered in Jos with 5 vehicles and above in their fleet only 29 have so far registered with the RTSSS representing 45% and that is why the crash rate in Jos has never reduced continuously for 5-10 years.
- viii. Most of the safety facilities (Reflective warning signs, 1<sup>st</sup> aid bags, registered office/terminus, parking and loading without interference with traffic movement, fire extinguishers, possession of toy vehicles, good tyres and mini workshop etc.) that are supposed to serve as a criteria for registering transport companies under the RTSSS are lacking, the researcher found out that only 3 transport companies out of the 29 registered have the requirements for registration under the



scheme some of the transport companies have some of the safety facilities and lack some, all these were noticed during on the spot assessment of the safety facilities of the registered transport companies.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the above findings the following recommendations are hereby proposed to address the problem of Road Transport Safety Standardization Scheme in Jos.

- i. The public awareness on the Road Transport Safety Standardization Scheme should be step up if it means visiting this transport companies that have 5 vehicles and above in their fleet to make them understand the importance of the scheme so that the scheme can be accepted by all transport operators.
- ii. The enforcers of the RTSSS (FRSC) should take her time and visit the transport companies in Jos to make sure the policy guideline of the scheme is adhered to that will checkmate all the transport operators registered with the scheme to appoint competent safety manager to manage the operation of their fleet and any transport company that refuses to appoint a competent safety manager, her registration should be withdrawn and blacklisted and they will not get patronage.
- iii. The enforcers of the scheme (FRSC) should not only visit terminals of fleet operators to ensure the right thing is done, they should

- also check the log book of these vehicles to make sure that the vehicles are well maintained to embarked on long distance journey since lack of vehicles maintenance can cause a road crash.
- iv. The Federal Government should allow the management of the Federal Road Safety Corps to carry out a recruitment exercise of staff who will be trained especially to monitor the activities of those fleet operators these staff when recruited would be able to visit all the transport operators terminals on a daily basis to ensure that the scheme achieve the desired result.
  - v. The enforcer of the RTSSS (FRSC) should review the recruitment policy of drivers by making sure that the FRSC is part of the recruitment exercise of these drivers. This is the only way drivers would be recruited with valid drivers license
  - vi. Transport companies should ensure that all their fleet drivers are trained both internally and externally, on defensive driving techniques, causes road traffic crashes, highway code use of log book and drivers compartment, training them will make them adhere to traffic laws and regulations on the highway
  - vii. The road traffic crash rate in Jos and the country at large has not come down continuously for 5-10years rather if it drops this year, it will increase the following year, inview of that the enforcer of the scheme should review the RTSSS policy to incorporate the harmonization of transport operators that don't have 5 vehicles and above in their fleet as required by the policy guideline, to come

- together to register under the scheme just like it was done in the banking sector in 2006. This will help in checkmating the excesses of these transport operators thereby reducing carnage on our roads.
- viii. The enforcer of the RTSSS should make it mandatory for all transport companies in Jos that have 5 vehicles and above in their fleet to register with the scheme or else they should be blacklisted. The enforcer of the scheme (FRSC) should be organizing stakeholders meeting of the transport operators regularly that will help in addressing grey areas that serve as a bottleneck in the implementation of the scheme.
- ix. Considering the findings on the auditing of safety facilities at the terminals of the transport operators registered with the scheme, the FRSC should make it mandatory to those whose safety facilities are not in place to put them in place or their registration should be withdrawn and be blacklisted and all those whose terminals are very close to the road should be asked to relocate to a more befitting terminal so that traffic flow will not be obstructed as noticed by the researcher during his on the spot audit (see appendixes 1-4). In view of this, Plateau state government should provide a land for all the transport companies outside the business district to enable them have enough space to put in place all the safety facilities expected of them as required by the policy guideline, when this land is provided it will assist in decongesting the traffic density in the

business district of Jos and the traffic hold ups experienced would be drastically reduced and the enforcer of the scheme (FRSC) must insist that all the transport companies registered with the scheme have all the safety facilities at their terminals that is the only way standards would be maintained in the road transport industry.

## **Conclusion**

Considering the findings in this research work, one will say that the Road Transport Safety Standardization Scheme (RTSSS) needs to be accepted by all the sixty five Transport Companies identified in Jos instead of only twenty nine accepting the scheme, competent safety managers should be employed by the transport operators and safety facilities should be improved by all the transport operators registered with the scheme this will assist in crash reduction in the country.

Finally, aggressive public enlightenment should be carried out to educate all transport operators to see the need to register with the scheme.