

REBUILDING RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE IN NIGERIA: POLICY, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract: With a land area of 910,768 sq. km, population estimate of 150 million people and GDP-growth rate of 6.9% per annum (2006 est), the centrality of effective public transportation in Nigeria is readily seen. In this regard, rail transportation offers much potential because of its relative safety, reliability, lower cost to the users and being singularly capable of transforming the national economy through mass movement of people, goods and services. Within this context, the demand for an effective railway system, and the enormous potentials for profitable investment in rail infrastructure in Nigeria, is indisputable. Beginning with the history, the paper discusses the main problems of Nigeria's railway transport system; and then makes policy suggestions, after considering the potentials of rebuilding the rail infrastructure. The necessity of this work is premised on the fact that there is a significant gap in critical knowledge about Nigeria's railway transport system.

Keywords: Nigeria, Railway, Transportation, Infrastructure, Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

All over the world, the transportation of people, goods and services is a key development objective for governments. The problems of environmental pollution and transportation accidents also make it more imperative for policy makers to seek out better alternatives. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Joint Replacement Structure Plan, sets out a transport objective to encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact; and reduce reliance on the private car and road haulage (Essex Railway Policy). This is in apparent reaction to the realization that more and more people tend to now depend on their personal cars and the roads for their movement. This tendency is even more pronounced in developing countries where personal cars have evolved, on the one hand as status symbols, and on a more demanding level, as necessities. The Railway Development Society (RDS) an independent pressure group for better rail services also in the UK, is promoting major investment in the national and local rail services because RDS believes the

policy will help reduce air pollution, conserve fuel, reduce noise and achieve better quality of life for communities.

In Nigeria, the irony in the rail transport sector arose mainly after the oil boom in the 1970s when the railway system rather than improving with increased national earnings, started declining. Prior to that time, during the colonial era, the nation's diversified economy (Oyewale, 2005) had the railway to depend on for the movement of agricultural produce and mineral products from the Northern part of Nigeria to the South for onward movement to Great Britain. Added to this, the railway system provided a utilisation channel for one of the nation's leading mineral products – coal. During this period, rail infrastructure development in Nigeria had enjoyed tremendous support from the Colonial Government because of its interest. However, since the discovery of petroleum in commercial quantities, successive national and regional administrations have systematically neglected the railway transport sector, shifting attention to the importation of alternatives that would ride on oil, and the development of a national road network.

Nevertheless, rising fuel costs, swelling population as well as rural-urban migration figures and deplorable road conditions have recently revealed a major flaw in the development rationale that Nigeria adopted for her transport system. More so, the absence of explicit distributive and regulatory policies also contributes to the plagues of the entire landscape thereby making the mass movement of goods and heavy cargoes a persistent headache.

This poses the challenge of creating an environment where car owners could decide not to use their car based on the availability of a cost effective alternative. Beyond that, developing countries like Nigeria also have the challenge of ensuring that their populace can move freely and efficiently from place to place. This is of particular importance since a country like Nigeria has an appreciable proportion of her population below the poverty line, and therefore cannot afford personal vehicles. Along these lines, several efforts – albeit with very little success - have been made to sustain the nation's railway system which was initiated towards the end of the 17th century (NRC, 2006).

In response to the failure of the system, the Nigerian Government initiated the Vision 2020 in which the Nation is expected to be among the top 20 economies in the world. Efficient transportation system which is a top consideration for the club of 20 must therefore be in place for the realisation of this dream. Thus, recent efforts have been directed towards reviving the comatose railway transportation system in Nigeria through public-private sector initiative and collaborative efforts with foreign investors.

For instance, the Federal Government of Nigeria, in 2006 approved a US\$40 billion 25-year strategic plan for the modernization of the transport sector: about 8,000km standard gauge rail line would be constructed. The first phase covering a total of 1,315 km is expected to be completed in 5 years. Therefore, in realization of this plan, Nigeria and China signed a US\$8.3 billion contract for the construction of the new line (NRC, 2006).

It is within this context that this paper looks at the some of the key issues that affect Nigeria's railway transport system. The paper begins by tracing the evolution of railway transportation in Nigeria and then establishes the potentials within the nation for profitable investments in the infrastructure development in railway transportation sector. The experiences of selected countries with successful railway systems are reviewed to draw lessons for Nigeria, after which policy options are suggested before the paper concludes.

At the moment, there is almost no systematic discussion of Nigeria's railway system in the literature. Apart from the Facts and Figures published by NRC (2006) and the work of an ex-employee of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Osunbote (1997), it is almost impossible to find any literature that focuses on the railway system in Nigeria, except, maybe newspaper articles; hence, the justification for this work. We have drawn extensively from the notable works of NRC (2006) and Osunbote (1997) in preparing this paper.

2. RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION IN NIGERIA: HISTORY AND STATUS

The first railway line in Nigeria was constructed between 1898 and 1901 (NRC, 2006; Osunbote, 1997), making the railway system the oldest modern mode of transportation in Nigeria. Although initiated by private companies, the system was later taken over by the government. Since the completion of the first rail line, which spanned 193km, between Lagos and Ibadan in 1901, railway construction in Nigeria has continually extended. Details of the extension are contained in Table 1. It is clear from the table that a total of 3212 kilometres of rail had been constructed in the country over the century between 1898 and 2006, which translates to an average of 3.2 kilometres per year. However, track and route kilometres sum up to over 4300 and 3500 respectively. An interesting trend to note in the table is that there was consistent rail construction from 1898 to 1927, followed by a 31-year break. Consistent activity picked up again in 1958 – two years before the nation's independence from colonialism - and has continued till date.

A distribution of these rail construction works by time period is shown in Figure 1. Most of the nation's rail lines are seen to have been constructed during the colonial period. At that time, the driving motive was the need to link the Northern Nigeria to the Southern part for ease of movement of mineral and agricultural resources required for the development of Great Britain (Osunbote, 1997). It is therefore not surprising that the nation's rail lines are in a general state of disrepair – as evidenced by the information in Table 3. This is seen to be more so considering the fact that the most recent time period shown in Figure 1, 1986 – 2006, had the lowest intensity of rail construction. It goes without saying, then that the most recently completed rail lines in the nation were initiated about 2 decades ago. Analysis of colonial and post-colonial period of rail development in Nigeria showed that the discovery of crude oil viz-a- viz more revenue, rather than enhancing rail development, actually contributed to its decline. The Government at that time suddenly found wealth and without much planning for the future chose the path of affluence and neglected the railway.

Table 1: Rail Construction in Nigeria since Inception

Section	Started	Completed	Distance (km)
Lagos – Ibadan	1898	1901	193
Ibadan – Jebba	1901	1909	295
Kano – Baro	1907	1911	562
Jebba – Minna	1909	1916	225
Port-Harcourt – Enugu	1914	1916	243
Enugu – Makurdi	1916	1924	220
Kaduna Junction – Kafanchan	1922	1927	179

Kafanchan – Jos	1924	1927	101
Kuru – Bauchi	1958	1961	166
Bauchi – Gombe	1961	1963	155
Gombe – Maiduguri	1963	1964	302
Itakpe – Ajaokuta	1986	2006	277
Ajaokuta – Warri		Ongoing	275
Port-Harcourt – Onne		Ongoing	19

Source: Adapted from NRC, 2006

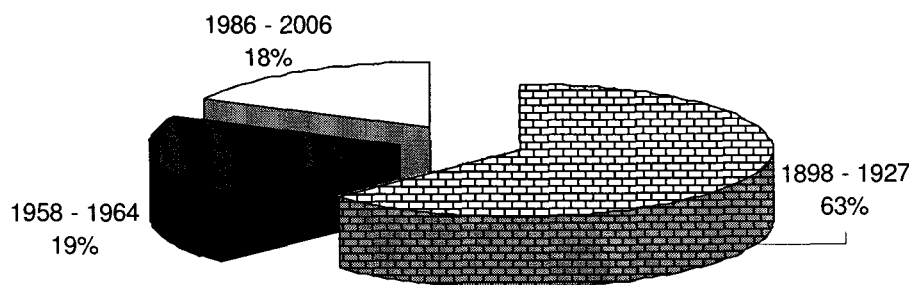


Figure 1: Distribution of railway construction in Nigeria by period

Source: Chart plotted with figures from NRC, 2006

Administration of the railway system is under the control of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC). The NRC became an autonomous Public Corporation in 1955 created by an Act of Parliament. Its primary mandates, among others, are to transport passengers and goods in a manner that will offer full value for money and to ensure safety of operations. The Corporation is organised to comprise 9 directorates and 3 sub-directorates with the entire rail network decentralised into 7 semi-autonomous zones. These zones are coordinated by the rail network headquarters located in Lagos, Nigeria's former Federal Capital. The activities of the NRC are supervised by the Federal Ministry of Transport. The Ministry, among others, has the responsibility of creating an enabling environment for the provision and implementation of effective national transport policies.

In spite of the apparently firm institutional arrangement, the inadequacies of the nation's railway system come out clearly. First, only 2 of the nation's 5 sea ports are served by rail and none of the airports is connected to the railway system. Besides, almost half of the 36 states in the country do not have any railways; and the distribution of the network among those that have is grossly uneven (NRC, 2006). For instance, we see from Table 2 that about half of the total rail length lies in only 5 states. The implication of this is that the Nation relies solely on road transportation for movement of people, goods and services. The attendant heavy fuel consumption and resources expended on road infrastructure which are hardly visible tend to slow the growth of the economy.

Table 2: Distribution of rail length in Nigerian states

State	Rail Length (km)	% of Total	Cumulative %
Kaduna	537	14.64	14.64
Bauchi	389	10.61	25.25
Niger	358	9.76	35.01
Plateau	259	7.06	42.08
Benue	230	6.27	48.35
Borno	201	5.48	53.83
Ogun	195	5.32	59.15
Jigawa	180	4.91	64.06
Gombe	173	4.72	68.78
Enugu	160	4.36	73.14
Abia	158	4.31	77.45
Kwara	150	4.09	81.54
Kano	140	3.82	85.36
Nassarawa	125	3.41	88.76
Zamfara	110	3.00	91.76
Osun	97	2.65	94.41
Katsina	64	1.75	96.15
Oyo	64	1.75	97.90
Rivers	37	1.01	98.91
Lagos	34	0.93	99.84
Yobe	6	0.16	100.00
Total	3667	100.00	

Source: Adapted from NRC, 2006

In addition, a total of 1805 kilometres of track sections have been long overdue for renewal (Table 3). This simply means that approximately 1 in every 2 kilometres of rail length in the states is overdue for renewal. Of this, approximately 65% had been due for repair for at least 25 years.

Table 3: Sections of Track Overdue for Renewal

Section	Length	Year Due
Kuru - Maiduguri	640	1990
Zaria - Kano	140	1982
Ilorin - Jebba	154	1981
Offa - Jebba	141	1981
Jebba - Minna	258	1963
Kano - Nguru	230	1963
Minna - Baro	179	1963
Ifaw Junction - Idogo	63	1963
Total	1805	

Source: Adapted from NRC, 2006

The relatively high prevalence of railroad accidents may not be unconnected with this. For instance, between 1997 and 2005, a total of 970 Class A accidents had occurred in the country (Table 4). This amounts to an approximate average of over a hundred accidents per year over the 9-year period. This may not be so surprising considering the fact that most recently acquired machinery/equipment was purchased in 1991 (NRC, 2006). A positive point to note, however, is that total annual accidents reduced over the entire period. Even so, total number of locomotives had reduced by almost 50% from a total of 235, between 1985 and 2004 (NRC, 2006).

Table 4: Railroad Accidents in Nigeria: 1997 - 2005

Accident Type	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total/accident type
Derailments	85	106	114	47	47	32	36	55	31	553
Collisions	16	14	27	17	29	19	23	17	7	169
Washouts	8	11	12	24	4	6	9	4	3	81
Broken Rails	6	8	17	3	3	11	13	11	5	77
Loss of Control etc.	-	25	17	16	6	16	3	2	5	90
Total accidents per year	115	164	187	107	89	84	84	89	51	970

Source: Adapted from NRC, 2006

Of the problems that have plagued the Nigerian railway system, poor maintenance systems seem to be one of the most significant. For instance, adopting the breakdown maintenance approach rather than preventive, has created a situation where most of the railroads and trains are dysfunctional. More so, a significant proportion of the equipment/machinery and techniques in use are obsolete. This is arising from the inadequate and haphazard approach of government to the funding of the sector (Osunbote, 1997). It is worth noting that railway systems are, by nature, complex and therefore need to be carefully controlled and coordinated if they must operate at optimal levels.

Besides the funding problem, there is also the challenge of inconsistencies in government policies and mechanisms. Virtually every new government comes up with its own new programmes and strategies, without taking care to ensure continuity in implementation of these programmes and strategies. Consequently, explicit distributive and regulatory policies which will help in driving the system are largely absent; and the institutional arrangement put in place in the NRC is inherently inadequate. One of the most notable implications of this difficulty is reflected in the human capital within Nigeria's railway transport sector. The consistently declining workforce in the NRC is clearly not indicative of proper funding and close monitoring. Between 1985 and 1990, for instance, the number of staff involved in NRC operations fell from 33815 to 23500 (NRC, 2006; Osunbote, 1997).

Apparently due to the combined influence of the foregoing challenges the economic contribution of railroad transport in Nigeria has declined over time. An important consequence of this development is the reduction in the use of railways for importation in Nigeria. According to Osunbote (1997), while the relative share of road transport in import

traffic in Lagos rose from 24% in 1955/56 to 89% in 1973/74, that of rail transport fell from 76% to 11% over the same period. The same trend was observed in Port-Harcourt, another major import city in Nigeria. Here, the relative share of rail transport fell from 58% in 1955/56 to 18% in 1973/74, while that of road transport doubled over the same period.

And as shown in Table 5, the total number of wagons as well as freight tonnes reduced significantly between 2000 and 2004. Although total number of passengers as well as revenue from the cartage of passengers and cargo increased over the same period, the increase does not correspond to the decline in infrastructure as indicated in the fallen number of wagons. The rise in the financial figures may well be due to a number of hidden factors, notable among which are inflation and increased railway charges.

Table 5: Summary of Railway Operations in Nigeria: 2000 - 2004

Year	No of Passengers	Revenue	Freight Tonnes	Wagon	Revenue
2000	1,525,946	142,920,540	116,837	3,434	155,865,908
2001	1,284,022	110,456,518	132,813	4,135	115,256,200
2002	987,088	101,017,010	98,190	872	132,908,397
2003	1,622,271	156,276,964	58,790	1,049	101,129,077
2004	1,751,159	206,772,909	62,575	2,049	1,124,800,593

Source: Adapted from NRC, 2006

3. PROSPECTS OF THE RAILWAY TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

In spite of the challenges identified above, a lot of potentials could still be harnessed from the comatose system with a redefinition in the nation's railway development policy. To begin with, the nation, being one of the largest markets in Africa and the largest in West Africa, offers tremendous opportunities. For a starter, rail transportation seems to offer much potential to make a difference in Nigeria. Apart from its being singularly capable of easing the pressure on the nation's road network, it is undoubtedly safer, more reliable and cheaper, especially in terms of handling mass material movements as already are predominant in the nation's major cities. Therefore, for any investment made, the promise of return is largely guaranteed.

Moreover, the present state of the railway system in the country begs for private investment in certain key areas. Besides certain basic infrastructure, a number of possibilities exist that investors, especially from international could tap into. For instance, the production of concrete sleepers, the rehabilitation of existing timber treatment plant (or establishment of a new one) as well as the rehabilitation and operation of quarries and boilers will not only receive a great market from the Nigerian Railway Corporation but also from the private sector in Nigeria and all over the West African sub-region. Specifically, the quarries would generate patronage from the growing local building and construction industry while the timber treatment plant will also enjoy the patronage of the local timber/wood industry.

4. FINANCING RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE IN NIGERIA

4.1 Infrastructure – Government participation

The reason why governments, especially those of developing countries must provide railways infrastructure is because there is not enough money to be made from the enterprise and because the commercial risks are too high for the private sector. The infrastructure is very expensive and the amount of money ordinary people are able to pay in fares is not enough to repay the costs of building and maintaining the lines. In many cases, there isn't even enough money coming from fares to pay for the day-to-day operating costs like energy bills and staff wages. The government therefore has to cover the shortfall. They must provide the infrastructure, or at least help to provide it, and support the operations and maintenance costs. Therefore, we suggest that before any meaningful private sector participation in the Nigerian Railway could be achieved, the Federal Government must continue massive investment in rail infrastructure not only in the construction of modern rail line but also modern stations across the length and breadth of the country. It must put in place policies that would sustain infrastructural growth over the next 25 years. Eventually, FDI and local private participation will be encouraged.

4.2 Private Sector Participation

The last political dispensation in Nigeria witnessed the privatisation of many state owned agencies which are perceived as inefficient. In many cases, government-owned utilities have been sold to the private sector, usually at very attractive prices in order to attract purchasers who may have to spend a lot of money restructuring the organization to make it into a profitable business. Telecommunications, power supply and airlines are all areas which governments have sold into private ownership and which have eventually become profitable. However, the railways are more difficult to sell since they have high infrastructure and maintenance costs and the income from operations is artificially low and usually not enough to sustain the railway operations (Railway Financing 2006).

Although, this policy has been criticized by proponents of State as a welfarist institution, it has enjoyed tremendous support from multi-lateral agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank. The good aspect to note is that, the current Government has promised to continue with the reforms initiated by the immediate past administration. This is a positive development and a clear departure from what used to obtain where every government initiates new policies which usually were terminated with the life of their administration. Therefore, the Nigerian Government must be firm in its decisions and put in place policies that are investors' friendly to encourage private sector participation. This should come as incentives such tax exemptions, rebates, duty waivers and equity contributions among others as practiced in many developed countries.

4.3 Efficiency

"Efficient" really means "cost effective use of resources" and this is why the private sector can be helpful in running or maintaining a railway system (Railway Financing 2007). For some reasons, governments all over the world seem unable to control their management so that

public services are run efficiently. In developing countries, government agencies are seen as welfare means for political patronage. This account for most of the inefficiencies and deficiencies of government owned agencies because square pegs are often fixed in round holes. The history of the Nigerian Railway is replete with inefficiency except during the colonial period. Though the NRC apparently had a firm structure, government supervision of the Corporation was ineffective as obtained in other publicly owned agencies. The Corporation staff strength was often over bloated with many redundant staff occupying space without being productive. The cost implication was often too much for Government to shoulder because the corporation's account was always in red (Osunbote, 2007). In such instances, the private sector can be useful in improving efficiency of the Nigerian Railway Corporation by partnership with private companies to run some of its operations and offering concessions, inducements, guarantees or financial subsidies..

4.4 Maintenance

Maintenance costs are now going commercial, along with the rest of railway financing. Many countries now engage private maintenance outfits for their railways. The effect is more jobs are created and value is obtained for money. In view of this therefore, it is expected that after the construction of the rail line and provisioning of modern rail infrastructure maintenance is key to sustaining its operations.

4.5 Need for Collaborative Effort

Another major challenge of the private sector participation in rail transportation in Nigeria is lack of awareness". It is often believed that the challenges of rail transportation are too overwhelming and could hardly be overcome. In this direction, the Federal Government of Nigeria must prepare the ground for effective collaborative efforts with foreign technical partners. This is because; the foreign technical partners would always want the assurances and/or guarantee of the Federal Government. We therefore suggest that, the Nigerian Government should identify local operators and provide them with necessary assistance in order to be able to enter into agreement with foreign partners

5. TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM: LESSONS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

5.1 India

The rapid and unprecedented growth of India's railway system offers important lessons for Nigeria. India is a particularly good case in point given its socio-economic similarities to Nigeria. First, like Nigeria, India was a British colony. Then, within its sub-region, India, like Nigeria is one of the most populous. Finally, India is not one of those countries to be classified as rich given the proportion of its population that live below the poverty line.

Table 6: Comparing railway track length in Nigeria and India

	Year	Track Length (km)
India	1853	33.79
	1880	14481.00
	2006	108706.00
Nigeria	1898	193.00
	2006	3505.00

It is within the context that the comparison in Table 6 tells an interesting story. It is obvious that the growth rate of the railway system in India far surpasses that of Nigeria. Although, railway started in Nigeria 45 years after India, the difference in growth between the two countries far surpasses the difference in years. For instance, it took the Indian railway system only 27 years to grow its track length 24 times as much as the Nigerian system grew in 108 years. In addition, total track length in the Indian railway system in 2006 was about 31 times the track length in Nigeria. In fact, Indian Railways – the first transport organisation in India – is today the largest rail network in Asia and the second largest in the whole world.

The success achieved by India in its railway sector is attributable to a number of factors. First, the government demonstrates a high level of commitment. This is shown, first and foremost in the creation of 3 ministerial offices specifically to cater for the railway system. The Minister for Railway and his 2 Ministers of State for railway administer the nation's rail transport system through the Railway Board. This detailed organisation puts India's railway system in a position to succeed. In addition to that, the rail transport sector in India is well funded. This is partly due to the explicit ministerial structure that is in place. The availability and adequacy of funding makes it relatively easy for the system to invest in modern equipment and facilities and to expand its capabilities. This has gone a long way in pushing the sector forward. For instance, as at 2006, 11000 trains are operated daily in India and these serve an average of 13 million passengers every year. An additional 2000km of track and 250 locomotive engines are to be put in place in 2007.

5.2 Brazil

Brazil is another country with similar development profile as Nigeria. In terms of railway development as well, Brazil started before Nigeria by about 44 years. In 1854 when the Brazilian Railway System started, there was only a total of 14.5 kilometres but by 2007, this has grown over the years to a total of 29252 km. This translates to annual growth rate of 191 kilometres of track length.

Brazil does not have a unified railway system because majority of railway development is along the coastal regions of the south-eastern states. The ownership is diverse and their operations are complex. For instance, the Federal-owned Central Railway of Brazil crisscrosses the Leopoldina Railway Company (Railway History, 2007). There is no single railway network that could link all parts of the country together. Some railways are owned by companies, mainly British companies. These companies operate under concessions and leases from States and from the Federal Government. The Federal Government and the States governments also own substantial portions of railways in Brazil.

The structure of the Brazil Railway offers a good lesson for Nigeria. Whereas, the Nigerian Railway Corporation has a unified structure operating under the ministry of Transport, Brazil has a complicated structure involving different ownerships. In Nigeria, States of the Nations sees the railway as the problem of the Federal Government and they do not see reasons why they should invest in railway infrastructure in their states. This is unlike in Brazil, where states own railways and could grant concessions to private operators.

The success of Brazil railway is not unconnected with the success of its federal system of government. Though Nigeria operates a federal system of government like Brazil, the states in Nigeria do not enjoy the type of autonomy the Brazilian states enjoy. Therefore, Nigeria must take steps to ensure that its federal system of government conform with other federal system of government whereby the federating states are allow a degree of autonomy that will enable them to develop at their own pace.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY OPTIONS

From the foregoing discussions, it is evident that the problems of rail transport in Nigeria are not unsolvable. Indeed, the experiences of the selected countries seem to show that almost any height of rail transport development is possible if the appropriate mechanisms are in place.

First, the institutional framework needs to be strengthened. As is the case in India, perhaps what Nigeria needs is the creation of a special office to oversee the administration and financing of the railway sector. This will ensure that a higher level of attention is paid to the sector and that funds are made available in a timely manner. The import of this is readily seen when the extent of the transportation problem in Nigeria is considered.

In addition, commercial participation is a viable option that may be considered. Although private sector participation in railway operations has its deterrent factors, notably, low and slow returns on investment, there is the possibility of private sector involvement in components of the management system. In some countries of the world where extensive rail networks exist, certain components of the overall railway transport management system are handled by the private sector. For instance, ticketing in the Netherlands is handled by a private outfit and that arrangement takes away some burden off the authorities. Moreover, the private sector could be involved in the provision of services that are required by railways such as maintenance, quarrying, station management, timber processing and the like.

An efficient management and maintenance system also must be put in place. This is particularly important considering the capital intensiveness of railway transportation. Ensuring that scarce resources are utilised in a cost-effective manner will generate significant long-term benefits. Likewise, carrying out preventive maintenance and timely repairs on infrastructure will allow for much capital gain over the long term.

Collaborative efforts in areas of infrastructure development such as Built Operate and Transfer (BOT) of modern rail stations, concession and waivers for private investors would be a right step in the right direction. Other forms of incentive that will attract private investors could include bank loan guarantees, creation of enabling environment through effective legislation and observance of the rule of law. The Government must also be willing to make available to foreign investors existing data for business decision making.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper has reviewed the evolution of railway transportation in Nigeria. The major problems in the railway transportation landscape have also been identified. The key problems are inadequate funding, inconsistent policies, poor state of infrastructure and poor maintenance systems. As a result of these problems, the contribution of rail transportation to Nigeria's economy is very minimal, with almost half of the states in the nation not having a single railway.

However, it has been identified that some opportunities for profitable private-sector involvement still exist. These opportunities which come in many forms, promise high returns on investment. Notwithstanding, appropriate policies must be put in place for the nation's railway to be revived and for its full potentials to be realised. Some of the policy suggestions that the paper raises are institutional modification and strengthening, closer monitoring and control, more effective funding and a higher level of government commitment.

It is of utmost importance to note that for there to be a viable railway system, government must demonstrate significant will-power and appropriate policies must be put in place. We propose that the nation needs strong distributive and regulatory policies. National experiences have shown that since the nation once had a vibrant railway system, she can always have it again; and the potentials for investors now are much higher than before.

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