

RAILWAY SERVICES AND HUMAN SECURITY IN ENUGU METROPOLIS, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Railway facilities and services are a major factor to be considered in examining the security and welfare of the active populace in Enugu Metropolis. Rail transport services in the metropolis have been anything but weak and barely support the people's real economic and social life. Existential consequences of such include, but not limited to the people paying more for consumer goods, waste of precious and productive hours on bad roads due to neglect of both the roads and the rail intersections, gradual erosion of strong bond between the north and the south, loss of opportunities for economic activities among persons, the segmentation of the major roads in the city at strategic junctions by rail lines and constituting a threat to the safety of human lives and properties. The theoretical framework for this paper was based on neo-colonialism. Data were sourced from text books, journals, newspaper publications and reliable online sources. This paper advocates that there is need for a more modernized and effective rail transport system in Enugu Metropolis; the Nigeria Railway Corporation's rail operations in Enugu are not effective and people friendly. It is therefore expedient that the rail transport system in the Metropolis and the South Eastern states be upgraded to meet the ever-rising transportation needs of the people. Any effort, from the private and government, at improving rail transport operations in the metropolis should be encouraged, funded, implemented and sustained to ultimately enhance the security and welfare of the populace.

Keywords: Railway Services, Human security, Metropolis, Intersections, Segmentation, Rail lines.

Introduction

One of the most significant and impactful inventions of humans is the rail transportation system, playing invaluable roles in the overall development and security of economies. It is most affordable and handy in the business of logistics and safety. A good rail transportation network connects societies and expands human economic, social, cultural and commercial engagements. Such interactions defuse misconceptions and promote regional understanding, tolerance and security. Adequate transportation in the form of rail is essential for the effective interaction of any two geographical entities across the world.

The initial idea that informed construction of rail lines in Nigeria was partly to create links whereby other parts of the country could easily access Lagos, the then colonial seat of power. According to Act setting up the Nigerian Railway Corporation, it was also intended and designed to commute passengers and transport their ware in safe, affordable and efficient manner that will offer full value for money, recoup cost or break even, improve market share and quality of service, ensure safety of operations and maximum efficiencies, fulfil corporate social responsibility in a manner that will satisfy

the yearnings of commuters, trade, commerce, and industry, government and the general public (Nigerian Transport Profile, 1993).

In several countries of the world, rail transport is proven to have substantially brought general empowerment, socio-economic development, and it contributes significantly to the conveyance of goods and passengers. A transport infrastructure such as the railway has the propensity to enhance the economic security and well-being, promote environmental security by reducing traffic congestion and emissions, and reduce intercommunity conflicts through social interactions and understanding. The rail transportation systems could be a vehicle for addressing human threats that emanates from misunderstanding, unemployment, hunger, road congestion and impeded mobility.

History suggests that as far back as 1898, the then colonial administrators began the laying of rail tracks from Lagos to Ibadan, South West Nigeria (Ekanem & Onakomoya, 1977; Muktar (2011) and Oni (2000), cited in (Agbaeze & Onwuka, 2014). According to the postulation of Adesanya (2010), the Railway was originally a government department in 1898 but later metamorphosed to Nigerian Railway Corporation as created by the Act of 1955, amended by 1990 Act, and up till 2022, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) subsists as fully or wholly state-owned infrastructure having the largest asset-base in form of landed and mobile property. The Corporation's buildings, obsolete and heavy machines and the entirety of railroad network are principally relics and acquisitions of colonial governments. However, due to continued neglect by successive post-colonial military and civilian administrations, the once sprouting and prestigious enterprise descended to a low ebb so much so that the term 'moribund' is now commonly used to describe the Nigerian Railway. Such description is informed by the level of operational dysfunction that has beset the Corporation (Akwara, et al., 2014). When a strategic economic, social and security infrastructure like the railway is „moribund“, the effect on lives and welfare of the people is enormous. Friendships and economies hitherto connected by rail transportation are severed; both direct and indirect jobs are lost thereby plunging many homes into the poverty brackets.

The Nigerian Railway Corporation, owners and operators of rail transport system in Nigeria has hitherto failed in its constitutional objective of providing an efficient and affordable transport for Nigerians, particularly on long distance routes. Rail transportation system can be an incentive for the establishment of companies in remote communities where such transport services are available. This promotes development and eliminates threats of poverty and immobility. An effective rail transport operation in the country has the potential to enhance, according to Wilson and Felix (2015) a strong inter regional trade and business relationships in which the excess agricultural products from Northern Nigeria are moved to the South of the country where they are most needed, while the excess produce from the South is transported to the North where they are most needed. Rail transport provides significantly safer services compared to road transport. Rail transport unarguably presents greater incentive due to its relative safety, reliability, and more affordable to average user and being singularly capable of transforming the national economy through mass movement of people, goods and services from one point to another (Igwe, et al, 2013).

This paper focused on the general effects of poor rail transport operations on the lives and general well-being of Nigerians using Enugu Local Government Area which houses the headquarters of South Eastern rail line as case study. It is focused on drawing the attention of

state institutions to the plight of citizens and their businesses which suffer the consequences of dysfunctional 21st century rail transport system.

Conceptual Clarifications

Rail Transport

Rail is notably a modern means of transport used across the world. It is famous for mass transit and haulage. Since her colonial era when Nigeria embraced the rail as a means of transport, it became a major player in the transport subsector of the nation's economy, moving agricultural products, commuters and enhancing communication and friendship between the North and South of the country. Transport by rail is also referred to as train transport. It is designed to enable vehicles roll on iron tracks otherwise called rails or railroads. Its common and universal acceptance is anchored on its pocket friendly modes of commuting and goods carriage over long, as well as, short distances. Given that the system runs on smooth and solid metal which are usually steel, this accords it some inherent benefits of minimal frictional resistance which helps attach more loads in terms of wagons or carriages. This system is universally known as a train (The Economic Times, 2018).

A railway can be described as a pathway or road network lay with rails (wood, iron or steel) on which carriages or wagons convey passengers or goods and are moved by a locomotive engine. It is a system of the whole organization required for the working of this, and the company of persons owning or managing it (Franklin, 1999). The rail is one of the means of modern transportation on land. It is more suitable for the conveyance of large number of commuters and bulky goods particularly because of its lower cost implications, environmental friendliness and the alternative it provides to vehicular traffic. The Rails globally remain prominent for the rapidly growing intermodal freight services, promotes highway decongestion and competing favourably with other means of transportation.

State of Nigerian Railway

The design of the nation's railway in a North-South fashion was mainly to facilitate the flow of goods, such as cocoa, groundnut and cotton from the hinterlands to the coast for onward shipment to Europe. In the early years of its existence and up till late 1970s, the railway system was generally efficient and vibrant (Adesanya, 2002). Nigeria's existing rail network consists of a 3,505 km and 669 km of narrow (cape) gauge and standard gauge respectively. The narrow gauge has been in a sorry state due to decades of misuse and mismanagement. In 2019, for instance, the only functional standard gauge rail line between Abuja and Kaduna generated as much revenue as the entire narrow gauge rail system. The construction of Abuja– Kaduna rail line commenced in 2011 and was completed in 2014 by the Chinese Civil and Engineering Construction Company (CCECC), making it the first standard gauge line in the country. Despite all of government's efforts to bring the benefits of rail transportation to Nigerians, the eastern rail line remains the old colonial narrow gauge. The Federal Government, sole owner of the country's railway, plans to replace most of the western corridor with the standard gauge while the Eastern corridor will be rehabilitated and remains the narrow-gauge tracks.

Human security

Human security stresses the dignity of the human person and life. The core idea is the primacy of human life irrespective of geography, race, and ideologies, religious or political affiliations.

The concept itself is a source of contention and sometimes ambiguous. Human security places threats to peoples' health, environment, community, governance, economy, food, and general quality of life as its focus. It is a departure from the realist perception of security which centered on the protection of the state from threats to people-centered security or security of the real state. It presents the people as referent of security. The origin can be traced to the 1994 Human Development Report of the UNDP as advanced by notable scholars. It is a perspective of security that is people-centered. The report outlined the scope of human security to include:

- i. Economic security- a secured basic income for individuals and household through productive and service-oriented activities.
- ii. Food security – ensuring that people have access and can afford basic food items.
- iii. Health security – access to basic healthcare services and protection from diseases.
- iv. Environmental security – assured by protecting people from man-made pollutants and degradation.
- v. Personal Security- protection from all forms of physical violence.
- vi. Community security- protection from the loss of their traditional affiliations, and from their cultural norms and values.
- vii. Political security- ensuring that people live in societies or communities where their basic rights are guaranteed.

Human security has been described to have two main aspects. Firstly, it means safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. Secondly, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life of a people – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. Such threats can exist at all levels of national income and development (UNDP 1994). By designating the individual, rather than the state, as the “referent object of security”, human security is emerging as a framework that can serve as a means to evaluate threats, foresee crises, analyse the causes of discord and propose solutions entailing a redistribution of responsibilities (Amitav, et al. 2011).

It is posited that the simplest definition of security is the absence of insecurity and threats. In realism, security is usually associated with threats to the survival of states. Human security instead focuses on threats to individuals and communities. Such threats can be to their survival, including physical abuse, violence, persecution, or even death to their means of livelihoods (unemployment, food insecurity, health threats, etc.), and to their dignity. Thus, another security threat to human security is poverty. Poverty has the capacity to induce violence which threatens the stability of the state as well as poses a threat to the dignity of individuals. Human security, in its broadest term, therefore means freedom from want, freedom from fear and a life of dignity (Tadjbakhsh, 2009). It is therefore a focus on threats that directly affects the dignity of life of a people, their existence, survival and their environment.

Human security is now an important, critical unit of the world political and development agenda. There are two pivotal components which here: first is the protection of the human person which is a strategic concern for both sub-national, national as well as international security; the second is the security conditions for people's development are not bound to traditional matters of national defense, law and order, but rather encompass all political, economic and social issues that would enable a life free from risk and fear (Hussein, et al 2004). The focus of human security is evidently, all activities that promote the dignity of the human person and other related policies, programme of actions and processes that sustains or preserves

such dignity. This broad definition suggests a multifaceted approach to tackling security challenges within nations, regional bodies and at the global level. Security is projected or designed to be about the people. Human security is not a concern with physical weapons. It is a concern with human dignity derived from better living conditions. It culminates into, in the last analysis, a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, an ethnic tension that did not explode a dissident who was not silenced, a human spirit that was not crushed (Mahbub & Haq, 1995). The new definition of human security is the protection of the vital core of all human lives and existence from critical and pervasive threats and conditions, building on their strengths and aspirations. Building blocks of survival and creating systems that give people dignity and livelihood is the crux of human security (UNDP, 1994).

Nevertheless, the concept, like many other concepts in social science and humanities, has not gone unchallenged. It is challenged on the arbitrariness, vagueness of the idea and the broadness of its epistemology of threats. It is even more challenging as evident in the UNDP's report and Canadian Government's papers list of threats to human security includes everything from substance abuse to genocide, making it impossible to determine priorities for action, where human security and policy attention is most required (Singh, 2014). Roland (2001) postulated that human security is likened to sustainable development where everyone is for it but with few people having a clear idea of what it means. Policy makers are provided with little or no guidance in their prioritization of competing policies because existing definitions of human security tend to be extraordinarily expensive and vague, encompassing everything from physical security to psychological well-being.

International aid remains one hurdle to operationalizing human security. International aid can be a blessing or otherwise. It can clearly help overcome development issues, conflict situations, poverty and insecurity if effectively utilised. Poor utilisation of such aids can erase past efforts, increase underdevelopment and poverty, create instability and insecurity. Powerful countries use aid as a tool to fulfill their political, diplomatic and strategic interests in poor countries. Secondly, it means that benefiting countries have to use aid to buy material and expertise from the donors. Thus, the aid with wrong intentions runs the danger of creating perverse incentives leading to conflicts or exacerbated human securities (Shahrbanon, 2004).

According to Singh, such disagreements and quarrels should not be seen as serious flaws of the concept and what it tends to project. The utility of the concept still stands despite the lack of a universally acceptable definition. Rather, it is perhaps a generic problem often common within the social sciences of not being able to have a definitive explanation given that the objects of the study are in constant motion and there can be no methodological posture of objectivity (Singh, 2014). The concept equally draws a universal appeal as the state is not isolated in its purview capturing the sanctity of human lives, value for resources and the territorial integrity of the state. It embraces the notion of the people being the referent as there is no state without the people. An efficient rail transport system has the potential to impact on the security of society. In reality, it addresses a core issue that affects the daily lives of individuals and possible cause of insecurity. The transport infrastructure addresses threats that are non-military thereby moving the referent to the individuals for whom any threat, military or non-military ultimately affects. The impacts of rail transportation on human lives are evident on the accidents that didn't happen because the roads were decongested: the man-hour that was saved, the pollution that was greatly minimized, the jobs created due to railway services, the roads that lasted longer due to the use of rail for haulage, ancillary facilities provided for rail workers and their dependants and the savings made from the use of cheaper means of transport.

The Enugu Railway station

The city of Enugu is the epicentre of rail transport activities in South Eastern Nigeria. The political and economic relevance to the region might be a factor. Enugu is the political hub of defunct South Eastern Region of Nigeria and a beehive of political, commercial and other human activities. The construction of an Eastern rail line thus began in Port Harcourt in November, 1913 (Eze, 2021). Within the period 1913 and 1916, a 1.05-meter gauge railway was built from Port Harcourt on a branch of Bonny River to Enugu coal field. The rail line has its headquarters at Enugu (Ujam, 1997). The Enugu rail lines consist of 8 kms of rail lines that carried coal from Ogbete (Obwetti) and Iva mines. Another 14.8 kms Branch line from Ogbaho to Nkalagu, which was used for carrying coal and gypsum to Nkalagu Cement factory was built in 1958 (Ofomata ed. 1975, cited in Franklin 1999).

Enugu Railway and human security

Adequate and effective human security is a by-product of an available, adequate, effective and affordable transport services particularly, the railway. However, any poorly deployed and managed infrastructure would likely depreciate the essence for which it was provided and the railway infrastructure is no exception.

Train services constitute the cause of the major traffic problem of the city. The rail lines occupy what would have been an ideal town centre. On development matters, the railway segmented the central area therefore affecting the accessibility to many of the rental and government areas. Again, the rail-lines crossed the roads at critical places at the same grade level, thus, making it necessary to stop vehicular traffic when trains are crossing. The three major crossings are Osadebe/Bishop Anyiogu Roads, Zik Avenue/Edinburgh Road and New Market/Ogui Road. When the train leaves the station, another very important junction Abakaliki/Ogui Road will be blocked (Franklin 1999). The segmentation of the city by rail networks constitutes a major human security challenge to both motorists and commuters. Rail crossings at strategic locations in the city centre led to frequent vehicular stoppages and gridlock for minutes which constitutes a waste of time and money. Consequently, any case of miscommunication among railway operators and commuters can lead to loss of human lives, property and man hour.

On the contributions of rail transport to the GDP of Enugu, Faajir and Zidan (2016) analysed specific challenges and issues that are in the transportation industry in two African economies, Nigeria and Egypt. The research analysed, among others, insecurity, obsolete facilities and non-functioning railway systems. The result revealed that rail transport in Nigeria accounts for less than the 50% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of transport sector. More worrying though is the fact that although rail transport system has always contributed a negligible proportion of value added in transportation sub-sector, its share of value added has been on the decline owing to the fact that other means of transport like the road transport which conveys freight and passengers has practically dominated the entire luggage which were in the past conveyed by rail.

Ademola (2016) examined the commercial viability of rail transport operations in Nigeria using its freight data operations data from 2012 to 2014. He noted that a 44% loss in freight operation was recorded in 2012. This however decreased to 38.3% in 2013 and by 2014 the percentage loss had further declined to 16%. He found that rail transport operations at the moment are not commercially viable to attract the needed alternative injections. This finding seems to suggest that rail transportation in Nigeria may not be economically viable, particularly in the short run.

This could also be a result of competition from the road transport subsector or the consequences of poor service delivery in the rail transport sub-sector. This result could also be a pointer to the need to create more awareness among the populace on the need to use an alternative and cheaper means of transport, providing greater value for their money.

There are several studies on how rail transport operations impact on lives and security of communities. Rowstow (1960) noted the historical importance of rail transport citing it as the most powerful single catalyst of economic take off given its impact in widening of markets. Nigeria's Draft National Transport Policy (1993), states the key role that transport plays in the economic and social development of a country like Nigeria. A well-functioning and integrated Transport System will amongst other things: –stimulate national development and enhance the quality of life for all; allow markets to operate by enabling the seamless movement of goods and people; provide vital links between spatially separated facilities and enable social contact and interaction; provide access to employment, health, education and services.

Economic and food insecurity in the Enugu metropolis are exacerbated, partly by the poor quality rail infrastructure and delivery. For instance, the railway network is not only dilapidated but grossly inadequate. The rail connection between the northern part of the country and Enugu from where several agricultural products were supplied is non-existent in 2022. The delay or outright failure to transport agricultural produce at competitive cost by rail has severely impacted the country's ability to leverage inherent benefits from bulk products. Over the years most perishable food grown in the north of the country end up rotting in the fields because the cost of transporting them to distant markets in the south is more than the value. Igwe, Oyelola, Ajiboshin and Raheem (2013) posited that the rails are insufficient for carrying heavier loads and require custom-fitted rolling stock because the gauge is smaller than standard. The carrying capacity and speed of rail services in Enugu is much limited due to its narrow gauge.

The high safety margin of the railway is not in dispute. It has better space economy; better overall and manageable speed, when fully developed; it is environmentally friendly given its reduced emissions; and can support national security logistics via the movement of troops (Ademiluyi & Dina, 2011). The resultant high accident rate on roads is of security concern and brings to fore the need for an efficient and reliable rail transportation system that will decongest both human and vehicular traffic on our roads and improve not only passenger safety but also the security of lives and property.

Theoretical Framework

This article is located within the postcolonial theory made prominent in Young (2001) who expressed three perspectives from which postcolonial theory emerged, including humanitarian, liberal and economic. According to Young (2001), while the humanitarians and economists waged campaigns against colonialism, liberal politicians supported colonisation as a means of civilisation, adopting all means possible, including the use of force, to actualize their plan. Smith (1776) postulated that colonialism is not the outcome of wisdom and policy of European colonialists but the consequences of their demonstration of injustice, disorder and unwarranted domination.

The colonial experiences of victims who took up struggles for liberation around the world especially in the tri-continental countries of Latin America, South East Asia and Africa informed the basis upon which postcolonial theory was built. People involved in liberation

movements as well as those affected by the ills of colonisation and imperialism were consciously brought to a level of responsibility, in that the Cultural Revolution refuses to bear and live in a state of state of perpetual subjugation. In a dislocated culture, while challenging the consequences of the past that are exploitative, the theory is not at war with the past. Rukundwa and Aarde, (2009) postulated that postcolonial theory raises self-consciousness thereby revolutionising the minds of those colonised and the colonisers to build a new society where liberty and equity are the hallmarks.

Enugu Railway remains a colonial relic after over sixty years of political independence by Nigeria. This piece is to awaken both administrators and the supposed beneficiaries of the rail infrastructure on the condition of the Corporation's infrastructure around Enugu metropolis and its consequences on the human security (welfare) of the people. Attention is drawn to the harm caused by the present state of rail transportation services in the area. Enugu railway was built by the British colonial administration, but its operation, upgrade and general delivery for the 21st century Nigerian commuter is the responsibility of today's Nigerian leaders.

Impacts of Enugu Railway Services and Infrastructure on Security and Welfare of the People

1. An effective rail transport system is an incentive for companies to site their industries in an area thereby bringing jobs and diverse of development. The economics of this can only be imagined (Agbaeze & Onwuka, 2014). This promotes development and eliminates threats of poverty and immobility. Entrepreneurs are confident that their products will get to the final consumers thereby investing in rural areas where properties are lower. The current state of rail infrastructure in Enugu metropolis should be a source of worry to businesses that it hardly supports.
2. Heavy vehicular traffic and gridlocks in Enugu metropolis along the Ogui Road axis is a source of worry and waste of productive man-hours to several residents. Vehicles and human traffic have to wait for several minutes for a train crossing to the south or to the northern part of the country. This further puts a strain on the economic fortunes of the people.
3. Providing an efficient and affordable rail transport for Nigerians is the primary responsibility of the Nigerian Railway Corporation. The Corporation has hitherto failed on this mandate particularly to the people of Enugu metropolis (Franklin, 1999).
4. Rail transport promotes economic growth and welfare of the citizens. Uzundu (2011, cited in Abioye 2016) postulated that it has become a principal catalyst in sustainable socio-economic development. It is noteworthy that rail transport is playing a crucial as well as important role in the economic development of countries like Britain, USA, Canada, Russia, France and China. Such a catalyst cannot be ignored in the face of the need and clamour for an effective and cost-effective transport system.
5. Commuters' safety in Enugu is being compromised as, captured by Filani (2003), road transport constitutes about 90% of goods movement, while Akwara (2014) blamed the perennial problems of increased rate of fatal road accidents and environmental damage for this. It is therefore noteworthy that any increase in the availability, efficiency and patronage of rail transport services can substantially reduce the burden on Nigerian roads, boast the lifespan of roads and reduce associated road accidents thereby impacting positively on human lives and security. Railway transportation holds the ace and potential because of its relative safety, reliability, and lower cost to the average users and being,

due its sheer size and delivery, singularly capable of transforming the national economy through mass movement of people, goods and services (Igwe, et al. 2013). The world over, there are fewer number of rail derailments when compared with the road transport; the tickets are cheaper, the timings are fixed and offers potential customers the time to plan their itinerary.

6. An affordable and well managed railway infrastructure is significant for the elimination of the threat of unemployment through job creation and employment opportunities in Enugu. The News agency of Nigeria report, February (2015) stated that despite providing employment to more than 45,000 Nigerians at its peak, the Nigerian Railway Corporation, by 2003, only had a handful of workers left as there were virtually little or no rail services in the country, but for a few skeletal ones. Enugu railway was caught up in this web of failure and consequently threw many who had hitherto relied on its services to eke out a living back into the already saturated job market. Nigeria can leverage on this, invest substantially in the subsector in order to reduce its army of ever-growing unemployed youths.
7. The retinue of abandoned or disused NRC properties at the Enugu rail station constitutes an environmental and social threat to the security of the people. Some of these several abandoned wagons have been taken over by hoodlums who use them as abode from where unsuspecting passers-by are dispossessed of their properties or attacked. Odeleye (2010) opined that NRC properties depreciated in value and some were vandalized beyond repair.
8. The segmentation of major cities like Enugu, Umuahia, Aba, Port Harcourt, among others along the eastern route by rail lines at various strategic locations raises safety concerns among pedestrians and other road users. Any lapses in communication or failure to halt both vehicular and human traffic when a locomotive train is approaching a busy road junction could be of catastrophic consequences. Franklin (1999) postulated that the rail-lines crossed the roads at critical places at the same grade level, thus, making it necessary to stop vehicular traffic when trains are crossing.
9. The overloading of passenger trains is a common feature on the eastern railway routes. Train coaches are most often packed full with passengers who stand all through their journeys. Some of the commuters sit on windows, while other ones either hang on staircase or sit on the roof of moving trains. This practice constitutes a grave human insecurity and creates an opening for corruption and loss of revenue due to the Nigeria Railway Corporation. The overcrowding by commuters has severally been exploited by criminals to pick the pockets of unsuspecting passengers who lose their hard-earned money.
10. The eastern railway can be a handy weapon for poverty reduction. Deepening poverty is a threat to decent human living, welfare and security. The high level of deprivation and poverty in Nigeria could be drastically reduced using the instrumentality of rail transport systems. This view is supported by Ujam (1997) who stated that railway as a means of transport was essential to trade. It brought wealth, liberty, new and desirable goods and security to the people of Eastern Nigeria.
11. Insufficient rail facilities and effective services impact negatively on the economic security of Enugu populace. The result is deepening poverty levels in the ancient coal city. The reason for the prevalent poverty across rural and urban areas of the country was identified as being inadequate infrastructural services by Omolola (2013) cited in Akwara (2014). Consequently, this inadequacy has exacerbated the threat of unemployment, hunger, uncertainties, poverty and diseases, among others.

Conclusion

Residents and commuters in Enugu metropolis have hitherto enjoyed rail transport services. Unfortunately, the Enugu railway station with its facilities bears the mark of colonialism, near abandonment and obsolesces. The use of Nigeria's critical infrastructures in the promotion of human security and welfare has not enjoyed due attention. This probably mirrors the value the nation places on human lives and welfare. An effective rail transportation system is a catalyst for economic development and the advancement of the welfare of citizens.

Enugu railway, both during the colonial government and at independence played a significant role in the economic and infrastructural development of the country. It played a significant role in transporting coal from mining sites; created job opportunities for the people and endeared patriotism among a people who enjoyed a pride of ownership. It impacted the lives of surrounding communities in particular and the rest of the nation in general.

Road transport would never replace the rail transport system given their peculiarities in enhancing economic activities in the country. The epileptic state of rail transportation exposes properties of the Corporation to vandalism, while residents suffer the effects of dysfunctional infrastructure and lost economic opportunities. Every effort at revamping the rail infrastructure in Nigeria is commendable and must be followed to the letter.

The Enugu railway system needs serious and urgent attention to save what is left of its equipment, particularly in the station building and tracks which bear the brunt of illegal encroachment by private businesses and developers. Most of its tracks built since 1916 are still the narrow gauge better described as colonial relics with abandoned coaches and wagons. Indiscriminate encroachment on the tracks by street traders exposes the populace to serious threats of accidents, loss of lives and disruption of rail transportation activities.

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