PROMOTION OF EFFICIENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN MALAWI

BY

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Introduction

- Malawi has a population of about 17 million people out of this population 80% is in the rural areas and 20% is in urban areas.

- Transport system in Malawi plays a critical role in stimulating economic activities such as distribution of goods and services and movement of people from one place to another.

- Owning a private car or a motorized two-wheeler is a major aspiration for people in cities in Malawi.

- Have a vehicle population of about 290,935 as of 2016.

- With a total classified network of about 15,400 km of which only 4,312 km
Malawi used to have state controlled Public Transport before 1990’s
UTM, stage coach and then Shire Bus Lines
In early 1980’s the sector was liberalized and more players started coming in with minibuses
Since the 1990s the transport business in general and public transport in particular was deregulated this lead to dissolving of the public enterprise
Transport policies Shift to permit market-determined decisions, enterprise autonomy, and private participation in the ownership and management of transport businesses.
As a result, the number of private operators increased exponentially with the influx of many minibuses in the mid-1990s, which provided relief access to public transport.
Public Transport Regulation

- The responsibility for public transport management lies with the Ministry of Transport and Public Works through the Directorate of Road Traffic and Safety Services.
- The Directorate is charged with administering regulatory provisions relating to motor vehicle administration, driver licensing administration, operator authorization and control of permits.
- Since 2000 more reforms has been undertaken to liberalize the public transport sector
- The 2004 National Transport Policy - fully deregulated the market by removing any restrictions on entry and exit to the collective passenger transport sector while giving the sector the freedom to set its own tariffs.
- The situation therefore evolved from one of government-controlled prices before 2000 into a free market in which prices are determined by the industry itself, with the government only being informed about prices just prior to implementation.
Operators are just required to be registered with us and obtain the necessary licenses and permits to operate, such as road service permits and certificates of roadworthiness.

Directorate of Road Traffic Still remains the enforcing body for matters linked to safety and permit requirements and also the jointly regulated allocation of minibus routes with the Minibus Owner’s Association of Malawi (MOAM).

In this deregulated context, the government created the Competition and Fair Trading Commission to prevent collateral effects such as the formation of cartels and anti-competitive practices.
FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- **Buses**
  - In the road passenger transport services, until recently the dominant player was the state-owned Bus
  - Currently its dominated by private operators
  - Government introduced deliberately policy to encourage citizens procure big buses government by removing duty for busses carrying more than 45 passengers.

- **Minibuses**
  - Minibus operations are fully liberalized and the sector is very competitive and in some cases saturated.
  - It is estimated that the total number of minibuses in the country stands at around 4,500.
  - Minibuses and minibuses account for 47% of the market share.
FORMS OF TRANSPORT

▶ Taxis
  ▶ The number of registered taxis in Malawi is currently unknown but estimates put the figure at 1,500.

▶ Matolas - Open Vehicles
  ▶ pick-up trucks used as public transport means. Usually overloaded and unsafe, they connect up the main urban centers of the country.
  ▶ As they are quite affordable (two to three times cheaper than a minibus) they meet a significant demand of the population, ensuring 24% of national passenger transport

▶ Railway - network of about 942 km covering parts of Central and Southern region

▶ Water Transport - on 600 km Malawi with four main ports covering all three regions.
Railway Network

- Malawi has an old Railway network of 797 km constructed in early 1990’s
- **Kachaso-Nkaya** is newly constructed line 145 km
- Total railway Network is 942 km
- Passenger Service is operated
  - Limbe-Balaka
  - Balaka-Nayuchi

Railway Connection in Malawi

- Railway Line

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- Railway Network
Characteristics of an efficient transportation system

- A well designed intra-city transport system
- Reasonable cost
- High degree of safety and reliability
- Avoid unnecessary traffic flow
- Well maintained and managed
- Non-Polluted urban air
- Efficient transport system requires strengthening various features of the system including mobility, accessibility, affordability, social equity, efficiency, safety, security, convenience, low carbon, comfort, and people- and environment-friendliness
Effects of transport problems/inefficiencies

- Transport congestion - uncontrolled motorization
- Transport cost increases
- Travelling time increases
- Productivity decreases
- More traffic accidents
- Loss of life and property
- Serious air pollution
Solutions

- Improvements on Transport Infrastructure (Such as Roads) - Public Transport oriented Urban Planning -

  *Malawi* need for huge investment in a more accommodating road infrastructure especially in major cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe, Zomba and Mzuzu. with grade separations for Vehicles; Public Transport; Bicycle lanes and pedestrian lanes.

- This Investment should be beyond the Traditional road engineering, which can be summarized in the phrase “**build your way out of congestion**”

- *Malawi* need not to **erroneously promote** this vision as the solution to congestion and transport problems.

  “Adding highway lanes to deal with traffic congestion is like loosening your belt to cure obesity”

  - Lewis Mumford, The Roaring Traffic’s Boom

- Policies for **more and more road construction** have clearly failed to cope with ever increasing demand from rapid motorization, resulting in a vicious circle.

- Need to consider other more complex problems of **travel demand management**, **negative externalities (side-effects)** of such policies and overall livability in an urban setting.
VICIOUS CYCLE

Vicious Circle of Car-Oriented Transport Development

Methods of solving the Problems

- The increase of infrastructure to alleviate travel demand will have apparently positive consequences in the short term.
- Medium to long-term there will be a much greater congestion than before, thus increasing the problem rather than solving it.
- Re-allocating road space for public transport and non-motorized transport.
- This approach has been called in some cases a “road diet”.
- The first is one where space for cars is explicitly reduced, the second emphasizes the need for roads where all road users are catered to.
- Public Transport: This measure implies the development of high quality public transport systems, which includes mass transit systems.
What Need to be done

- Investing where possible in the construction, modernization and expansion of urban light-rail systems.
- Invest in green technologies- fuel economy vehicles; Electric trains and solar powered Buses
- If structures are in place seeks to shift passengers towards more sustainable transport modes. Encourage citizens to start using more public and non-motorized transport
- Encourage citizens to use Non-Motorized Transport- such as Walking and cycling. These modes have been greatly promoted recently due to their great benefits for reducing transport emissions and for improved human health.
- Need to PUSH CITIZENS OUT OF AUTOMOBILES and “pull” THEM TO PUBLIC
- Provision of GOOD QUALITY SERVICE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT, develop infrastructure for public transport and non motorized transport and in general develop policies that improve conditions for the use of these modes.
Break the Vicious cycle

More cars
- Car ownership restrictions
- Public Transport-BRT-Big buses to replace minibuses

More cars
- Less car traffic
- Less congestion

More roads
- Less car traffic
- Less congestion
- Commercial speed of PT increases
- More cost-efficient PT operation
- Better quality for passengers

More cars
- More efficient use of road infrastructure

More roads
- More PT customers
- More PT revenue
- Urban straggle under control
- More attractive cities and city centres

HIGHER QUALITY OF URBAN LIFE
- More efficient use of road infrastructure
- Less subsidies needed
- PT more market oriented

PUBLIC TRANSPORT MORE COMMERCIALLY VIABLE
Other measures

Integration, at all levels, is a prerequisite of a modern and efficient public transport system.

Immediate Solutions include:-

- **Bring back the city lines to replace minibuses** in all the four major cities such as Blantyre and Lilongwe. PULL citizens out of automobiles.
- **Expanding the roads to accommodate non-motorized users** such as bicycles and those that are walking. Expansion though is ORIENTED TOWARDS PUBLIC TRANSPORT.
- **Proper urban planning** by providing necessary facilities closer to locations such as shopping malls to reduce demand for motorized transport.
- **Introduce policies that will restrict** vehicle ownership and **Car traffic Restrictions**.
- Supportive legal and regulatory framework which provides a clear basis and set of rules for action, rights and responsibilities for all concerned stakeholders in both public and private sectors.
- Encourage **GREEN TECHNOLOGIES** (Electric buses/rail; solar power Bus rapid Transport).
- Start Collecting data on **VEHICLE EMISSIONS** using smoke analyzers.
Conclusion

- Efficiency will be achieved by improving human health through by investing in critical infrastructure; the reduction of urban air pollution, controlling excessive motorization, reducing the number of deaths and injuries from road accidents, improving public transport services and by encouraging more walking and cycling.

- A more integrated approach is required to cater for inefficiencies in the public transport.
Transport is not a technical, but a political issue.
Technically and economically it is possible and simple to structure high quality bus based transit systems, as long as other vehicles be removed from a few lanes in main arteries. DO you Agree????