

Introduction

The world over, transportation is a means of carrying goods and people from one destination to another. There are several means of transportation, namely; animals, vehicles, ships, aircrafts etc. These means of transportation are commonly used on land, high sea and air respectively (Cross, Higbie, & Cross, 2009). Many countries engage in transportation businesses such as United Arab Emirates where they use Etihad Airways and Emirates Airlines as form of business in conveying both people and goods to different destinations around the world. We also have the Ethiopian Airlines operating in different continents such as Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America.

In view of these, transport business is also seen not only from the inter-continental bases but also from the local perspective via roads, air and water. In Nigeria, we have different types of transport businesses and these businesses are operated by both the government and the private sector. There are government owned transport companies such as Gombe Line, Benue Links, Adamawa Sunshine, Plateau Riders, Kano Line and so no. This work therefore, focuses on Gombe Line as a transport company and the role it has played in contributing to peace-building and social-economic development of Gombe State and indeed North East and Nigeria at large through her inter-states relations.

More so, the incumbent Governor of Gombe State, His Excellency Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya during his first tenure in office, he bought about 50 brand new buses for the Gombe Line transport company for the purpose of repositioning the company to offer better services to the people and to generate revenue for the government. These buses became a new brand for Gombe State especially with the innovation of 3G meaning Gombe Goes Green. The idea of buying new buses return the lost glory of the company and it also provided more jobs for drivers to drive these

buses through their inter-states routes. It also created awareness on the part of the company where more passengers saw the need to use the new buses bought by the State Government (Yaya, 2019).

Figure 1: 1st Photos of Newly Commissioned Buses for Gombe New



Source: Tribune Newspaper, (2019).

Figure 1: 2nd Photos of Newly Commissioned Buses for Gombe New



Source: Taoheed (2022).

Conceptual Framework

Gombe Line: It is a Transport Company owned by the Gombe State Government. The company has employed so many Nigerians whom some are drivers, administrative staff, security staff and some to assist the drivers in loading the vehicles. The company engages in carrying goods, persons and services which contribute to the socio-economic development of Gombe State and indeed, Nigeria. The transport company covers most states across the country. They transport passengers from Gombe to Maiduguri, Gombe to Abuja, Gombe to Lagos, Gombe to Sokoto, Gombe to Yola as well as Gombe to Makurdi and other different destinations and back.

Peace-building: Through the provision of job opportunities by the Gombe Line Transport Company, such jobs provides food on the tables of such employees by the said transport company. The concept of peace-building in this work opined that various people who meet at the Gombe Line Park and those who travel together end up in relationships thereby connecting with each other

and some of such end up in marriages. As such, those activities where people are employed and the passengers meeting together creates peaceful environment towards socio-economic development and peace-building in Gombe State and Nigeria at large.

Socio-economic Development: The socioeconomic aspect of the work here includes the jobs those who work for the company have gotten and the revenue the company generates for the Gombe State Government. Another aspect of the social development here connotes the people who meet together and become friends as well as those who end up in marriages.

Research Method

The work made use of qualitative research design through the conduct of interviews for the purpose of data collection. The work also made use of secondary data through the usage of journal articles and other relevant sources like the internet.

The Role of Gombe Line through Peace-building and Socio-economic Development

1. **Job Creation:** The work of Vandenberg and Creation (2006) opined that job creation in any society or community can contribute to poverty reduction and that can further help families through enterprise development. Creation of job opportunities in any given environment can alleviate the people in such an environment be it a small community or a large settlement where people are living. In this regards, through the Gombe Line as a transport company which was established by the Gombe State Government, the company has provided more jobs for those who are working with the company for the purpose of peace-building in the state as well as provision of socio-economic development of the state and Nigeria as a country.

Bulavskaya and Reynès (2018) expressed how job creation has impact on the people of Netherlands and that showcases economic impact and development. Izzi (2013) connotes

that youth employment serves as a tool in peace-building when they provide jobs for the youths. They tend to be busy doing something and that can promote peace-building in a given society. Other countries such as Northern Ireland also opined that, economic assistance can attribute to peace-building mechanism when jobs are created for the people (Byrne, Thiessen, Fissuh, Irvin & Hawranik, 2008).

Agbibo, (2015) argues that through job creation and youth development, youth become agents of peace-building. In line with the various scholars' submission, Gombe Line Transport Company has indeed provided jobs for both the educated and uneducated. One of the respondents opined thus:

We have been working here for many years now since the creation of Gombe Line as a transport company in Gombe State, the company is owned and controlled by the Government of Gombe State, and it has provided some jobs for our drivers whom are mostly indigenes of Gombe State. However, the company has equally given jobs to those who are from other states of the federation and we are all benefiting from these jobs because, it has provided food for us and our families as well as our relations, that is, dependents.

2. Revenue Generation:

The issue of revenue generation is part of the socio-economic benefits of establishing the transport company (Adenugba, & Ogechi, 2013). The company generates revenue for the state as well as the people who are employed by the Gombe Line Transport Company. It is indeed part of the establishments that generate revenue in Gombe State. Just like any other transport company in Nigeria, there are many states that engage in transport business for the purpose of providing services to the people. The people of Gombe State also enjoy the presence of such companies because they do travel using such transport companies which are owned by other states (Balducci, 2011).

Hence, the more passengers are using the Gombe Line Transport Company, the more revenue is being generated by the company which serve as part of socio-economic development of the State and indeed, Nigeria. Other scholars have attributed the services of transport businesses as a means of making or generating revenue for such transport companies (Cross, Higbie, & Cross, 2009; Njeru, 2017). However, it is of the view that State Government owned companies are usually subsidized in order to make the services affordable by the ordinary citizens of the State and Nigeria as a whole. Many people use the services rendered by the transport company.

The work of Terwase, Abdul-Talib & Zengeni (2014) opined that Nigeria is so endowed by huge minerals and material resources as well as human resources. Thus, the work connotes that Nigeria has the highest population in Africa. The country's population serve as a means to the development of transport businesses across Nigeria. It is believed that many Nigerians patronize the services of the transport company as another means to peace-building efforts where people enjoy their services peacefully. When the needed services are provided, it calls for peace-building mechanism within the company and outside the company (Terwase, Adesina, Puldu, & Abdul-Talib, 2018).

A respondent opined on the issue of revenue generation thus:

We all pay for our transport fares here each time we come to get a vehicle in order to travel to our various destinations, we do pay. We are happy paying since it is not very expensive like traveling from Gombe to Abuja, we pay only N5,000. It is very affordable and I think by our payment, the company too can generate revenue for the government too. Gombe Line has one of the best transport systems because most of their vehicles are new. I was told they recently bought new buses and that is one of the motivational reasons for us to always use Gombe Line whenever we are travelling outside the State. To some, it might be because of the safety of their buses since they have a speed limit. Their drivers are very careful while behind the wheels.

In another view by another respondent:

We truly love using Gombe Line because they are cheap and affordable. More so, their buses are equally comfortable. The buses are available to different destinations where you can be able to travel comfortably. Another beautiful aspect of their buses is that they move on time and very early in the morning for those traveling long distances such as Abuja, Kano, Yola, Makurdi, Port Harcourt, Lagos, Sokoto and other destinations. When you come to the park, you can see their buses with those platforms indicating where they are heading. So, all these passengers do pay their transport fare which is done peacefully and in one accord. There is no form of force in the process. And another dimension is that, you can also see other transport companies from different states in Nigeria loading within the same premises.

In contribution to socio-economic development, the work of Terwase, Abdul-Talib & Zengeni (2014) opined that Nigeria is so blessed with resources which include mineral and material resources. As such, Gombe Line engages in carrying different passengers whom are from different places and to different destinations that has also contributed to the socioeconomic development of the State. The revenue generated from the transport business also serves as contribution to socioeconomic development of the State and indeed, Nigeria. It also contributes to peace-building since the needs of the people are met via the services that are provided by the company.

Another form of revenue generation is where the company staff pay tax to the Gombe State Internal Revenue Service and that forms generating revenue for the same Government of Gombe State. All these taxes as a result of staff that are employed by the Company also contribute to the socio-economic development of the State and the country in general. Tax payment is another means of generating revenue for the government and such revenues could be used for infrastructural development of the state in order to foster peace.

In Gombe State, the government has developed the state capital, Gombe through construction of drainage systems, roads construction, water supply, provision of street lights and other social

amenities for the State in general. They are people who tend to be happy when peaceful means of resolving conflict is applied, thus, provision of social amenities for the people also creates peaceful environment where people can live together happily (Yerima, Ibrahim, Terwase & Abdul Talib, 2016)

3. Provision of Transport Services:

Two years back the Government of Gombe State bought over fifty new buses and that elevated the name of the State. With the arrival of those new buses, their colour was also transformed and beautifully designed into what they called Gombe Goes Green (3G). That motivated prospective passengers who wanted to test the new buses by entering from Gombe to different destinations in the country. Gombe Goes Green became talk of the town where many passengers who had experienced the new buses passed on the information to others to use Gombe Line because majority of their buses were newly bought and supplied by the Government of Gombe State to the Gombe Line Transport Company. Terwase, Terwase, Puldu, and Abdul-Talib (2018) opined that those who are employed are usually happy but those without jobs are psychologically traumatized. Therefore, those employed as bus drivers tend to render their services as much as they could.

Some passengers started comparing the Gombe Line buses to other state government owned Transport Companies where their buses are very old and some lack maintenance culture. In view of that, a respondent corroborated thus:

We were so happy when we were informed about the arrival of new buses which were bought by the State Government and supplied to the Gombe Line Transport Company. Most of my friends stopped entering buses of other transport companies owned by private agencies. They largely preferred the buses that were newly bought

because of their newness and the comfort within the said buses.
Everyone seems to enjoy the buses and well as their services.

4. Inter-Governmental Relations:

Through inter-state transport system, there is peaceful means of providing services to the people of different cultural backgrounds where passengers are treated equally. We have different state owned transport companies that operate with good cordial relations with other states. At Gombe Line Terminus, you will see the likes of:

- a) Benue Links belonging to Benue State Government
- b) Adamawa Sunshine belonging to Adamawa State Government
- c) Plateau Riders belonging to Plateau State Government
- d) Borno Express belonging to Borno State Government
- e) Kano Line belonging to Kano State Government
- f) Yankari Express belonging to Bauchi State Government

All these transport companies are owned by the Government of those states mentioned above and the role they play in Nigeria is so vital to socioeconomic development of the country. The Gombe Line Transport Company therefore, creates enabling environment for them to operate without conflict. Their operations are coordinated and that provides cordial inter-state relations among the transport companies as owned and controlled by the Governments of various states as mentioned above. In view of how they operate without conflict, a respondent reveals that:

We operate on intervals, giving example between Gombe Line and Benue Links where our operations are thus, if Gombe Line is leaving for Makurdi from Gombe town today, we will have Benue Links leaving for Gombe from Makurdi on the same day. So, by tomorrow, Benue Links will leave for Makurdi from Gombe town whereas Gombe Line will leave for Gombe town from Makurdi on the same day. By so doing, we avoid conflict and we do promote peaceful co-existence between us. The role played by both parties is to promote peace and build peaceful relations between us. Again you will notice that all the Transport Companies mentioned stops at the motor parks

belonging to the various States as mentioned above. All those vehicles do stop at Gombe Line Motor Park located in Gombe town and when they are in Benue State, their terminal becomes Benue Links Park in Makurdi, the Benue State Capital.

Indeed, Gombe Line and other transport companies are helpful to Nigerians in many ways especially by transporting goods and services on our roads every day. Most of the people who cannot afford air transport do engage the use of vehicles to take them from one destination to another.

Challenges Faced by Gombe Line

1. **Maintenance Culture:** One of the many challenges of transport companies operating in Nigeria is lack of maintenance culture, especially government owned transport companies.

In some cases, the drivers who are reckless may not be conscious of the fact that there is need to maintain the vehicles in their custody. In as much as these vehicles are owned by the government, the drivers need to take very good care of the vehicles. When you handle government owned properties in your care very well, it could contribute to their lasting longer as well as expanded duration of usage. There are many vehicles that got damaged because such vehicles were not well taken care of.

It is very important to preserve all government owned properties and not just in the case of Gombe Line vehicles. Therefore, there is need for proper education and orientation for all drivers of the said transport company in order to give them the needed orientation on how to take very good care of the vehicles in their hands for proper usage. Some drivers do take very good care of their personal vehicles and properties but they do not take care of government owned vehicles. More so, such behaviours could become a culture and a way of life. That is why, the need for proper education, orientation and reorientation is needed from time to time for all drivers.

2. **Road Accidents and Bad Roads:** Issues of road accidents in Nigeria could be attributed to many reasons some of which are recklessness on the part of drivers, bad roads, insecurity, armed robberies, over speeding and so on. There are many roads that are used by Gombe Line in Nigeria since they use many roads across inter-states. There are records of accidents where Gombe Line vehicles were involved as seen in their terminal in Gombe town. This paper therefore suggest that, the government at the Federal and State levels should collaborate in constructing good roads across Nigeria as well as rehabilitation of roads that are in bad condition.
3. **Insecurity Challenges:** There are many challenges of insecurity in Nigeria as seen in many parts of the country. These insecurity challenges are as a result of Boko Haram conflict in the Northeast, Banditry in the Northwest, Farmer/herder conflicts in the North-central, and IPOB in the South-eastern part of the country. The country is also bedevilled with the challenges of kidnapping and armed robbery in all parts of the geopolitical zones of the country especially in the Northwest where bandits specialize in kidnapping people in different communities in Zamfara State, Kebbi State, Kaduna State and Katsina State. There are records of people who were kidnapped while they were traveling in vehicles owned by government transports companies in different parts of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Many states in Nigeria have their different transport companies as mentioned in this work and the work has put forward many ways Gombe Line has served as part of the sectors that contributes to peace-building and the development of the State as well as the country at large. The work therefore, outlined Job Creation, Revenue Generation, Provision of Transport Services as well as peace-

building through inter-governmental relations between one state and another. We have seen these through the activities of various transport companies rendering services as mentioned in the work.

