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HYPOTHESES

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RESULTS & DISCUSSION

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AN ANALYSIS ON THE BOTTLENECKS AFFECTING TRANSPORT SECTOR ESPECIALLY WEIGHBRIDGES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the bottlenecks affecting transport sector especially weighbridges. To identify measures and mechanisms necessary to maximize throughput, achieve a smooth cost effective and balanced flow of cargo at the weighbridge stations, to enhance effectiveness and efficiency along the Northern corridor. Strategies have been put in place through various stakeholders consultation with the aim of having a common stand on factors affecting the transport sector in Kenyan and the Northern corridor route and to view organizational policies that need to be employed in managing the current Weighbridges in Kenya to be able to attain an acceptable level of services to all stakeholders. The methodology involved Observation and interviewing of Key Senior Officers (5) at the Weighbridges, (2) at Mariakani, (2) at Athi River, (1) at Mtwapa and (10) Truck Drivers along the Northern Corridor Route and (5) Truck owners in Mombasa, the study also link the views with published and unpublished documentation available in the secondary data. Given the interest shown to the study by trucks owners and truck drivers, a lot of information was shared however there was little cooperation from Weighbridge Operations on sharing information. The findings shows that Government have a lot to do in terms of policies guidance and the need to invest in road and it accessories, cooperation from the mandated agencies is paramount towards and success to be achieved in the sector. The study thus discloses that there is a lot of interest by stakeholder towards any action done by Researcher or Government to understand the challenges facing the transport sector in Kenya.

KEYWORDS

Bottlenecks, Northern Corridor route, Weighbridge.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The issues affecting the efficiency and effectiveness at the transport sector, and by extension, the road transport have been discussed in many fora and analyzed in many studies. The objective has been continuously to facilitate a conducive trade and logistics environment in Kenya and the other member states.

Continued delays at the weighbridges' has resulted in enormous losses to the private sector in the country, while affecting Kenya's dream of transforming into a regional business hub in Africa. Delays are not related to weighing operations only but other processes at and around the weighbridges such as escort goods.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 KENYA NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY

Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA), a state corporation established under the ministry of roads and mandated to manage, develop, rehabilitate and maintain national roads. KeNHA is responsible for ensuring adherence to rules and guidelines on axle load control as prescribed under the traffic act. The ministry of roads has the overall responsibility for Kenya's Axle Load Control policy as provided in the Traffic Act. There are seven weighbridges operated along the main northern corridor route between Mombasa and Malaba in Kenya. These are Mariakani (30km from Mombasa port), Athi river, (just outside Nairobi) Mai Mahiu, Gilgil, Eldoret, Bungoma and Amagoro (Malaba –Uganda border). Of the seven weighbridges along the Northern corridor, three are being managed by private sector. Mariakani and Gilgil are managed by SGS Kenya Limited, while the Athi River weighbridge is managed by Avery Kenya Limited. The Mariakani weighbridge is the only one along the corridor which is equipped with all the three types of weighbridges while all the rest are equipped with the single axle weigher. It is indicated that the weighbridges' at mariakani and Gilgil are ISO certified, with all the procedures and quality manual on the policy and operational aspects clearly documented for implementation.

Mariakani and Athi River weighbridges in Kenya are being upgraded to full traffic control centres; this includes installation of weigh in motion facilities on both sides of the road.

2.2 THE NORTHERN CORRIDOR TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

The Governments in whose countries the core Northern Corridor road network traverses (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi), have established dedicated Road Funds in order to ensure availability of finance to ensure adequate and timely routine and periodic maintenance. However, there are still gaps in funding due to large demand, which compete for financing from the Road Funds. In respect of overloading, Kenya and Uganda the Highway Authorities are responsible for weighbridges. The exception is the Mariakani weighbridge (near Mombasa) in Kenya, which has been contracted to a private operator. If contraventions are detected, prosecution are instituted (there is no option to pay admission of guilt fines and vehicles are impounded until a court has issued judgment). There have been complaints of ineffectiveness of the system to curb overloading and the soliciting of "unofficial" payments at the weighbridges. However, improvements are being made or are planned. (Nathan Associates Inc. Arlington, Virginia, USA)

2.3 ROAD AND BORDER TRANSIT TIME

The driving time is reflective of distance as destinations with longer distances have longer driving time. However, shorter destinations may take longer time if roads are in poor conditions, less facilitation of transport at border points, and more taken at weighbridges and road blocks. The routes on Beira and Nacala corridors seem to be affected by all these factors and therefore driving time is not consistent with increases in distance (Murithi A, Samuel M)

The representative from the Ministry of Roads, Engineer P C Kilimo While addressing one of the Transport stakeholders meeting acknowledged the progress made at the EAC level with respect to the harmonization of GVWs, emphasizing that the Ministry considered the issue of the railway and Port of Mombasa as critical areas for Kenyans development. He noted that it was important for the stakeholders to consider bold steps to ensure that the port continues to be competitive, including the whole issue of port 'commercialization' i.e. privatization. This would make it improve in service delivery and allow it to compete with other world class facilities.

2.4 QUOTED COMMENTS DURING ROAD TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP

".....The problem at the Port is the conflict of interests between different Government agencies. There is need for a single trade facilitation agency to provide the required leadership....." Mr. Boaz Makomere, KIFWA, during the Stakeholders Workshop, 7th December 2011

".....The people who overload roads are not KeNHA, but Private sector, maintaining these roads cost money, which is not easy to come by....." Eng Samuel Ogege, KeNHA during the Stakeholders Workshop, 7th December 2011

".....to blame the current state of the roads on overloading alone is to stretch the truth. There are other factors, especially the quality of the road works....." Ms. Merianne Singo, Road Transport Association, Stakeholders Workshop, 7th December 2011

".....the Ministry considers the issue of the railway and Port of Mombasa as critical areas for Kenya's development....." Eng. Kilimo, Ministry of Roads, Stakeholders Workshop, 7th December 2011

".....the Government has no business doing business, the government should let the private sector engage in business while focusing on regulation....." Mr. Edwins Mukabanah, KEPSA, Stakeholders Workshop, 7th December 2011

3. IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The study will help in establishing the bottlenecks affecting transport sector especially weighbridges and hence provide solutions on how to improve efficiency along the weighbridges.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There have been several challenges affecting transport sector in Kenya and the region. Some of these challenges have resulted to inefficiencies by several government agencies leading to loss of business to competitors such as central corridor, Tanzania etc.

5. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are to investigate the bottlenecks affecting transport sector especially weighbridges. To identify measures and mechanisms necessary to maximize throughput, achieve a smooth cost effective and balanced flow of cargo at the weighbridge stations.

6. HYPOTHESES

One of the leading factors affecting the transport sector according to stakeholders in Kenya is the weighbridge among others, weighbridge in Kenya contribute to larger portions of delay of trucks loaded with cargo, destined to interior part of Kenya and transit countries. This leads to poor truck turnaround hence leading to backlog of containers, congestion and delay of raw materials to industries in the region. The study will have gone to details to find out whether these factors which contribute to slow movement of cargo are the weighbridges.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology applied was interview with a predetermined questionnaire, the response was as follows:

5.1 OFFICERS IN WEIGHBRIDGE OPERATIONS

NO.	TITLE	WEIGHBRIDGE	REMARKS
1.	Operations officer in charge	Mariakani	Positive feedback
2.	Operations officer (equipments)	Athi River	Positive feedback
3.	Assistant officer (weighbridge)	Mariakani	Positive feedback
4.	Supervisor of weighbridge (mtwapa)	Athi River	Positive feedback
5.	Ministry officer of weighbridges	Ministry of Roads	Positive feedback

5.2 TRUCK DRIVERS

NO.	DESTINATION	REMARKS
5	Local drivers	Positive feedback
5	Transit drivers	Positive feedback

5.3 TRUCK OWNERS

NO.	NAME OF COMPANY	REMARKS
1.	Shiva transporters	Positive feedback
2.	Ocean transporters	Positive feedback
3.	Mombasa trucks	Positive feedback
4.	Hakika hauliers	Positive feedback
5.	Interplanet carriers	Positive feedback

Other methods applied from publishers and non-published quotes from workshops and seminars by different stakeholders on subjects relating to transport in the region.

6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**6.1 ROAD FUNDS**

The Governments in whose countries the core Northern Corridor road network traverses (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi), have established dedicated Road Funds in order to ensure availability of finance to ensure adequate and timely routine and periodic maintenance. However, there are still gaps in funding due to large demand, which compete for financing from the Road Funds. In respect of overloading, Kenya and Uganda the Highway Authorities are responsible for weighbridges. The exception is the Mariakani weighbridge (near Mombasa) in Kenya, which has been contracted to a private operator. If contraventions are detected, prosecution are instituted (there is no option to pay admission of guilt fines and vehicles are impounded until a court has issued judgment). There have been complaints of ineffectiveness of the system to curb overloading and the soliciting of "unofficial" payments at the weighbridges. However, improvements are being made or are planned.

6.2 FRUSTRATION IN TRANSPORT SECTOR

An Interview with truck drivers revealed shows that at some weighbridge station, they are forced to wait until midnight the following day before proceeding with their journey after clearance affecting their truck turnaround, they spend between Sh15, 000 and Sh25, 000 from Mombasa to Busia. The money is to ensure easy passage through the weighbridges," a dejected Mr. Abdi, driver of a prime mover truck is a case in point.

On occasions senior police officers remain on duty beyond 11pm, and are told drivers work with loaders and pick-up owners to offload and ferry some goods to lighten the load, after which the lorries drive through the weighbridge, to be reloaded two or three kilometers ahead, it costs between Sh3, 000 to Sh4, 000 to have a pick-up a trucker through the weighbridge. However, for some drivers, they dread this tactic.

Mr. Clyde Mutotso, partner at Clyde & Associates, says about 50 per cent of total import freight costs are due to port expenses and for fighting transport hurdles. He quotes a study done by CPCS Transcom that states that truck drivers pay between 56,000 to Sh75, 000 to corrupt officers from Mombasa to Kigali in Rwanda.

It costs about Sh130, 000 to move a container from Dubai to Mombasa, but the cost doubles between Mombasa and Kampala.

6.3 IMPROVED VEHICLE OVERLOAD CONTROL SYSTEM

There are some areas which need improve on the system such as training assistance to assist member states to align legislation on vehicle limits with regional standards and to pass new regulations providing for administrative penalties. Outreach activities to sensitize the trucking industry to the implications of the new rules are useful to ensure smooth implementation of the administrative system and to secure the co-operation of industry – from an early stage – to improve compliance levels and training of weighbridge staff and law enforcement agencies.

6.4 ROAD MAINTENANCE IN KENYA

Roads are managed by Road Agencies/Authorities and maintained on contract for specific works defined such as routine maintenance; re-sealing/periodic maintenance. Finance is from Road funds and Government budget allocation. When there is no finance, maintenance is postponed, thus accumulating deferred maintenance and accelerated road deterioration. Overload control is managed by the Road Authorities in Kenya (KenHA) and Uganda via weighbridges. Rwanda and Burundi are in the process of establishing weighbridges at and similar vehicle overload control systems.

6.5 TRADE AND TRANSPORT FACILITATION

Several investments in the road sector to reduce the travel time and vehicle operating costs. Nevertheless, time gained through road construction can easily be erased by a proliferation of customs and police stops, both formal and informal, and even over-frequent use of weighbridges to protect the roads. Some interventions are designed to create a regional harmonized transit regime to realize the full trade benefits of the infrastructure investments.

Despite the agreement reached in 2008, there has been little progress by Member States in the region in amending their legislation to adopt the harmonized regional standards. Moreover, only Tanzania has introduced the agreed system of administrative penalties based on the recovery of actual economic costs of road damage. Rwanda and Burundi have no existing weighbridges infrastructure and are in the process of establishing them at the border points.

Experience elsewhere has highlighted that the efficacy of overload controls is improved when the trucking industry is fully cognizant of the content of the new rules and their application. Outreach activities to sensitize the trucking industry to the implications of the new rules are useful to ensure smooth implementation of the administrative system and to secure the co-operation of industry – from an early stage – to improve compliance levels. At the same time, training of weighbridge staff and law enforcement officers in the implementation of the new rules is also needed and to hold practical training sessions with weighbridge personnel and enforcement personnel.

6.6 CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

It would be critical that the relevant agencies, particularly the police, weighbridge authority and local governments, are committed to maximum free movement on the corridors. Without

An assessment on the performance of the Northern Corridor is affected by numerous operational, policy, procedural, and administrative issues. These are summarized below and strategies for addressing these causes of inefficiency are presented in Kenya, vehicles licensed for transit cannot carry domestic cargo and must use prescribed transit routes. This has the effect of many return trips being empty. Similarly in Tanzania, the Revenue Authority licenses trucks for transit or domestic with the same effect.

Domestic road transport policies in all states are aimed at deregulating market access, which has had some positive effects, but the lack of qualitative regulation has also had several undesirable consequences. These include low entry barriers leading to cut throat competition, low safety levels and poor service quality.

Existing overloading control strategy is aimed at achieving 100 percent inspections of all commercial vehicles. There is no targeted risk management approach and no incentive to encourage truckers to self-regulate. The high intensity of checking increases journey times and provides an added incentive for corruption. Differences in national limits complicate cross-border operations. There is also no regional consistency in terms of the frequency of checks as some states (Burundi, Rwanda) have no existing weighbridge infrastructure.

7. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

7.1 MOBILE WEIGHBRIDGE

Mobile weighbridges are quite new in Kenya. They are mostly used by the Road Authorities in Kenya (KenHA) and some companies used for personal use example a freight transport company using it to check their vehicles' mass before it goes on its journey.



7.2 PORTABLE WEIGHING EQUIPMENT (PWE)

PWE is made up of weigh pad scales which are able to be placed on a flat road surface. The load of the vehicle is obtained by summing up the axles' mass as each axle passes over the sensors. A number of different types of technology can be used as the weighing mechanisms such as: A spring can be used, bringing it back to its initial position by turning a crank. The resolutions correspond with the load measured. Hydraulic pads can also be used. They use pressure variable of a liquid contained in a coil to help measure the load.



7.3 WEIGH-IN-MOTION (WIM) SCALES

Weigh-in-motion scales are installed in national highways common in the Kenyan roads. This is done to provide traffic loading information, strategic planning, pavement design and for law enforcement.



7.4 AWARENESS BY THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

According to Trade and Logistics Consultant, Mr. Gordon J Anyango, with regard to the Weigh bridges in Kenya play an important role within the broader regional framework of the Northern Corridor; there are seven (7) fixed weighbridges between Mombasa and Malaba. Three have been licensed to private sector operators. Mariakani and Athi River are busiest with delays of between 3-4 hours compared to others at 1-2 hours. Lack of awareness by the business community, more particularly transporters, on the consequences of overloading is a problem; There are two main reasons for non-compliant cargo loads (Deliberate overloading of trucks by transporters and overloading at the Port of Mombasa despite smart cranes); Overloading and corruption are related, with transporters keen on maximizing profits, being ready to bribe their way at the weigh bridges. Over 90% of trucks along the weigh bridges are however compliant. Poor law enforcement is another area of concern.

7.5 KEY EMERGING ISSUES

There were a total of 13 weigh bridges in Kenya, with 12 being fully operational. 3 of these are under private managers. The desire of KeNHA is to privatize all the weighbridges. With regard to improvements at the weighbridges, KeNHA has begun installing new scales to address the problems of discrepancies in weights; installing automated systems; unless there is a breakdown, tickets are not manually generated. Also Public Display Units – been installed conspicuously, driver can see the whole weighing procedures. Improving the facilities ongoing – Mtwapa, MaaiMahiu, Gilgil- 2 way bridges will be ultra –modern (*rolling out contracts for Mariakani and Athi River*). When funds allow, this will be replicated at Webuye, Gilgil and Eldoret. KeNHA has installed weigh in motion scales at Athi River, Mariakani, in process of installing this at MaaiMahiu and Gilgil. Compliant trucks will move through green channel without any stopping. Installing and commissioning of 22 airbags for multi decks scale easing congestion at station. Currently, the installed CCTV cameras are not able to pick the number plates; hence players are still manipulating process. Soon cameras will pick all data for all the trucks. Construction of an additional lane at Mariakani – 80 million shillings; to construct auxiliary lane approach to weigh bridge station and installing new static scales; Fencing of the weighbridge station to preclude idlers and construction of lay by's at Malaba, Mai Mahiu and Busia and the establishment of weighbridge Oversight Committee. With regard to corruption, approximately 30 staff have been fired at Athi River alone, during the joint sting operations, conducted in partnership with the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission. Cooperation with other partners for vehicles not being kept at weighbridges unnecessarily. KeNHA working with transporters around Nairobi to encourage self regulation.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The government of Kenya to consider under their Road Transport Board to have a representative of Transport Sector or a nominee from Kenya Transport association (KTA). There's a need for the government of Kenya to standardize impunitive measures. There is need for the government to improve on road signs.

9. CONCLUSION

The hurdles faced by the traders using the Northern Corridor to convey their goods in transit extend beyond Malaba. For implementing any agreed policy requires the cooperation of the different agencies both public and private.

Notwithstanding the fact that the problem of long queues at weighbridges, the major cause is associated with lack of training both to the truck drivers, machine operators and regulatory agencies on the importance of their contribution in the performance in the transport sector. Furthermore, the process is subject to risk exposures such as customs business system failures, lack of agency fees by the drivers to enlist the services of customs/clearing agents and failure by all parties involved in the clearance process to work 24/7. Further it is recommended that more studies need to be done with a view to establish the challenges leading to Non Performance of 24/7 by state agencies whereas there is directive by the Government to implement it.

10. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In future there is a need to research using other parameters which have not been used in this study such as government officials in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

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