
A SHORT CUT MAY BE A LONGER ROUTE: ECONOMIC AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS OF TRAFFIC REGULATIONS' VIOLATIONS IN OYO STATE

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Abstract

On the road altercations, road crashes, longer travelling time, loss of lives and properties, and general economic loss were recorded on the roads because road users were mostly in a hurry and disobeyed traffic regulations. Oyo State Road Traffic Management Authority Law 2009 (OYRTMAL 2009) and some other relevant documents were reviewed, together with the data generated on the field, with a view to expunge the adequacy of active regulations to address emerging traffic realities and then advise road users on sustainable road infrastructure usage. Some of the traffic regulations violated by the road users while in hurry include: driving/riding against direction approved by law, disobeying traffic light, disobeying zebra crossing regulation, causing obstruction on the road, not yielding to traffic on the left at roundabout and so forth. It requires much longer time to settle disputes that ensue when one of the negative implications of traffic regulations' violations occurs. It is therefore imperative for road users to obey traffic regulations for safer road, and for personal and general economic prosperity.

Keywords: OYRTMA, OYRTMAL 2009, traffic regulations, economy, Oyo State

INTRODUCTION

The road corridors are constructed and road furniture installed to bring maximum succor to road users. Road are tarred and functionalized with signs and markings. A tarred road reduces travelling time, eases movement, enthruses users, adds aesthetic value, reduces wear and tear, and helps conserving fuel. In like manners, signs and markings optimize the road usage by directing, informing, cautioning, warning and controlling the road users. All these are meant to attain free flow of traffics and prevent road carnage (Asadu and Ayuwo, 2018).

In order to ensure the roads are used for the intended purposes, the governments are always float regulations, framework or policy for appropriate usage. Furthering commitment to maximum road infrastructure usage, the stakeholders usually set up institution that will enforce compliance with the floated regulations. In many advanced economies, the enforcement of the compliance with the road traffic regulations by the road users has been automated (Adewuyi et al., 2019). Reliable biodata maintained by these economies paves way for all violators to face the consequences their actions.

In Nigeria, Oyo State to be specific, Oyo State Road Traffic Management Authority Law 2009 (OYRTMA 2009) was enacted to regulate how the road users would be exploiting the road infrastructures. Oyo State Road Traffic Management Authority (OYRTMA) was then set up as Institution that would enforce OYRTMAL 2009 (Adesokan, 2023).

Many road users especially motorists and riders are found of violating the provisions of OYRTMAL 2009 while creating short cuts in a bid to reach their destinations ahead of time. Some of the short cuts created by the road users were riding/driving against direction approved by law, disobeying traffic light instructions, parking on the road in manners that create hindrance to free traffic flow, driving at above stipulated speeds, wrongful overtaking, overloading, illegal U-turns (Akpoghomeh, 2000; OYRTMAL, 2009; Statista, 2022; Adeniji, 2022) and so on. These violations, more often than not, have led to longer travelling times than usual, economic loss, loss of properties, legal torsion and loss of life (Adrianna, 2022).

This work seeks to enlighten the road users about negative implications of creating short cuts against traffic regulations and laws.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The materials used were the Oyo State Road Traffic Management Authority Law, 2009 (OYRTMAL, 2009), field assessment data and journal articles downloaded using search engines like Web of Science, Researchgate, Google scholar, Scopus, Tailor and Francis online, MPDI, Sage Publishing, and ScienceDirect were resources. These resources were analyzed and the results obtained and discussed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Disobeying Traffic Lights (TSM-02)

Traffic lights are auto-machines installed to control, direct, divert and/or inform motorists and other road users at road junctions, intersections, diversions and construction sites. The traffic lights are substitutes to scarce human resource, replacements for human fatigue and appropriate for day and night operations. They help preventing traffic jams and road crashes. However despite the meritorious and public-centered services provided by the traffic lights, many road users violate their usage regulations in a bid to beat time (in hurry). When the traffic light (red light) stops your lane, it has allowed/passed another lane that crosses your

lane. If your lane is on green traffic light, you can drive on when it is safe to do so, but then stop when the amber (yellow) light is on. In the same vein, if your lane is waiting (on red), do not move when the amber (yellow) light is on until the green light on (Osnaya, 2021). This is the golden rule to avoid accidents at locations controlled by traffic lights.



Figure 1: Motorists violating traffic light regulation at Dandaru Ibadan

In Oyo State, the maximum period a traffic light can put a motorist on wait is two and half minutes (150 seconds). Many motorists do violate traffic light regulation by moving when the light says stop in the name of being in a hurry (Figure 1). That would be a short and economic time compare to if you violate the regulation and get involved in a crash as a result. The 150 seconds could become hours to settle the ensued dispute. The crash could involve damages that would run to huge sum of money. The crash could claim life which may lead to long and costly legal battle. If the violator is caught by OYRTMA agents on duty and the magistrate find him/her guilty, he/she may pay a sum of fine not less than ten thousand naira and/or between three and six months imprisonment.

Failure to yield to Right of Way for Pedestrians at a Zebra Crossing (TSM-06)

One of the categories of road users is pedestrians. Walkways and zebra (pedestrian) crossing are among the road furniture provided for the pedestrians. Zebra crossing is a white and black paint on the road surface that indicates spot where pedestrians are expected to cross the road (Figure 2). This is the spot where motorists are expected to slow down on the highway for pedestrians to cross.



One minute would be too long for pedestrians to cross, then the motorists could proceed afterwards. Many motorists found violating this traffic regulation in disguise of being in a hurry. Many pedestrians have been knocked down by motorists/tricyclists/motorcyclists. One minute impatience could then cost hours, life, economic loss, legal battle and much more. If OYRTMA Agent caught the violator and magistrate found him/her guilty, the violator could pay a fine not less than fifteen thousand naira and/or three to six month imprisonment.

Failure to give Way to Traffic on the Left at Roundabout (TSM-07)

At roundabout, the traffic (vehicle) on the left has right of way ahead of those on the right. It is regulated that vehicle on the right should exercise patience, which ordinarily would not take more few seconds, for vehicle on the left to pass. This reason for this is that the driver (for lefty vehicle) is closer to the left flank for self and mirror-aided view. It would be easier for him/her to prevent contact than the driver of the vehicle on the left. However many times when this regulation is violated while hurrying, there are vehicle bashings. This often leads to

wastage of good and precious time on argument, economic loss true repair, altercations which include verbal and physical assaults, inducement of traffic gridlock and so on. If the violator is caught by OYRTMA officer, he/she may be fined in amount not less than ten thousand naira or tried in the magistrate court.

Exceeding prescribed Speed Limit (SPV-01)

Over-speeding is when motorists/riders propel the vehicles/motorcycles at speeds exceeding the limits set for the road or the location. There are specified speed limits for various categories of roads and locations. These limits are set after considerations for peculiarities of the roads and/or locations. Ultimately, these limits are meant to protect the properties, lives of motorists, pedestrians, school children, and the general public. Motorists and riders do violate this regulation out of ignorance and commonly while in a hurry. Over-speeding could lead to suicide, homicide and/or murder (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Effect of over-speeding (accident) along Ibadan-Oyo expressway

The difference in arrival times between the over-speeding driver and speed-compliance driver is not more than five minutes. It would be monumental loss to lose a whole vehicle to five minutes impatience and irreparable loss to lose a life for the same reason. If the violator of this regulation is caught by the agents of the OYRTMA and found guilty by the magistrate, he/she may a fine not less than five thousand naira and/or three to six months imprisonment.

Driving in a Direction prohibited by the Road Traffic Law (MTF-02)

Driving or riding against direction regulated by law (one-way) is a criminal offence that has claimed lives of many. In many of the occasions, the unsuspected law abiding road users have met untimely deaths in the hand of these regulation violators (Figure 4). The reason, most of the times, why the violators drive or ride through one-way is that they do not want to go and make u turn at the appropriate place. Sometimes, the motorists and riders may be avoiding checking points mounted by the law enforcement agents. The time needed to make it to legal u-turn is always insignificant when compare to havocs occasioned by this recklessness.



Figure 4: One-way rider involved in an accident at Mokola Ibadan

OYRTMA is reviewing extra measures needed to deter these regulation violators in Oyo State. Any violator who is caught may have his/her vehicle or motorcycle impounded for longer time, may need to submit psychiatric test result for sanity, may face magistrate and then pay a fine not less than fifteen thousand naira.

Wrongful Overtaking of Other Vehicle (MTF-04)

Overtaking is when a vehicle or bike that is on higher speed by-passes one that is on lower speed. Notwithstanding overtaking has a rule. Overtaking could be risky sometimes especially at blind spots like nearing dangerous bends, narrower road, unguided bridge and so on. An adequately furnished road has marking that informs the motorists and riders when it is safe or otherwise to overtake. A white rigid line that divides the road means it is not safe and overtaking is prohibited while broken white line means overtaking is allowed if it is safe to do so. Many road crashes have been recorded as a result of motorists violating this regulation out of impatience. Lives and properties have been lost in the process. Other economic implications of this violation are loss of time, cost of legal battle if one ensues, and fine to pay if the violator is caught by appropriate state agents.

Overloading of Vehicle (MTF-05)

Overloading is when a vehicle or motorcycle carries load larger than its manufacturer specified capacity or when the load protrudes beyond acceptable limit or of too high in height. Drivers are found of loading their vehicles with a view to make more money within shortest time possible. Overloading has a few negative impacts on socio-economy: it heightens rate of wear and tear of the affected vehicle; it lessens the ability of the driver to control the vehicle in case of mechanical fault and accidental situations (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Overloaded truck lost control

The loss incurs through overloading overweighs its gain. The personal property loss and damages claims by the affected parties would be incomparable to income from overloading. In some cases loss of life could be involved and this is an irreparable loss (human capital loss) where socio-economic life of the deceased dependants would be impacted. Overloading is a breach of regulation of OYRTMAL 2009. If the violator is caught by the Agents of OYRTMA and he/she is guilty through pronouncement of the magistrate, the violator could pay a fine not less than ten thousand naira and/or prison term.

Parking or Stopping to Pick Passenger other than Bus stop (MTF-08)

Two of the furniture built with the roads are bus stop and terminals. They are provided at strategic locations on the road where commercial vehicles and the passengers could meet. These facilities are meant to soak passenger-bound vehicles away from moving traffic on the main lanes of the road. OYRTMAL 2009 has regulated that commercial vehicles must only stop to pick passengers at bus stop and terminal. However non-compliance with this regulation by the commercial vehicles as a result of being too hurry to enter the bus stop has always led to traffic hold ups at junctions in Ibadan and some locations across the state. The further effect of violation of this law is wastage of preventable loss of time, burning of more fuel, release of more exhaust in the environment and also environmental pollution. Any violator of this regulation who is caught by the Agents of OYRTMA could pay fine not less than ten thousand naira and other penalties if the magistrate found him/her guilty. The money

earned while violating the regulation would be far from sufficient to settle the fine. Also the time needed to obey the regulation would be too small compare to time required to settle the case.

Causing Obstruction on the Road (MTF-11)

Traffic obstruction is any obstacle presents on any of the traffic lane at any given time, walkway and/or any other part of the road that ha specific function. The acts that violate this regulation include: wrong parking and waiting, dumping of gravel and trading encroachment (Figure 6). Motorists violate this regulation claiming that they would be there for a moment. However, some of these roads have been marked, therefore some do not allow parking or waiting at all while some allow waiting alone except in case of emergency or breakdown. Traffic obstruction has negative economic impact in that it induces traffic hold up, prolongs emergency response time, leads to time wastage and sometimes severity of road crash.



Constituting traffic obstruction on the road is a contravention of regulation of traffic management (MTF-11) in Oyo State. An offender caught would his vehicle, tricycle or motorcycle impounded, face the prosecution and liable to pay a fine not less than ten thousand naira and/or with other fine(s).

Making or Receiving Phone Calls while Driving (MTF-14)

Another traffic management regulation contravened at will by motorists and tricyclists alike is using of phone while driving and riding. This practice distracts attention of the motorists and riders from maximum concentration driving and riding require. It has led to lots of accidents and as a result many have been sent to early grave. Most roads in Oyo state were with lay-bys and markings where pull aside could be observed to make and/or receive calls. Many motorists would be claiming they are too in a rush to stop by to make or receive calls. Phone usage, while driving, is a contravention of Oyo state traffic management regulation

(MTF-14). Any violator who was in a hurry to stop to make few minute calls, if caught, would have hours/days and money to settle his/her case.

Motorists not observing Road Markings and Signs

Most roads in Oyo State were marked to inform the road users intending usage. A yellow line by the edge of the walkway means no parking. However a white rigid line that demarcate last lane indicates parking. Therefore parking plus no parking means waiting.

Parking sign + No Parking sign = Waiting



Figure 7: White and yellow lines appear together on the road

This road, considering white and yellow line on it, allows motorists and riders to stop-by to make or receive calls and waiting. Motorists who parked his/her vehicle and could not been in or around it has violated a traffic regulation and punishable under the OYRTMA 2009.

CONCLUSION

This article has revealed that the short cuts (violations of traffic regulations) which many motorists and riders adopted in other to beat time are false and mere conjectures. These so called short cuts are longer, rougher and dangerous than normal and legal routes. These short cuts are only shorter ways to economic loss and loss of life.

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