

**NIGERIAN LABOUR POLICY AND ITS IMPACT
ON THE RAILWAY WORKERS IN KADUNA
STATE 1960-1990s**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2023

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STATE 1960-1990s**

by

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my special gratitude to God Almighty for the opportunity to undergo this programme successfully. My profound gratitude goes out to my dynamic supervisor, Associate Professor Muhamad Hasrul Zakariah. Your thorough and knowledgeable contributions and corrections were indispensable in the development of this study. Thank you for putting up with my persistent queries and the impromptu requests for consultations. This study would not have been possible without your contributions and constant guidance. The top management of the School of Humanities and the History Section, USM, must not be left out. Especially the thesis proposal committee, Professor Ooi, Dr. Tai Chee Seng, and a host of other administrative staff of the section. Your contributions and support are highly appreciated. To the Viva committee, your corrections has enriched the final outcome of the thesis greatly. This study would not have been possible without the assistance received from the staff of the National Archives Kaduna. To Mr. Michael Vonyiri, Mr. Jibrin, Mallam Dalibi, and all the other supporting staff, you deserve my sincere gratitude. My appreciation goes to all the staff History Department, Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna, thank you for the outstanding support. I am highly indebted to the staff of Nigerian Railway Corporation, particularly Mr. Nasir Suleiman, Theophilus, Terhemmen, Abdullahi, and the numerous other staff at the Kaduna, Zaria, and Kafanchan Stations, thank you for your time and provision of valuable information and documents provided that led to the completion of this study. Many thanks go to the staff of the Institute of Transport Technology, Zaria.

Last but not the least, to the Nigerian Army and the Nigerian Defence Academy for giving me the opportunity and resources to undertake this study, and for

considering me worthy of being sponsored through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, I owe you a great debt. A big thank you to my entire family, colleagues, and friends for their unrelenting support and prayers. To numerous others whose names were not mentioned here, you are very much appreciated.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
NITEL	Nigerian Telecommunications Limited
NRC	Nigeria Railway Corporation
NAA	Nigerian Airport Authority
NEPA	National Electric Power Authority
NMC	Nigerian Mining Corporation
NSPMC	Nigerian Security Printing & Minting Company Limited
NCC	National Coal Corporation
NPF	National Provident Fund
NICON	National Insurance Corporation of Nigeria
DSCL	Delta Steel Company Limited
IPS	Institut Pengajian Siswazah
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
FHA	Federal Housing Authority
NTA	Nigerian Television Authority
NAN	News Agency of Nigeria
NLC	National Labour Congress
UTES	Rail India Technical and Economic Services
RRIC	Railway Restructuring Implementation Committee
RIB	Railway Inspectorate Board
NREL	Nigerian Railways Engineering Limited
NRL	Nigerian Railway Limited
NTA	Nigerian Track Authority
WG	Working Group
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
TA	Technical Assistance
TCPC	Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
GM	General Manager
NUR	Federated Nigerian Union of Railwaymen
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

CCECC	China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation
FMoT	Federal Ministry of Transport
LGA	Local Government Areas
KSG	Kaduna State Government
KTL	Kaduna Textile Limited
UNTL	United Nigeria Textiles Limited
ATL	Arewa Textiles
PAN	Peugeot Automobile Nigeria Limited
NBL	Nigerian Breweries Limited
KRPC	Kaduna Refining and Petrochemical Company
WAFF	West African Frontier Force
NPC	National Population Commission
SBC	Southern Baptists Convention
ACF	Arewa Consultative Forum
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NNDC	Northern Nigeria Development Corporation
NNIL	Northern Nigeria Investment Limited
ESIALA	Eastern States Interim Assets and Liabilities Agency
ICSA	Interim Common Services Agency
NNPL	New Nigerian Labour Policy

DASAR BURUH NIGERIA DAN KESANNYA TERHADAP PEKERJA KERETAPI DI NEGERI KADUNA 1960-1990-AN

ABSTRAK

Selama berdekad selepas merdeka, struktur Perbadanan Keretapi Nigeria (*Nigerian Railways Cooperation* atau NRC) kekal statik dan menyedihkan dalam suasana perkembangan sosieokonomi dan politik negara itu yang mencabar. Di sebalik segala usaha kerajaan untuk memperbaiki keadaan dengan pelaburan besar bernilai jutaan dollar, hanya sedikit penambahbaikan yang telah dicapai. Kesan kegagalan ini tentunya terhadap kebajikan para pekerja yang kian memburuk seperti ketidakupayaan pembayaran gaji, tunggakan pembayaran pencen, keadaan kawasan penempatan pekerja yang terbiar, bangunan-bangunan pejabat yang usang serta kehilangan motivasi dalam kalangan mereka. Malahan ekonomi negara juga turut terkesan akibat daripada kemerosotan perkhidmatan keretapi ini. Penyelidikan ini menganalisis pembangunan serta impak dasar buruh dan polisi perundingan gaji Nigeria, seterusnya bagaimana perkhidmatan keretapi telah mentransformasi negeri Kaduna. Kajian ini turut menyentuh tentang kesan kemerosotan NRC terhadap kebajikan para pekerja keretapi di Kaduna antara tahun 1960 hingga era 1990-an. Kajian ini menggunakan pelbagai metodologi dalam penyelidikan ilmu sejarah termasuk mengaplikasikan kaedah kuantitatif dan kualitatif dalam pengumpulan serta analisis data numerikal dan bukan numerikal berhubung isu kesan ekonomi. Tidak terkecuali juga analisis yang melibatkan pemahaman tentang konsep, pandangan atau pengalaman yang berkaitan. Penyelidikan ini membabitkan proses interpretasi dan analisis terhadap sumber arkib yang kebanyakannya diperolehi di Arkib Kebangsaan Nigeria di Kaduna. Bahan arkib ini termasuklah rekod-rekod kolonial, rekod

perseorangan dan rekod rasmi kerajaan. Dapatan kajian pula menunjukkan perkhidmatan keretapi telah mentransformasikan negeri Kaduna menjadi tunjang aktiviti ekonomi di Nigeria. Hasil penyelidikan ini turut mendapati bahawa polisi buruh dan penetapan kadar gaji di Kaduna tidak berjaya disebabkan kurangnya penglibatan yang teratur oleh para buruh dalam proses perundingan pekerjaan. Hal ini berpunca daripada kekangan undang-undang terhadap NRC, masalah pengurusan institusi dan pelbagai kelemahan pentadbiran yang memberi kesan yang teruk kepada para pekerja di Kaduna. Justeru kajian ini mendapati terdapatnya keperluan segera kepada pengukuhan Akta NRC bagi membolehkan sesuatu keputusan berguna dibuat, seterusnya pengenalan kepada dasar yang boleh mengubah perbadanan NRC menjadi sebuah perusahaan perniagaan yang mampu memenuhi kos operasinya.

**NIGERIAN LABOUR POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE RAILWAY
WORKERS IN KADUNA STATE 1960-1990s**

ABSTRACT

Decades after independence, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) remained static in structure and apathetic to the emerging socio-economic and political challenges. Despite efforts by the Government to fix the rote in the sector, investing millions of US dollars in the rehabilitation, very minimal sign of improvement is visible. The consequence is the poor state of staff welfare, such as unpaid salaries, the backlog of pensions, dilapidated residences, and office buildings, and the absence of motivation. The country's economy is not spared from the decay of the railways. The study analyzed the development and impact of Nigeria's labour and wage bargaining policies and how the railway transformed Kaduna state. It additionally investigated the impact of the collapse of NRC on the welfare of its workers in Kaduna from 1960 to the 1990s. The research adopted a mixed method of historical inquiry. A methodology that involved the application of quantitative and qualitative analysis of collecting and analyzing numerical and non-numerical data on issues of economic impacts and understanding concepts, opinions, or experiences. The National Archives, Kaduna provided official, personal, and colonial records used in analysis and interpretation. Findings disclosed that the railway transformed Kaduna into a fulcrum of economic activities in Nigeria. It was also revealed that labour and wage-fixing policies introduced could not work due to the lack of organized labour's involvement in negotiations. the work further discovered that NRC's decline could be tied to restrictions imposed on the Corporation by its enabling Act, institutional arrangements, and other managerial deficiencies with severe consequences on railway

workers in Kaduna. There is therefore the need to immediately enhance the NRC Act that will permit it to make useful decisions. Introduce policies that will transform the Corporation into a business enterprise capable of meeting its operation cost.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Federation of Nigeria occupies an area of about 355,174 square miles, on the west coast of tropical Africa, with a population of about 56 million people, as indicated by the 1963 census figure. Another census was conducted in 1973 and rejected by the Federal Government because they were overblown and out of balance with the estimated figure. Out of more than 250 tribal groups in Nigeria, the three major ones are Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba. The Hausa inhabits the northern part of the country, the Ibos are found in the east, and the Yoruba occupy the western parts. Today, Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and the eighth-most populated country globally, with 182 million inhabitants in 2005.¹ In the same vein, Kaduna State is one of northern Nigeria's biggest and most significant urban communities.² A significant part of the historical backdrop of Kaduna lies in its colonial origins. Many of the other enormous urban communities in northern Nigeria, like Kano, Sokoto, and Maiduguri, were significant towns and locales of emirates in the pre-colonial period.

On the other hand, Kaduna is comparably younger than other pre-colonial towns as it was Lord Fredric Lugard's idea to establish it in 1912. It was first established as a garrison town accommodating the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) and subsequently the regional capital of the then British colonial Protectorate of northern Nigeria.³ The young capital pulled in individuals of various foundations, religions, and cultures. Added to its job as the capital of northern Nigeria, Kaduna has, throughout the

1. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Population Prospect: Nigerian Federal Government Office of Statistics Lagos." *Digest of Statistics* (July 1917): 23.

2. Ibid.

3. T. Falola, *Britain and Nigeria: Exploitation or development*, (UK: Zed Book, 1987), 43-50

years, likewise developed as a focal point of print and electronic media; it attracted businesses and industrial activities in the area.⁴ The town's growth was enhanced when the city turned into a significant center and intersection of the Nigerian railway system. The map below shows that the town served as a railway link with the Lagos-Kano line, and the Port Harcourt-Maiduguri in the northeast, with Baro, Nigeria's biggest inland port on the river Niger. The most significant business that arose in the city between the late 1960s and mid-1970s was textile manufacturing. In the mid-sixties, Kaduna was host to Nigeria's most prominent textile industry, employing more individuals than other industries in the city.

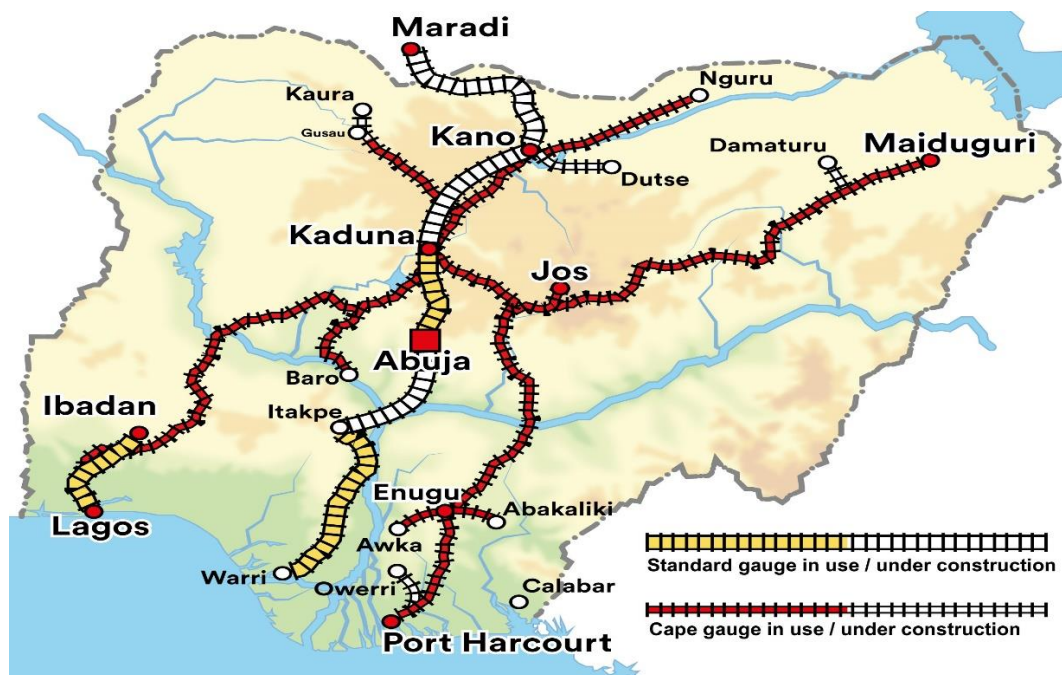


Figure 1.1 Map of Nigeria showing the location of Kaduna on the Eastern and Western Rail Lines. Source: Nigerian Geographical Survey.

4. Ibid

A policy is the “way of thinking and set of guiding ideas that underpin the actions of an organization,”^{5,6} to put it simply. An established method of conducting business and guiding business actions in a particular sector of an organization or institution is referred to as “a guide for making an administrative decision.”⁷ The research looked at the way of thinking and the body of principles, which form the basis for the government's action in Nigeria's transportation sector, affected the drafting of labour policies. However, this was limited to evaluating labour engagement and recruiting, training, remuneration, overall labour and transportation policy issues, and welfare concerns in the Kaduna branch of the Nigeria Railway Corporation (NRC). State policy relating to labour-management issues is either complete *laissez-faire* or complete state direct control of labour. As indicated by Reynold,⁸ unions everywhere operate in the domain of legal and political controls. The larger community enforces its will in public policy through statutes, administrative guidelines, and judicial choices. A review of Nigeria's labour history demonstrates that the country has experienced two phases.⁹ These were the periods of regulation and deregulation of industrial activities, respectively.

The idea behind the Nigerian policy on labour-management relations was aimed to promote free cooperation between employers and labour, in other words, the establishment of constitutional industrial relations as a way of life. A brief examination of the policies of the Government and the institution of labour-management relations revealed that the stated goal of establishing industrial negotiating machinery was to

5. E.F.L. Brech (ed), *The Principle and Practice of Management* (London: Longman. 1963), 34.

6. Dick Carlson, *Modern Management and Practices: Organization for Economic Co-operation and development*, (London: Macmillan, 1962), 137.

7. Ibid.

8. L.G. Rynold, *Labour Economics and labour relations*, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Endlewood Cliffs, 1974), 27-34.

9. A.N. Gbosi, *Fundamentals of International Economics and Finance*, (Lagos: Upper Standard, 1985), 21-23.

promote the development of a fully independent labour movement. The Trade Disputes (Arbitration and Inquiry) Ordinance of 1941 encouraged the practice.¹⁰

Sir John MacPherson, the commissioner who examined the Enugu colliery shooting disturbance in November 1949, sent a dispatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on May 18, 1950, in which he firmly articulated the state policy and described the administration's efforts to carry it out.¹¹ His comments were that:

*I must make a brief reference to the general policy of the Government concerning Trade Unions. The Government has repeatedly made it plain that it wishes to see strong and reasonable unions built up. Despite many setbacks, a great deal of practical evidence has been given by the Government's determination to carry out that policy. Officers with long experience of work in the United Kingdom trade union have been recruited, some of them Nigerians, for conciliation work; where conciliation has failed, arbitrators have been established; and recently, scholarships have been granted to Nigerian trade unions.*¹²

These policies were again re-echoed in Geneva in August 1955 by the late chief Festus Okotie-Eboh as the line which Nigeria had accepted and since pursued by its popularly elected Government.¹³ That the Regional Governments accepted the Central Government's industrial relations policy was deduced firstly from the Eastern Regional Government White paper in 1955, which says:

10. Tayo Fashoyin, "State Regulation of Trade Disputes in Essential Services in Nigeria," *Industrial Relations* 36, no. 1 (1981): 207-222.; Department of Labour, *Currently Review*, (Lagos, March 1943), 4-7.

11. H.M.S.O, Colonial No. 257, *Report of the commission of Enquiry into the Disorder in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria, November 1949*.

12. Ibid.

13. Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh was the Minister of labour and his speech was at the 38th conference of the I.L.O, Department of Labour, *Quarterly Review*, (Federal Government Printer, 1955), 19.

The Ministry¹⁴ fully supports the policy¹⁵ of joint determination of wages and conditions of employment of self-government in industry, it is the policy of the Government to encourage the growth of genuine trade unions. Union education will be fostered, and every assistance will be given to further the development of an efficient administration of trade union business. Encouragement will be given to the maintenance of a strong central organization of trade union which the Government can consult on the view of working people on relevant subject.¹⁶

Indeed, several Nigerian labour policies are modern and forward-looking. However, in practice, the nation appears not to perceive the capacity of the human resources that it has been creating. Specific labour policies, like “Nigerianization,”¹⁷ have contended with force the challenges of recruitment, training, and development of human resources. This has created a well-educated, learned, and modern workforce and confirmed a rising pay level. Likewise, it is evident that whatever the workplace or ideology within which individuals work when individuals become progressively proficient and increasingly refined; they need to be better informed regarding their working circumstances. They need to be better involved with circumstances that affect them and to take an interest in the basic leadership progress. The enlightened labourer becomes suspicious of anything harbouring paternalism.

Earlier changes in labour policies came about as the consequence of shortages experienced in the colonies, championed by the forward-looking Labour Party (LP) leaders Lord Passfield and Drummond Shiels. To retain labour the colonial governments

14. Ibid.; Referring to the Ministry of Labour and Welfare, Eastern Nigeria.

15. Ibid.; The Central Government policy: this was a time where Nigeria had regional governments, respectively, the Western, Eastern and Northern regions.

16. Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), Sessional Paper No. 8, *Eastern region*, Nigeria. 1955.

17. FGN, “Statement of Policy of the Government of the Federation of Nigerianization of the Federal Service 1956-60,” *Sessional Paper*, no.4 (1960): 15-32.; Nigerianization was a policy adopted in 1948 to speed up higher level Employment in indigenous Nigerians through promotion of lower staff. It also involved the massive training of indigenous student in tertiary institutions of learning.

contended that attention should be paid to other aspects of the labourer's social welfare such as hours of work, pay rates, housing conditions, medical services, and the like. Passfield asserted that these issues were central to the evolving colonial labour policy and were the duty of the administrators to show a high standard in such matters.¹⁸ Labour Recruitment was chosen as a priority for discussion because the process of obtaining labourers held out the prospect of compulsion being used by the people being recruited.”¹⁹

Consequently, most labour policies in Nigeria are a carry-over of laws from the British colonialist, with slight alterations by progressive Nigerian regimes.²⁰ A Colonial Official contended in 1930 that the primary obligation of the office was to choose the best man accessible for a specific occupation, send him out to do it, and back him up.²¹ The Colonial Office did not make African policy: this was the preserve of the different Colonial Governments, with the Secretary of State for the colonies only exercising a potential veto.²² Some early labour laws were the Master and Servant laws of 1908 and 1911, the Labour Code No. 1 of 1929, Nigerian Trade Union Ordinance No.44 of 1938, Inspectorate Code of October 1939, Trade Disputes (Arbitration and Inquiry) Ordinance of 1941, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1940, 1968 Decree No.21, Trade Disputes (Emergency Provisions) and its amending Decree No.53 of 1969 making strike and lockouts illegal and punishable by imprisonment. The Decree also ordered an establishment of an Industrial Arbitration Tribunal, which started functioning in 1970.

On the other hand, the common explanation behind building the railroads in Nigeria was to open the hinterland to exploit agricultural and mineral resources. It was also meant

18. D.O 35/417/11769, *Circular Dispatch: Passfiled to Governors*, dated 6th August 1930; C.O.323/30/1071/70093.

19. H. Bernard Bourdillon, "Colonial Development and Welfare," *Royal Institute of International Affairs* 20, no. 3 (1944): 369-380.

20. D. Goldsworthy, *Colonial Issues in British Politics 1945-1961*, (UK: Oxford, 1971), 47-61.

21. J.F. Adeniyi Ajayi, and M. Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa* 2, (London: Longman, 1974), 525-6.

22. F. Jaekel, *The History of Nigeria Railway* 3, (London: Spectrum books, 1997), 23.

to provide leverage for strengthening colonial political administration. The Nigerian railway began as an administrative division in 1898 by laying the original railway track in Nigeria. Presently, it exists as a public enterprise made by the NRC Act of 1955 (revised in 1990).²³

The study has argued that the failure of the Government's labour and transportation policies is key to the decay in Nigerian railways with damning consequences on issues like poor management, corruption, gross underutilization of established capacity, and poor welfare package, to mention some. The Nigerian Government should initiate a practical and enforceable policy that will ensure the smooth administration and management of the NRC in its various districts across the nation. The Government should act deliberately in favour of the railways in Nigeria because that will reduce the number of casualties due to road accidents, prolong the lifespan of roads and enhance the revenue generation of the Corporation.

1.2 Literature Review

This study focused on the impact of Nigeria's labour policy on railways workers in Kaduna state. Given the crucial role of the Nigerian Railways operations in the development of Nigeria and the expansion of the British administration in the country, a considerable volume of historical literature exists on labour and transport-related matters. However, this literature lacks a study on the impact of these policies on the railway, especially in Kaduna. Therefore, an existing gap in the literature on the NRC. This present study, therefore, is an attempt to fill this gap. Over time, the policies adopted by the various governments bothered the need to recruit enough manpower that could be used

23. Nigerian Railway Corporation Act (No. 20 of 1955) (Chapter 323), *Laws of the Federation of Nigeria: 1990 revised edition* 18, (Lagos: Government Printer, 1955), 11950-12006.

for colonial projects. Therefore, force and contractual recruitment were employed to achieve the aim. Railway staff as part and parcel of the numerous communities they found themselves in, as studies have shown, have contributed immensely to the growth and wellbeing of those places. The railway in Kaduna does not operate as an autonomous system but is part of the Nigeria Railway Corporation, the central body responsible for management. With the current decay in the Nigerian railways, a result of years of neglect, the rail workers who were a source of enlightenment, envy, and pride have now been reduced to suffering and penury.²⁴ This is not to say that rail workers are the only ones affected by the general downturn experienced in the Nigerian labour atmosphere. Two approaches were utilized in the review of literature: the Chronological and “Funnel” approach. The former reviews historic documents to the most recent literature, while the latter approach explored the broader level of “funneling” to a specific area of research. The aim is to give a general perspective on the subject matter and at the same time outline events sequentially.

Genevieve Ambrose Oldfield²⁵ *The Native Railway Worker in Nigeria*, was a survey of the Nigerian Railway workers that constituted a record of every tribe living in the southern and northern provinces, by the government-owned and controlled railway. During the past fiscal year, 16,376 Africans and West Indians have been employed by the railway, while the European staff numbers only 369 officials. Of the total number of native workers, including West Indians, 11,075 are labourers, 3,509 artisans and 1,792 salaried staff. The following tabulation shows the increasing percentage of Africans who

24. W. Oyemakinde, “The Railway Workers and Modernization in Colonial Nigeria,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 10, no.1 (1979): 113-24.

25. G.A. Oldfield, “The Native Railway Worker in Nigeria,” *Journal of the International African Institute* 9, no. 3 (Jul. 1936): 379-402

occupy posts in the salaried staff formerly held by Europeans. According to her, the number of Africans/West Indians as Stations Masters was 100 percent, Locomotive Drivers 53.5 percent, Firemen 100 percent, Guards 9.5 percent, Shop Chargemen 53.7 percent and Clerical Staff 100 percent.

The study gave details of labour employed in the various departments of the railway by emphasizing the increase in the number of native and West Indian employees. Training of native staff apprenticeship was accepted in the locomotive workshops of the mechanical department, either as scholarship or indentured apprentices. The period of apprenticeship lasted five years, after which the candidate agreed to serve the government faithfully and honestly. Three traffic training schools were established at Ebute Metta in the western division, at Zaria in the north, and at Port Harcourt in the eastern district.

Labour wages after March 31st, 1931, were regraded to correspond generally with wages in Great Britain, and all employees other than those on the staff grades were re-rated at hourly paid rates. Other native employees and officials in the railway service were on staff grades which vary according to their functions and the skill required. The salary scale, however, does not exceed that of the highest-paid chief clerk at £400 per annum. The study by Oldfield is significant in the general literature on the establishment of the railway in Nigeria, especially in the recruitment of the natives. It gave statistics on labour engaged in the hired labour by identifying the tribes, training, wages, and institutions involved in training staff. However, the work failed to acknowledge the application of force labour at the book was published. Additionally, a lot of natives were drawn to railway employment at its establishment to a large due to the taxes imposed by the colonial government that required locals to earn the white man's currency for tax purposes.

With improvement in the British labour Policy beginning in 1929, colonial labour matters began to attract renewed attention as an essential element in British overseas colonial policy. Leading in the formulation of a policy to improve labour and social conditions in the dependencies had its origin with the Labour Party Government in Britain from 1929 to 1931.²⁶ The advent of the socialist Lord Passfield as Secretary of State for the colonies provided an excellent climate for positive changes in colonial labour policy. Passfield's commitment as a social reformer was reinforced by the appointment of Dr. Drummond Shiels as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonial Office.²⁷ The two men became the moving spirit behind the colonial labour Government.

In this regard, Drummond singled out the "Master and Servant Ordinances," which, in his view, provided very severe penalties for breaches of contracts, whereas; these breaches should be treated as civil offenses. He regarded these provisions as subject to greater abuse in situations where contracts were verbal, as was the case in many African dependencies. Secondly, he drew the delegates' attention to the dangerous consequences of the low-wage policy in many colonies. To him, low wages were responsible for the shortages of labour experienced in most dependencies. He argued that organized unions were necessary "safety valves" which could be turned into proper constitutional bodies, but suppressing such organizations would only drive the movements underground and turn them into subversive organizations.²⁸ These views, appropriately, formed the basis of the oft-quoted memorandum dispatched by Pass field to the Colonial Governments in August 1930.²⁹ Based on the preceding, it was evident that the primary reason for the change in labour policy in the pre-war years was not the honest desire to improve the

26. M. Cole, *Makers of the Labour Movement*, (London: Longmans, 1948), 227-247.

27. Dictionary of National Biography 1951-1960, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 883-84.

28. Cole, *Labour Movement*, 231-240.

29. D.O. 35/417/11769, *Circular Dispatch: Pass field to Governors*, dated 6th August. 1930.

welfare needs of colonial labour. The changes came from the pressure against oppressive labour policies from within the Labour Government and numerous colonial dependencies. The changes experienced in labor policies became mandatory due partly to desertions and protests that were becoming rampant in the British colonial empire.

The Nigerian Government took an International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)³⁰ loan of U.S. \$28 million, to meet part of the foreign exchange cost of the Nigerian Railway Corporation's development program. The development program was in two parts: a 1955-1960 plan, for the improvement of the existing system; and the construction of the Bornu Extension, a new line of 408 miles to open and develop the north-eastern region of Nigeria. The program was based on the IBRD survey, titled *Report on the Development Program of the Nigerian Railway Corporation*.

The report examined management and the supervisory staff which it described as competent. It additionally applauded personnel efficiency in the lower and labour grades as fair. Management's Policy to employ, and train Nigerians according to their ability, the objective being a system eventually managed and operated largely by Nigerians was considered in the report. Personnel pension rights were formerly under the government before the establishment of the Corporation at which time the Railway set up its own Pension Fund.

Concerning industrial relations, the Corporation recognizes eleven unions of different crafts, all of which are registered following regulation. Negotiating machinery for the settlement of differences follows a three-step procedure from the district office to the management level. Under the Trade Disputes Ordinance, a final appeal may be made to the Minister of Labour who can submit a case to arbitration. The report claimed there

30. International Bank for Reconstruction And Development (IBRD), *Report On the Development Program of the Nigerian Railway Corporation*, (April 18, 1958), 61-93.

were fewer strikes and that labour relations were good. It also encouraged compartmentalization of staff into groups based on their race or tribe. The Railway's efforts to increase productivity have produced a marked improvement in recent years. In Nigerianization, the recruitment of staff was based on the recommendations of a Committee and a Selection Board, and Nigerians are employed whenever suitable candidates can be found to fill vacant positions.

The weakness of the above survey by the Bank was the assumption and the high expectation that the Nigerianization policy was capable of swift replacement of expatriate workers with indigenous staff without dramatically affecting the Corporation's operations. Records from other studies here indicated that the policy led to the recruitment and placement of unqualified individuals to positions based on tribal or regional considerations. The report fostered the already biases groups in the country were known for rather than encouraging unity.

Going to Simon's study, "Transport and Liquor in Colonial Nigeria," revenue from customs duties on imported liquor was used by the colonial administration to fund, among other things, transport infrastructure improvements, which in turn, affect the movement of alcohol on both the local and the national level.³¹ All colonial governments in Nigeria were concerned less about the trade volume than any loss of revenue from it. However, rising duties restricted the volume of imports and were used to support the claim that they were keeping the liquor trade under control.

Within a month of its foundation, the colony of Lagos imposed a tariff on imported liquor, realizing half the total revenue of £6,000 in 1862. When the Government saw the benefits, it singled out the liquor trade for special taxation: while other goods paid a 3

31. S.D.H. Heap, "The liquor Trade and the Nigerian Economy. 1880-1939" (PhD diss., University of Ibadan, 1995), Chapters 2-4; *West African Pilot* 7 (January 1938), 1.

percent ad valorem duty, spirits were subject to a duty of 30 percent. Almost immediately, the basis of duty calculation changed with the introduction of specific customs duties.³² Governor Denton bluntly stated one use of liquor revenue in 1886' "There is a need for Lagos to have an excellent harbour: I will say that, while the duty on spirits is six pence, the Government will not have to look far for sources from which to derive the sum that would be required,"³³ Keen not to be accused of facilitating the liquor trade, the authorities claimed the amount of liquor it carried was very moderate and of little account, stressing that the percentages that the Gin traffic bore to the total traffic that accrued from duties on liquor and disregarded other significant sources of income that had maximum contributions to the development of transportation in Nigeria. Notwithstanding the limitation of this study on emphasizing the relevance of a single commodity in generating so many funds for transport infrastructure, it broadened our understanding of other sources of revenue to the colonialists.

In a research, Lock characterized Kaduna, a city in the early part of British control over Nigeria. Kaduna - the Hausa plural for crocodiles was established as the administrative centre of northern Nigeria. Kaduna, which was founded in 1917, superseded Lokoja, Jebba, and Zungeru, which, alternately, served as the capitals of northern Nigeria from 1899 to 1901, 1901 to 2002, and 1902 to 1917.³⁴ It is located 903 kilometres on the Lagos-Kano railway line from Lagos. The largest crossroads for the exchange of commodities and passengers in the nation is in Kaduna, where trains from Kano, Kaura Namoda, Port Harcourt, and Lagos intersect.

32. National Archives Ibadan (NAI) CSO 1/1/45, *Lagos Government Railway General Manager's Report, January-June 1903*; PRO. CO 520/64, *Egerton to Crewe*. 6 August 1908.

33. NAI. Ministry of Home Affairs, Ibadan (IBMINHOME) 1/26, *N.C. Denton, Acting Resident, Benin Providence to E.J.G Kelly, Secretary. Southern Providences*. 22 September 1936.

34. M. Lock and Partners, *Kaduna: 1917-2017 Management Procedures*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 2-5.

Kaduna has served as the seat of various provincial, regional, and eventually state governments ever since it was chosen as the capital of the northern region. Kaduna had formerly served as the northern region's headquarters, but in a 12-state political system, the North Central State's capital moved there in 1967. Kaduna continued to be the state capital of Kaduna State in 1976,³⁵ when the 19-state governmental structure was established. Because there were so many significant textile companies in Kaduna in the late 1960s and early 1970s, where they supplied half of the nation's textiles, the city has been dubbed the Manchester of Nigeria. Lock's study on the relevance of the railways in Kaduna is not in doubt, but the lack of depth into the impact of the Nigerian Railways in the city leaves a wide gap. Another critical oversight was the absence of the massive labour influx from surrounding towns in the city's development. This limitation from work makes this current study necessary.

Agwu's work on labour policies in Nigeria provided practical stages of the development of laws by the colonial state immediately after wars of conquest to the period after the Nigerian Civil War. The author's claim that the colonial government adopted the *laisse faire* approach to economic development can be misleading. This is because the regime, as indicated, initiated certain development strategies and policies due to pressure either from indigenous elites or from pressure from the Metropolitan Government. The relevance of Government in the provision of employment for numerous projects and the wage-earning labour it created was recognized by the study.³⁶ From the Master-Servant laws to the Labour Codes that followed, to the establishment of Labour

35. L.A. Ali, "Effects of industrial Waste Pollution of River Kaduna on Economic Lives of the people in Kaduna Metropolis" (MSc diss., Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, 2004), 43-71.

36. Akpala Agwu, "Labour Policies and Practices in Nigeria," *Journal of Industrial Relations* 13, no. 3 (1971): 274-90.

Health Areas, and the changing attitude of the British to the colonial labour, one thing was evident; pressure had been employed to achieve all.

On Nigerianization, Agwu examined the Government's commission assigned to investigate the approaches to the Nigerianization Policy. The commission upheld the policy of awarding scholarships and the expansion and training institution but added that the policy should be sped up and appointed directly to superior posts.³⁷ Some areas include Salary and Wages Policy; Policy for Labour Relationship; and Trade Unions Recognition. The recommendation then formed the basis of future policy.³⁸ In light of this, he argued that Nigeria continued unilaterally deciding workers' compensation through commissions and official committees, not through collective bargaining. This savours paternalism and shows a lack of recognition of the aspirations and capacity of its human resources. Moreover, the practice could not build a stable foundation and purposeful relationship between employers and labour, the Government, and the working force on a broad-based negotiation. It may not bring about a strong tradition of industrial peace established by free consent, arising from a social environment in which relations among members of an organization and the community are characterized by confidence and respect.

The relevance of Agwu's work to this study is crucial; it traced the evolution of Nigerian labour laws from the Master and servant laws in 1908 to well beyond the 70s. He argued that unless the Government is willing to engage all parties in negotiations on an industrial operation, nothing meaningful can be achieved. This is despite some faulty assumptions of the colonial Government's policies on free enterprise, as proven by their

37. H.M. Foot, *Commission Report on the Recruitment and Training of Nigerians for Senior Posts in the Government Service of Nigeria*. (Lagos 1948) 16-18.

38. FGN, Sessional Paper No.4, *Statement of Policy of the Government of the Federation of Nigerianization of the Federal Service*. 1956-60. (Lagos: Government Printer, 1960), 19.

shortcomings. The current study gained from the analysis of changes in labour policies and laws, espoused in Agwu's work, irrespective of its limited scope.

Wale Oyemakinde's three critical works: *Railway Construction and Operation in Nigeria, 1895-1911*; *Labour Problem Socio-Economic Impact*;³⁹ the *Railway Worker and Modernization in Colonial Nigeria*, and the *Nigeria general Strike of 1945*⁴⁰ enriched the understanding of the origins of the railway in Nigeria and the transformation that accompanied it as a result. He traced the emergence of the railway labour force to 1895, at first very submissive, when Shelford^{41,42} and his group of engineers engaged a couple of indigenous people to aid in the tropical bush clearing. The indigenous workers were engaged in exploratory equipment carrying as they conducted the first expert survey to ascertain the course of railway construction from the Lagos coast to the hinterland. Contrary to other periods claimed for the commencement of railway construction in Nigeria, Oyemakinde asserted that by December 1895 construction had commenced from Lagos to Abeokuta, which was reached in April 1899, and ultimately to Ibadan, in December 1900.⁴³

Railroad employment was presumably most alluring after the opening of the Lagos-Ibadan line on March 4, 1901. This date denoted the start of railroad activity which likewise opened opportunities for indigenous people to participate as rail line labourers. Those of them with proven aptitude at work moved toward becoming semi-skilled and skilled. They inevitably got set on the permanent establishment, leaving others behind to carter for the track. To the author, railway employment altered the homogenous setting

39. Wale Oyemakinde, "Railway Construction and Operation in Nigeria, 1895-1911 Labour problems and socio-economic Impact," *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN)* 7, no.2 (1974): 303-323.

40. Wale Oyemakinde, "The Nigeria General Strike of 1945," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 7, no. 4 (1975): 113-24.

41. Fredric Shelford was the Crown Agents' railway consulting Africa, the Engineer for West.; CO 96/412/39602, Shelford to Crown Agent 26 October 1903.

42. Oyemakinde, "General Strike of 1945," 693-710.

43. *Ibid.*, 693-710

of most communities. Labourers were expected to live in the railway quarters built around the stations all over the country; they provided the nucleus of a wage-earning sector in an economy that was just being monetized. Indeed, railway employees were harbingers of the currency revolution in Nigeria in the first two decades of the 20th century.⁴⁴

Wale's exposition on railway militancy featured remarkable relationships between the railway trade unions and the railway administration. Indeed, turbulent trade unionism on the Nigerian railway, especially in the intervening years of the Second World War, and the events of the General Strike of 1945 eloquently demonstrated.⁴⁵ It signified the first significant assertion of the entire Nigerian labour force's rights. The General strike of 1945 was led, inspired, and sustained by the workmen of the Nigerian railway operating among the other Nigerian workers in the major urban centres. The railway factor in the general strike was progressively huge because it depended on the nationwide involvement in the general strike. Being the best single physical connection in the country for reasons of transportation and communication, the railway system stretched the strike frontier to the various territories of the country. Everywhere throughout the system, railroad stations altogether turned into the foci for strike plans and action. The strike started in Lagos and extended into the hinterland, following the established route of the iron thread.^{46,47}

Wale's contribution to the development of the railway in Nigeria is undeniable, especially his interest in the early indigenous labour recruited that later formed the nucleus of the NRC. His main argument was that the development of the railways led to the emergence of an enlightened class of Nigerians, replete with trade consciousness.

44. Oyemakinde, "Railway Construction," 303-323.

45. Oyemakinde, "General Strike of 1945," 693-710.

46. Ibid.

47. National Archives Ibadan (NAI). CSO 1/3 Vol.3, *Governor Henry McCollum to Secretary of State*, 24/10/1897.

These mainstream studies are an invaluable source from which insights into the Nigerian railway could be amassed. The significance of the current study is that it differed from the above works through the analysis of the impact of labour policy on a section of railway workers.

The three works by Yesufu titled *Manpower Problems and Economic Development in Nigeria*; *An Introduction to Industrial Relations in Nigeria*;⁴⁸ and *The Dynamic of Industrial Relations in Nigeria: The Nigeria Experience*,⁴⁹ were a collection of papers or independent studies.⁵⁰ In the first part of the first book, the primary challenges of the supply and the demand for manpower were scrutinized. Other chapters examined the education systems in Nigeria. The authors condemned British traditional education introduced in the country thought to have significantly led to the failure of the socio-economic progress of Nigeria. They bemoan the lack of attention to technical and vocational education, a luxury that no underdeveloped country such as Nigeria can afford in the twentieth century. The book provided general literature on the basic problems of economic planning and manpower development in Nigeria.

The effective manipulation of wage differentials to balance the supply and the demand for job categories was a significant issue examined in the study. Other contributions were the need to invigorate farming education and the provision of adequate technical and financial facilities for the growth of small-scale indigenous industries.

Migrant labour challenges were extensive in Africa, which featured in the author's subsequent works. Yesufu, unlike other authors did not castigate migrant labour as completely undesirable system of wage employment. His reasons were that since most

48. T.M. Yesufu, *An Introduction to Industrial Relations in Nigeria*, (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1962), 73.

49. T.M. Yesufu, *The Dynamic of Industrial Relations in Nigeria: The Nigeria Experience*, (Ibadan: University Press, 1982), 11-55.

50 T.M. Yesufu, ed., *Manpower Problems and Economic Development in Nigeria*, (Ibadan: OUP, 1969), 317.

employment was not permanent; many wage-earners maintain links with their rural homes. Additionally, cash transfer from urban workers to the villages stimulated the redistribution of the national income. The author blamed trade union leadership and finances (non-payment of dues by members) as responsible for the weakness of industrial activities in the country. Unfortunately, the author did not tell whether employers have agreed to collect union dues by deducting from employees' wages. Moreover, the comparison by the author of countries with established "check-off system" as a standard, did not suffice as the system was only introduced in Nigeria in the 1960s. The author, though not part of his inquiry, condemned the tribal affiliations as responsible for lack of loyalty to unions by rank and file, a claim the study did not examine in depth.

Even though the works lack depth in the analysis of certain problems, reliance on official documents, workers and trade unionists' opinions were scarcely considered. Additionally, underlying conceptual issues of methodology, manpower planning, forecasting; and input-output analysis, should be of interest to economists. The works were, however, unable to address the issues which are of importance to the current study. Despite its meaningful suggestions for future planning in Nigeria, the book failed to appreciate the significance of emerging labour unions in the development of a viable economy. The significance of the studies was that it gave a fair assessment of trade unionism in a meaningful context to suggest problems for further research.

The Official Gazette⁵¹ of the Federal Government of Nigeria of 1978, the Federal Military Government approved, consequent upon the report of the Administrator of Trade Union Affairs and the recommendations of the Commissioner for Labour, the restructuring into 71 industrial unions of the existing registered trade unions of senior and

51. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Restructuring of Trade Unions, *Official Gazette* 65, no. 6, (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Labour, 15, August 1977): 122-250.

junior staff, professional personnel, self-employed persons, independent contractors, and employers which are over 800. Approval was given by Government for a check-off arrangement.

To finalize arrangements relating to the establishment of the 71 industrial unions and a new Central Labour Organisation, the Trade Union Administrator was responsible for publishing details of the programme of meetings and conferences with the trade unions. The proposed 71 industrial unions with their constituent unions are as indicated below as represented by the railway workers union. Furthermore, two hundred and seventy-seven unions' registration was cancelled. The Nigerian Union of Railwaymen (NUR), one of the 71 unions retained comprised all categories of employees, except Senior staff employed in Railway Transport National Union of Railway Workers of Nigeria, Railway and Ports Transport and Clerical Staff Union of Nigeria, The Association of Locomotive Drivers, Firemen, Yard Staff and Allied Workers' Union, Nigerian Railway Permanent Way Workers' Union, and Railway Technical Staff Association of Nigeria. The significance of the restructuring was that it gave coherence and limited the proliferation of house unions in the country.

Olufemi examined the vast implications of the railway system as evidenced in the sacrifice, which was both human and financial, in his essay "*Background to Railway Policy in Nigeria*."⁵² Noted that the rail lines were built through undiscovered territory, through dense forest, across enormous hill ranges, and frequently had grave of the labourers.⁵³ This shows the enormous task this massive project presented, and the sacrifices made to accomplish it. The investment for the construction of these railways

52. Olufemi Omosini, "Background to Railway Policy in Nigeria 1877-1901" in *Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History*, eds. I.A. Akinjogbin and S.O. Osoba (Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press, 1980), 148.

53. Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*. (London: Hutchinson, 1976), 273.

became a monumental effort because of the British Imperial Government's approach toward the colonies. When he wrote, "The enormous financial cost of railway building in tropical Africa was felt first by the role it provided the state in organizing transportation and second through the pressure it imposed upon African revenue," Ralph Austen captured this constraint.⁵⁴ The study by Olufemi examined the British colonial attitudes primarily during the construction of the railways in Nigeria with a specific concern about the cost of material and human lives. The research argued that railway construction led to the displacement of able-bodied men from their communities, which harmed the economy. Another claim by the study was the overwhelming financial responsibility imposed on the Nigerian people. This claim, for example, contradicted the study by David Sunderland, *The Departmental System of Railway Construction in British West Africa, 1895-1906*, where the author argued that most railways were built with borrowed funds from UK investors. Olufemi's account examined the British disposition regarding the railway construction and the cost on human lives.⁵⁵

Arewah,⁵⁶ outlined three primary purposes of Government involvement in industrial relations: Government is the supreme guardian of coercive power, and the prime controller of the national economy. Lastly, the biggest employer of labour with the principal duty of setting minimum standards to guide other employers by laying the framework for industrial relations management. The duty of the Government, consequently, exceeds that of the other parties as non-effective control of disagreements can incapacitate other productive resources in the system. African governments have acknowledged and are playing the strategy that workers and employers cannot be left

54. Ralph.A. Austen, *African Economic History*. (London: James Currey, 2011), 126.

55. David Sunderland, "The Department System of Railway Construction in British West Africa, 1895- 1906," *The Journal of Transport History* 23, no.2, (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2002), 46.

56. P.J.O. Arewa, "Legislation and Industrial Relations," *Paper Presented in the Department of Adult Education*, (Ibadan: University of Ibadan, 1980), 3-9.

alone for the stability of economic activities, which directly influences the entire country's welfare. However, the period from 1966 to 1979 saw a fundamental transformation in the role of the Government in industrial relations in Nigeria. Strikes were prohibited, the techniques for declaring trade disputes became cumbersome, and officeholders were authorized to arrest and detain rebellious trade union leaders and ban unions. Arewah's work only confirmed the corporatization of industrial relations in Nigeria and several African nations. The above study shows that the Nigerian Government has never been absent in managing industrial relations through stifling enabling laws. Despite their contributions to the government's involvement in labour matters, the government's claim as the supreme guardian of coercive power may not be correct.⁵⁷

There is ample proof in the writings of, example, O'Connor,⁵⁸ Leinbach,⁵⁹ Mabogunje, Igben, Onakomaiya,⁶⁰ Hilling,⁶¹ Bullock,⁶² and others supported the significant effect of rail transport on the socio-economic improvement and transformation of a nation. Rail transport has diverse advantages over other modes of transportation in terms of its environmentally friendly operations. The dynamic change in rail motive power has made the railroad quicker yet in addition to attaining a zero natural contamination status through the introduction of the electric train. The extension of the cutting-edge rail service in Nigeria will reduce natural contamination and improve the liveability standards of Nigerian urban centres. The utilization of advanced rails for both

57. Ibid.

58. O. Conor AM. *Railways and Development in Uganda*, (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1965), 81.

59. T.R. Leinbach, "Transport and the development of Malaya," *Annals Association of American Geographers* 65, no.2 (1975), 90-98.

60. S.O. Onakomaiya, "Overland transport," in *Geography of Nigerian Development*, JS Oguntuyinbo. OO Areola. M Filani eds. (Ibadan: Heinemann, 1983): 316-337.

61. D. Hilling, *Transport and Developing Countries*, (London: Routledge, 1996), 22.

62. Richard Bullock, *Results of Railway Privatization in Africa: The international Bank for Reconstruction and Development the World Bank*. (Washington. DC 20433, 2005), 52.

intra-city and inter-city shuttle will likewise decrease noise contamination in the urban environment. The research on the future of railways in developing countries like Nigeria is an important guide for policymakers to improve the current state of railways in the country. The authors claimed that advanced trains could reduce travel time and reduce harmful effects on the environment. Even though the study was not on railways in Kaduna, the adoption of its findings is vital for effective railway operations.

There were rehabilitation attempts through the Rail India Technical and Economic Services (RITES), 1978, The Romanian Project, 1986, The Obgemudia Administration, 1989-92, and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), 1995-99. RITES was granted a contract to oversee and restore, where conceivable, the system, and this proceeded until 1988 when it was proclaimed bankrupt; after the forced redundancy of around 25 percent of the workforce, the rest then went on strike for six months, shutting the system. Ogbemudia's administration of the NRC was commended for turning around the fortunes of the Corporation. The Chinese administration and grants to the Corporation also formed part of his work.⁶³

As claimed by the study, privatization and concessions were the only way out for the successful management of railways in Africa, which was a failure in most African nations. Being a study concerned with the effective running of the railway system in Nigeria and the impact that it will have on its staff, a proposal for the commercialization of the system is germane. This current study aimed to examine individual government policies relating to both labour and transport during the period 1960 to the 1990s that led to the unfortunate decline of the Corporation.

63. "Steps to rehabilitate Nigeria's railway system," May 2005, <https://www.raiserve.com/railnews/>.

S.R. Tolofari & E.J. Gubbins, in their study, *Nigerian Railways: Problems and Prospects*,⁶⁴ identified a certain number of factors that diminished the potential of the railways. To them, until 1970, farming fares from the north gave the railroad significant traffic. In 1967/68, they gave 41 percent of all railroad's cargo traffic, with interior traffic representing a further 13 percent. Be that as it may, by 1970/71, agriculture traffic had plunged to 355,691 tons from a peak of 863,821 tons ten years prior. Since this traffic crest, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has worked with a financial shortfall up to the present day (except for 1963/64 when it earned a benefit of £34,000.⁶⁵ They grouped the problems into exogenous, operational, and administrative. The decline in agricultural exports and coal traffic; competition from road transport; inadequate locomotive capacity; poor scheduling of freight services: poor quality service; overstaffing; lack of adequate technical and managerial workforce; and ineffective financial management.

The authors' recommendation for improvement in government policy planning in the form of industrial area policy will be essential. The location of industries at sites linked to the rail with a stipulation for capital help for the development of private sidings can boost the railway's income; like that given by the Railway Act, 1974, in the United Kingdom.⁶⁶ There is no doubt that the study is correct in analyzing the problems bedevilling the railways listed above. One faulty assumption by the authors is the claim of overstaffing. Other studies on the NRs saw the dearth of technical expertise as a challenge rather than overstaffing. By looking at the vast untapped potential, NRC can engage much more people. Locating industries close to rail lines, though an important

64. S.R. Tolofari & E.J. Gubbins, *Nigerian Railways: Problems and Prospects*, *Transportation Planning and Technology* 8, no.4 (London: Routledge, 1984), 225-235.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid