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The Sub-National Politics of Setting Road Infrastructure Development Agenda (RIDA): An Insight from Yobe State, North Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract- Some political, social and economic factors often confront democratic regimes in making decisions in their developmental strides. Despite its importance, however, the issues of how and why road infrastructure development agenda (RIDA) emerged are often neglected in political discourse. In Nigeria's North Eastern region and in Yobe state in particular, where the availability of road infrastructure is still not adequate and financial resources and political consideration collectively require fresh insights. This paper, therefore, provides the description and analysis of RIDA of Governor Gaidam in Yobe State from 2009-2015 through the perceptions and experiences of road development stakeholders. This qualitative study involved 26 interviews with informants and review of policy documents that underscores what, why and how the Yobe state developed its RIDA. The finding showcases the government's mandates, objectives and priority agenda setting towards achieving road infrastructure development under the regime. Overall, the emp has is was primarily placed on both content and context of the regime's RIDA which may positively or negatively affect the state's current and future road infrastructure development.

Keywords: *policy, infrastructure, road development, agenda setting, yobe state, nigeria.*

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The Sub-National Politics of Setting Road Infrastructure Development Agenda (RIDA): An Insight from Yobe State, North Eastern Nigeria

Ali Ibrahim Abbas ^α & Yusuf Maina-Bukar ^ο

Abstract- Some political, social and economic factors often confront democratic regimes in making decisions in their developmental strides. Despite its importance, however, the issues of how and why road infrastructure development agenda (RIDA) emerged are often neglected in political discourse. In Nigeria's North Eastern region and in Yobe state in particular, where the availability of road infrastructure is still not adequate and financial resources and political consideration collectively require fresh insights. This paper, therefore, provides the description and analysis of RIDA of Governor Gaidam in Yobe State from 2009-2015 through the perceptions and experiences of road development stakeholders. This qualitative study involved 26 interviews with informants and review of policy documents that underscores what, why and how the Yobe state developed its RIDA. The finding showcases the government's mandates, objectives and priority agenda setting towards achieving road infrastructure development under the regime. Overall, the emphasis was primarily placed on both content and context of the regime's RIDA which may positively or negatively affect the state's current and future road infrastructure development.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, most societies associate the relevance of road infrastructure development with poverty reduction, improvements in education, health care and social cohesion (Andres, Biller and Dappe 2016; Mudi and Manase 2015). Infact, this explains the reason attributing national growth to the well-functioning of the road infrastructure which underscores production and the free flow of essential goods and services (Mudi & Manase, 2015). Although there has been some progress regarding road infrastructure development in Nigeria since the return of democracy in 1999, such nature of development, however, depicts geo-political disparities with consequences on the nation's socio-economic development (National Bureau of Statistics, (NBS, 2010). This lack of key infrastructure had in the North Eastern region of Nigeria propelled the worst health and

education indices (MDG 2015; UNDP 2015). Infact, in Yobe state, this situation had caused poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, illiteracy, and youth restiveness (Abbas 2016). Due to such lack of needed basic infrastructures like road network, some Nigerians regard Yobeas one of the most underdeveloped states in Nigeria (Abbas 2016; NBS 2010) characterized by less developed socio-economic development indicators especially if compared with others.

Interestingly, through road infrastructure development in Nigeria, "the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy" in Chapter 2 subsections 15 (3) requires that: "for the purpose of promoting national integration, it shall be the duty of the state to provide adequate facilities for and encourages free mobility of people, goods, and services throughout the Federation." As result, this becomes necessary as road transport "has grown importance due to an increased share of conveyance of passengers and goods across the globe and provides connection to remote areas, facilitates trade, provides access to amenities, markets, etc." (Nandy, 2014:132). However, the main challenge is that although critical infrastructure like road remains central to any key national development agenda such as addressing poverty (Abbas, 2013), unfortunately, the current situation in Nigeria shows a collapse of important infrastructures that continue to undermine and limits the capabilities of its people to advance their socio-economic endeavours (Abbas, 2016). It is therefore not surprising that due to its importance in easing movement of goods and services, poverty reduction, improvements in education, health care and social cohesion (Andres, Biller and Dappe 2016; Mudi and Manase 2015; Opawole et al. 2013; Oyedele 2012) the demand for road infrastructure from most democratic regimes in Nigeria and other developing societies, therefore, becomes higher.

For this study, road infrastructure, therefore, comprises "all types of roads in a given area, including various structures which serve to transport passengers and goods" (Ivanova & Masarova 2013:264). Similarly, road infrastructure includes road categories (main, township and rural) alongside "facilities, structures, signage and markings, electrical systems, and so on needed to provide for safe, trouble-free and efficient traffic" (Ivanova & Masarova, 2013:264). The importance

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of road infrastructure has been advanced previously by Nandy (2014:132) who showed that road transport “has grown importance due to the increased conveyance of passengers and goods across the globe as it provides connection to remote areas, facilitates trade, provides access to amenities, markets, etc.” Although good road networks are desirable in socio-economic development Olivia (2017) cautioned its planning, implementation, and management is posed by challenges that require good governance, competence, and availability of sufficient fund. Hence, good regime performance is needed to achieve the availability of good road infrastructure and its maintenance.

Although previous efforts were made to understand the development of road infrastructure by regimes at regional or national comparative levels (De 2012; Jerome 2012; Oliva 2017), individual national levels (Demenge et al. 2015; Ivanova & Masarova 2013; Lindsay & Kongolo 2015; van de Walle 2009), comparative states wide analysis at national levels (Nallathiga, 2015; Nandy, 2014), none of the studies provided an individual state level analysis on road infrastructure development agenda. Although some earlier scholars provide discussions: Demenge (2015) and Mohanty, Nayak, and Chatterjee (2016) for Ladakh and Odisha states respectively in faraway India, and Opawole et al. (2013) in Osun state in Nigeria, the roles of the sub-national level through democratic regime performance particularly in Nigeria, is currently absent. This paper therefore while reflecting on the national and state priorities in Yobe state amidst social, economic and political reasons, provides the motivations on how and why this regime developed its RIDA through the perceptions and experiences of road infrastructure stakeholders in the democratic process.

This paper organisation of this paper runs: section 2 provides the qualitative methodological approaches adopted. It delineates the socio-economic context of the study area, data collection procedures, selection of key informants and how data analysis was carried out including its overall limitations. Section 3 provides the description and analysis of RIDA of Gaidam’s regime from 2009-2015 through the perceptions and experiences of key road stakeholders in Yobe state. Specifically, some consideration of the motivations that made the regime to have developed its RIDA in line with political, economic and social factors was outlined. Emphasis is particularly made on the roles that sub-national government plays in road infrastructure development in the budget and financial allocation; construction of new road length; maintenance of both old and new roads; geo-political coverage and rehabilitation and reconstruction of failed roads owned by the central government in federating countries. These issues remain the stabilising factors within the constitutional mandate of most Nigerian states that envisaged comprehensive RIDA. Finally, as this paper

has mapped out the key mandates, strategic objectives, and priority agenda setting in achieving road infrastructure development, section 4 draws the conclusions of this paper based on its key findings.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study is a critical exploration of Yobe state with respect to its socio- economic infrastructures. It examines the state as one of the poorest with the worst social and economic indices in Nigeria (NBS 2010). The Governor Gaidam’s regime from 2009-2015 served as a case in point. Located in North Eastern region of Nigeria, Yobe state was created on 27th August 1991. With state capital in Damaturu, the state is situated within latitude and longitude 11o N and 13.50 E respectively with 47,153 km² total land area. Stretching the entire northern part of the state, Yobe shares over 323 kilometers of international territory with the Niger Republic. According to 2006 national population census, Yobe state has a population of 2,321,339 people made up of 1,205,034 male and 1,116,305 female (NBS, 2010). Based on the projected 3.2percent growth rate per annum, Yobe’s current population ranges around 3.5 million. Small-scale agriculture constituting more than 80percent of its populace remains the main source of income and employment for a large population of the state (Abbas, 2016). With 80% rural population, Yobe state has 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 178 political wards.

Using the qualitative research approaches, the data collection was carried out in Yobe state in Nigeria from May to September 2016. This involves an interview with purposively selected 26 informants and review of the regime’s road infrastructure development policy documents. The interview data were verified through member checking. The 26 informants were selected from 4 categories of senior public officials, civil society groups, experts in road construction and management and community leaders. For the top public officials, past and present politicians and bureaucrats (Commissioners, Permanent Secretaries and Directors) with portfolios in the State Ministry of Works (SMoW) were involved. For the civil society, some representatives of road-related issues observers (Nigeria Society of Engineers, (NSE), National Union of Road Transport Workers, (NURTW), and the National Union of Journalist, (NUJ) were involved. For the experts in road construction and management mostly working in the state included some environmental experts, civil engineers, surveyors, and town planners were also interviewed. Similarly, some community leaders who have influenced road infrastructure development plan in the state were interviewed as key informants.

The data were analysed using the thematic analysis. Hence, after careful and critical analysis of the raw data, meanings were attributed to each statement,

comment and description of informants through categorising the textual data into clusters of similar entities or conceptual categories. The categories in each transcript were collated either through the chronology of events, discussions based on themes or its interconnectivity. It should, however, be noted that although this effort was made to cover road infrastructure development stakeholders, only the reflections, experiences and reports in the current democratic governance process were used as there have been no abundant studies on this issue, especially in the study area. However, an understanding of the national development approach to road infrastructure development in Nigeria and similar places is considered useful and applied in this study.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this paper, three themes provide the description and analysis of this regime's RIDA from 2009-2015 through the perceptions and experiences of road infrastructure stakeholders in the democratic process. These themes reflect on the regime's road infrastructure development mandates, strategic objectives, and priority agenda and target setting. For this chapter, the regime's responsibilities in road infrastructure development is first presented then followed by subsequent sub-sections.

a) *Responsibilities of the State Government in Road Infrastructure Development*

When asked about the regime's responsibilities in road infrastructure development, informants offered similar opinions albeit in different perspectives. Interestingly, most of their shared opinions were based on the principle that democratic regimes have a responsibility to provide infrastructure need of citizens such as good road network (Opawole et al. 2013; Oyedele 2012). As argued by another scholar, such infrastructure development is the basis for measuring the performance of democratic leaders and, it is the foundation of good governance (Oyedele 2012). While reflecting on this democratic regime in Yobe state, a civil engineering director whose work experience in the road sector spans over 30 years, states:

In any democratic setup, one of the primary responsibilities of the government to its citizens is to provide good basic infrastructure. Among the key infrastructure urgently needed in Yobe state, road networks play a very important role in the lives of the citizens regarding movement from one place to another, economic activities, and soon. It is my opinion that, at the moment, one of the key elements that need to be provided by any regime in Yobe state is good road network (Interview, August 2016).

As has been expressed above, the role of the state government road infrastructure development is

particularly important in Nigeria (FMW 2013; Opawale et al. 2013; Oyedele, 2012) as public roads are categorized into three Trunks; A, B and C which means are shared responsibilities of federal, state and LGAs (FMOW 2013). Based on this, the success of any state government depends on the regime's RIDA. Infact, it will be guided by how well it is either initiated or articulated towards achieving its set goals. In Yobe state, the Ministry of Work is established to run as the government's institutional body to design, provide and maintain good and quality road infrastructure at the state level (FMW 2013). Its role, therefore, captures what Lindsay and Kongolo (2015) describe as government's institutional responsibility towards the provision of good road infrastructure at the sub-national level. Further, as road infrastructure development is on the concurrent legislative list according to the constitution of Nigeria, Yobe like all other state governments is thus empowered to initiate and implement its RIDA in line with the nation's vision 2020.

Given this decentralised responsibilities among the three tiers of government (federal, state and local), the current political and administrative provisions, therefore, encourage the exercise of responsibilities of any regime in road development. Specifically, in Yobe state, this mandate is expected to be achieved by the combined activities of key players in the road sector. Therefore, to achieve this broad goal in Yobe state, the SMO Wpiloted by a Commissioner is responsible for the road infrastructure policy development and even implementation. To help discharge his/her duties, the Commissioner who remains a political appointee of the State Executive Governor is thus assisted by the Permanent Secretary and the Heads of various departments. As these key players oversee the over-arching body that provides policy direction towards ensuring good road networks, road infrastructure development cannot be achieved if the regime's RIDA is not properly initiated or crafted through articulated vision and mission of the regime's overall socio-economic development agenda in the state. In short, this regime like others can only achieve road development if they have the needed initiatives and innovations to develop the road sector.

b) *Strategic Objectives: Vision and Mission*

When the Gaidam's regime came into power in 2009, most road networks in Yobe state were either bad or impassable due to a serious need for repairs (YBSG 2012; YOSERA III). A road transport workers union leader (NURTW) provides specific examples of the poor situation of the road in Yobe state when this regime came on board in 2009.

At the start of this administration, most road networks in Yobe state were then nonmotorable to most of our drivers thereby forcing us to drive through the desert and another bad terrain to

transport people, goods, and services. It was very difficult for us (drivers) considering the poor terrain in the state (Interview, July 2016).

This opinion is similarly supported by a top government official, however, using the state capital (Damaturu) as an example.

Before we came in 2007, even Damaturu metropolitan was just like a glorified local government as there was nothing to show as a state capital. Throughout the state, we honestly lacked basic good road infrastructure thereby making it difficult for people to move around freely. My first thinking was, therefore, to ensure that we start by providing the immediately needed infrastructure across Yobe state through embarking on road construction, rehabilitation, and reconstructions. Our first target was to ensure that we plan and develop good networks of road and drainages in five major towns of Yobe state which includes Damaturu, Nguru, Gashua, Gaidam, and Potiskum before moving further (Interview, August 2016).

The opinions captured above are indications of the regime's desire and political commitment to develop road infrastructure which was either absent or in bad shape over the years in the state (YOSERA III; YBSG 2012). To address this infrastructure gap, these policy documents capture the regime's overall vision and mission statement in its road infrastructure development drive.

Vision

Intend to open up rural and semi-urban areas with a view to having functional rural-urban roads in each of the seventeen LGAs in Yobe state (Yobe Socio-economic Reform Agenda, YOSERA III: 85).

Mission

To open up Yobe state with a view to having functional roads towards easing transportation of goods and services and enhance social and economic interaction among the citizens of the state as well as another part of the country (Yobe State Government policy document for the implementation of programmes and projects (2011-2015), YBSG 2012:47).

While lending his voice to the vision and mission of the government, a top politician provides a comprehensive objective of the regime in road infrastructure development from 2009-2015.

The regime's focus in road's development is to create opportunities for all places, sections, constituencies and senatorial districts of Yobe state to have access to basic social amenities which would not have been possible if there are no good road networks linking those areas. It is the objective of the regime to give farmers and those who intend to go back to farming access roads thereby

boosting an agricultural policy of the regime which encourages farming as a priority policy. It is also our desire that through these new roads, access to agricultural farmlands will be provided and to bring out their produce in order to communicate and interact with people in the markets to sell their goods and buy goods as well. All the objectives we hope to achieve them while considering resources and community needs in our desire for accountability as a government (Interview, August 2016).

Generally, the main aim of this democratic regime is to provide equal access and opportunities to all communities the access to health care, education and market for their agricultural products. Most of the larger population of Yobe state mostly depends on road transportation for intra and inter-city, communal to community linkage, community to farm linkage among other socio-economic activities (YOSERA III). Consequently, the poor availability of road networks will mean people will be left without access to public infrastructures such as schools, hospitals, and markets (Andres, Biller & Dappe, 2016) thereby pushing them into poverty, poor health, illiteracy and unemployment. To address this, Andres, Biller and Dappe (2016) thus suggested that underdeveloped states need good road networks not only to ensure quality life but also to avoid a possible building constraint on economic growth to the substantial infrastructure gap. However, while the relevance of roads remains relevant to socio-economic development, achieving this objective by the democratic regime are not easy to come due to political interests and financial constraints. Hence, it is only critical and logical for each democratic regime to prioritise its road infrastructure agenda and initiatives.

a) *Priority Agenda Setting*

Given the series of political, economic, and social considerations by democratic regimes in road development, prioritisation becomes imminent. As revealed in this paper, five priority agenda have guided this regime's road infrastructure development, as subsequently explained.

i. *Agenda for Road Budget and Finance*

Road infrastructure financing under this regime in Yobe state has been its priorities. Informants share that since Yobe state has been considered underdeveloped due to lack of infrastructure like good road network, this regime's resolve to allocate and utilise sufficient financial resources in road infrastructure development is not only eminent but strategic. In specific, the regime was to focus on funding requirement, improve budgetary allocation, releases, and performance towards addressing some salient financial operational challenges in the road sector. Although private financing of infrastructure is gradually

replacing public financing in developed nations (Jerome 2012; Olivia 2017), road infrastructure development in Yobe state and Nigeria in general still comes from public funds (FMW 2013; Oyedele 2012). As democratic regimes are mostly influenced by political interest, it thus becomes eminent for this regime to make strategic political calculations to decide on financing road infrastructure in the state. To emphasise the need for more funding for the road sector, a civil engineer and a former permanent secretary in the state commented:

In my opinion, there is a need for an increase in the budgetary allocation and finances of the road development sector especially if you consider the relevance of roads as key infrastructure in the socio-economic development of a developing state like Yobe which solely depends on road transportation. Road's developments thus remain a significant factor in driving the state's agricultural economy as well as its trade. In this regard, more financial resources are needed to facilitate achieving the regime's objectives into reality. Without enough resources allocated for the sector, these objectives cannot be achieved into reality because road development is capital intensive (Interview, June 2016).

The general agreement is that achieving road infrastructure development by this regime requires improvement in financial resource mostly especially budgetary allocation. This view is similarly justified as Ivanova and Masarova (2013) suggest that the construction, repair, and maintenance of road infrastructure require sufficient fund to make such facility technically adequate for any weather situation. It should, however, be noted that although improved public financial expenditure is considered significant for road infrastructure development, the major challenge is that in most cases in developing societies, budgets are merely considered as paper work. Added to this challenge in Nigeria, there is currently lack of alternative financing such as Public Private Partnership (PPP) in road development (Opawole et al. 2013). As argued by these scholars, in the absence of such alternative financing and the lack of political will by the government, in most cases road projects are abandoned, suspended and uncompleted. Other challenges include over inflation of contract sum in budgets and are sometimes not even released at the end of the financial years due to corrupt practices or lack of fund. This generally is an indication that, the regime performance in road infrastructure development could be affected by poor budgeting and financing which remains a threat to achieving sustainable infrastructure development needed in Yobe state and Nigeria.

ii. *Agenda for Construction of New Road Networks*

When this regime came into being, its main target was to construct over 1000km of road length by

2015 across Yobe state (YBSG 2012; YOSERA III). In Yobe state like elsewhere in Nigeria, good road network with wide coverage is essential for socio-economic activities as it remains the dominant means of transportation in the state. Although important as it sounds, this can only be achieved if this regime performs in delivering road infrastructure in Yobe state. This becomes imperative as De (2012) showed that effective governance plays an important role in realising fundamental objectives of states in the provision of right infrastructure. Impliedly, this means that the better this democratic regime performs in developing road infrastructure based on certain consideration, the better the delivery of road networks which could have an impact on the nature of democratic consolidation in the state. In this regard, two factors (political and socio-economic considerations) are found to be the motivating factors for this regime plans in road infrastructure development.

For political consideration, democratic demands during electioneering campaigns are identified as one guide to the regime's agenda on road infrastructure development. A community leader in one of the areas that demanded the construction of new road network shared his view:

Most of the roads development projects of this regime were based on the needs of the people. We usually made such demand through our respective communities during election campaigns. I think if this government is conscious of the people's demands, then it must live up to its responsibilities (Interview, May 2016).

This opinion reflects Demenge (2015) where he found that the location and distribution of road infrastructure are also influenced by political considerations such as power and control exercised by state elites. He argued therefore that road networks can be constructed for instance due to political pressure (Demenge 2015). This mean road may be constructed to satisfy citizen's demand which mostly favours political allies instead of for instance political opponents (Demenge 2015). In Yobe state, such demands are mostly made during campaigns as candidates make such pledges to deliver if elected or reelected into office. Based on this, the regime as a matter of accountability and responsiveness is expected to deliver on its campaign promises in road infrastructure development. Anything short of the regime's agenda in the road sector will, therefore, be considered a democratic failure of the regime if they failed to perform as pledged.

For socio-economic consideration, road development in Yobe state is considered as an important drive expected to open up access to social and economic amenities thereby improving the living standard of the citizenry. To buttress this point, a representative of the NSE explains this rationale.



When you have good road networks, it eases the way people move around, facilitates economic activities; provide access to healthcare, education, water and related social and economic services and opportunities. It is my view that, roads development is an important element of this regime especially by considering the plans so far by this regime to open up both rural and semi-urban areas (Interview, August 2016).

This opinion emphasises that road access improves free movement of goods and services, economic activities and well as better chances for access to health care, education and even water facilities in the state. This generally means that road access serves as a key variable in raising people's standard of living in a given place (van de Walle 2009). This scholar went further to argue that to improve access to education and health, road infrastructure must be provided which he termed "limited distributive instruments" where government attempts to achieve its distributional objectives. Lindsay and Kongolo (2015) also advanced that one way to promote access to social services to people which democratic regimes should emphasise is to provide them with good road infrastructure. It is in this regard that Demenge (2015) for instance advanced that this form part of the reasons why political regimes, in most developing nations, embark on road construction project as they are considered conducive for development of societies. Although there could be differences in each regime's preferences in the provision of road infrastructure with regards to coverage and time spent (Nallathiga 2015), the performance of this democratic regime in Yobe state could be determined in future whether this key milestone has been achieved or not.

iii. *Agenda for Maintenance of Road Infrastructure*

Road maintenance was also identified as one of the regime's priority while developing its road infrastructure development agenda. The regime's target was to rehabilitate by 50 percent, 70percent and 100percent of rural, semi-urban and urban roads respectively by 2015 (YBSG 2012; YOSERA III). To achieve this target means to plan to provide good roads in the state that are without potholes and hence safer for transportation of people, good, and services. Based on this, importance is therefore attached to maintenance on road infrastructure as one Director in the SMOw reveals.

The major challenge in the road sector is the need to focus on maintenance. As I said earlier, it is not good enough to construct a road without making proper plans for its maintenance. Note that, you may end up losing the entire facility (road) and may have to do it all over again at a later time. But with proper maintenance, the road can stay for a long time allowing for safer movement of people, goods, and services. Also, you may not feel the effect of

spending so much resource on it for serious repairs (Interview, August 2016).

Interestingly, while road maintenance like road construction requires huge resources to carry out, any road constructed either by this regime or previous governments must be accompanied by proper maintenance to last longer. It is, therefore, one thing to construct, reconstruct or rehabilitate and it is yet another to maintain the road infrastructure. This explains for instance why the expansion of road infrastructure must be followed by maintenance, as construction and maintenance are interdependent (RAWG 2011). Similarly, the movement of people, goods, and services take longer time due to the poor road network in Yobe state (YOSERA III). It is therefore only logical that the current democratic regime not only engages in road construction but also in its major repairs and maintenance towards achieving sustainable road infrastructure development in the state.

Although there are wide acknowledgments of the regime's effort in overall road infrastructural development, some informants however shared contrary opinion particularly with regards to road maintenance by the state government. For instance, a journalist reports that "although, the regime prioritised road development as part of its socio-economic development agenda, its approach to road maintenance is less coordinated as there is no clear policy by the government" (Interview, August 2016). However, to indicate unsuccessful effort made by this democratic regime towards having its state's owned road maintenance agency in Yobe state, one Director in the SMOw shares his experience:

During the 2012 National Council on Works, the council recommended that every state should establish State Road Maintenance Agency (SRMA). Although State Ministry of Works has put in place all the necessary machinery to actualise this resolution, such target is not currently achieved or realised by the regime. We are waiting for the government to act as it will go a long way in road maintenance and repairs in Yobe state if established (Interview, August 2016).

Based on this opinion, even at the moment, Yobe state government does not have the federal government like FERMA responsible for the maintenance of roads in Yobe state. FERMA is an acronym for Federal Road Maintenance Agency managed by the federal government of Nigeria responsible for the rehabilitation, repair of the failed portion and the general maintenance of federal government's owned road across the country. Thus, the lack of any specific agency responsible for overall repairs and maintenance of state-owned roads by Yobe state government remains a major challenge that needs to be addressed. van de Walle (2009) advanced that there should be an institutional arrangement in which

routine maintenance of road infrastructure is efficiently provided and enforced as it may significantly impact on road sustainability. Importantly, since the state government is involved in several "road development, construction, maintenance and management" (FMW 2013), it needs to have its road maintenance agency. This is important as the expansion of road infrastructure must be followed by maintenance as the two (construction and maintenance) are interdependent (RAWG 2011). Also, Nallathiga (2015:88) stated that "states tend to perform better when they have "specialised Road Development Corporation."

iv. *Agenda for Geo-Political Coverage of Road Infrastructure*

From 2009-2015, the main target of the regime was to provide 20km township roads and 40km drainages in the major towns by 2015 (YBSG, 2012; YOSERA III). As indicated in these policy documents, the regime's overall goal was to increase accessibility of rural areas to road networks by 60percent by 2015 and increase accessibility of rural-urban road networks by 65percent by 2015. To achieve the targets, three considerations with regards to geo-political coverage and the siting of road infrastructure in Yobe state were identified. Firstly, the regime intended to provide road networks across the state thus covering all Local Government Area (LGAs) in its three senatorial districts (Yobe East, South, and North). One top politician in the state emphasised this point.

We hope at the end of the tenure of this regime, can boost up to say, there is no any Local Government Area (LGA) in Yobe state that is not connected with road network as result of the effort of this regime. We aim to cover every nook and cranny of the state with road network (Interview, August 2016).

Secondly, major township roads are planned to be constructed in the towns of Damaturu (the state capital), Potiskum, Geidam, Nguru, and Gashua. A top politician shares the motivation for this regime's agenda.

Before we came in, there were no sufficient and good township roads or drainages either in Damaturu or any place outside Damaturu. We immediately rolled out our plans to embark on construction of township roads and drainages in all major towns (Damaturu, Potiskum, Gashua, Nguru, and Gaidam). I was able to ensure that, although it started by late Governor, the construction of the ring road which was to be one phase and one lane, when I came in, we decided that Damaturu ring road should be made double lane and we must provide street lightening after its completion (Interview, August 2016).

With regards to above-expressed opinion, there seem to be efforts to make the concentration of township roads in major towns and even the state

capital in Yobe state. This opinion reflects that roads are sometimes constructed for symbolic reasons (Demenge 2015). Other prominent scholars such as Conover (2010) also emphasise that road infrastructure may serve as a "symbol of prestige, modernity, development and progress." In this regard, the regime's effort towards providing such roads in those areas are thus considered to be for fascinating and modern infrastructure needs to beautify places and areas due to their prestige. In this regard, as Damaturu and other major towns were identified the likely major beneficiaries of road infrastructure development of the regime is an indication of the "symbol, iconography and prestige" (Conover 2010; Demenge 2015) of road infrastructure albeit other socio-economic and political relevance that may be important in Yobe state.

Thirdly, the regime had planned to provide road accessibility to rural-urban areas. Atop pub official provides this explanation in an elaborate manner:

Governor Gaidam has always maintained that every citizen of Yobe state must have the opportunity to enjoy social infrastructure and amenities such as hospitals, schools, and water, etc. Some of these facilities are located in some places that if there are no roads network and linkages, people from such remote places cannot access these infrastructures and they are also citizens of Yobe state. To bring out people and communities from such socio-economic seclusion is what prompted even the Trans-Saharan road project in Yobe state and other road projects like the Godowoli-Siminiti, etc (Interview, August 2016).

This opinion indicates that most people from remote areas in Yobe state find it difficult if not impossible to access market places to sell their goods, or send their children to school or families have access to good health care services. Interestingly, previous studies have shown that road infrastructure interventions provide economic benefits as it reduces constraints that that people face in exploring and expanding economic opportunities (van de Walle 2009). Similarly, another study (Stifel, Minten, & Koru 2016) found that improved rural roads infrastructure stems from the economic benefits that such road enhances or increase access to for instance markets. Given the fact that the larger population of Yobe state like in most Nigerian states lives in rural areas (Abbas 2016; YOSERA III) it is only logical that this democratic regime make some deliberate plans in developing rural road infrastructure as this will facilitates socio-economic development in Yobe state.

v. *Agenda for Reconstruction of Failed Federal Government Roads*

As one of its priority agenda, this regime intended to reconstruct failed road networks (mostly owned by the federal government) in the state through collaborations. This became desirous because when

this regime came on board in 2009, most roads in the state owned by the federal government were in deplorable conditions and needed urgent repairs and re-construction (YOSERA III). One former Director in the SMOW explains the reasons for the need to take over the federal roads by the state government in its plans.

When this government came in, it was on record that most federal roads in Yobe state were dilapidated or failed. However, given that it is our people (Yobe citizens) in the state that mostly use these roads, the state government felt and decided to come in to renovate some of the key ones. To me, this takeover is very important for the citizens who are the end user of the facilities (Interview, May 2016).

This view is similarly shared by a representative of the Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE).

Honestly, before the coming of this regime, the situation of our roads in Yobe state is in a very sorry state. Although the roads are categorised into federal and state roads, the federal roads, in particular, have suffered serious neglect to the extent that this regime has to take over some of the roads for reconstruction and maintenance (Interview, August 2016).

Some informants justified the regime's action as they argued that, although some roads are owned and managed by the federal and state governments based on their schedules (FMW, 2013), it is the people who mostly reside in Yobe state that fly these roads. In their opinion, to an ordinary man, it does not matter whether these roads are owned by federal or state government. Although the intention to take over some federal government roads were important by considering the poor state of federal government's owned roads in the state, at the crux of this plan lays unending conflicts between the federal and state governments with greater political implications. The crisis centers on the fact that the federal government is responsible for Trunk A roads, state government for Trunk B and LGAs for Trunk C (FMOW 2013). Although, the intention of taking over of the federal roads by the Yobe state government were done through agreements these intentions are sometimes challenged by opposing politicians from national level with different political parties with the state government. A representative of the NURTW cited an example with the Gashua-Nguru road:

The Nguru-Gashua for instance, although the project was later abandoned due to conflicts of interest between federal and state government's claims over the road is one of the most important roads in the state having linked Yobe state with the rest of Nigeria in that location. I will say that the initial startup to rehabilitate the critically failed portion of the road by the Yobe state government

was a good development until the project suffered a setback due to political differences of our political leaders. I think the state government will have to go back to the drawing board once again (Interview, July 2016).

This opinion brings to the fore the unhealthy nature of national and sub-national politics in road development like in the development of other basic infrastructure mostly influenced by national and state level key political actors in Nigeria. This indicates that different sub-national politics is diverse in sharing responsibilities. Although each tier of governments is responsible for funding, construction and maintenance of road network based on their respective schedules (FMW 2013), the bulk of road infrastructure development in Nigeria still largely remains with state governments. With the current political rivalry, the state government is thus only limited to designing, financing, constructing and maintaining state government-owned roads in the state. Worse still, when the insurgency started, it gave way for the federal government to abandon the few road projects they were undertaking which pass through the state. In short, this essentially means that the functions of the SMoW in Yobe state are to be strictly guided by the regulations of Trunk B roads controlled by state government. Since this arrangement sometimes causes political conflict; it is likely to affect the pace of road infrastructure development in the state and the nation in general.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper was to provide the Gaidam's regime RIDA from 2009-2015 in Yobe state, North Eastern Nigeria through the perceptions and experiences of road stakeholders. As the finding showed, when this regime came on board, road networks in the state were either absent or in deplorable conditions and therefore in need of urgent intervention to ease socio-economic activities of the people. It was in consideration of these challenges that the regime intended to develop road infrastructure needs in line with democratic, political, economic and social demands. Its relevance in Yobe state is associated with poverty reduction, improvements in education, health care and social cohesion. To achieve this agenda, the emphasis was made to increase the budget and financial allocation; construct new road length; maintain both old and new roads; achieve geo-political coverage and rehabilitate and reconstruct failed roads owned by the federal government domiciled in the state. As this democratic regime was influenced by diverse political interests, it thus becomes eminent to have made strategic political calculations to reach a certain decision on the design, finance, construction and maintenance of road infrastructure in Yobe state. These addressed issues in this paper remain the stabilising factors in

Yobe state that shapes regime performance within its constitutional mandate that envisaged comprehensive RIDA. As this study has mapped out the mandate, strategic objectives, and priority agenda setting towards achieving road infrastructure development set by this regime, the contending future question remains whether or not such political declarations were achieved or not.

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