

Appraisal of Road Accidents in Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The thrust of this study is to appraise road accidents in Akungba Akoko, Akoko South West local government area of Ondo State, Nigeria. Using Survey Research Design (SRD), data were collected via a structured questionnaire interview, Google earth imagery, observation and photo snaps. The study recognized increase rate of traffic fatalities from automobile crashes leading to general increasing incidence of morbidity and mortality rates as well as financial cost to both society and individual. The result of the study confirms a number of human factors associated with high rate of road accidents in the area. The study identifies areas prone to incessant road accidents in the study area. It also determines causes of road accidents in the area. The study asserts that, Ondo State government should enhance partnership with the federal government of Nigeria and international development agencies to improve road maintenance and strengthening the role adequately fund the agencies that is concerned with the enforcement of traffic rules and regulations. This necessitates the need to sensitize the public on the dangers of trading along major roads.

Keynotes: Fatalities, Morbidity, Mortality, Road Accidents, Traffic Crashes.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is of note that, road traffic injuries cause considerable economic losses to individuals, their families, and to nations as a whole. These losses arise from the cost of treatment as well as lost productivity for those killed or disabled by their injuries, and for family members who need to take time off work or school to care for the injured. Road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product (WHO, 2018).

In view of the above, the World Health Organization (WHO) set up monitoring progress on road safety. The WHO's Global status report on road safety 2018, presents information on road safety from 175 countries. This report is the fourth in a series and provides an overview of the road safety situation globally. The global status reports are the official tool for monitoring the Decade of action. The World Health Organization media centre (WHO, 2018) recorded that: About 1.3 million people die each year as a result of road traffic crash. They stated further that, road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among young people aged 15 – 29years, and that, 3. 93% of the world's fatalities on the road occur in low and middle income countries, even though these countries have approximately half of the world's vehicles. Every year the lives of approximately 1.3 million people are cut short as a result of a road traffic crash. Between 20 and 50 million more people suffer non-fatal injuries, with many incurring a disability as a result of their injury. They informed also that, half of those dying on the world's roads are vulnerable road user's are pedestrians, cyclists and motor cyclists. They opined that, without action, road traffic crashes are predicted to rise to become the 7th leading cause of death by 2030.

Furthermore, Gbadamasi (2015) informed that, in Nigeria today, hardly a day goes by without the occurrence of a road traffic accident leading to generally increasing incidence of morbidity and mortality rates as well as financial cost to both society and the individual involved.

In a related development, Amata (2022) reported that, the accident rate on Nigerian roads has become a threat to many Nigerians because of reckless driving and poor road conditions. He explained further that, data from the Federal Road

Safety Corps and the National Bureau of Statistics says between 2013 and 2020, at least 41,709 persons have lost their lives to road crashes in Nigeria. And that, road crashes are identified as one of the leading causes of death in Nigeria, especially among age groups 5 to 29. Furthermore, the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC, 2022) informed that, 10,050 people die yearly in road accidents. Statistically, this means there are 27 deaths on our roads daily and this excludes hundreds of victims who suffer various degrees of injuries and permanent disabilities from such road carnage.

Consequently, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals contain two global targets on road safety. SDG target 3.6 calls to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes – a global imperative which was extended until 2030 by a UN General Assembly resolution adopted last August. SDG target 11.2, on a 2030 timeframe, calls for improving road safety in the provision of access to transport systems and expanding public transport (Henry & Shah, 2021).

Despite these resolutions, Olufemi (2022) informed that, in the past ten years, residents of Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria have been experiencing various accident cases in the community, which till now is yet to have a lasting solution. It is against this background that this study was conceived to appraise road accidents in Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.

II. LITERATURE APPRAISAL

Oluwaseyi & Gbadamosi (2017) investigated the possible causes of road traffic accidents in Nigeria with the set objective of recommending general preventive measures. They posited that, the consequential effect of the negative externalities of transport is accident with its attendant injuries and fatalities capable of neutralizing its social and economic benefits if not well managed. And that, traffic fatalities from automobile crashes have been known to be high in developing countries in which Nigeria constitute an integral part despite the much lower vehicle ownership in relation to population strength. They informed further that, in Nigeria today, hardly a day goes by without the occurrence of a road traffic accident leading to generally increasing incidence of morbidity and mortality rates as well as financial cost to both society and the individual involved.

They stated further that, road traffic accident situation in Nigeria has been alarming and

particularly disturbing ever since the first auto crash was recorded. Nigeria's effort at tackling the challenges of safety on our roads commenced in 1913 with the promulgation of the first transport law- the Highway (Motor Traffic) Ordinance whose main objective was "reducing the incidents of road traffic accidents to the barest minimum" in the southern protectorate." A nation-wide ordinance followed in 1916 with the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorate in 1914. Subsequently in 1940 and 1945, the country-wide law was reviewed and adapted along the United Kingdom Road Traffic Act of 1930. Other legislations thereafter included the Road Traffic Act, the Federal Highway Act, the Law of Carriage, and the Federal Road Safety Commission Decree of 1988, which was later amended in 2007. But despite the several revisions of the transport laws and notwithstanding the multiplicity of agencies, with states having their traffic management agencies, the road traffic crashes kept increasing all over the country.

In the same vein, Onyemaechi & Ofoma (2016), worked on Road traffic accidents and public health in Nigeria. They engaged a web-based literature search, using the advanced features of various databases such as PubMed, Scopus, Embase, Google, and directory of open access journals was carried out independently. They informed that, the search retrieved 850 results, and that, Data from these studies were extracted and assessed for inclusion. The criteria for inclusion in the review were: clinical and epidemiological studies on RTA, studies that focused on road traffic safety and prevention of RTA. A total of 15 articles that suited the study formed the evidence base on which this call for action is founded. In addition to the published articles, 10 website resources were also used. They informed further that, the risk of bias of the study was assessed using the Cochrane Collaboration's tool for assessment of risk of bias.

They also looked into the reason Road Traffic Accidents (RTA) deserve the Government's Time, Energy and Focus. They inferred that, in Nigeria, injuries and deaths resulting from RTA are on the rise and are Nigeria's third-leading cause of overall deaths, the leading cause of trauma-related deaths and the most common cause of disability. The situation is especially problematic in Nigeria because of poor traffic infrastructure, poor road design, poor enforcement of traffic rules and regulations, a rapidly growing population, and subsequent number of people driving cars. As Nigeria's economy grows, the

volume of traffic is expected to rise, from 8 million vehicles in 2013 to 40 million by 2020. They averred that, RTA has physical, social, emotional, and economic implications. They informed further that, fatalities, physical disability, and morbidity from road accidents predominantly affect the young and the economically productive age groups. And that, survivors often endure a diminished quality of life from deformities and disabilities, post-traumatic stress and loss of personal income, in a country not well known for exceptional rehabilitation services. The rest of the populace lives in perpetual and pervasive fear of travelling occasioned by not feeling safe on the roads.

Consequently, WHO (2004), informed that, the direct global economic cost of RTA in 2003, was estimated at USD 518 billion/year with USD 100 billion of that occurring in poor developing countries. In a related development, WHO (2013), also estimates the national cost of RTA to be between 1% and 3% of the gross domestic product. Juillard et al. (2010) concurred that, In Nigeria, about 80 billion Naira is lost to RTA annually. They informed further that, the economic cost includes cost of property and public amenity damaged, the cost of medical treatment, and the cost of productivity lost due to the accident. Onyemaechi & Ofoma (2016) observed that, this is a huge economic loss particularly for a country plagued with poverty. And that, despite the statistics of RTA in Nigeria, it has not received all the attention it deserves.

They opined that, there is need to view RTA as an issue of urgent national importance that needs urgent attention aimed at reducing the health, social, and economic impact. And that, policy makers at the various levels of government need to recognize this growing problem as a public health crisis and design appropriate policy responses that will back up with meticulous implementation.

Following a critical survey of the increasing burden of RTA on the world economy, the UN general assembly in 2010 adopted a resolution which proclaimed a decade of action for road safety. The goal of the decade (2011–2020) is to stabilize and reduce the increasing trend in road traffic fatalities, saving an estimated 5 million lives over this period. To guide countries on taking concrete national level actions to achieve this goal, a global plan of action was developed. This provides a practical tool to help governments develop a national plan of action. National activities should be based on 5 key pillars which include: road safety management, safer roads

and mobility, safer vehicles, safer road users, and post-crash response.

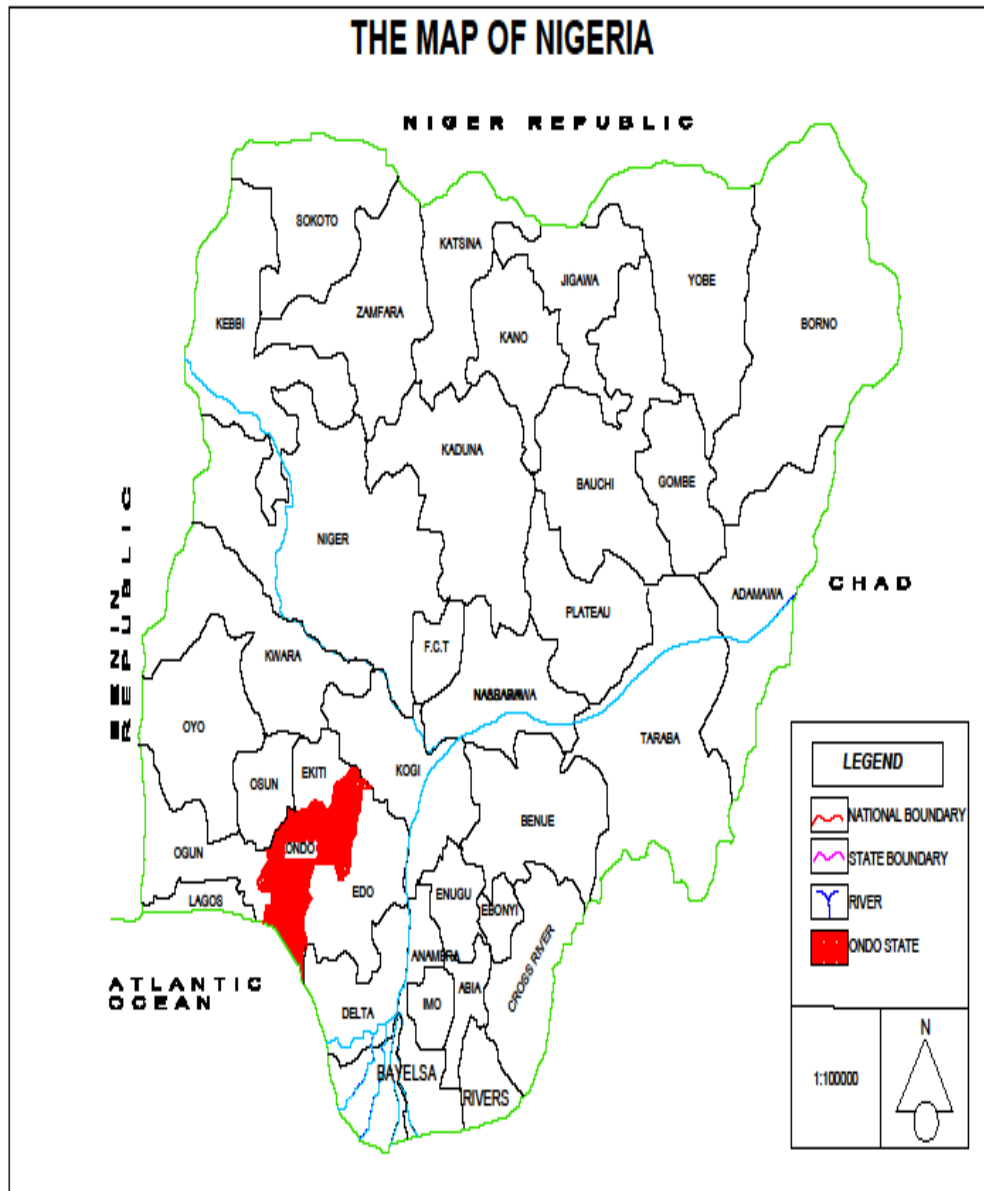
III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Research Site

Akungba-Akoko is located in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo-State Nigeria (Map 1, Map 2, and Map 3). It is located between Longitude 5° 44'E and Latitude 7°27'N. It is a conglomerate of other small towns and villages like Apole, Akowonjo, Okerigbo, ugbonna, Araromi and Ago Egbira. The town is bounded at the North by Ikare-Akoko, at the East by Oka-Akoko at the west by Supare-Akoko and at the South by Etioro a sub-quarter in Supare-Akoko. It is virtually surrounded by Hills, among the outstanding hills are Okerigbo in the North, Otapeje in the South, Akunmeren in the west and in the East by Oke- Oko hills.

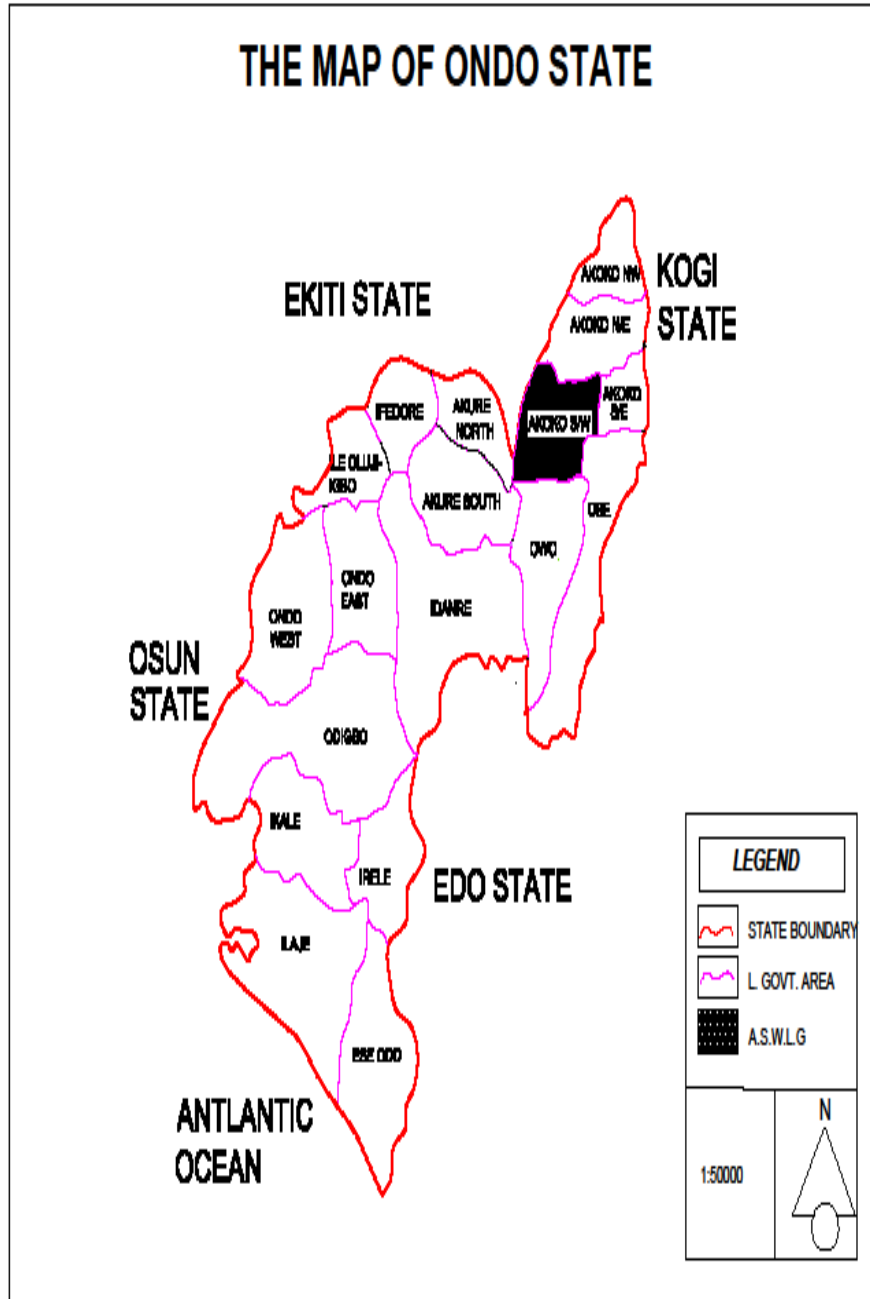
Akungba-Akoko inhabitants were believed to have migrated from Ile-Ife, the cradle of Yoruba land. In 14th centuries, the town was established by a powerful hunter and a direct Son from the house of Olubose I, The Ooni of Ile-Ife. Hence, this make the present Ooni the Olubose the III recognized the town very well in his speech during the Akungba Day Yam Festival celebration of the Year 2001. More so, during the migration from Ife, the leader has a Son and fellow hunters who are equally powerful, who on arrival, located his children along with the hunters to surround him at a strategic position to defend the town. To bring good accord to facilitate better relationship between the children and the hunters and their families, a very powerful deity was erected on centrally located hill called "Oroke" which is being worshipped by all Akungba Sons and Sundry till today. Consequently, No type of War has ever raided or entered nor captured any Son or part of the town, rather the town has produced several War machinery to assist some towns in distress. Obviously, The fore-fathers who established the town, was confirmed to have inherited a Large Room from his own father at the palace of Ooni of Ife till today, which showed that Akungba was a descendant of a Royal lineage Ooni of Ile-Ife. At this juncture, it is important to note that the present site of Akungba was not their first settlement. The fact that the settlement and development of any town or village depend to a large extent of its geographical location and favourable climatic condition explained why the people of Akungba left their former settlement known as "Apole" (due to unfavourable geographical of the

area because it was obvious with the numerous Hills)
and settled at their present location.

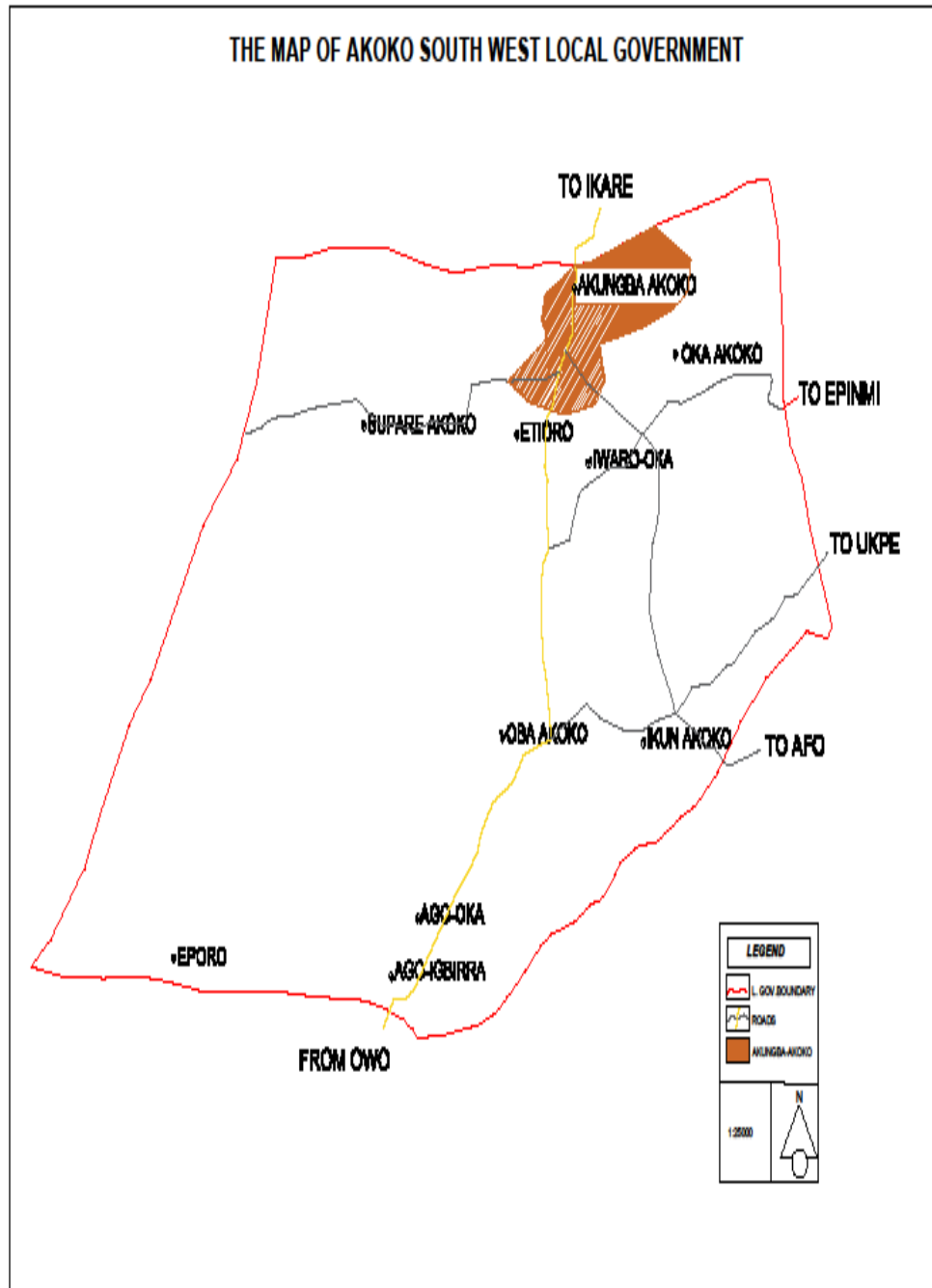


Map 1: Map of Nigeria in Relation to Ondo State

Source; Federal Ministry of Survey, Abuja, Nigeria (2020).



Map 2: Map of Ondo State in Relation to Akoko South West
 Source; Ondo State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, Akure (2020).



Map 3: Map of Akoko South West in Relation to Akungba Akoko
 Source; Ondo State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, Akure (2022)

The Database

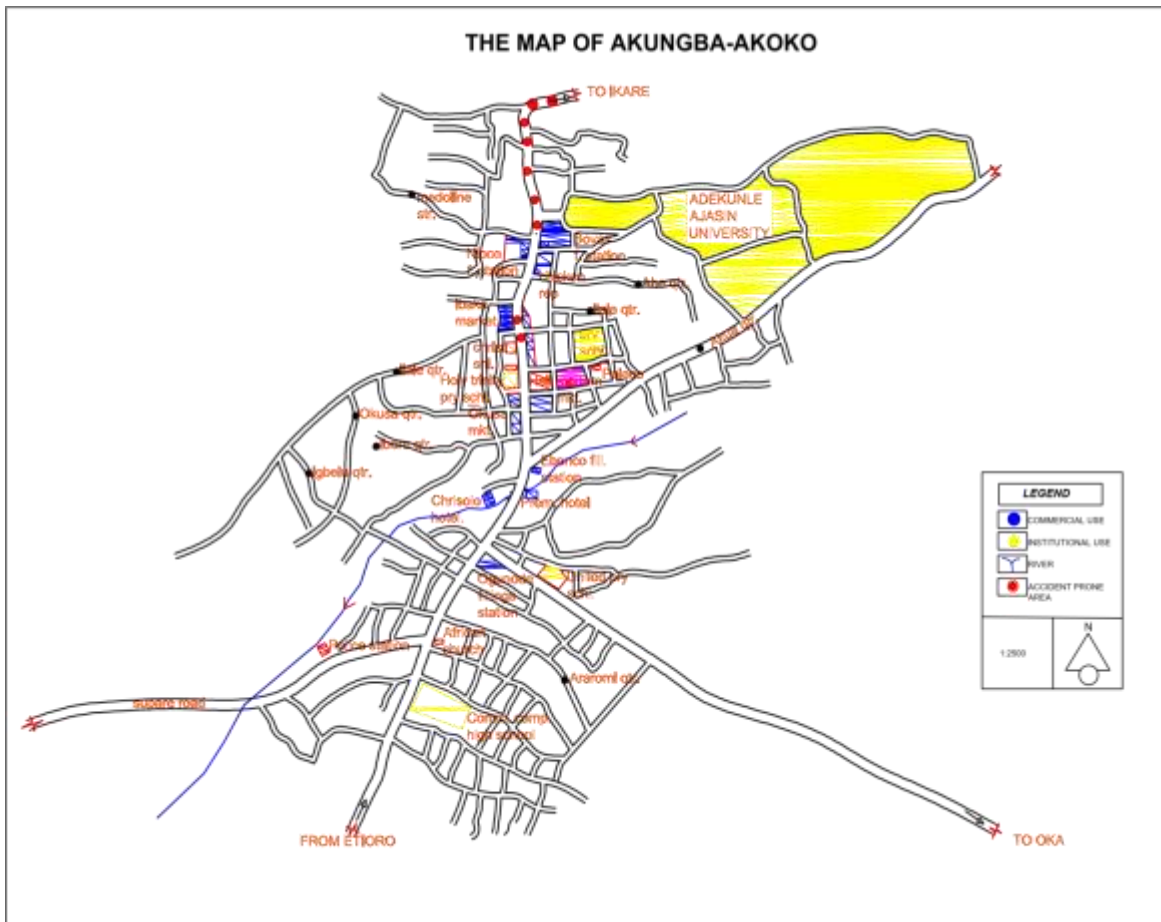
Data collection for this study was essentially through Survey Research Design (SRD) with the aid of structured questionnaire, personal interviews, Google earth imagery, photo-snaps, and observation. Other sources include government ministries and agencies, journals, textbooks, and internet facilities. The study area has a projected total population of 26,071(NPC, 1991 and author’s input, 2022). Average household size in Nigeria is established at 7 by the Ondo State Bureau for Statistics (ODSBS, 2012). This implies that, there are 3,724 households in the study area. For the study, a sample size of 372 amounting to 10% of the total households was randomly chosen. Questionnaires were subsequently administered using systematic random sampling technique at every 10th occupied residential buildings in the study area. This was done with the help of 6 field assistants. Data processing was carried out using

the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. The processed data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.

4.1. Areas Prone to Incessant Road Accidents in Akungba Akoko.

There are three main roads in Akungba Akoko (Map 4). The main road from Etioro to Ikare runs from north to the southern part of the town, with junctions, is popularly known as Adefarati road. It was discovered that, at the north end of the road through the front of Adekunle Ajasin University to the Okerigbo hill is where most of the road accidents used to occur. They are the spots coloured red along the Eioro-Ikare road (Map 4).



Map 4; map of Akungba Akoko.

Source; Google earth imagery and author’s field survey, 2022.

4.2 Causes of Road Accidents in the Study Area.

Oluwaseyi & Gbedamosi (2017) inferred that, the causes of road traffic accidents falls under three major categories viz-Human factors, Mechanical factors and Environmental factors. They stated further that, of these three categories, the human factors are said to be responsible for over 80% of all traffic crashes. Hence, this research delve into human factors like; poor road condition, reckless driving, narrow road, loss of concentration, inadequate road setbacks, and lack of road furniture.

Table 1 reveals that, 23% of the respondents informed that, majority of the accidents in the area were caused by poor road condition. 48% of them said most of the accidents in the area were caused by reckless driving from the drivers or Okada riders. 5% reported that it is the narrow Adefarati road that is

causing road accidents in the area. 3% believed that, the drivers or Okada riders might have loss concentration in driving either because of Fatigue or making calls or sending text messages while driving. But 3% of them said it is due to inadequate road set-back. Because, most of the trading activities along the road were almost halve of the drive ways especially on the Ibaka market days, where the traders almost cover the whole drive way. This is evident in plate 1. 16% of the respondents said it is either the combination of poor road condition, narrow road and inadequate road set-back, 2% of them believe that incessant road accidents in Akungba Akoko were caused by lack of road furniture, like; drainage, road signs and signals, road markers and green verge.



Plate 1: Showing how Road Side Traders used to Impede Traffic Flow along Adefarati Road, Akungba Akoko.

Source : Author’s field survey, 2022.

Table 1: Showing the Causes of Road Accidents in Akungba-Akoko

	Causes	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	Poor road condition	86	23
B	Reckless driving	179	48
C	Narrow road	20	5
D	Failed brake	11	3
E	Inadequate road setback	9	3
f	a, b, c and, e	61	16
G	Lack of road furniture	6	2
	Total	372	100

Source; Author’s field survey, 2022.

4.3 Period within which Road Accident used to occur in the Study Area

In Nigeria today, hardly a day goes by without the occurrence of a traffic accident, leading to generally increasing incidence of morbidity and mortality rates as well as financial cost, of both society and the individual involved (Oluwaseyi & Gbadamosi, 2017). It is against this background that this research investigates the period within which road accidents used to occur in the study area. Table

2 reveals that, 2% of the respondents in the study area affirmed that road accidents used to occur in their area once in a month. 82% said weekly, 13% reported that road accident used to occur in their area twice in a week, while 3% said it is thrice a week.

It could be deduced from the results above that majority (82%) said road accident used to occur in their area every week of the year. That means it is a very serious physical planning problem that demand urgent attention.

Table 2: Showing Period within which Road Accidents use to occur in the Study Area.

	Period	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	Monthly	6	2
B	Weekly	306	82
C	Twice a week	50	13
D	Thrice a week	10	3
	Total	372	100

Source; Author's field survey, 2022.

4.4. Institutional Appraisal of Law Enforcement Agencies in the Study Area.

This research through personal interview gathered some information from some officials of the agencies that are concerned with road accident in the study area. They include; Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) and the Local Government Staff that is concerned with community development.

The research recorded that the biggest challenge faced by these organization were inadequate manpower (both skill and unskilled). They informed that it is more pronounced in the Community Development Department of the local government, where the department appropriated 24 field officers for Akungba alone for 2020; but the state government approved only 12 for the whole Akoko South West local government area. This inadequate manpower hinders their performances especially on Ibaka market days. They informed further that, most road side traders and road users were usually hostile to the local government staff in the course of discharging their duties. It was also reported that the people are adamant to correction as demonstrated in their preference to shading even on the main road on Ibaka market days. In general, most road users do not obey traffic rules while using the roads.

The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in Oka Police Station informed that, there was only one functional patrol van for the whole Akoko South West Local Government Area. Another challenge in this

organization apart from insufficient man-power is ageing patrol van, funds, irregular electricity supply and high cost of Premium Motor Spirit (P.M.S) for running the only van available in the whole local government area.

V. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The place of policy in successful service delivery has earlier been emphasized in this study. As it is, the existing policy in Ondo State is garnered by practice rather than precepts and documentation. It has therefore become imperative and urgent for Ondo State government to evolve well articulated policy on improved and proper enforcement on the road traffic laws. The research wish to suggest that the policy thrusts should include among others;

- Enhancement of partnership with Federal Government and International Development Agencies to improve road maintenance.
- Encourage community participation in enforcement of road traffic laws in the state.
- Strengthening the role and adequately fund the agencies that are concerned with road accident in the area, in order to enhance their operational capacity.
- The public should be sensitized through public enlightenment campaign; either with the help of traditional rulers, religious leaders, print or electronic media to educate the people on the

danger of trading along major roads and refusing to obey road traffic laws in the study area.

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