

Public service transport drivers in Kenya: Their characteristics and compliance with traffic regulations and prospects for the future

Abstract:

Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) are the dominant mode of transport in Kenya. Majority of their drivers are younger having attained some secondary school education as well as some training in driving. The drivers, however, work for more days and hours per week and have no regular and reliable remuneration package. These poor conditions of work coupled with poor training and lack of discipline on roads have been found to account for their low level of compliance with traffic regulations and rules. Low compliance has in turn been found to explain the high rate of road crashes and associated fatalities and injuries of passengers and pedestrians. Between 2003-2004, the government made efforts to gazette and enforce traffic regulations and rules. Whereas there was slight reduction in road crashes, fatalities and injuries, the road safety situation soon reverted back to its earlier level. The study sought to find out reasons for persistence of drivers' non-compliance and their characteristics that accounted for non-compliance and prospects for reduction of the problem on a sustainable basis. One hundred and twenty five (125) PSV drivers were sampled and interviewed in the cities of Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. Additional data was collected from key informants and desk reviews. It was found that despite enforcement by the police, there was high non-compliance of the drivers with the regulations. To improve compliance, there is need, among other things, for gradual transformation of the ownership and management of PSVs from individual investor- and association- to company ownership and management, improved basic and refresher training and road safety awareness efforts targeting various stakeholders.