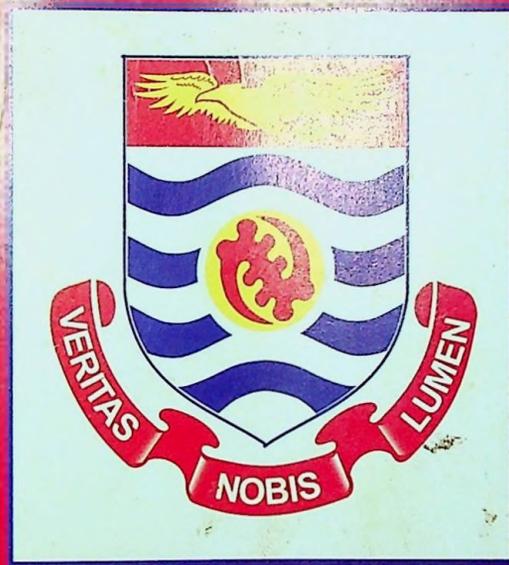


# **OGUAA JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (JOSS)**

**Volume 4 No. 4 November, 2009**



**A PUBLICATION BY  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
CAPE COAST, GHANA**

## The Metro Mass Transportation Scheme in GHANA: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward

A. M. ABANE

Department of Geography and Regional Planning  
University of Cape Coast,  
Cape Coast, Ghana

### Abstract

*For many authorities in Ghana's metropolitan areas, public transport provision is increasingly becoming problematic as daily trips of city dwellers tend to cover numerous suburbs or even satellite settlements, thereby increasing travel costs in terms of time, money and comfort. Rather than reducing travel times, enhancing economic activities and productivity of commuters as well as ensuring the safety and comfort of city dwellers, the public transport systems in developing cities such as Accra, Kumasi and Tamale in Ghana have become uncomfortable, risky and generally inconvenient. This paper focuses on the activities of the Metro Mass Transit Limited in Ghana since its inception in 2003. The paper first reviews the various processes that led to the introduction of yet another version of the defunct Omnibus Services Authority (OSA) Transport Company. This is followed by an outline of major challenges likely to confront the Company's operations. Employing selected features of a management model by Cummings and Worley (1997), the paper then proposes possible strategies to address the challenges. For purposes of clarity some references are made to the defunct OSA Transport Company as well as other private operators such as the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU), Kingdom Transport and the State Transport Company (STC). The paper ends with suggestions for the training and education of operators of the MMTL designed to enhance their capacities to effectively manage the buses.*

## **Introduction**

In cities where mass transportation is available and operates efficiently, the challenges of movement are easily addressed and people are able to cope with the traffic situation. However, in many of the cities in African countries, transport facilities are either inadequate to match demand or are adequate but poorly planned, and therefore, ineffective in addressing the needs of residents. Added to this is the fact that for various reasons, including maintaining personal comfort and status, a substantial proportion of city dwellers with private cars prefer to drive to work.

For metropolitan areas like Accra and Kumasi in Ghana, such decisions coupled with the concentration of most socio-economic activities in the central business districts (CBDs), have led to serious congestions in the streets (see Abane 1993, 2004). Buses, small cars, wooden trucks (trotros), push carts, pedal- and motor-cycles and pedestrians compete for the same road space. The rapid growth and sprawling of these cities have further imposed enormous challenges to people as travel practices become more and more difficult to predict and plan for. Daily trips within the cities tend to cover numerous suburbs, sometimes even towns, making the residents of these cities belong to 'several territories at once' (Millot 2004: 207).

In metropolitan areas where mass transportation is the focal point of most travel, the literature suggests enormous benefits, especially when the trips are carefully and properly planned and executed. Among the benefits are a reduction in travel time, savings on reduced energy consumption as people park their cars and board buses, reduction in air and noise pollution in the cities and increased productivity as workers are now able to arrive at workplaces on time to perform their tasks (see, for example, Salter 1989; Loukopoulos, Garling and Vilhemson, 2005). But things are not always as rosy as observed above and urban bus services in particular have sometimes proved very problematic in developing countries. Various performance indicator analysis of bus transit operations in several cities across the world have reported them as being

characterized by over-crowdedness, excessive waiting times, long and inconsistent travel times, and poor and unreliable services (Adarkwa 1991; Peiser 2001). Reports on bus operations in Ghana are no different: long waiting times, poor ventilation and reckless driving leading to declining patronage and profits. In one of such studies, Abane (2004) observed not only irregular bus scheduling of especially OSA Transport Company which mostly delayed journeys but also the fact that some passengers said the buses were so dirty that they left stains on the dresses of clients. These and many other reasons have compelled some commuters with cars to drive to work. It is not surprising that the Mobility 2001 Report of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (<http://www.sustainablemobility.org>) indicates that public transit systems including bus services in the world's major cities are losing between 0.3 and 1.2 per cent of their customers each year as a result of the inability to provide the required services.

In spite of the problems indicated above, the perceived benefits of using buses for city rides still far outweigh the losses. This might have motivated various governments in Ghana since independence to continue to encourage intra-city bus operations, especially through the Omnibus Services Authority (OSA) and later the City Express Services (CES). Although both OSA and CES were never as successful as expected, Ghanaians will particularly remember the former for its services in rural communities when it had to expand to those areas because of competition from the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) and other companies, which made working in city centres financially unattractive. It was obvious that even where the GPRTU vehicles could not reach, OSA buses did and offered vital services to people without alternative means of motorised travel.

### **Planning for Metro Mass Transit**

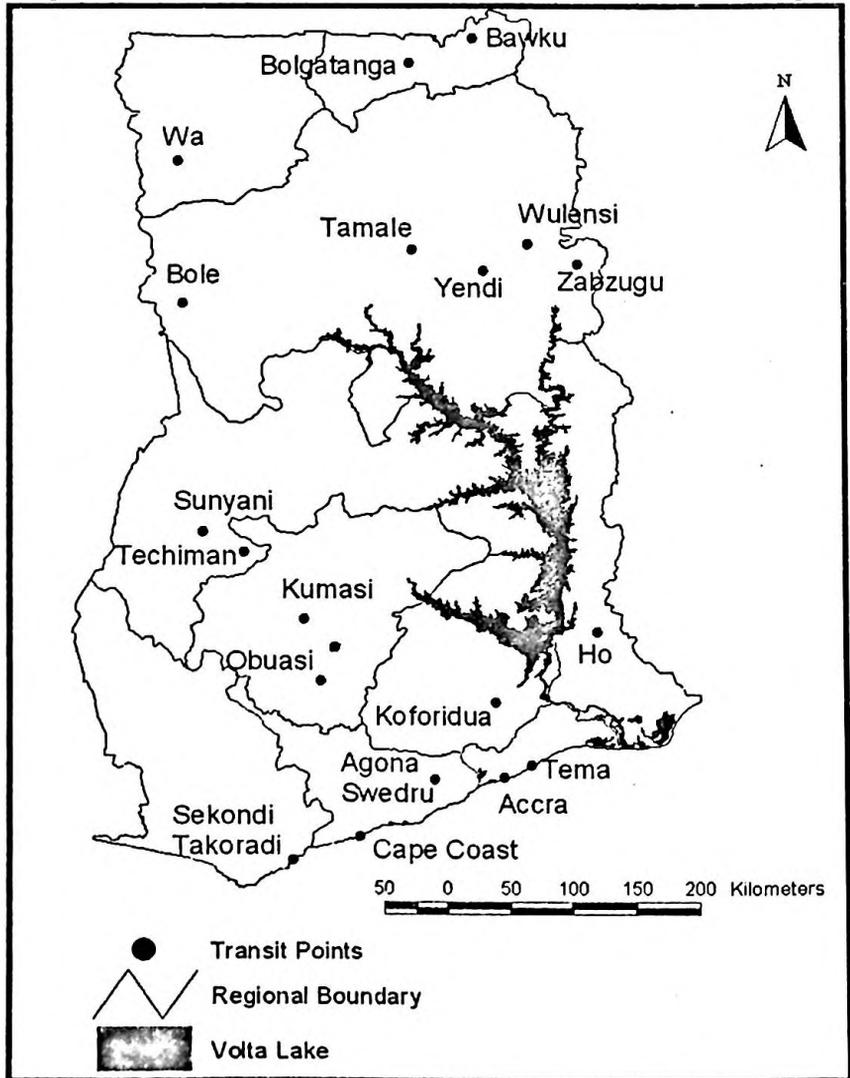
On assuming power in January 2001 the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Government immediately put together some measures through the Ministry of Roads and

Transport to re-vamp the collapsing government-supported mass transportation scheme in the country. The Government first reversed the decision to put OSA Transport Company Limited under divestiture, thereby freeing it to become a nucleus for a re-designed mass transport system. Secondly, discussions were held between the Ministry of Roads and Transport on the one hand and Management and the Board of Directors of OSA Transport Company on the other to work out strategies to re-engineer mass transportation in Accra on a pilot basis and later implement the scheme in the key cities (Ministry of Roads and Transport 2005). Thirdly, local and international workshops were organized, bringing together both private and public sector experts to share experiences and come out with best practices in mass transportation. In one of such workshops, discussions focused on sub-regional mass transport as well as education and training programmes for implementers of public transportation policies<sup>1</sup>. It was in this workshop that the then Vice President, Alhaji Aliu Mahama, re-echoed his Government's commitment to revive OSA and make it a viable mass transporter. He lamented that even though taxis and low occupancy vehicles dominated vehicular transport in the country, yet the services provided are generally irregular, unreliable and of poor quality (Proceedings of International Workshop 2003). Fourthly, the Department of Urban Roads together with personnel from OSA and the Ministry itself were charged with the responsibility of selecting and re-engineering routes to be designated as 'bus-alone lanes'. In addition to this, they were to work out modalities for procurement of buses to augment those from OSA for the pilot exercise. Fifthly, to ensure public acceptance and ultimate participation in the scheme, public education using both the print and electronic media was undertaken, even though it was not as intense as one would have expected. Finally, Government saw the entire exercise as part of its projected design to provide improved transport infrastructure and facilities in urban centres as well as ensure a reduction in transport costs for commuters.

An international workshop on mass transportation in the West African subregion was held in Accra from – to discuss implementation of mass transportation in countries in the subregion

Thus, with refurbished buses from the UK and Italy, the latter being a donation to the Government, Metro Mass Transit Limited replaced OSA Transport Company Limited in October 2003, becoming officially incorporated with the Government of Ghana holding 45% shares while the other 55% shares went to the State Insurance Company (SIC), National Investment Bank (NIB), Ghana Oil Company Limited, Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) and Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT). Since the introduction of the scheme, all the regional capitals of the country as well as other fairly large urban settlements have been served (Fig 1). Presently, MMTL has a fleet of 1,311 buses including 400 Yaxing, 284 Fiat Iveco, 90 TATA, 249 UDL Neoplan, 75 DAF Neoplan and 213 DVL Joncheere, with a projection to increase the number to 1,500 before the close of 2008 in order to facilitate the extension of services to even smaller settlements in the country (MMTL, Accra Office, 2008).

**Fig 1: Ghana: Metro Mass Transit Coverage**



Source: MMTL Office, Accra, 2007

Almost eight years into its operations, there is the need to begin to seriously discuss the MMTL scheme as it affects city dwellers, in terms of identifying the challenges facing it as well as suggesting strategies for enhancing the quality of services. Such an exercise is necessary because of the possibility of the challenges overwhelming the Company and derailing what should be considered as an important national project (MMTL 2008). Two issues which are particularly crucial for the success of the mass transportation scheme are (1) how to sustain the scheme given the hostile attitude of the private sector, especially the Ghana Private Roads Transport Union (GPRTU), towards the defunct OSA which partly nurtured its non-performance and eventual collapse in the cities; and (2) the type of education and training to be given to the drivers and management to ensure that they run the Company in a more professional manner than those before it. Indeed, a report in *The Independent*, a privately owned newspaper, captioned "Kufuor's buses in danger" (No. 026, March 12, 2007, p. 1) had already alerted officials of MMTL of eminent financial crisis if nothing is done to check drivers who drain part of the fuel for sale and abuse the ticketing system. These and other issues likely to negatively affect the operations of the MMTL are the focus of this paper. Specifically, the paper sought to outline the main challenges likely to confront MMTL and suggest strategies to address the challenges with a view to making the company competitive in the fast expanding hostile commuter transport market in the country.

### **Data and methods**

Data for the paper were obtained from three main sources. Firstly, information was collected from the offices of the defunct OSA Transport Company on the main problems that made it difficult for that company to compete with GPRTU and other private operators. Some of the issues relate to safety, training and education. Secondly, discussions were held with key personnel of the MMTL with respect to their operations, challenges and the way forward. Issues on coverage,



safety and routing systems were also discussed. The rest of the information was through library research and official documents from transport and related departments and ministries. Generally, the data collected were those that supported the discussions about the operations of MMTL as well as the major challenges currently confronting the company.

It has to be said that officials of MMTL failed to disclose information on some of the issues raised, particularly those relating to revenue generated over time, number of accident cases recorded and strategies to stay in business. This handicap was expected. As a company in its infancy, there is the tendency to guard against possible leakage of its business strategies which could give advantage to its competitors. Besides, many business enterprises do not take kindly to researchers prying into their operations and would always try to find a way to avoid answering what they consider to be sensitive questions. Despite these pitfalls, enough information was gathered to support the preparation of the paper as the core issues are on challenges and the way forward using a management model.

### **Major challenges**

Like all commercial commuter companies in a fast developing market, MMTL is bound to encounter challenges that potentially threaten its viability as a business entity. Unfortunately for the company, inheriting the defunct OSA Transport Company, which had become unpopular with the private road transport sector, particularly the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) and Kingdom Transport Company meant also inheriting the problems that beset that Company. A discussion of the challenges and the way forward for the Company make up the rest of the paper.

### **Marketing MMTL**

Among the major challenges of MMTL is how to market itself as a viable alternative to the other numerous private transport companies operating in the

towns and cities. Although the MMTL is still trying to establish branches across the country and consolidate areas it has been able to make entry, its performance so far can be described as quite remarkable. For instance, it conveyed 40 million passengers in 2005 covering over 12 million passenger kilometres. Indeed, by mid-June 2006, it had already carried more than 28 million passengers excluding over three million school children who enjoyed free rides (MMTL, Accra Office, 2007). Given its current workforce of over 2,500, there is every possibility that the Company would be able to live up to its responsibility and sustain its business in the country. However, this will depend upon how management is able to sell it to Ghanaians by making MMTL look very different from the defunct OSA which was unfortunately ignorantly perceived to be non-performing and wasteful with a corrupt management, in spite of the very credible achievements of that Company under very trying conditions. For example, even though OSA Company controlled less than 2% of the traveling public in the country, it managed to reach the remotest areas where GPRTU, with 95 per cent of the market, could not. For MMTL to market itself and avoid similar negative labels as were conferred on the defunct OSA Company, it has to constantly remind the traveling public through advertisements as well as its performance on the ground that MMTL is here to serve the ordinary travelers – workers, traders, carpenters, school children, and the elderly. Reserving seats for elderly clients and busing people over 70 years old free of charge as part of market promotions and corporate obligations during certain parts of the year could also make the company popular.

A related challenge is how to make a difference in the delivery of services to the public. With very keen competition from traditional transport companies such as the GPRTU, Kingdom Transport, City Express Services and PROTOA, MMTL has to devise excellent management strategies to stay ahead of all competitors. In particular, it should make travelling in places like Accra and Kumasi which are virtually choked, more reliable, comfortable and cheaper than it is with its competitors. It is important to remind management of MMTL that the

urban transport system in the country is perceived to be characterised by congestion, poor quality of service including long delays and waiting times, poor environmental standards and high exposure to road traffic accidents (Jorgensen and Abane 1999). One therefore expects MMTL to improve upon its routing system and make buses available for boarding every 15-20 minutes in order to reduce waiting times and make conditions on board the buses attractive.

There is also the need to maintain discipline among the drivers and conductors. At no time should drivers and conductors show disrespect to passengers nor should they refuse to give back change when it comes to payment of fares. The perception that drivers and conductors of commuter transport operators cheat passengers and shareholders by offering them half tickets and refusing to give correct change should be addressed as they have the potential to backfire and financially cripple the company.

During a field exercise recently, confrontations between passengers and drivers/conductors of MMTL were observed. Many of the passengers expressed dissatisfaction with the conduct of drivers and conductors for intentionally ignoring the need to give them change and tickets for fares paid. There were also instances where some passengers gave out tickets to people about to board the buses, thus enabling them to travel without paying fares. The recent dismissal of over 400 drivers from MMTL workers for corrupt practices is evidence that some action is being taken to ensure that frontline staff perform their activities in honesty, integrity and reliability<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps management should seriously consider introducing electronic ticketing as this offers them the opportunity to monitor daily sales.

In addition to the issues mentioned above, MMTL will have to forge cordial relations with not only the public but even its competitors. The latter is relevant because of the recent unfriendly incidents visited on drivers as well as buses

<sup>2</sup>In ... MMTL management dismissed ... of its workers the action precipitated court action against the company by the victims. As at the time of writing the case was being discussed extensively in the Ghanaian media.

belonging to MMTL by some members of the GPRTU at some market centres. It is important for management of MMTL to put up a positive image and let the other competitors understand that all of them are playing complementary roles as far as easing the transport needs of Ghanaians is concerned and that all can do business without being hostile to one another.

### **Resist temptation to spread thin**

The obvious failure of the defunct OSA Transport Company and also City Express Service was their inability to stay focused and implement their main mandates of providing intra-city services. Unable to compete with the GPRTU who mostly operate with minibuses, especially with respect to turn around time in the cities, OSA and CES were forced to reduce the scale of their intra-city services and shift to inter-city and rural services. This defeated their original mandates and rendered their services in the cities relatively insignificant. The lack of focus meant city dwellers could no longer trust these transport operators to meet their acute travel needs. Thus, in spite of the poor services provided by GPRTU, it became clear that city dwellers had no option but to rely on its buses for their travel. Given the circumstances, there was little doubt that government would not continue to subsidise OSA when it could not fulfil its obligations to city dwellers.

MMTL has to recognise this issue as one of its major challenges. Already there is some evidence of the company beginning to shift focus by spreading itself thinly on the ground with its introduction of inter-city services. The decision to spread out has already generated hostility from the GPRTU members in some towns who see their entry into those places as a threat and potential to erode their market share. While in the short term officials of MMTL may be receiving messages of welcome from residents of these towns and villages, it is also the case that the strategy could gradually harm their operations and provoke bitter memories of OSA and CES which failed to make the necessary impact and eventually fizzled out sooner than they entered the intra- and inter-city travel market.

### **Maintaining political neutrality**

A fourth challenge to MMTL is how to create a balance between fulfilling the demands of Government as a majority shareholder while at the same time resisting temptations to 'dance to the tune of the piper' (Government). In a developing country such as Ghana, state-owned or part state-owned assets such as MMTL can sometimes be manipulated to the advantage of politicians. In the 1996 and 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections, for example, OSA buses were used to transport supporters of some political parties virtually free, with management made to understand that the company was making its contribution to the campaigns. Amounts running into hundreds of millions of cedis were lost as a result of these activities and interferences by politicians. Strangely, the same politicians accused the company of non-performance and placed it under divestiture. While working on this paper, MMTL buses were engaged in transporting supporters of the ruling party to rallies and one wonders whether the benefits of incumbency were not also at play. Given that large buses find it difficult to stay competitive in congested urban centres without subsidies (Glaister 1985) and government 'manipulation' of fares because they do not want public outcry over charging competitive rates, MMTL has a daunting task sustaining itself in the cities. Expansion of the routes in line with the growth of cities and towns such as Accra, Kumasi and Tamale means that MMTL buses now cover longer distances than was the case in the 1980s and 1990s.

If MMTL is to succeed in meeting its mission as a commuter transport service provider, the fares must be in line with the increasing distances, prices and inflation rates. MMTL must resist the temptation to compel it to charge uncompetitive fares; it is the responsibility of governments and not commercial transport operators to assist the poor. Where resistance is difficult, then Government must be made to pay for any extra costs incurred. An example is the free rides given to school children; there is the need for Government to pay some form of subsidy to sustain and expand the scheme. Welfarism beyond expected social obligations cannot be imposed on a company designed to operate and pay dividends to its shareholders.

### **A must succeed venture**

A fundamental challenge for MMTL is that it must not fail as it basically emerged through a political promise. Insofar as the New Patriotic Party (NPP) continues to vie for political power in the country, it will always look to its achievements in all the sectors including public transport. Any failure to meet minimum standards will provide ammunition to opponents of the Government to quiz its ability to introduce and sustain projects. If, on the other hand, MMTL is performing creditably, the Government will point to its successes and ask for re-election. In the 1996 and 2000 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Government pointed to its achievements in the roads and education sectors and asked Ghanaians to re-elect the Party to continue with the good work. The same was replayed in the 2004 and 2008 elections when the NPP Government also mentioned education, construction of major arterial roads, introduction of mass transportation and the health insurance schemes as achievements which Ghanaians should use to re-elect it. MMTL has to contend with such a dilemma of being tossed about by politicians and needs to stay focused and stick to its programme as a mass commuter transport provider. That a section of the supporters of a political party should have course to harass its drivers even before the actual declaration of the presidential run-off in December 2008 seems to suggest that some Ghanaians perceive the company to be championing the course of the NPP. This could be an issue for management to address.

### **Terminals for buses/passengers**

Another serious problem which a substantial number of passengers mentioned is about the availability of terminals where buses stop for people to either board or alight or for potential passengers to rest while waiting for buses. Apart from Accra where there were some terminals, the other cities had none. In Tamale MMTL buses shared terminals with those from GPRTU whereas in Sekondi-Takoradi the terminal is so far removed from the city centre that passengers rarely used it. For those who would not want to make long walks to the terminal, taxis become the option.

### **Ensuring the safety of clients**

Road traffic accidents have become a topical issue in the country. Available data show that Ghana is the second highest road traffic accident prone country with 73 deaths to 10,000 accidents. Indeed, the National Road Safety Commission (NRSC) has observed that about six persons die daily from road traffic accidents in the country (NRSC 2004). A substantial proportion of the drivers involved in these accidents operate commercial vehicles (see Abane, 1994, 2004). MMTL has to recognise the existence of this all important threat not only to the safety of its clients but its entire survival. The drivers have to maintain discipline on the road and act very professionally so as to avoid killing and maiming passengers. An assurance that people are safe on MMTL buses would be an important condition for people getting attracted to the company's buses and thus enabling it to increase its market share.

The myriad of challenges outlined are not insurmountable. MMTL can address them and become a successful transport company if it adopts the right managerial strategies to transform the challenges into opportunities for change. The rest of the paper suggests the way forward drawing from an organizational development model by Cummings and Worley (1993). The issue here is that MMTL can make a difference if they adopt the principles outlined in the model as a business roadmap to address the challenges and achieve its vision which is to 'build a dominant, reliable, efficient, safe and affordable yet an economically sustainable mass transit public bus company in Ghana' (MMTL, 2003).

### **Model for efficient mass transportation management**

Given the type of challenges mentioned, MMTL would have to adopt a workable management strategy to minimize the potential damage to its business and to make it stay ahead of competitors. In the opinion of this author, such a strategy can be based on the ideas of Cummings and Worley (1997). In their desire to contribute to effective management of change using organization development (OD) tools, Cummings and Worley proposed five sets of activities to be implemented. These are (1) motivating change, (2) creating a vision, (3)

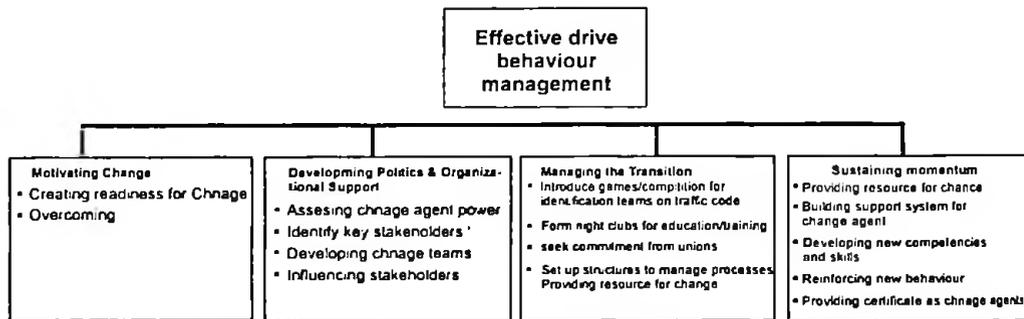
developing political support, (4) managing the transition, and (5) sustaining momentum (Fig 2). In the first set of activities, it is expected that the subjects of change will be made to 'want to' and believe in the need for change. They should be prepared for the change since change calls for commitment by those affected to abandon their present and previous ways of doing things. Cummings and Worley went further to propose three methods for achieving this first phase, namely (1) sensitising subjects about the need/reasons for change; (2) demonstrating evidence of the current state of affairs (undesirable) and proposed future state (desirable); and (3) providing positive and realistic expectations to clients about the merits of the change. The second set of activities is on how to overcome resistance to the proposed change. This is also achieved through implementing another three sets of strategies, namely (1) dealing empathetically with feelings of loss and anxiety; (2) providing extensive communication on the efforts made in addressing the change; and (3) encouraging the change. Indeed, Cummings and Worley emphasised that among 'the oldest and most effective strategies for overcoming resistance is to involve organizational members directly in planning and implementing change' (p.148). The next step, which is creating a vision, actually indicates the future situation and shows how subjects and individuals and groups could fit into that future. In order to accomplish this, there is the need for a well-defined vision since (1) that will reduce uncertainty, (2) serve as goals to mould behaviour; (3) demonstrate that the future will be beneficial; and (4) show that it is attainable. The mission, valued outcomes and valued conditions as shown in the diagram provide tangible goals which members/subjects will direct their energies to.

### **Motivating change**

Firstly, motivating change will require tact and skill on the part of management to bring on board all the workers. To begin the process, management should hold fora (durbars) with the different segments of the workforce using the human resource unit to facilitate the activities. Each segment should be encouraged to hold brainstorming sessions with a view to identifying their perceived challenges

and how these challenges should be addressed to make MMTL grow. The issues likely to emerge will cover incentives, discipline, inputs and other working conditions. Management should study the issues, set up a small body to further discuss them and present a more consolidated report for further consideration. The report should then become a framework for a workshop involving representatives of all segments of labour and management. Once this has been achieved, a new report on the outcome of the workshop can then be used as a policy document for initiating the change process.

Figure 2: Effective driver behaviour change management model



Source: Adapted from Cummings and Worley (1997)

In effecting the change, there is the need to seek political support, without which not much will be achieved. Thus, Cummings and Worley suggest that powerful individuals and groups should be encouraged to give total support to the change process. The rest of the steps involve managing the transition and sustaining the momentum in the change. Managing the transition stage could involve three sets of activities, the first of which is activity planning requiring one to specify the sequence of events and milestone to accomplish. The plan should be as good as a road map for members and a checklist to measure progress. The

second is commitment planning which involves seeking support and commitment of all key actors including their leadership, resources and energy. The third relates to management structures and this requires the setting up of parallel learning structures to initiate, lead, monitor and facilitate the change. The final activity is about how to sustain the momentum generated by the change. To achieve this, a number of strategies have also been proposed in the model such as making resources available, building support systems for change agents, developing new competencies and skills, and reinforcing a new mode of behaviour arising from the change. The second set of activities is on how to overcome resistance to the proposed change. This is also achieved through implementing another three sets of strategies, namely (1) dealing empathetically with feelings of loss and anxiety; (2) providing extensive communication on the efforts made in addressing the change; and (3) encouraging the change. Indeed, Cummings and Worley emphasised that among 'the oldest and most effective strategies for overcoming resistance is to involve organizational members directly in planning and implementing change' (p.148). The next step, which is creating a vision, actually indicates the future situation and shows how subjects and individuals and groups could fit into that future. In order to accomplish this, there is the need for a well-defined vision since (1) that will reduce uncertainty, (2) serve as goals to mould behaviour; (3) demonstrate that the future will be beneficial; and (4) show that it is attainable. The mission, valued outcomes and valued conditions as shown in the diagram provide tangible goals which members/subjects will direct their energies to.

### **Effecting and sustaining change at MMTL**

Implementing the change model described above requires absolute acceptance by the Board of Directors and Management of MMTL that there is the need for change. That need must be clearly stated and discussed extensively with shareholders and all stakeholders who will participate in the change process. For

instance, MMTL should be convinced that there is still fraud, cheating, laziness and *aban dia* (belong to Government) attitude among the workers, making it difficult for the Company to achieve its stated targets each year. The objective of the change and the challenges outlined earlier should therefore form the overall basis for the change. Once that is done, the activities in each of the cells should then be implemented as religiously as possible.

It is expected that at the end of the processes outlined above, most of the workforce would have come to terms with the need for a change. They would have understood that any form of change will affect all of them as well as see the need to be part of the change process. Once it is observed that internal change is imminent, that should give management the opportunity to begin to identify and consult key stakeholders who could be either direct or indirect agents of the change process. This is because the next three activities will require the input of all these people.

While not necessarily undertaking another strategic plan, it is important that management overviews the vision and mission statements of the company as part of the process of motivating change. What is important here is to ensure that all the workers are well educated on the relevance of the vision and mission statements. The following questions would be helpful in the discussions: (1) Where were we when we started? (2) What was our road map? (3) Where are we now? (4) Where do we go from here? (5) What specific road map do we want to adopt? Discussing these issues together and finding answers to them would make people claim ownership of whatever decisions emerge. It is important to state that the vision and mission statements ought to be in line with the expected change. This implies that the discussions arrive at conclusions that call for a new set of values and organisational culture very different from the one they are about to depart from.

### **Political and organizational support**

The component dealing with political and organisational support is as crucial as is creating conditions for the change. At this level, management has to implement two very sensitive activities. First, management will identify people in or close to Government and other powerful political forces to support their course. This should be done as professionally as possible else the Company could easily be made to dance to the tune of these groups. The independence of the Company must as much as possible be maintained. Therefore, those identified should not be allowed to assume unnecessary power which they can wield around the corridors of the Company. At the same time, management should ensure that they meet their social and other responsibilities so that politicians will not find them wanting and try to influence decisions. The support, if obtained, should be directed at implementing the change. Those identified will ensure that policy issues are successfully adopted by Government and that any decisions taken by MMTL are not at variance with Government's development agenda. If this author is to suggest some stakeholders for this segment, then one would be dealing with authorities of Ministries whose functions have to do with transport such as Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Ports, Harbours and Railways, Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations and Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs as well as members of parliament on committees relating to transport, and finally, executive members of GPRTU, STC, City Express and Kingdom Transport. It would be useful also to invite eminent business persons, planners, administrators and selected members of the travelling public to participate in the exercise. In addition to the fora suggested, management should begin to build teams using these key stakeholders. This writer is aware that MMTL has tried a few of these activities over the last two-three years. For instance, MMTL has held meetings with some of its competitors to discuss how they can work together without the rancour and bitterness between them. However, it is also the case that these meetings did not aim at a change of behaviour among workers at

MMTL itself. This is where the segment becomes very relevant and consistent with the objective of initiating change.

### **Managing the transition**

The strategy outlined above should be tied closely to this phase, which is on how to manage the transition. Apart from aiming at sustaining whatever activities are instituted, there is also the need to carefully handle the transition so that it does not derail along the line. To achieve this, management should organise friendly games with the identified stakeholder groups. It is suggested that the games be organised on regular basis and should include both indoor and out-of-door activities such as ludo, draught, cards, tennis and soccer. MMTL should raise teams for the competitions. It will be useful even to involve clientele communities in the competitions. Communities where MMTL drivers/conductors have clashed with GPRTU drivers/mates should be the first option. The idea is to let the people begin to see the friendly relations between MMTL workers on the one hand and the other bus operators on the other. Overall, it is expected that the public will appreciate that something new is emerging.

### **Sustaining the process**

In order to sustain the momentum, another set of activities relating to those suggested in the model should be implemented. For instance, a body should be set up to oversee the games. MMTL should make available adequate resources in terms of money, materials and equipment for the competitions. The stakeholder teams should be used as part of the support system for the company. Any new lessons emerging from either the meetings or discussions during the games should be critically reviewed and the useful parts included in MMTL's policy. More importantly, it is necessary for management to do all that is necessary to consolidate the new positive behaviours of its workers. One thing that is vital and must be part of the activities is to reward not only winners of the

games but use those opportunities to announce the best well-behaved worker of MMTL within a specific period. The reward could be in the form of certificates or equipment such as television set, refrigerator or a set of furniture. The body instituted to manage the games should be charged with the responsibility of identifying the best worker.

### **New policy for MMTL**

Finally, there is the phase of policy change. The component has to take care of documentation of all the activities. The information gathered should now form a basis for a new policy on MMTL. The information should also be used together with the government sympathisers to influence a change in the national policy on mass transportation in general and MMTL transport in particular.

### **Issues on training and education**

In addition to implementing elements of the Cummings and Worley model, management of MMTL should also recognize the dual role of education and training in any road transport management and safety. This is important for transport workers in Ghana where there is so much indiscipline on the roads. Education is required to re-mould attitudes and behaviour of road users, both drivers and pedestrians alike. Drivers would have to be educated on how to cope with the new environment of working strictly according to scheduled times. They would need to be tailored to give premium to the safety of passengers. They would have to be educated to understand that the success of their operations depends mainly on passenger satisfaction. Providing quality service would have to be the main ingredient of their operations.

Managing this kind of education and training requires the recruitment of a certain blend of experts. Mass transportation in its functional state is multi-faceted and this should reflect in the recruitment of staff for the public education. Engineers would be needed; so also would be sociologists, counselors, transport practitioners, geographers, planners and administrators. There is no doubt,

however, that people with background in education would be extremely useful in the attempt to 'transform' the current crop of drivers into the kind of disciplined drivers expected to manage the buses. A substantial number of the drivers in most of the transport agencies in the country who have found their way into MMTL including those from the defunct OSA Transport Company and City Express are simply 'hazards' on the road. They would need to be 'socially re-engineered' to play their new role.

The training and education should not be limited to teaching people rules, road markings and signs and the art of driving even though these are very important. The scope should be broadened to cover such areas as needs and skills assessment, operations management, financial accounting, safety and security, understanding the road environment, maintenance routine, and driver and pedestrian behaviour. After going through the training, it is expected that one should feel quite comfortable on the road and less likely to get involved in avoidable accidents.

Management must not delude itself that all members of staff will automatically change for the better. The objective should be to target as much as 80-90 per cent of the staff embracing the change process. Some would not change irrespective of education and level of incentives given to them. Others could have sufficient information to make them drive well but decide to be deviant on the road (see, for example, Hagerstrand 1967; Pred 1967). The best thing for such people is to be gradually phased out of the system and replaced by more change-conscious persons. There is no room for laziness, deviancy and a 'father Christmas' attitude in a competitive transport business else the business will collapse faster than it began services.

## **Conclusion**

There is the need for an effective public transport system for every country, given the expansion of urban centres with the attendant long travel distances for

working populations. People need to get to activity points on schedule and also to return home safely and on time. The private-public transport mix in the country is yet to meet the expectations of Ghanaian travelers. MMTL has begun fairly well and needs to be encouraged to stay clear of the difficult challenges that crippled the efforts of the defunct OSA Company and other previous public transport companies.

Adopting and diligently implementing the Cummings and Worley's (1997) model has the potential to ensure change in MMTL so that it can achieve its vision of becoming a leader in the commuter transport services sector by providing to the traveling public an enhanced transport system at a reasonable cost. It is recommended that MMTL should challenge itself to provide comfortable, reliable and friendly services to the public, aiming at attracting to it a substantial proportion of the market share of travelers in the towns and cities. Only through that will it sustain its presence in the market.

## **References**

- Abane, A. M. (1993) Tackling traffic congestion in Accra, Ghana: A road user's perspective, *Journal of Advanced Transportation*, 27 (2): 193-206
- Abane, A. M. (1994) Driver behaviour and city traffic: Empirical observations from Accra, Ghana, *Research Review*, 10 (1&2): 1-13
- Abane, A. M. (2004) Red light running in a developing city: A case study of the Accra Metropolitan Area, *Oguaa Social Sciences Journal*, 5: 42-63
- Adarkwa, K. (1991) Urban consumer needs in the transport sector and government policy in Ghana, *Journal of Advanced Transportation*, 25 (1): 42-53
- Cummings, T. G. and Worley, C. G. (1997) *Organizational development and change*, Cincinnati: South Western Publishing.
- Glaister, S. (1985) Competition on an urban bus route, *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*: 65-81

- Hagerstrand, T. (1967) *Innovation diffusion as a spatial process*, postscript and translation by Allan Pred with assistance from Greta Haag, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Jorgensen, S. H. and Abane, A. M. (1999) A comparative study of urban traffic accidents in developing and developed countries: Empirical observations from Trondheim (Norway) and Accra (Ghana), *Bulletin of the Ghana Geographical Association*, 21, pp 121-137
- Loukopoulos, P., Garling, T. and Vilhjelmeson, B. (2005) Mapping the potential consequences of car-use reduction in urban areas, *Journal of Transport Geography*, 13 (2): 135-150
- Metro Mass Transit Limited (MMTL) (2008), Head Office, Accra
- Millot, M (2004) Urban growth, travel practices and evolution of road safety, *Journal of Transport Geography* 12 (3): 207-218
- Mobility 2001 Report of the world business council for sustainable development <http://www.sustainablemobility.org> Accessed on October 10, 2008.
- National Road Safety Commission (NRSC) (2004) National Headquarters, Accra.
- Peiser, R. (2001) Decomposing urban sprawl. *Town Planning Review* 72 (3): 275-298.
- Pred, A. (1967) *Behaviour locations: Foundations for a Geographic and dynamic locations theory*, Sweden: Lund Royal University.
- Salter, R. J. (1989) *Highway traffic analysis and design*, London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- The Independent (2007) Number 026, March 12, p. 1