
The Impact of Non-Governmental Organizations in Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Katsina State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been recognized as an important stakeholders, because of their role in the promotion of health of people initially in areas such as HIV/AIDS, Polio, and Tuberculosis. In more recent times, they have also contributed in reduction of maternal mortality ratio and obstetric fistula, particularly in developing countries of Africa and Asian regions. The study therefore seeks to analyse the contributions of NGOs during the implementation of the 2004 Nigerian National Health Policy, with respect to its health targets of reducing of maternal mortality ratio by 66% two of its referral hospitals (General hospital and Turai Yaradua Maternity and Children Hospital respectively, Katsina, Katsina state and make up appropriate recommendations on strengthening future collaborations with NGOs. Method: The data for the research was collected via primary sources i.e a field research work carried from the one hospital, where mixed research methods was used i.e an open ended questionnaire sand an in-depth interview. A total of 367 questionnaires were administered on pregnant women, also an in-depth interview was held with four top officials (2 Medical directors and 2 chief nursing sisters of the hospitals). The research found reduction in the level of maternal mortality ratio by 1.5% or 1:68 MMR, and support from NGOs, and Katsina state collaboration with NGOs.

Keywords: *Maternal Mortality Ratio, NGOs, 2004 Revised Nigeria National Health Policy, Policy Implementation*

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the implementation of various health policies particularly in developing countries of Africa and Asia during the last three decades, not much progress have been made with regards to tackling maternal mortality ratio (MMR), as still millions of women globally die due to causes linked to pregnancy and childbirth. For example, it was reported that between 1990 and 2010 about 287,000 women die annually (Kullimaet al. 2009). Furthermore, WHO (2012) reported that about 800 women die per day and more than 30 women die every hour and that sub-Saharan Africa and south Asian countries account for more than eighty-five percent of these maternal deaths.

One of the biggest challenge that hindered the successful implementation of most health policies was insufficient funding of the health sector by most governments of developing nations, despite their pledge to allocate 15% of their national budget to health sector during the 2001 Abuja declaration. In Nigeria, the government allocates only about 3.1 to 4% of the total budget as

against World Health Organization recommendations of at least 15% national budgets of any UN members' state. Lack of budgetary release of funds have also made it impossible for meaningful planning and execution of programs effectively (Federal Ministry of Health, 2011; Olise, 2007; Alenoghena, et al. 2014; Gender report, 2012, Obansa & Ormisan, 2013; FMH Abuja, 2011).

The Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), emerged in 1965, to compliment the efforts of governments in tackling social problems facing their societies (World Bank, 2003). Therefore, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are charitable clubs or associations within the society that comes together for the purpose of achieving certain objectives such as offering charitable donations and offering voluntary services (United Nations 1990).

The significance of NGOs and other coalition groups came to the fore during the preparation of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, when women health advocates and other civil society organizations contributed significantly in reshaping the family planning agenda to include reproductive health and rights more broadly (UNFPA, 1999). Several studies also indicated the role NGOs played in shaping policies around the world (POLICY Project, 2000; UNFPA, 2003; POLICY, 2004a and 2004b; UNAIDS, 1999; UN, 2002; AFSC, 2003; TAC, 2003).

The role of NGOs in policy implementation process is critical in view of the weak economic and financial conditions of most developing countries. Advocacy groups particularly international NGOs and donor countries have been assisting governments in promoting health, economic and wellbeing of their citizen as part of their global social responsibilities, through provision of financial supports to poor developing countries in order to improve their health systems because of their inability to strengthen their health systems due to poor funding. For example, it was reported that the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation initiatives and President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), had contributed \$48 billion to research, care, prevention, and treatment of HIV within a five year. Similarly, a study conducted in Nigeria revealed that NGOs and other international donor organizations had made significant financial contributions of \$ USD 32,479 Million and \$ USD 45,477,907.00 in 2007 and 2008 respectively towards converting HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (The Global health Regime, 2013).

In Nigeria, coalitions groups particularly NGOs, have done very well in many areas – health, education, rural development etc. For example, UNAIDS in collaboration with NGOs carried out sensitization programs aimed at making people aware about HIV/AIDS throughout Africa they have participated in implementation of family planning programs, reproductive health, safe motherhood, and HIV/AIDS Jaero, (2005) and Agba, Akpanudoedehe and Ocheni (2014). Other areas of NGO interventions is the donation of 100 tricycle motor bike ambulances by Clinton Health Access Initiatives (CHAI), to boost neonatal care particular in the rural areas of Katsina state (Daily Trust, 2015).

However, critics have observed that such interventions by NGOs and donor organizations only reflects the needs of the donor priorities rather than local needs of the beneficiaries, they are also in most cases uncoordinated, and unaccountable, either to their intended beneficiaries or to taxpayers.

The objective of the study, is to assess the role or contributions made by (NGOs), during the implementation of the 2004 revised national health policy in Katsina state towards the reduction of maternal mortality ratio from two referral hospitals in the state – Turai Yar’adua maternal and children hospital and general hospital respectively.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework of Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980), was considered relevant to the research because it recognizes the role of other stakeholders such as NGOs as critical during formulation and implementation of social policies, especially against the background of weak economic conditions of developing countries.

Advocacy groups or sometimes referred to as coalitions are among the many actors involved in the policy implementation, because they share common interest, beliefs etc., with the policy formulators and implementers. This group includes legislators, journalists, non-governmental organizations, religious/community leaders, professionals, family members etc. They cooperate and work together to achieve policy goals/objectives as well as monitor policy implementation. Thus, various stakeholders that have interest in health care are getting involved in the process of policy formulation (Buse et al. 2005). Furthermore, Keck and Sikkink (1998) reported that several forces such as NGOs are increasingly playing an important role in the way policies are formulated, as they also provide support by way of funding, mobilization/awareness campaigns (Sabatier and Weible 2007). World Bank, also defines Non-Governmental Organizations as a private organizations that pursue some basic social services, or embarked on community development services that are non-profit or business oriented (World Bank, 2003).

Policy formulation and implementation is a multi-sectorial discipline or activity, requiring some form of collaboration among different stakeholders, including advocacy groups such as NGOs (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). Securing the cooperation of all stakeholders is necessary right from formulation stage up to implementation and evaluation stages of the policy, which requires the development of an appropriate political strategy for execution of the policy. Policy implementers must to be ready to recognize the importance of organizational power and influence, as a necessary ingredient in getting things done just as they recognize the importance of figuring out what to do in the first place, otherwise organizations will fall further and further behind (Preffer 1992).

Non-governmental organizations influence government decisions/policies through various people such as public opinion molders (who influences government policies), foot soldiers, (who also influence public policy formulation and implementation through public demonstrations, electoral campaigns and fund-raising; mobilization of financial resources to execute their programs like media campaigns, research, publications), provide effective leadership to manage its activities particularly resource management (POLICY, 2004a and 2004b). For example it was noted that many countries, particularly developing nations, lack finances and health infrastructures to improve the health of their people. Therefore their targets of health policies could not be fully met during their implementation process, without support of the NGOs Bermon et al. (2011); Kunzel et al 2012; Mathais et al. (2013); Prosper et al (2012).

The amount of influence advocacy groups exert on the policy process and Implementation is evaluated based on their resources (i.e. finance and human). Human resources, this includes all actors associated with the policy formulation and implementation process, particularly government officials occupying top government positions of influence such as judges and parliamentarians Sabatier and Weible (2007).

METHODOLOGY

Mixed research methods was used during the data collection - a total of 367 questionnaires were administered on pregnant women and an in-depth interview was held with four top officials (2 Medical directors and 2 chief nursing sisters of the hospital). The questionnaires for the beneficiary women were administered by the researchers in Hausa Language (as most of them were not literate), while the in-depth interviews with the officials of the hospitals were conducted in English Language. The questionnaires were analyzed and the results presented in a tabular form and narrations, with the women responses coming first, followed by the interview conducted with the officials of the hospital.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis Results of Respondents Responses through administration of questionnaires to pregnant women and an in-depth interview to hospital officials.

Table 1: Effects Insufficient Funding on Health Care Access

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagreed	9	2.4
Undecided	16	4.4
Disagreed	118	32.2
Agreed	138	37.6
Strongly Agree	86	23.4
Total (N)	367	100.0

From table above, majority of the respondents (i.e.138 or 37.6% and 86 or 23.4% of the respondents), agreed and strongly agreed respectively that insufficient funding of the health sector by the government, still constitutes a major hindrance/stumbling block affecting access to health care system by both pregnant women and obstetric fistula victims. While 118 of the respondents which represents (i.e.32.2%) disagreed with the statement by saying that the government is doing its best with regards to funding of the health sector. In the same vein, the least respondents i.e. 16 or 4.4% were undecided and 9 or 2.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed. It is clear that majority of respondents hold the opinion that the level of funding of Katsina state health sector by the government is still insufficient.

Table 2: Effects of Cost of Drugs and Injectables

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagreed	7	1.9
Undecided	10	2.7
Disagree	120	32.7
Agree	146	39.8
Strongly Agree	84	22.9
Total (N)	367	100.0

Table above, indicates that majority of the respondents (i.e. 146 or 39.8% and 84 or 22.9%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively that high cost of drugs and injectables negatively impacted on the implementation of the policy.

Table 3: Effect of Lack Education and Awareness on Health Care Access

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagreed	8	2.2
Undecided	12	3.2
Disagree	49	13.4
Agree	106	28.9
Strongly Agree	192	52.3
Total (N)	367	100.0

Table above, indicates that majority of the respondents (i.e. 192 or 52.3% and 106 or 28.9%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that lack of education and awareness affects access to health facilities by pregnant women.

Table 4: Impact of Socio Cultural Factors

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagreed	5	1.4
Undecided	13	3.5
Disagree	41	11.2
Agree	134	36.5
Strongly Agree	174	47.4
Total (N)	367	100.0

Table above, indicates that majority of the respondents (i.e. 174 or 47.4% and 134 or 36.5%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that socio-cultural factors affects utilization of health care facilities by pregnant women especially those living in rural areas, thus leading to complications.

Table 5: Effects of Non-Governmental Organization on Health Care

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagreed	8	2.2
Undecided	15	4.1
Disagree	30	8.2
Agree	151	41.1
Strongly Agree	163	44.4
Total (N)	367	100.0

From table above, indicates that majority of the respondents (i.e.163 or 44.4% and 151 or 41.1%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that Non-Governmental Organizations are complementing the efforts of Katsina state government through the provision of facilities such as beddings, building of theatre rooms, hospital equipment, wards, drugs and injectables.

In-Depth Interview with Hospital Officials

The officials were asked a range of questions, with respect to the role NGOs played during the implementation of health in their hospitals.

What Role did NGOs Played during the Implementation Process?

“The government and some NGOs have carried a lot of sensitization programmes to educate men, women and communities on safe pregnancy. This has helped to increase access to hospitals by pregnant women at least within the urban areas”. (MD₁)

“...That through the collaboration with the state government, the NGOs have been providing seminars and training to our Nurses. It also provides drugs, equipment etc. that are used during ANC and child delivery”. (CNS₁)

“...The NGOs are helpful in some many areas, as you can see some of the admitted patients wards were built and donated by the wealthy individuals”. (MD₂)

“...They play some significant role by providing support materials and infrastructures”. (CNS₂)

What specific contributions are the NGOs making on tackling socio-economic and socio-cultural factors?

“At this hospital, we are seeing the effects of socio-economic factors. As most if not all, the patients here are poor and illiterate. The NGOs are really helping in areas of supplying free drugs and blood supply”. (MD₁)

“Socio-cultural factors and socio-economic factors still plays an important role in discouraging pregnant women to access hospital facilities. Therefore, government and NGOs are trying through serious empowerment programmes. (CNS₁)

“Most of these women comes from rural areas, where majority depends on their husbands or relatives permission before going to hospital. State government with collaboration with NGOs helps in sensitization campaign, to allow women come to hospital for ANC and child delivery”. (MD₂)

“Socio-cultural and economic factors still affects access to hospitals because most of the women are unemployed, but NGOs are helping with free drugs and other hospital incentives”.(CNS₂)

Role of NGOs on supply of Drugs/Injectables:

“The state government having realized that it cannot shoulder responsibilities of reproductive health alone, nevertheless it had also encouraged deliberate collaboration with NGOs and wealthy individuals. And they are really helping in areas of free drugs, blood supply and sensitization etc.” (MD₁)

“...Advocacy groups are helping in many areas including building of operating theatres, supply of beds, chairs for ANC etc.” (CNS₁)

“...Without their assistance the hospital has been receiving, it would have been difficult to reduce MMR”. (MD₂)

“They have been very helpful in many areas. We thank them for their support”. (CNS₂)

Role of NGOs on Provision of Physical Infrastructure:

“..NGO and wealthy individuals provided some of the physical structures in this hospital. They also constructed boreholes and assist with drugs and counseling of our patients”. (MD₁)

“...Indeed apart from payment of salaries by the government, they rely on donations from NGOs and wealthy individuals”. (CNS₁)

“...proudly, I can say the NGOs are complementing government efforts in the supply of hospitals equipment. (MD₂)

“... We shall remain grateful to them. Without them we could nothave perform the way we are performing today. (CNS₂)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It is therefore clear that there is a change in the way policy formulation and implementation was handled i.e in the past it was exclusively in the hands of top government policy makers and very few individuals and groups outside government circle. However, in recent times, a wider range of stakeholders outside of government have been incorporated in policy circle. As can be seen from the results above that NGOs have assisted greatly during the implementation of the 2004 revised national health policy in Katsina state, which had resulted in the reduction of maternal mortality ratio. Their interventions in a variety of areas such as provisions of drugs and injectables, health infrastructure, publicity and sensitization of women is quite commendable,

especially in the view of poor economic conditions of most developing countries like Nigeria, which has made them unable to meet up with the provision of some UNconventions on funding, CEDAW etc. Earlier studies conducted elsewhere, have also reported the enormous contributions of NGOs particularly in improvement of reproductive health in developing countries especially in the areas of funding, as well as other areas, (the Global health Regime, 2013 POLICY Project, 2000; UNFPA, 2003; POLICY, 2004a and 2004b; UNAIDS, 1999; UN, 2002; AFSC, 2003; TAC, 2003). A similar findings carried out in the rural communities of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria by Agba; Akpanudoedehe and Stephen (2014), hadrevealed some various charities provided by NGOs in areas of health, Education etc. However, similar researches that reaffirmed NGOs assistances were that of UNAIDS (1999) Ojo (2003), Chevron (2003), Akpanudoedehe (2006). They confirmed that, there is a functional relationship between NGOs and health development in rural areas. Moreover, Nigerian best forum (NBF) (2013), which is a non-government organization (NGO), partnership for Reviving Routine Immunization in Northern Nigeria- Maternal and Neonatal Child Health (PRRINN-MNCH), has donated drugs and hospital equipment worth 120 million to Katsina state government to reduce maternal and child mortality and other related issues

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is the need for more sensitization programs squarely directed at rural areas where the existence of socio-cultural and socio-economic factors appears to be more pronounced. On this note the Katsina state government should strengthened the existing collaboration relationship between it and advocacy groups particularly NGOs, both foreign and local that have made giant achievements in improving health of Nigerians in areas such as Polio eradication, Guinean worm eradication, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS to assist in addressing maternal death.

CONCLUSION

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), could serve as a veritable source of funding which could go along in complimenting the efforts of government of developing nation like Nigeria in view of their weak national economies and the endemic corruption existing within politicians and the government officials. However, it should be added that a comprehensive policy of collaboration that would attract in particular foreign NGOs that have sufficient resources at their disposal should be worked out. The present worldwide economic recession affecting most of the nations coupled with dwindling oil price globally have further justifies more reasons for collaborations with NGOs in order to promote safe motherhood.

It can therefore, be seen that without support received from NGOS and wealthy individuals, the success story recorded would not have been possible. It is indeed through the efforts of NGOs both local and international that developing nations like Nigeria have succeeded in addressing their health challenges in areas such as HIV/AIDs, tuberculosis, Polio, maternal death to name but a few. Therefore government should encourage the formation of more NGOs to address its ever growing health needs.

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