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EXAMINING THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) IN ENHANCING HEALTHCARE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The provision of an affordable and accessible healthcare system has remained the collective responsibility of both state and non-state actors in Nigeria. Despite the government's giant stride at providing affordable and increased accessibility to healthcare services; many of the Nigerian population are underserved. This is because, healthcare infrastructure and services remain inadequate, leading to health disparities and preventable mortality. However, it appears that the huge potential of health-related NGOs to provide significant contributions towards an improved healthcare system is still been underexploited. This study examines how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have over time contributed to improving healthcare services in Nigeria. Moreso, it unveils strategies, partnerships, and impact, on healthcare infrastructure nationwide. Additionally, it delves into specific case studies that highlight how NGOs have positively influenced the healthcare sector. These case studies focus on disease control access to medicines and the reduction of child mortality rates. The research findings emphasize the importance of NGO involvement in improving healthcare access and addressing health disparities. By understanding the roles played by NGOs in the Nigerian healthcare system, policymakers and stakeholders should collaborate effectively with these organizations to enhance healthcare access and work towards achieving universal health coverage in the country.

Keywords: healthcare access, healthcare impact, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), Nigeria

Introduction

In the world over, access to quality healthcare facilities is a fundamental human right (United Nations, 1948), yet, in many parts of the world, including Nigeria, it remains an elusive privilege for a significant portion of the population. Nigeria, (with a population of 217, 373, 637million) is the most populous country in Africa and continues to grapple with the challenge of providing adequate healthcare services to its citizens. while the government is primarily responsible for the provision of healthcare, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in enhancing healthcare access cannot be underestimated. This is because, non-governmental organizations have emerged as critical partners in the endeavor to bridge the healthcare gap, offering a glimmer of hope to millions of Nigerians who have long endured the burden of inadequate healthcare services (World Health Organisation, 2019). It is worthy of note that, many countries around the world (such as India, Brazil, and South Africa) face similar challenges in improving access to healthcare for their citizens. This is a complex issue influenced by various factors, including economic development, political stability, and healthcare infrastructure.

This study embarks on an exploration of the multifaceted role that NGOs play in Nigeria's

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healthcare landscape. it delves into their strategies, partnerships, and their significant impact on healthcare infrastructure (Gostin, mok, & Redd, 2020). through detailed case studies, this research illuminates the transformative influence of NGOs within the Nigerian healthcare sector, with a specific focus on areas such as disease control, access to essential medicines, and the reduction of maternal and child mortality rates (Kruk et al., 2017). these case studies offer compelling evidence of the invaluable contributions that NGOs have made and continue to make, in advancing healthcare accessibility in Nigeria (Adeyi et al., 2017). This research hopes to underscore the profound significance of NGO involvement in healthcare access and their ability to address critical health disparities (McCoy, riddle, & Gaspard, 2019). by understanding the various facets of the roles that NGOs play within Nigeria's healthcare system, policymakers and stakeholders can glean insights and strategies to better collaborate with these organizations (World Bank, 2015). such collaboration is essential in bolstering healthcare access, improving the overall health status of the population, and working toward the realization of universal health coverage in the country (World Health Organization, 2014). According to Hounton et al., (2019) study more shed light on the pivotal role of NGOs in Nigeria's healthcare landscape, laying the groundwork for a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable healthcare system that is responsive to the healthcare needs of all its citizens

Undoubtedly, access to quality healthcare remains a critical issue in Nigeria, with a significant portion of the population lacking access to essential healthcare services (World Health Organization, 2019). Despite governmental efforts, healthcare infrastructure and services remain inadequate, leading to health disparities and preventable mortality (Gostin, Mok, & Redd, 2020). Additionally, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have emerged as vital contributors to healthcare access, yet there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of their roles and impact within the Nigerian healthcare system. This study seeks to address the following critical issues. This study based its proposition on the assumption that NGOs play a substantial role in enhancing healthcare access in Nigeria. It further assumes that these organizations employ various strategies, including partnerships and infrastructure development, to improve healthcare delivery in Nigeria (Mensah, Oyewole, & Wellenius, 2019). The main thrust of this study centered on examining the strategies employed by NGOs in enhancing healthcare access in Nigeria.; assess the partnerships forged by government and NGOs in the Nigerian healthcare sector and their impact on service delivery. Also, to investigate the specific areas where NGOs have contributed significantly, such as disease control, access to essential medicines, and the reduction of maternal and child mortality rates. This study holds significant relevance in several dimensions. Firstly, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the role of NGOs in healthcare access in low and middle-income countries, particularly in the context of Nigeria. Secondly, it provides valuable insights for policymakers, healthcare practitioners, and NGOs to collaborate effectively in addressing the healthcare challenges in Nigeria. Moreover, it offers a basis for informed decision-making in healthcare policy and practice, ultimately striving for the improvement of healthcare services in Nigeria. Lastly, it underscores the importance of civil society and non-governmental efforts in achieving health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (United Nations, 2015).

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A Review of Related Literature

Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right that has been recognized by international bodies and agreements (United Nations, 1948). However, the ability of many nations, including Nigeria, to fulfill this right remains a significant challenge. This section reviews relevant literature on the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in enhancing healthcare access in Nigeria, shedding light on their strategies, partnerships, and impact on healthcare infrastructure.

NGOs play a pivotal role in improving healthcare access in resource-constrained settings, including Nigeria (Adeyi et al., 2017). The NGOs often fill the gaps in healthcare delivery where government resources and infrastructure are lacking. Through their initiatives, NGOs contribute to addressing critical health disparities and providing healthcare services to underserved populations (Hounton et al., 2019). NGOs have become essential players in efforts to ensure equitable access to healthcare services. Moreso, NGOs have employed various strategies to enhance healthcare access in Nigeria. These strategies encompass the provision of medical services, capacity building, infrastructure development, and advocacy (Mensah, Oyewole, & Wellenius, 2019). NGOs often focus on areas such as primary healthcare, maternal and child health, and the prevention and control of diseases. They may establish healthcare facilities, mobile clinics, and community health programs to bridge gaps in healthcare delivery (World Bank, 2015). NGOs actively engage in partnerships and collaborations with governments, international organizations, and local communities to amplify their impact. These partnerships facilitate resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and the coordination of efforts to improve healthcare access (Kruk et al., 2017). Collaborative initiatives often result in a more comprehensive approach to healthcare service delivery, making the most of available resources. The impact of NGOs on healthcare infrastructure is evident through the establishment and renovation of healthcare facilities, provision of medical equipment and supplies, and training of healthcare personnel (World Health Organization, 2014).

Additionally, NGOs contribute to community health education, which can lead to increased healthcare utilization and improved health-seeking behaviors (Kruk et al., 2017). This literature review also highlights specific case studies showcasing the transformative influence of NGOs in Nigeria's healthcare sector. These case studies demonstrate how NGOs have made substantial contributions in areas such as disease control, access to essential medicines, and the reduction of maternal and child mortality rates (Adeyi et al., 2017). Insights from the literature reviewed underscore the significant role of NGOs in enhancing healthcare access in Nigeria. However, while existing studies provide valuable insights into the strategies and impact of NGOs, there remains a need for more comprehensive research that quantifies the outcomes of NGO interventions, measures the extent of healthcare disparities addressed, and evaluates the long-term sustainability of their initiatives.

From an empirical perspective, Adeyi., Atun., & Mensah, (2017) conducted a study that focused on universal health coverage in Nigeria. Their research emphasized the importance of acting promptly to improve healthcare access in the country. They underscored that NGOs

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have a critical role to play in achieving this goal, particularly in addressing health disparities (Adeyi et al., 2017).

Also, Hounton et al (2019) examined patterns and trends in the coverage of maternal, newborn, and child health interventions in various countries, including Nigeria. Evidence from the study revealed the significance of NGOs in improving access to maternal and child healthcare services, underscoring the role these organizations play in enhancing healthcare access in Nigeria (Hounton et al., 2019). In the same manner, Kruk et (2017) carried out a cross-sectional multilevel analysis focusing on facility delivery in rural Tanzania. While the study was not specific to Nigeria, it highlighted the challenges and disparities in healthcare access in resource-constrained settings. NGOs were seen as critical actors in addressing the gaps and ensuring that healthcare services are accessible to those in need (Kruk et al., 2017). Moreover, Mensah., Oyewole, and Wellenius, (2019) identified the challenges of achieving universal health coverage in Nigeria. The research emphasized the complexities and disparities in healthcare access within the country. They pointed out the potential role of NGOs in contributing to equitable healthcare access and universal coverage (Mensah, Oyewole, & Wellenius, 2019). In conclusion, these previous studies collectively highlight the crucial role of NGOs in enhancing healthcare access in Nigeria. While each study focuses on different aspects of healthcare access and is often not exclusive to Nigeria, they consistently emphasize the significant contributions that NGOs can make in bridging gaps, addressing disparities, and improving access to healthcare services. Adeyi et al. (2017) and Mensah et al. (2019) underline the urgency of taking action to improve healthcare access, while Hounton et al. (2019) and Kruk et al. (2017) demonstrate the tangible impact of NGOs in resource-constrained settings, further supporting the need for an in-depth examination of the roles of NGOs in Nigeria's healthcare system. The table below shows the summary of statistics about the Nigerian healthcare system.

Healthcare Indicators in Nigeria

Nigeria Health System	Statistics
Population	217,373,637M
States	36 and the federal capital territory
Local Government	774
Residency	52.0% live in urban areas
Health Budget % total budget	5.97% (2022) NGN3,453/capita
Health Expenditure % GDP:	3.03% less than Ethiopia and Ghana
Government Expenditure /capita:	Nigeria; 15.95 USD, Ghana: 40.24 USD Ethiopia: 22.70USD, Canada: 70.17USD
Private expenditure per capita	Nigeria: 71.30%, Ghana:48.48%, Ethiopia:43.19%, Chile 49.08%, Canada:29.83%.
Health indices	
• Life expectancy in Nigeria (2021)	• Males: 59.07 • Female: 62.78 • Total: 60.87
• Neonatal mortality (approximately in 2016/2017)	• 40/1000. • Infant mortality: 80/1,000 • Under-five mortality: 120/1000 (NSHDP II)
• Maternal mortality rate	800/100,000 (approximate 2015, NSHDP II)
Distribution of Health Facilities	Type of health facility Public/ Private
Primary Health Centers	30,098 (Public: 21,808, Private: 8,290)
Secondary Health Facilities	3,992 (Public: 969 Private: 3,023)
Tertiary Health Facilities	86 (Public:86, Private: 10)
Distribution of health manpower	
Doctors in Nigeria (2022)	24,600. Population ratio, 1:8,836
Dentists	1,400. population ratio, 1: 155,267. Required at a ratio of 1 doctor /600 population: 362,289 doctors. Deficit: 338,289
Nurses	249,566 Population ratio 1:1,677 (NHSDP II,2015)
• Senior CHEWs • Junior CHEWs	• 42,938 population ratios 1:28,256 (NHSDP II,2015) • 28,548 population ratio 1: 5,914 (NHSDP II,2015)
States of physical Infrastructures	
Buildings	• 38.4% of facilities required major renovations while 34% required minor renovations. • 49% had cracked walls, 50.7% had cemented floors, 21.9% had rough floors and a large proportion (58.9%) had leaking roofs

Source: extracted from Abah, V. O. (2022)

NGOs Strategies for Improved Healthcare Access in Nigeria

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have played a pivotal role in enhancing healthcare access and support in Nigeria through various strategies. These strategies have proven to be instrumental in addressing healthcare disparities and improving the overall healthcare system.

1. Health Education and Awareness Campaigns: NGOs in Nigeria have implemented extensive health education and awareness campaigns to promote better health practices and behaviors among communities. For instance, NGOs often conduct workshops,

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seminars, and community outreach programs to educate individuals on topics such as disease prevention, nutrition, and family planning (Bhutta et al., 2017). These initiatives are essential in raising awareness about health issues and empowering individuals to take control of their well-being.

2. Provision of Medical Services: Many NGOs in Nigeria operate healthcare facilities, clinics, and mobile health units that offer medical services to underserved populations, especially in remote and marginalized areas (Odeyemi et al., 2018). These services include primary healthcare, maternal and child health, immunization, and treatment for common diseases. By establishing and maintaining such healthcare facilities, NGOs ensure that healthcare services are accessible to those who might otherwise go without.

3. Capacity Building and Training: NGOs actively engage in capacity building and training programs for healthcare workers and community health volunteers. This approach aims to strengthen the healthcare workforce and improve the quality of healthcare services (Ajakaye et al., 2020). Through training, healthcare personnel are better equipped to address the specific healthcare needs of their communities, ultimately improving the delivery of care.

4. Advocacy and Policy Influence: NGOs in Nigeria often engage in advocacy efforts to influence healthcare policies and promote the allocation of resources for healthcare services (Oliveras, Amouzou, & Waiswa, 2019). By advocating for equitable healthcare policies, NGOs contribute to shaping the healthcare landscape in Nigeria and ensuring that the needs of underserved populations are considered in national health strategies.

5. Collaboration and Partnerships: NGOs actively collaborate with governmental health agencies, international organizations, and other stakeholders to amplify their impact. These collaborations often result in the efficient use of resources and a more coordinated approach to healthcare support (Kruk et al., 2017). Partnerships can lead to improved healthcare infrastructure, better access to essential medicines, and more comprehensive healthcare services.

NGOs' strategies for healthcare support in Nigeria are multifaceted and encompass various approaches, including health education, service provision, capacity building, advocacy, and partnerships. These strategies collectively contribute to addressing healthcare disparities and improving access to quality healthcare services, particularly among underserved populations in Nigeria.

NGOs Core Areas of Strategic Partnerships with Nigerian State Actors

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria often collaborate with state actors to address critical issues in the healthcare sector. These strategic partnerships encompass several core areas that are instrumental in improving healthcare access and outcomes in the country. The areas of partnership include:

1. Health Service Delivery: NGOs actively partner with state health agencies to enhance the delivery of healthcare services to underserved populations. State actors often provide the necessary infrastructure and resources, while NGOs bring

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expertise, human resources, and community outreach capabilities. These collaborations lead to the establishment of healthcare facilities, clinics, and mobile health units, thereby extending the reach of essential healthcare services (Abimbola et al., 2016).

2. Capacity Building and Training: NGOs collaborate with state actors to build the capacity of healthcare personnel. This often involves training and skill development programs for healthcare workers, community health volunteers, and other stakeholders in the healthcare system. By enhancing the skills and knowledge of healthcare personnel, these partnerships contribute to improved healthcare service quality (World Health Organization, 2016).

3. Health Education and Awareness Campaigns: Joint initiatives between NGOs and state actors frequently include health education and awareness campaigns. These campaigns target communities and individuals, raising awareness about health issues, prevention measures, and healthy behaviors. By working together, NGOs and state actors can leverage their communication resources to disseminate critical health information effectively (Ajakaye et al., 2020).

4. Policy Advocacy and Resource Allocation: Strategic partnerships also involve advocacy efforts by NGOs to influence healthcare policies and resource allocation. State actors, such as government agencies and ministries, play a crucial role in shaping healthcare policies and budgets. NGOs leverage their expertise and advocacy skills to ensure that policies are equitable and resources are allocated to meet the healthcare needs of underserved populations (Hoa et al., 2020).

5. Research and Data Collection: Collaborative research projects between NGOs and state actors are essential for evidence-based decision-making. These partnerships involve data collection, analysis, and research on healthcare issues. By working together, NGOs and state actors can generate valuable insights and inform policies that address healthcare disparities (Odeyemi et al., 2018).

6. Emergency Response and Humanitarian Aid: NGOs often collaborate with state actors during emergencies, such as disease outbreaks or natural disasters. These partnerships enable a coordinated response to health crises, with NGOs providing on-ground support, medical supplies, and expertise. The collaboration between NGOs and state actors is critical for saving lives during emergencies (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2019).

Strategic partnerships between NGOs and state actors in Nigeria are crucial in addressing healthcare challenges and disparities. These partnerships cover various core areas, including service delivery, capacity building, health education, policy advocacy, research, and emergency response. By working collaboratively, NGOs and state actors can maximize their resources and expertise to improve healthcare access and outcomes in the country.

Impact of NGOs on Healthcare Infrastructure in Nigeria

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have played a pivotal role in enhancing healthcare infrastructure in Nigeria. Their contributions are instrumental in improving the quality and accessibility of healthcare services across the country.

1. Establishment and Renovation of Healthcare Facilities: NGOs have been actively involved in the establishment of new healthcare facilities and the renovation of existing ones (Adeyi et al., 2017). These initiatives contribute to the expansion of the healthcare infrastructure, particularly in underserved and remote areas. By building and upgrading clinics, hospitals, and health centers, NGOs help bridge the gap in healthcare service availability. For example, there is evidence that NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) have

   renovated healthcare facilities in conflict-affected areas in Borno State, including in Maiduguri and surrounding regions. Moreover, Partners in Health has established healthcare facilities in states like Plateau, focusing on maternal and child health services and community health centers. Beyond that, Jhpiego, an NGO has established specialized maternal and child health facilities in Kwara State, with a focus on improving healthcare services for women and children. This suggests the wide-ranging efforts of NGOs to establish and renovate healthcare facilities in various states across Nigeria, with a focus on improving healthcare access and services for different populations. Specific projects and locations may vary based on the priorities and initiatives of each NGO.

2. Provision of Medical Equipment and Supplies: NGOs often supply medical equipment, instruments, and essential supplies to healthcare facilities (Bhutta et al., 2017). This support is critical for ensuring that healthcare providers have the necessary tools to deliver quality care. The availability of medical equipment enhances the diagnostic and treatment capabilities of healthcare facilities. For instance, amongst the NGOs that have provided medical equipment and supplies includes: Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders): MSF operates in Nigeria and provides medical supplies and services, particularly in conflict-affected regions, International Medical Corps: This organization focuses on emergency response and provides medical supplies in crisis-affected areas, Save the Children: Save the Children works to improve child and maternal health, providing supplies and healthcare services, Partners In Health, Health Partners International: This organization supports healthcare initiatives and may provide medical equipment and supplies, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC): IFRC supports the healthcare needs of communities through supplies and services, MedShare: MedShare focuses on redistributing surplus medical supplies to areas in need, including Nigeria, Global Giving: An online platform that connects donors with various NGOs working in healthcare, including the provision of medical supplies etc.

3. Training and Capacity Building: NGOs invest in training healthcare personnel and staff in healthcare facilities (Ajakaye et al., 2020). These capacity-building initiatives enhance the skills and knowledge of healthcare workers, making them more proficient in delivering healthcare services. Trained personnel contribute to the efficient operation of healthcare facilities. Specifically, the NGO: Save the Children has at several times conducted training on maternal and child health, including obstetric care and neonatal resuscitation in various states, including Kano, Jigawa, and Lagos. Not only that, FHI 360 has held training programmes on HIV prevention, testing, and treatment in multiple states, including Lagos, Rivers, and Enugu. Likewise, Pathfinder International held training programmes in family planning and reproductive health services in many states, including Kaduna and Nasarawa. Also, CARE has organised a series of training activities on WASH, focusing on hygiene promotion and disease prevention, in various states, including Adamawa and

Benue.

4. Support for Telemedicine and Technology: Some NGOs in Nigeria have introduced telemedicine and technology solutions to improve healthcare access (Odeyemi et al., 2018). These innovations are particularly beneficial in remote areas where access to healthcare is limited. Telemedicine allows patients to consult with healthcare professionals via digital platforms, increasing healthcare accessibility. As an emerging subfield, InStrat Global Health Solutions has held many training programmes in telemedicine, enabling healthcare workers to deliver remote medical consultations, diagnose patients, and provide expert guidance through digital platforms in various states of the federation, including Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja. Conversely, as part of support for improved healthcare delivery in Nigeria, eHealth Africa focuses on eHealth solutions, such as electronic health records (EHR) systems, data analytics, and disease surveillance tools, to improve healthcare service delivery. eHealth initiatives have been implemented in several states, including Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi. Furthermore, the Health Systems Consult Limited NGO has implemented telehealth and mobile health (mHealth) solutions, providing healthcare workers with digital tools to support remote consultations and medical information access. These programmes have been rolled out in multiple states, including Enugu, Oyo,

5. Community Health Centres and Mobile Units: NGOs often establish community health centers and mobile health units to reach underserved populations (Kruk et al., 2017). These units bring healthcare services directly to communities, ensuring that people in remote areas have access to essential medical care. Mobile units are especially effective in providing outreach services to vulnerable populations. In Lagos for instance, NGOs like Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) have established community health centers and mobile units in Lagos State to provide healthcare services to underserved populations. In response to the humanitarian crisis in the northeast, organizations like the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have established community health centers and mobile units in Borno State to provide healthcare to internally displaced persons. In addition, NGOs such as Save the Children have been active in establishing and supporting community health centers and mobile clinics in Kano State to improve maternal and child health services. All these illustrations suggest that NGOs often target specific states and regions in Nigeria, especially those with high healthcare needs or areas affected by humanitarian crises.

6. Public Health Initiatives: NGOs implement public health initiatives aimed at improving healthcare infrastructure. These initiatives may include vaccination campaigns, disease control programs, and maternal and child health projects (Hoa et al., 2020). By focusing on these areas, NGOs contribute to the overall improvement of healthcare services and infrastructure. Part of the public health initiative by NGOs includes the Malaria Control Programme, continuous activities including insecticide-treated bed net distribution and malaria prevention, been promoted by the Malaria Consortium in various states with high malaria prevalence, such as Sokoto and Kano. More importantly, the HIV/AIDS Awareness and Treatment programme, a nationwide continuous HIV testing and treatment effort with a focus on high-prevalence states been promoted by an NGO-Society for Family Health (SFH).

No doubt, the NGOs have a substantial impact on healthcare infrastructure in Nigeria through their efforts to establish and renovate healthcare facilities, provide medical equipment, support capacity building, introduce technology solutions, and reach underserved populations through community health centers and mobile units. These contributions are essential in expanding healthcare accessibility and improving the quality of healthcare services across the country. Arising from the above illustrations, it became clear that NGOs plays significant roles in expanding healthcare access and delivery system. This is based on contributions to a range of public health initiatives in Nigeria, each addressing specific health challenges.

Statistics on Healthcare Services in Some selected States of Nigeria

Population (2022)	Hospitals	Clinics	Primary Health Centers (PHCs)	Doctors (per 1,000 people)	Nurses (per 1,000 people)	Immunization Coverage (%)	Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000 live births)	Child Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	Access to Clean Water (%)	Access to Improved Sanitation (%)
Abia	4,897,696	80+	200+	250+	0.3	1.6	60%	576	119	65%
Adamawa		**60+**	140+	180+	0.2	1.5	55%	590	120	60%
Akwa Ibom		**90+**	220+	270+	0.4	1.7	62%	570	118	68%
Anambra		**100+**	230+	280+	0.4	1.8	65%	550	115	70%
Bauchi		**70+**	180+	220+	0.2	1.3	50%	610	123	55%
Bayelsa		**40+**	100+	120+	0.3	1.5	54%	600	122	58%
Benue		**85+**	210+	250+	0.2	1.4	53%	590	120	52%
Borno		**60+**	140+	170+	0.1	1.2	45%	630	125	48%
Cross River		**70+**	160+	200+	0.3	1.6	58%	580	117	62%
Delta		**85+**	210+	250+	0.4	1.7	63%	560	114	64%
Ebonyi		**60+**	140+	170+	0.3	1.5	52%	620	124	53%
Edo		**+**	200+	240+	0.4	1.7	61%	570	116	66%
Ekiti		**+**	120+	150+	0.3	1.6	57%	580	117	59%
Enugu		**+**	220+	270+	0.4	1.8	64%	550	115	69%
FCT (Abuja)		**+**	160+	200+	0.5	1.9	70%	540	112	72%

Source: Extracted from Abah, V. O. (2022)

As evidenced in the above table, the health facilities and workforce available are far short of required (see columns 1-3). Consequently, the negative effect of this shortage has made the populace vulnerable to preventable diseases. As shown in the table presented above, the maternal mortality rate per 1000 live births is very high in most of the states selected. For instance, the maternal mortality rate for FCT stood at 70%, Enugu 64%, Delta 63%, Edo 61%, and Abia 60%. Moreso, data on the child mortality rate per 1000 live births also indicate a very disturbing case of high mortality rate in the selected states of Borno with 630 deaths per 1000, Ebonyi with 620, Bauchi with 610, and Bayelsa. Additionally, data presented on other heath-related environmental issues like access to clean water, and access to improved sanitation also suggest an ugly situation. This invariably suggests the level of decadency in Nigeria's healthcare delivery system which required collaborative efforts of both the state actors and NGOs.

Methodology

This study relied heavily on secondary sources of data. Specifically, the study adopted qualitative methods (e.g., content analysis) or quantitative techniques as relevant. Therefore, the source of data for this study includes academic journals, government reports, NGO publications, international organizations' reports (e.g., WHO, UNICEF), and reputable healthcare databases. This may include academic articles, government reports, NGO program evaluations, and healthcare statistics. A case study approach is chosen as it allows for an in-depth exploration of specific cases within their real-life context (Yin, 2018). In this study, multiple NGOs operating within Nigeria's healthcare sector were examined as individual cases. Moreso, relevant documents, such as NGO reports, policy documents, and healthcare records, will be analyzed to gain historical context, policy insights, and programmatic details regarding NGO contributions to healthcare in Nigeria. Moreover, the study ensures data retrieved from the selected secondary sources are relevant to the objective of the study ensure that the data aligns with your research objectives. For analysis, key insights were extracted from secondary data collected on trends and activities related to the role of NGOs in healthcare delivery in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been essential in enhancing Nigeria's healthcare system. The work of NGOs has been crucial in bridging the gaps created by government-run healthcare facilities in a nation with many healthcare concerns. These organizations have proven their dedication to enhancing healthcare access, quality, and equity in Nigeria by engaging in a variety of interventions, from neighborhood-based projects to large-scale policies. The ability of the NGO to reach underserved and marginalized communities is a crucial component of its influence. The results of earlier studies (Smith et al., 2018; Okafor & Ogbu, 2017), which emphasize the significance of NGOs in resolving healthcare inequities and promoting inclusivity, are consistent with this (as are the findings here). NGOs have reached rural places through their grassroots efforts and tailored interventions, offering crucial healthcare services.

Arising from the above shreds of pieces of evidence and illustrations, the study recommends that the government should strengthen collaboration and Coordination with NGOs to maximize the impact of their in-healthcare delivery, there is also a need for greater collaboration and coordination between NGOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders. More importantly, state actors should encourage partnerships between NGOs and government healthcare institutions to harness the strengths of both sectors. Moreover, the government needs to facilitate regular meetings and communication channels to share best practices and exchange information. In the same manner create a centralized platform or database that tracks NGO activities in healthcare, ensuring efficient resource allocation and avoiding duplication.

Additionally, to improve the quality and sustainability of healthcare interventions by NGOs, it is crucial to invest in capacity building and training programs. And develop and implement training programs for healthcare workers in NGOs to enhance their skills and knowledge. As

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part of the effort to ensure the sustainability of the interventions, community engagement, and Empowerment should involve local communities in the planning and implementation of healthcare projects. In the same way, promote health education and awareness campaigns to empower communities with knowledge on preventive healthcare. Therefore, encourage the creation of community health committees to oversee healthcare initiatives and ensure their sustainability.

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