

Infant Mortality, Access to Primary Health Care and Prospects for Socio-Economic Development in Bwari Area Council of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Infant mortality, ineffective ante- and post-maternal healthcare and stagnated development in Nigeria are decades old concerns that need urgent redress. High rates of infant mortality and inability of pregnant women to access healthcare implicate children's life chances, maternal psychosocial and economic wellbeing, future family welfare, community and national development prospects. Healthcare practices of the present constitutes the foundation for future child, family and overall development. Principally, this empirical research examines Nigeria's critical dimensions of infant mortality and access to primary health centers (PHCs) as behavioral tendencies capable of shaping the present and future of infancy, childhood, the family and the nation, using Bwari community as a case study. Thus, the emphasis is on the environment, attitudes and behaviors that shape the present and prepares the future development of children and society. The research employed qualitative and quantitative methods with testable hypotheses. Findings reveal that respondents' socio-economic characteristics intermediate on extent of accessing available health care facilities. The respondents' relatively high literacy, urban residency and civil service jobs, health talks from medical professionals, free medical treatment and, very importantly, zero infant mortality outcome, suggest that environment, human capital quality and health outcomes have relationships. Yet, Nigeria records one of the worst global health indices, suggesting a scenario of two nations, driven by an exclusive governance model that perpetuates social inequality and glaring rural neglect. To meet its health, hence development needs, Nigeria should summon the political will and eliminate its extant exclusive governance model which, with inherent impunity, opaqueness, narrowness and inequity, manifests high infant mortality and under-five deaths, stunting, wasting, low intelligent quotient, low human development index and other issues. Government should apply political will, improve health budget and engage inclusive model for enhanced social justice, opportunities for individual and national development.

Keywords: Infant, Mortality, Access, Primary healthcare and development

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