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Public-Private-Partnership for Effective and Efficient Service Delivery in Nigeria: A Study of Ebonyi State Health Sector

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ABSTRACT

Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) has become a common issue of discourse among individuals, groups and governments. This study which discussed how PPP can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery in Ebonyi state health sector specifically sought to ascertain the extent to which people can access qualitative health services in Ebonyi state and ascertain the nature of relationship between the public and private in the health sector under the PPP arrangement in Ebonyi state. One alternate hypothesis was formulated while a theory of "Neo Liberalism" was adopted as the theoretical framework. The study used survey design whereby data were collected from the sample considered to be the representative of the population. Data collected were presented in tables containing frequencies of the responses and their corresponding percentages. The hypothesis of the study was tested using chi-square (X^2) statistical tool and the result of the analyses revealed that: Ebonyi state government has actually disbursed a substantial amount of money under the PPP arrangement to six missionary hospitals in the state which has positively resulted in improved health services like immunization; reduction in maternal mortality and morbidity, among others. The implication of the foregoing is that; PPP will stimulate a greater state of development in all sectors since funding and evaluation are more efficiently executed. The study concluded that; Public-Private-Partnership remains one of the "special purpose vehicle" available to the Ebonyi state government to revive the comatose public corporations and utilities, expand the installed capacity of the existing ones and embark on the development of new public infrastructures, with the aim of delivering quality public goods and services of global standard and therefore made the following recommendations: Ebonyi state government should extend the provisions of the most accessible, qualitative and cost-effective health care and other services by going into partnership with the private in all the sectors and in the management of the health centres in the thirteen (13) General Hospitals spread across the thirteen (13) local government areas in the state, among others.

Key Words: Public, Private, Partnership, Effective, Efficient, Service Delivery, Nigeria, Ebonyi State, Health Sector.

INTRODUCTION

The protection of lives, provision of services including the development of infrastructure are unarguably some of the most important functions of every government as infrastructural facilities and such other services, are the wheels on which any economy runs as they provide the enabling environment for sustained economic growth and wealth, (Okorie, 2005).

In developed countries, the involvement of the private sector in the development and financing of public facilities and services has increased substantially over the past decade (Redwood, Goldwasser, and Street, 1999). However, the provision of some basic services are mostly undertaken by the public sector and often financed through budgets and Appropriation Acts. In spite of strong commitments of most governments to welfare provisions in most countries, a wide gap exist in terms of meeting the quantity and quality of services required for sustainable socio-economic development principally due to shortage of public funds and the attendant corruption surrounding the use of the approved funds by public officers.

Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) came into being as a result of the continued budgetary constraints faced by the various governments and the exhaustion of opportunities for outright privatization of public infrastructure (Okorie, 2005). Federal and state governments began to explore more subtle alternatives for accessing private sector resources in delivery and operation of public facilities.

Public-Private-Partnership is a sustained and long term partnering relationship between the public (government) and private sectors including; the missionaries to provide services and goods. Through public-Private-Partnership, the public sector seeks to bring together the resources of the public sector and the technical expertise of the private sectors to provide services and goods to the public at the best Value for Money, (Starling, 1986). It can also be referred as one of the Public Finance Initiative (PFIs) and is a contractual agreement between the public and the private sectors to share financial, technical and management risks in project development and management. PPP is seen by many as the "almighty formula" in infrastructure provisions especially with the economic crunch ravaging World economies.

PPP arose as a medium for services development i.e. to make available adequate welfare services through public and private sectors arrangements. PPP is one of a number of ways of delivering public infrastructure, facilities and related services. It is not a substitute for strong and effective governance and decision making by government. In all cases, government remains responsible and accountable for delivering services and projects in a manner that protects and furthers the public interest (Narain, 2003). The importance of PPP as finance, management and maintenance option for development of infrastructure has been recognized in recent times, especially as governments the world over are looking for a better option for financing, management and maintenance of infrastructures for development. These forms of partnerships bring the public and the private sectors together in a long term partnership for mutual benefits. This is brought about as a result of government's recognition that there are something which the private sector does best and others where the public sector has more to offer. The government go into PPP with the objectives of delivering significantly improved public services, by contributing to increases in the quality and quantity of investment, to release the full potential of public sector assets, including state owned businesses and hence provide value for the taxpayer and wider benefits for the economy, and to allow stakeholders to receive a fair share of the benefits of the PPP. The stakeholders in this aspect include customers and users of the service(s) being provided, the taxpayers and employees at every level of the organization.

Prior to independence, the development and financing of basic people-oriented services were carried out by the public sector (government) in Nigeria. This was inherited by the nationalists that took over from the colonial government after independence. The state led development strategy of that period essentially meant that the public sector was the sole financier of infrastructure. The importance of PPP as a finance, management and maintenance option was recognized in Nigeria during the Olusegun Obasanjo's administration with the privatization of some public enterprises, deregulation and the monetization of some Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government, Okpara (2012). It gained more ground with the establishment of the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) by the late president Umar Yar'Adua in 2009 after infrastructure concession Regulatory Act was signed by the Obasanjo government in 2005. The examples of projects financed and maintained under the PPP initiative in the country include: Terminal II of the Murtala Muhammed Airport that is being rehabilitated under the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) scheme with Messers Bi-courtriey consortium as the new private managers. It was the first to be executed under the current PPP initiative. Also being financed is the rehabilitation of two main gateways in the FCT, the Airport Expressway and the outer Northern Expressway which runs from Zuba to Kubwa and to Asokoro. While the federal government provides 40%, the contractors source for 60% of the costs of the projects which when completed will, according to the past Minister of Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Adamu Aliero, generate employment opportunities and boost commercial activities within and around the FCT (Adekunde, 2006). Other projects include Shagamu-Benin road, Lagos-Badagry Highway etc. In the Agricultural sector, the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA), a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources has aggressively adopted the PPP initiative to manage its silos and reservation facilities. Government being aware of the attendant advantages of PPP initiative is making every grand plan to replicate this in all sectors of the nation's economy.

In Ebonyi State, the State Government under Governor Martin Elechi instituted the private-public-partnership initiative where the public sector can partner with the private sector in the financing, development, implementation and management of infrastructure and provision of services in Ebonyi State. The PPP was initiated to tackle the complex issues associated with projects in order to meet the public demand and ensure effective and efficient project delivery and stimulate private sector interest in participating in profitable social sector. The objective is to achieve more and provide better quality, efficient and affordable services to the society, strengthen institutional governance in the state by improving managerial skills and accountability with respect to construction, rehabilitation and provision of infrastructure, attract private funds for investments in the state, increase employment generation, strengthen human capacity development, minimize financial and operational rise on the parts of government, reducing the unit cost of infrastructural development, procurement and investment in the state and provide and enabling environment for private sector participation in services provision and infrastructure development in the state, among others.

Governor Elechi adopted PPP as a policy in realization of the fact that state resources are relatively limited to solve the infrastructural and developmental needs of the state. A law facilitating the PPP was made in 2009, known as the "Public-Private Participation in Infrastructure and other Related Services Development Law, 2009. The law also established the Ebonyi State Bureau of Public-Private-Partnership.

The Ebonyi State Bureau of Public-Private-Partnership has the following mandates:-

a. To be a centre on expertise for the promotion, development and implementation of ppp projects in the state.

b. Assist the policy council in the formulation of PPP policies and guidelines.

c. Provide technical assistance and support on PPP implementation to all government agencies, contracting authorities and the private sector.

d. Appraise, review, evaluate and approve all PPP projects throughout the process of project selection, preparation procurement

e. Co-ordinate the activities of contracting and other relevant government authorities and private sector with respect to PPP projects in the state.
f. Facilitate the issuance of renewal permit, licenses and other regulatory approvals for PPP projects from all government agencies and authorities.
g. Promote PPP awareness; disseminate information to investors about PPP opportunities in the state.

It has been reported in several studies that the health sector performance in Ebonyi state has being in a very deplorable condition which is characterized by high rate of avoidable infants, maternal mortality and morbidity as a result of inadequate or lack drugs and manpower.

This deplorable condition of the health sector attracted the attention of the state government to embark on partnership with the private sector. This was of great concern because the industry can no longer cope with the high demand put on it as a result of increased population and shortage of fund to finance much needed hospital facilities. In trying to ameliorate the infrastructure deficit problem, which has greatly constrained the economic growth and development of Ebonyi state, Governor Martin Elechi in 2009, envisioned an agenda aimed at improving the quality of the life of the people. At the centre of the agenda is the provision of Health Care Facilities through partnership with the private sector under Public-Private-Partnership arrangement. This led to the inauguration of a board called “Ebonyi State Strategic Health Development Plan”. The board is designed to serve as a major vehicle in operationalizing the process of private sector participation in the hospital management in the state in order to have a quality health care delivery in the state. The government as a matter of urgent public importance, disbursed N1.5 billion (One billion five hundred million naira) to the private sector under health sector management, (Egbo and Chukwuemeka, 2012).

The beneficiaries are the Missionary Hospitals who partner with the government to boost the health condition of the people in the state. The Missionary Hospitals that benefited are six in number and they are as follow:-

a. Mile 4 Hospital - Abakaliki

b. Presbyterian Joint Hospital - Uburu

c. St. Vincent Hospital – Ndubia, Izzi

d. Rural Improvement Mission Hospital - Ikwo

e. Sudan United Mission Hospital - izzi

f. Mater Misercodiae Hospital – Afikpo.

This partnership took effect from 20th November, 2009 when the state government saw the deplorable condition of health care in the state and decided to partner with the private sector in order to improve health system in the state and all these partnerships were to combat the menace of epidemics, Maternal and Infant Mortality and morbidity rates, and other life-threatening diseases in the state. The rate at which these lofty objectives have been achieved necessitated this research.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid growth of population in many developed and developing countries (Nigeria inclusive) has led to a substantial demand for the provision of infrastructural facilities. However, the conventional provision of infrastructure funded by government has lead to inefficiencies and subjected infrastructural development to the availability of government funds (Ajai, 2006). Despite the efforts of the state government in partnering with the private sector in provision of infrastructure, the average Nigeria is suspicious of PPP and is usually of the belief that it is a means of transferring power or control of the nation among favoured few, they refuse to see and appreciate the burden encountered by the private sector and public in ensuring the availability of a lasting and well functioning infrastructure and other welfare services which can better and faster be achieved through PPP.

Ebonyi state has meager resources to facilitate the required sustainable development, a large number of local governments, especially the rural ones, have no access to adequate and qualitative infrastructure especially in the health sector. Also many rural households do not have access to safe drinking water; sound health facilities etc, and are more vulnerable to avoidable epidemics.

The overwhelming demand for infrastructure of diverse purposes have created a need to involve the private sector in financing, constructing and managing public infrastructures to check the flaws common in conventional project procurements. Unfortunately, PPP practice in Nigeria and Ebonyi in particular is plagued by various issues caused by over reliance on ambiguous bespoke contracts and manipulated financial arrangements which exert pressure on the end users of the services provided by the private sector.

However, PPP in Nigeria general and Ebonyi in particular are faced with various challenges including; definition, as it is not properly defined in the law permitting the use of the finance option. Incessant changes in relevant political office holders and the chief executives of regulatory agencies is also a major problem with PPP projects, (Akinjide, 2005).

There is no sound legal and institutional frame work backing PPP in the country especially from the constitution, and in a situation where there is problem with the arrangement(s), the private sector or investors are left to bear the brunt financially or otherwise (Okpara, 2012). There is probability of corruption, inability of the private companies to access local currency and affordable long term loan. Finally, inconsistency in facilities maintenance and management practice, lack of transparency and accountability, problem of managerial and technical competence etc are major barriers impeding successful implementation of PPP projects in Ebonyi State in particular and Nigeria in general.

The rate at which every resident of Ebonyi state can access and afford the cost of qualitative health care services as a result of the PPP arrangement in that regard, necessitated this research.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study was to ascertain how PPP arrangement can enhance the most effective and efficient provision of qualitative health services in Ebonyi State.

Specifically, the study sought:

1. To ascertain the extent to which people can access qualitative health services in Ebonyi state.
2. To ascertain the nature of relationship between the public and private in the health sector under the PPP arrangement in Ebonyi state.

Hypothesis

HA1: People have more easy access to quality health services in Ebonyi state under the PPP arrangement.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Public-Private-Partnership (PPP)

Public-Private-Partnership has continued to attract lots of attention in literature and policy environments. For some people, it is an arrangement between governments and private sector entities for the purpose of providing public infrastructure, community facilities and related services. Such partnerships are characterized by the sharing of investment, risk, responsibility and reward between the partners, (Okorie, 2006; Adeola, 2009; Colverson, 2011.).

For them, projects can be executed under the PPP arrangement if:

a. There is a contractual arrangement between a public entity and private entity.
b. The delivery of infrastructure or services is in the public interest.
c. The public partners focus principally on the output and allow the private partner to determine the input.
d. A better value for money can be demonstrated than traditional public provision.

Colverson (2011) believes that PPPs can be said to include; long term contracts/agreements/relationships in the following way:

- A private funding component
- Provision of services or infrastructure through the private sector.
- Significant transfer of risk to the private sector, such as investment, design, construction or operational risks
- Complex contractual responsibilities and deliverables that vary over the contract period as the project moves through its phases, such as from finance to construction and operation.
- The return of infrastructure/services to the control of the state at the end of the contract term or
- The provision of services by the private sector on behalf of the state following the fulfillment of design and build responsibilities.

Okpara (2012), agreed with the foregoing when they said that PPP refers quite generally to private sector investment in public projects, whereby investors receive a return on their investment within a specific legal framework. In the same vein, the World Economic Forum defines a PPP as a voluntary alliance between several of about equal actors from different sectors whereby they agree to work together to reach a common goal or fulfill a specific need that involves share risks, responsibilities, means and competencies.

This means that PPPs are contractual agreement between a public agency (Federal, State or Local) and a private sector entity. Through this agreement, the skills and assets of each sector (public and private) are shared in delivering a service or facility for the use of the general public. In addition to the sharing of resources, each party shares in the risks and rewards potential in the delivery of the service and/or facility. Egboh and

Chukwuemeka (2012) add that PPP involves a contract between a public sector authority and a private party in which the private party provides a public service or project and assumes substantial financial, technical and operational risk in the project.

Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) is a sustained and long term partnering relationship between the public and private sectors to provide services and goods. Through PPP, the public sector seeks to bring together the resources of the public sector and the technical expertise of the private sector to provide services and goods to the public at the best value for money.

PPP should supposedly have the following features:

The legal framework that must be sound because of the different objectives of the parties; efficient and effective costing, the costing must take into consideration all the risks involved; the source of finance to be assured, accessible and made sustainable; both parties having technical knowledge of the infrastructure being developed, though it may be at different levels; and must be based on value for money (VFM), must be economical, efficient and effective.

Possible Benefits of Public-Private-Partnership

According to Colverson (2011:18), the following benefits can be derived from PPP initiative.

i. **Value for money**: Utilizing private sector skills and technology to deliver projects in a more efficient manner, resulting in either lower costs or a superior service for the same investment.

ii. **Optimization of design and operation**: Using outputs based specification allows room for and promotes innovative solutions from the private sector on the design, operation and maintenance aspects of the project, with the intention of improving effectiveness while reducing costs over the whole life cycle of the project.

iii. **Quicker delivery of project:** Private sector capacity and flexibility are seen to be superior to the public sector and PPPs therefore allow projects to be finished more quickly and on schedule than those attributed to public sector provision. With PPP, the bureaucratic tendencies are reduce thereby making projects to be completed on time.

iv. **Risk transfer:** Project risks (finance, time frame, planning permits, community consultations) are transferred to the party best equipped to deal with it, both in terms of expertise and costs, to the stability and benefit of the project.

v. **Increased investment:** In public infrastructure, governments are able to implement projects more frequently and on a large scale because the private sector finance element reduces its need to raise or budget additional funds, as is the case in standard procurement.

vi. **Increased budget/financing certainty:** The transfer of responsibility (and risk) to the private sector for some of the project elements shields government from unforeseen financial liabilities following cost overruns, delays or operational difficulties that would otherwise impact upon the budget bottom line project finances are secured for the length of the contract and not subject to cyclical political budget adjustments, allowing for greater investment planning and efficiencies throughout the management, operation and maintenance phases of the projects.

vii. **Improved services delivery:** PPP allows both sectors to operate with their sphere of expertise, the government in policy and governance, the private sector in the technical aspects of design, construction, operation and management. Payments that are linked to performance targets or requirements provide an incentive to perform that is too often absent in public provision of services.

viii. **Access to additional capital/off balance sheet financing:** Because all or a large percentage of finance in PPP is provided by the private sector, the government is not responsible for raising funds from within its own coffers of adjusting budgets to allow for large infrastructure spending. This particularly advantageous during times of fiscal crisis where the government is already short of funds or where the government may have a poor credit rating and is not able to raise the necessary finance. International and National Accounting Standards do provide some guidance as to what and how PPPs are recorded on balance sheets, but the issue is far from secure.

ix. **Political advantage:** There is political leverage to be gained from PPP agreements in terms of public perception and financial management credentials as projects are delivered on time with less impact on the budget and provide superior quality infrastructure or services.

x. **Private sector growth and stability:** PPPs provide the private sector with access to reduced risk, secure, long term investment opportunities that are underwritten by government contracts. Such agreements ensure private capital flows, provide investment opportunities, and stimulate local industry and job markets.

Critical Success Factors in PPP Initiative

In an increasing competitive global environment, public sectors around the world are focusing on new ways to finance projects, build infrastructure and delivery services. PPPs are becoming a common tool to bring together the strengths of both sectors. In addition to maximizing efficiencies and innovations of private

enterprise, PPP can provide much needed capital to finance public programs and projects, thereby freeing public funds for core economic and social programs, (Okorie, 2006). PPP evolved due to the capital restrains on the side of government in supplying and providing the needed services with the objectives of achieving better efficiency in the management and procurement of these needs, access to new sources of capital, accelerated development of infrastructure assets, risk sharing opportunities, maintenance or improvement of service levels, access to skills in planning, management and service delivery, realization of the value of under–utilized assets and greater value from economic development opportunities, (Babalakin, 2005; Narain, 2005; Adeola, 2009).
Also, Adeola, 2009, Omotala, 2009, and David-West, 2005, identified the following as the advantages of PPP initiatives:

1. **Effective procurement:** The components under this group includes, transparency in the procurement process, competitive procurement process, good governance, well organized and committed public agency, social support shared authority between public and private sectors and true and realistic assessment of the cost and benefits.
2. **Project implementation:** This comprises government involvement by providing a guarantee, multi-benefit objectives and political support, and the private sector's managerial and technical know-how.
3. **Legal framework:** This includes favourable legal framework, project technical feasibility, appropriate risk allocation and risk sharing, commitment and responsibility of public and private sectors and strong and good private consortium.
4. **Favourable economic conditions:** This includes stable macroeconomic conditions and sound economic policy.
5. **Available financial market:** This includes availability of suitable and adequate financial market.

Models of Public-Private-Partnership

The following according to Okorie, 2006, are the most popular PPP arrangements in Nigeria:

Concession: Concession is a collaborative arrangement before a government and private developer(s) to design and develop facilities through combination of participants which include the financiers and the contractors and or consultants. The developers may not necessarily be the financiers of the project. For example, Bicourtney Limited was expected to coordinate the financial and technical contributions of its partners in the concession of Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. Bicourtney's job was in charge of management of the concession as it is not a contractor. Its job was to arrange for finance and look for reputable contractors to develop the road.

Build, Own and Transfer (BOT): Under Build, Own and Transfer, the contractors who maybe a developer (financier) and not necessarily the builder, build and own the property which will be used by the client with the arrangement that the client will possess the property in the future. This arrangement is usually used for specialized facilities like hospitals, schools, social housing and markets.

Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT): In Build, Own, Operate and Transfer, the client does not have intention of using it and allows the developer to own it for a period of time. Example is the construction of Murtala Muhammed Airport II by Bicourtney Aviation management.

Design, Build, Finance and Own (DBFO): This is a Public Finance Initiative (PEI) in which a private organization conceived a development idea, design, construct it and operate it in perpetuity. For example, the Millennium Park, Maitaima, designed and developed by Salami Construction Company Limited.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI): Here, private sector (financial services company) funds a new or rehabilitation of existing project using various finance options on a long term bases.

Operation and Maintenance Contract (OMC): Private sector (under contract) operates a publicly owned asset for a specified term, while ownership of the asset remains with the public sector, etc.

The Challenges of PPP in Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular

Public-Private-Partnership though not quite new in the world history, came into prominence in Nigeria from fifties. The development of Dolphin Estate in the eighties was through PPP by the Lagos State Government and HFP construction limited. Also, the development of the oil industry immediately after oil was discovered in Oloibiri in Bayelsa state in 1956, was through PPP. In recent times, the attempt to adopt PPP as a method of construction in Nigeria failed many times. Majority of the stakeholders do not understand the principles of PPP.

PPPs in Nigeria and Ebonyi state in particular are faced with challenges such as financial limitations, dominance of public companies, corruption, inability of private companies to access local currency and affordable long term loan, other include PPPs are faced with the problem of definition, as it is not properly defined in the law permitting the used of the finance option.

Incessant changes in relevant political office holders and the chief executives of regulatory agencies is also a major problem with PPP projects, (Ajai, 2006). In the same vein, the sizes of the Nigerian banks pose a problem to the survival of such projects as they are unable to give a long term loan, when such loans are available, the rate of interests on them are usually too high to cope with. Many of the bank officials also lack experience in project financing (Okpara, 2012).

Inadequate sound legal and institutional framework backing Public-Private-Partnership in the country including Ebonyi State, and in a situation where there is problem with the arrangements the private sector or investors are left to bear the brunt financially and otherwise (Okpara, 2012).

Corruption is another challenge that faces PPP in Ebonyi state in particular and Nigeria at a large. Corruption is a cankerworm which has eaten deep into the fabrics of the state's economy. There have been many glaring cases of embezzlement and misappropriation of funds meant for infrastructural development of the state. Most at times, the PPP fail to carry out the infrastructural development and the agents siphon the funds for their personal use, thereby leaving the state undeveloped and this affect the standard of living of the masses.

Lack of political will by the agents and leadership of government to deal with corruption without fear or respect for the position of the individual or body has also hampered infrastructural development. Others are: Inadequate definition of project scope; constant interferences and manipulation of project scope and specifications for selfish reasons; inadequate data bank and faulty procurement policies and practices; poor project engineering designs and supply logistics; unstable public energy supply and high cost of petroleum products; lack of expertise and competent human capital, and so on.

Theoretical Framework

The researchers adopted a theory of "Neo Liberalism". The German scholar Alexander Rustow coined the term "Neo liberalism in 1938 at the "Collogue water Lippmann". The Colloquium defined the concept of Neo Liberalism as involving "the priority of the price mechanism, free enterprise, the system of the competition and a strong and impartial state. The effect of Neo-liberalism on global health, particularly the aspect of International aid, involves key players such as the government, the private sector, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Neo-liberal emphasis has been placed on free markets and privatization which has been tied to the "New Policy Agenda", an agenda in which the private sector and NGOs are viewed to provide better social welfare services than that of a nation or government. International NGOs have been promoted to till holes in public services created by the World Bank and IMF through their promotion of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) which slash government health spending which has not been sustainable. The reduced health spending and the gain of public health sector by NGO's causes the local health system to become fragmented, undermine local control of health programs and contribute to local social inequality between NGO workers and local individuals. Neo Liberalism seeks to transfer control of the economy or part of it from the public to the private sector or an integration of the two, rationalized by the narrative that it will produce a more efficient government and improve the economy and health of the nation. The definitive statement of the concrete policies advocated by Neo Liberalism is often taken to be John Williamson's Washington consensus. The washing consensus is a list of policy proposals that appeared to have gained consensus approval among the Washington based International Economic Organization (like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

The relevance of this theory lies in the fact that, while it uncovers the fact that no one is a monopoly of anything, adopting its ideals in Ebonyi state will enable the government and the private sector to pool resources together in developing every sector especially the health sector in its entirety where there is an urgent need to provide an efficient, qualitative and cost-effective health services especially now that there has continued to be constant outbreaks of avoidable epidemics.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a descriptive survey design and data were collected through structured questionnaire from the sample considered to be the representative of the population through simple random, purposive and stratified sampling techniques. 375 respondents comprising the staff, immediate patients of the affected mission hospitals partnering with the Ebonyi state government and a cross-section of residents from different communities in the state were used. Chi-square statistical tool was used to test the hypothesis of the study.

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution to: Ascertain the extent to which people can access qualitative health services in Ebonyi state and; ascertain the nature of relationship between the public and private in the health sector under the PPP arrangement in Ebonyi state.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

This is calculated through absolute number percentage which its formula is given as:

$\frac{R}{n}$ x $\frac{100}{1}$ that is; $\% = \frac{R}{n}$ x $\frac{100}{1}$

Where; % = Percentage of the respondents
R = Number of responses in each option
n = sample size

S/n	Items	Responses options (O) and their percentages								Total	
		SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%		
1.	People have more easy access to quality health services through the missionary hospitals partnering with the Ebonyi state government.	170	45.30	25	6.70	64	17.07	116	30.93	375	100
2.	The costs of services in these hospitals are cheaper when compared to privately-owned in the state.	92	24.53	126	33.60	70	18.67	87	23.20	375	100
3.	Ebonyi state government has always provided funds to the missionary hospitals as a way of partnering with them.	184	49.10	90	24.00	43	11.50	58	15.50	375	100
4.	Full partnership with the private sector in all sectors by the government will increase the rate of Ebonyi state development.	76	20.27	60	16.00	73	19.47	166	44.27	375	100
5.	Ebonyi state residents are fully aware of the nature of the relationship between the government and the missionary hospitals.	100	26.67	42	11.20	102	27.20	131	34.93	375	100
6.	The hospitals partnering with the Ebonyi state government are within the reach of all and sundry.	83	22.13	91	24.27	117	31.20	84	22.40	375	100
7.	There is high level of reduced preferential treatment in these hospitals.	107	28.53	23	6.13	82	21.87	163	43.37	375	100
8.	Government does not give the management of the hospitals the free hand to render health services to the people.	66	17.60	27	7.20	113	30.13	169	45.07	375	100

Source: Researchers 'Field Survey, 2015

Test of Hypothesis

Table 2: Contingency Table from item 1 in table of the questionnaire distribution Observed frequencies (O) and their corresponding percentages

S/n	Items	Responses options (O) and their percentages								Total	
		SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%		
1.	People have more easy access to quality health services through the missionary hospitals partnering with the Ebonyi state government.	170	45.30	25	6.70	64	17.07	116	30.93	375	100

Source: Researchers 'Field Survey, 2015.

$$X^2 = \frac{\Sigma (O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where; X^2 = chi-square; E=Expected frequency; Σ=Summation; O = Observed frequency

Table 3: Chi-square (x^2) Table calculated from the contingency table

Hypothesis	Options (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
HA1:	170	93.8	76.2	5806.44	61.90
	25	93.8	-68.8	4733.44	50.46
	64	93.8	-29.8	888.04	9.47
	116	93.8	22.2	492.84	5.25
	Total				**127.08**

Source: Researchers 'Field Survey, 2015.

FINDINGS

In the course of our investigation, the following findings were made:

- Ebonyi state government has disbursed a total of N1.7billion between 2007 and 2015 under the PPP initiative to six (6) hospitals in the following order: Mater Misericordae Hospital (N310 million), Sudan United Mission Hospital (N292 million), Presbyterian Joint Hospital (N282 million), Saint Vincent Hospital (N280.28 million), Rural Improvement Hospital (N279.85million), and Mile Four Hospital (N254.91 million).
- Apart from the forty seven (47) new structures constructed, equipped and put into active use in the concerned hospitals, 21 new outreach sites have been established to reach the hinterlands in the state.
- Ante-natal care has improved from 25,742 in 2008 to over 70,000 in 2015 and maternal deaths have dropped from 41 in 2007 to 23 in 2015. Immunization services also improved from the status-quo as no polio case was recorded as at October, 2015.
- The study has shown that sound and institutional framework of Public-Private-Partnership will ensure effective infrastructural development in Nigeria and Ebonyi state in particular.
- The study also revealed that many of the affected hospitals were either over or under staffed and a lot of residents in the hinterland are not even aware of the services of the six missionary hospitals.

Conclusion/Implication

Public-Private-Partnership remains one of the "special purpose vehicle" available to the Ebonyi state government to revive the comatose public corporations and utilities, expand the installed capacity of the existing ones and embark on the development of new public infrastructures, with the aim of delivering quality public goods and services of global standard. Best practices of Public-Private-Partnership will enable the private sector operators to deploy sound business management and finance in the production and provision of affordable and cost-effective goods and services, cause the efficient allocation of material and human resources, and the transformation of the public sector into employment generator, poverty reducing and alleviating agent, revenue generator, allied businesses and value creator.

The implication of the foregoing includes that; PPP will stimulate a greater state of development in all sectors since funding and evaluation are more efficiently executed. This would invariably reduce poverty rate in the state, curtail corruption, provide avenue for human capital development and reduce the outbreaks of avoidable epidemics.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the study therefore recommends as follow:

- Ebonyi state government should extend the provisions of the most accessible, qualitative and cost-effective health care and other services by going into partnership with the private in all the sectors and in the management of the health centres in the thirteen (13) General Hospitals spread across the thirteen (13) local government areas in the state.
- Strong monitoring team comprising the government and private sectors representatives, religious bodies, the academia and civil society should be formed and well mobilized to ensure standard implementation and constant maintenance.
- Nigerian government should ensure the extension of the operations of the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) beyond the national level to the state and other establishments as well as creation of access to credit securities for Public-Private-Partnership operators.
- Government and other financial agencies or institutions should assist in partnering with the private sector by providing adequate fund that will enhance speedy provision of infrastructural facilities in the state and Nigeria at large.

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