

Gombe village, where pregnant women die on the way to hospital

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Marka Isa, 15 of Dolli village, was pregnant with her first child and waiting eagerly for the day when she will deliver the baby.

When the day eventually arrived, Marka started labour late in the evening around 7pm and was attended to by her co-wife, Zainab Abdulhamid, one of the four women partially trained as Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) attending to all gynecology cases in the village.

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However, Marka had a prolong labour, forcing her husband to start making arrangement to take her to Lawanti, about seven kilometers from the village, as there is no single midwife in the village's health centre.

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She was carried on a motorcycle and rushed to a Primary Health Centre in Lawanti, unfortunately young Marka gave up the ghost before they could reach Lawanti due to bad road, which is a footpath that can only be accessible on motorcycles.

Also, Lubabatu Ali, 18 lost her life in 2017 while giving birth to her third child. She died on their way to access hospital in Gombe, a distant of 35 kilometres, when health centres in both Lawanti and Akko villages couldn't handle the complication with her childbirth.

By the time Lubabatu reached Gombe in the evening, she couldn't survive due to prolong labour that lasted for over 12 hours as such doctors could not save her and her little baby.

Another woman, Talatu Abdulhamid, 30, died on her way to Gombe, after the four TBAs in the village failed to handle the delivery of her fifth child, the child survived but the mother died at a hospital in Gombe.

According to medical doctors, Marka, Lubabatu and Talatu had reached the hospital at least two hours earlier, they might have survived and lived to see their new born children.

Apart from women, other residents of the village also lost their lives while trying to access healthcare outside the community because of poor access road into the

community.

Ibrahim Hussaini said his nephew, Mohammed Usman, 20 died in his hand while on a motorcycle on their way to Lawanti.

“The boy had high fever and was treated for sometime at the village health centre and at home, but when the condition deteriorated, we decided to take him to Lawanti, but he died on our way to the hospital,” he said.

The cases of Marka, Lubabatu and Usman are few cases out of several others who died while trying to access healthcare from the Dolli village, located about seven kilometers from Lawanti town along the Gombe-Bauchi highway in Akko Local Government of Gombe State.

Dolli village which was believed to have been established over 1000 years ago, with a population of about 2000 people lacks all the basic amenities that will make the inhabitant feel they are living in the 21st century.

They lacked good access road that will connect them with the outside world. The community is only accessible by motorcycles, making it difficult for them to take their farm produce to markets.

The only health centre in the village is grossly understaffed, it is being manned by only two persons, Environmental Health Technician (EHT) and Community Health Extension Worker (CHEW), and they close by 2pm, which means all patients on admission have to be discharged.

According to Abdussalam Magaji, Environmental Health Assistant (EHA), who is working voluntarily at the centre, the health workers leave early because they are coming several kilometers outside the village.

There is also the problem of lack of water for domestic use, they depended 100 percent on a pond where they drink from the same pond with their cattle and other domestic animals.

In the area of electricity, Dolli was connected to the national grid only in 2018, but the light went off just three days after the commissioning ceremony.

There are only four blocks of classrooms, two each for the primary and junior secondary schools respectively. Most of the pupils abandoned school after JSS 3, because the nearest school is seven kilometers away from the village.

The Village Head of Dolli, Malam Wakili Korau, said since the village was established over 1000 years ago, a comatose health centre and the dilapidated schools buildings are the only basic amenities they could boast of in the village.

“The village was established over 1000 years ago, but we were left behind in all areas of development with regards to social amenities. Ranging from poor healthcare centre, decayed school buildings and poor access road into the community and the worst part is we drank from the same pond with our animals.

“Because of the poor access road, our people, men, women and children, are dying almost on daily basis while accessing healthcare. Women are the worst hit because there is no single qualified midwife in Dolli and over 10 villages that surrounded us. Whenever a childbirth comes with a complication, the chances of survival for such woman is 50-50,” he decried.

Malam Korau added that in the 21st century the village is yet to be connected with electricity.

He said: “When an electricity project was started and eventually commissioned last year, we were happy and full of praise to the government for coming to our rescue,

however just three days after the dignitaries that commissioned the project left the village, the light went off and since then it never return.”

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