

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Knowledge, Perceptions and Attitudes of Islamic Scholars Towards Reproductive Health Programs in Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Some reproductive health policies and activities of international development organizations continued to be criticized by some religious groups. Such criticisms can be serious obstacles in the provision of reproductive health and rights information and services in many communities. This study was conducted to find the knowledge, perception and attitude of Islamic scholars on reproductive health programs and to get some suggestions on the scholars' role in the planning and implementation of reproductive health advocacy and programming. The data were collected by in-depth interview with representative sample of selected Muslim scholars in and around Maiduguri town in Borno State, Nigeria. All the scholars had vague or no idea of what reproductive health is all about. When they were explaining reproductive health, most of the scholars mentioned some of the rights of women especially the need for maintaining the good health of women and their children as reproductive health. Even though they have poor knowledge, all the Muslim scholars interviewed believed that reproductive health is an essential component of healthy living and the programs of the international development organizations are mostly good, but they have reservations and concern to certain campaigns and programs. Scholars that promised their contributions in enhancing reproductive health have a common condition for their continuous support to any international development organization or reproductive health program. Conformity to Islamic norms and principles are prerequisites to their loyalties. The scholars also advised the international development organizations on the need to identify themselves clearly, so that people know from where they are coming, what are their background, and the program that they want to do and the reasons for doing the program in the community.

Keywords: *Islamic scholars, Reproductive health programs, International development organizations*

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