

## **Iman Ibom Elite and Sustainable Development of Nigeria since the Colonial Period**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

*The training and development of humans have moved to the centre stage of development debate. It has become a common phenomenon for societies all over the world to incorporate the development of human resource in every sphere of their development agenda. Education builds the human capital which is considered as the primary component in economic growth, technological capability and social transformation. People are considered as the ultimate resource whose sustenance constitutes the all-embracing goal of development. Literature is replete with positive-pay-off and the multiplier effects of education on the society. Evidence also abounds to the effect that educational deprivation shuts individuals out of the mainstream of social, economic and political structures, limits the participation in labour force and locks them into relatively low productivity level. Indeed, lack of education whether, formal or informal leaves individuals helpless and increases the dependency ratio. It therefore becomes pertinent to educate and develop individuals in various business approaches. This paper discovers that the early acquisition of Western education by Iman Ibom people raised many of them to vantage position within Akwa Ibom and Nigeria at large and empowered them to contribute significantly to sustainable development. The paper recommends that Iman Ibom people should continue to be innovative in the contemporary era by embracing Western*

*education and relevant skills so that they could bequeath the legacy of sustainability to the next generation. It adopts a historical analytical method.*

## **Introduction**

Iman Ibom is one of the clans in Ibibio land in Akwa Ibom State. In a geographical sense, the clan stretches from Ekom Iman (the ancestral home) in Iman North, Etinan Local Government Area to Oniong clan in Onna Local Government Area. Iman Ibom consists of four families namely: Afaha, Nnung Oku Itina, Nnung Oku Ubo and Nnung Asuna (Akpan, 2017).

In Etinan Local Government Area, the four families constitute the 64 villages of the area. In Onna Local Government Area, an acronym for (Oniong, Awa and Nnung Ndem), the Awa group is made up of Afaha, Nnung Oku Itina and Asuna with 22 villages, Oniong, which is of Nnung Oku Ubo stock has 16 villages. Even though some of the villages in Nnung Ndem such as Ndon Eyo, Ikot Ndua Iman and Mkpok and Ikot Nkan are of Iman Ibom extraction (Akpan, 2017), this assessment would exclude that group.

Iman Ibom people are very dynamic and creative. As a people destined for greatness, Iman Ibom, though not a completely coastal dwellers, became one of the earliest set of Ibibio to receive Christianity following the arrival of Rev. Samuel Bill, of the Qua Iboe Mission in Ibeno in 1887. After the establishment of its first station at Ibeno in 1887, the Qua Iboe next established their presence in Okat, in Onna Local Government Area. After Okat, the Qua Iboe missionaries providentially planted the seed of the gospel in Etinan, an important Iman Ibom village in 1898. Also, Etinan was considered central enough for the establishment of Qua Iboe infrastructure like the Qua Iboe Mission School (Etinan Institute 1915), the Qua Iboe Mission Hospital (1927); the Qua Iboe Leper Colony, Ekpene Obom (1932), and the Qua Iboe Printing Press and Bookshop. Etinan eventually became the citadel of Christianity, great seat of Western

education, mother of several highly placed sons and daughters of Ibibio land, pacesetters in most laudable ventures (Akpan, 2015).

It is an undeniable fact that these institutions changed the destiny and landscape of Iman Ibom. For instance, Etinan Institute, the first post-secondary school in Ibibio land has ultimately contributed immensely in according Iman Ibom the unique appellation of the “brain basket of Akwa Ibom State”. The Qua Iboe Mission Hospital was once a centre of excellence in medical practice with a functional School of Midwifery. Moreover, the colonial authorities also established a Government School at Ikot Ekan in 1907, an institution that became an epic centre of learning in Nigeria (Akpan, 2017).

Apart from the schools established by the Qua Iboe Mission and the Colonial Government, other Christian bodies such as the Catholic, the Salvation Army and the African Church also ventured into the educational field and broadened the scope of Western education. The early connection of Iman Ibom people with Western education has resulted in the emergence of educated elite who have contributed significantly to national development since the colonial period.

Some of the elite discussed include: Obong Sampson Udo Etuk, the founder President of the Ibibio Union (later Ibibio State Union), his wife Obonganwan Grace Sampson Etuk, Chief J.S.B. Ikpe, former Governors such as: Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong, Obong Akpa Isemin, the current Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Mr. Udom Gabriel Emmanuel, outstanding technocrats such as Obong Ufot Ekaete, Apostle Samuel King, Obong Asuquo Etukeyen among others.

### **The Nexus between Human Resource Development and National Development**

The fact that human being is very important in ensuring the survival of the society is non-contestable. Development of any society can be brought about with the availability of adequate and requisite human and material resources. Irrespective of the enormity of the material resources,

development cannot be achieved if there is no man to effectively harness those non-human ingredients for development (Osudike, 2015).

Indeed, any country that is ready to pursue development must be able to first and foremost harness and develop, to be able to put to use, the potentials of her population. Human resource development could be seen as a field that is concerned with obtaining, organising and motivating the human resource of a society with a view to promoting effort, cooperation and trust between all people working for national development. The capacity to collate and analyse past experiences and to effect relevant innovation progressively, requires a conscious effort to develop the necessary human capacity both intellectual and physical to ensure requisite results and success in continuing basis. It is the combination of the multi-dimensional efforts and activities that sustain and improve man's effort on current level of economic performance and social welfare that is termed human resource development (Osudike, 2015).

### **Iman Ibom Elite and Sustainable Development**

As noted above, the early contact with the Christian missionaries and invariably the embrace of Western education positioned Iman Ibom in a vantage realm and helped in raising some of the first set of pre colonial and post-independence nation builders in this part of the country who left indelible foot prints in the sand of time. One of such iconic figures was Obong Sampson Udo Etuk of Etinan, fondly remembered as the initiator of the first communal education scheme in Nigeria, the Ibibio Union scholarship programme.

According to Abasiattai (1991) Obong Sampson Udo Etuk, was perhaps the most learned Ibibio man by 1937 – having acquired Primary School education, the Senior Teachers' Certificate (the highest then awarded by the Education Department in Nigeria), the Senior Clerical Certificate, having been appointed a Government Travelling Teacher in 1930. In its letter of May 1937, nominating Etuk to the colonial government for appointment into the Legislative Council, Lagos to represent the Ibibio

people, the Ibibio Union described Etuk as an “invaluable, long standing leader and good adviser,” and added:

A leisurely survey of Ibibio land by the Union to examine the weight of trust they have in their men, considering their usefulness to the community, character, self-sacrifice and patriotism, led the Union...unanimously to convey their implicit confidence upon Sampson Udo Etuk at present in the employ of government in the Education Department as a fit person to represent them in the Legislative Council. He is of a good, well known and leading family in Etinan....Finally, he is known for his excellent organisation of his family and as the most capable President of the Ibibio Union. The sincerity and efficiency with which he manages the business of his family, village, clan and that of the Ibibio community win him the favour of our race (Cited Akpan, 2014).

Obong Etuk's role in the formation of the Ibibio Union (later Ibibio State Union) which he served as the founder President between 1928 and 1938, the successful inauguration of the first community sponsored higher education scholarship in Nigeria, the establishment of the Ibibio State College at Ikot Ekpene in 1946, the scholarship scheme for six Ibibio women in 1948, have been well documented and need not detain us here. However, it should be added that the educational programme led to the emergence of the first six Ibibio graduates namely: Bassey Udo Adiaha Attah, from Uyo Division who studied Agriculture in the United States of America. He was the second Nigerian to obtain a degree in the discipline and the second to hold a Master of Science Degree in the discipline. Egbert Udo Udoma, another beneficiary, who studied Law, was probably the first African to have obtained a PhD in the discipline. Other beneficiaries included Obot Antia Obong, who studied Medicine in

Ireland, James Lawson Nsima and Ibanga Udo Akpabio, who studied Education in the United States of America. Mr. Akpabio later became the Minister of Education in the Eastern Region of Nigeria. One of the beneficiaries, Asuquo Udo Idiong unfortunately died after completing a study in Medicine in Canada. He was replaced by another candidate, Effiong Udo Ekpo (Akpan, 2014).

The superlative performance of the Ibibio Union entrenched the Ibibio on the global map. For instance, the *WASU Magazine* published by students from the four English speaking countries: Nigeria, Ghana (formerly Gold Coast) Sierra Leone and the Gambia in United Kingdom, in its March 1945 edition, acknowledged the contributions of the Ibibio Union. It should be added that the Editor and Chairman of the Editorial Board at that time was Egbert Udo Udoma, one of the Ibibio scholars in United Kingdom. Also Charles Akpan Ekere, an Iman Ibom elite, who studied at that time in London University was on the Editorial Board. Ekere's M.A. thesis entitled "Education in Nigeria: A Critical Policy and Practice in the Light of Modern Principles of Education", which was supervised by two renowned anthropologists, Prof. Daryll Ford and Margaret Read, is regarded as the earliest academic research on the role of education in the socio-political sphere of Nigerian society. Ekere rose to the position of Permanent Secretary in the old Eastern Region of Nigeria and acted as the Chief Secretary to the Premier in 1965, when the substantive Chief Secretary, Chief Jerome Udoji was on leave (Akpan, 2017).

The *WASU Magazine* reported the accomplishment of some of the Ibibio scholars thus:

Two Ibibio students, Messrs James L. Nsima and Ibanga U. Akpabio, have returned to Nigeria after graduating in the United States, securing the M.A. and B.Sc. degrees respectively. Their achievements provide one more example of the

potency of self-help. Mr. Nsima not only majored in Natural and Social Sciences at Hampton Institute but combined his course of study in Organisation and Administration of Education with Journalism...His elder colleague, who has proved that age is by no means a barrier to further learning, also obtained his degrees in identical subjects. We believe that these two men have much to contribute in common to the general progress of this country and we should expect that since the need of the moment is for qualified men, the Ibibio people would not hesitate to take advantage of their presence...The Ibibio Union has set a worthy example in encouraging the pursuit of higher education among promising Ibibio students (*WASU Magazine*, 1945: 19).

*The Annual Report on Southern Provinces of Nigeria for the Year 1938*, published by Government Printer, Lagos highlights the achievements of the Ibibio Union during Obong Etuk's tenure thus:

During April of this year, the Ibibio Union celebrated the tenth anniversary of its inception. Again, during the year, a long-cherished scheme of higher education was realised by the Union, when its funds proved sufficient to send early in August...members, to various educational establishments in the United Kingdom and United States for further studies...since 1937, the Union has represented their wish to Government for the Ibibio to be represented in the Legislative Council. Finally, in October this year, Mr. Nyong Essien, a member of Uruan clan of Uyo Division, the selection of the Ibibio Union, was gazetted as

the first member of the Ibibio Division...among its other activities, the Union has, during the year, further explored the question of a unified service scheme for the Native Administration employees in all Ibibio clans, and has allocated the establishment of a middle school for the Ibibio. Both these schemes are still in process. In general the Union has been a power for good and of great help in disseminating to the clans tribal opinion on matters of clan welfare, Council activities, finance and health measures (The Annual Report on Southern Provinces of Nigeria for the Year 1938: 20-21).

As it is generally known, during the pre-colonial and the colonial periods, the role of women in community development in Nigeria was either overlooked or grossly underestimated. Women were looked at as mothers and their common place was in the kitchen. However, in those days when female education was still new, one Iman Ibom girl was fortunate to have been sent to school by her parents. The lady was Obonganwan Grace Sampson Etuk, from Ikot Udo Abia, who eventually became the wife of Obong Sampson Udo Etuk. After her primary education, she attended Edgerley Memorial School, Calabar. On leaving Edgerley, she was trained as a student nurse in the Qua Iboe Mission Hospital, Etinan where she worked as a theatre nurse with eminent missionary doctors, Wheatley and Ross (Citation of Obonganwan Grace Etuk, 1990).

In 1948, she travelled to England. At Liverpool, she started a branch of the Ibibio Union. Later, together with Ntison Vincent Uwemedimo, they organised a branch of the Ibibio Union in London. While in London, she did a Diploma course in Catering and Home Economics at the London Good House – Keeping Institute. She also attended the Paris Academy School of Fashion and Dressing at London before she returned home in 1952 to contribute to community development. She also did advanced



training in Hotel Management in Cairo in 1961. While studying in Britain in the 1940s, she became an active member of the Labour party. (Akpan, 2013).

During World War II, she organised fund raising events to raise money for disabled persons and the soldiers. Through games and dances, the women were able to collect sufficient money for this purpose. She also captained a women's team against the male team in Calabar Province. In 1955, Obonganwan Etuk rose to the position of Catering Supervisor in the Government Rest House, Enugu – the first African to hold such a position. In 1956, her expertise was put to test as she had to cater for the Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth II and her entourage during the monarch's visit to Nigeria. For her excellent work, she was awarded an insignia by the Governor of Eastern Region, Clement Pleass, and received congratulatory messages from the Premier, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dr. E.A. Esin, Minister of Welfare *The Daily Express* of London and the Post and Telegraph (P and T) Territorial Controller, Mr. Rally (Akpan, 2013).

As a trained nurse and wife of the first Black Principal of the Teachers' Training College, Uyo (now University of Uyo), Obonganwan Etuk's initiative in the early 1940's resulted in the invitation of Dr. Haigh and Matron Gardiner of Methodist Hospital, Ituk Mbang, to run an antenatal clinic for pregnant mothers and training workshops for traditional midwives. The experiment provided the foundation for the University of Uyo Health Centre (Citation of Grace Etuk, 1990; Akpan, 2013).

Another Iman Ibom leader of the era who made significant contributions to nation building was Chief J.S.B. Ikpe. As one of the earliest Ibibio sons to received Western education, having attended the leading educational institution in Nigeria at that time (Bonny Normal School); Chief Ikpe displayed prolific brilliance and became an outstanding educational administrator and community mobiliser, planner and strategist. He was a onetime Secretary-General of the Ibibio Union and the brain behind the Ibibio Union Magazine (Akpan, 2017).

Three Iman Ibom sons, namely: Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong, Obong Akpan Isemin and Mr. Udom Gabriel Emmanuel have occupied the exalted position of Governor of the former Cross River State and Akwa Ibom State respectively. During Chief (Dr.) Isong and Obong Isemin's administration, they rose above parochialism and spread developmental projects round the existing areas. Specific reference should be made of the vibrant industrialisation policy embarked upon by the late Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong administration, which led to the establishment of industries across the then Cross River State, such as the Sunshine Batteries, and Biscuit Industry at Ukana in Essien Udim Local Government Area, Peacock Paint Limited, Ikot Ekan, Qua Steel Mill at Eket, Quality Ceramic at Itu and so on. This mature approach to statecraft ought to serve as a bench mark for future leaders of the State (Akpan, 2017).

As noted by Akpan (2013), the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) was an event of unprecedented trauma for our nation. It needed men of integrity and unalloyed fidelity and commitment to the federal cause to pull the nation through to its goal of military victory, economic prosperity and political unity and stability. At that time, Nigeria's desperate search for men of sterling worth to mediate these goals was answered with the availability of Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong.

General Ibrahima Babangida, in April 1991, during his first official state Visit to Akwa Ibom state, publicly informed Akwa Ibom people thus: "it was from your ranks that Nigeria acquired its war-time national field manager in the most critical years of the privations and financial shortfalls of the civil war when Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong served the nation as the Governor of the Central Bank". Chief (Dr.) Isong was the second Nigerian to hold the position of the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, but the first to occupy that exalted position for two consecutive terms. He was a renowned Harvard trained Economics wizard who distinguished himself in the service of several national and international finance establishments including the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.). As rightly observed, he is mostly remembered as the legend and patriot who was appointed as the

Governor of the Central Bank at a time when the nation's war finances were careening precariously on the economic tight rope. Few nations in modern human history have fought a war of that magnitude of the Nigerian civil war and emerged with their economy even stronger than pre-war level. Nigeria achieved this rear feat because of the superior management skills and "the proverbial integrity" of Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong. He also steered the apex bank during the period of transition from Nigerian Pounds to the Naira. It is therefore, not surprising that his portrait adorns the nation's One Thousand Naira currency (Akpan, 2013).

Also Obong Akpan Isemin, the first Civilian Governor of Akwa Ibom State is remembered as the man who espoused the philosophy of "politics of cake baking before politics of cake sharing". He introduced the philosophy of structural mental adjustment. The philosophy of "politics of cake baking before cake sharing" implied that politicians, civil servants and people should work hard to fatten the size of the "cake" to be sufficient to pass round. He thus dedicated what was supposed to be the first part of his tenure to the search for a healthier purse and facilities to make sharing easier in the latter half of his envisaged tenure as the Governor of Akwa Ibom State (Akpan, 2017).

During his tenure, the administration initiated a number of projects including rural electrification; it started the construction of four hospitals each with 110 beds and completed the Women Development Centre, Uyo, electrification of the Secretariat Complex. The new Governor's Office project, the Abuja Liaison Lodge projects were initiated. This was in addition to giving a befitting finishing and furnishing to the Governor's residence, the Hilltop Mansion. However, before the tenure attained its half time, the administration was overthrown by the military. The Isemin's administration will also be remembered for the struggle to end the on-shore/off-shore oil dichotomy and for the Structural Mental Adjustment concept which was however, not fully implemented. The concept sought to inspire among the people a spirit of risk taking, faith in self and belief in the

pursuit of enterprises as a preference to dependence on the Government of Civil Service (Awakessien, 1997).

Iman Ibom has also produced about six Secretaries to State Government beginning from the former South Eastern State, in the persons of Professor Essien Udosen Essien-Udom, (Ikot Osong, Iman north, Etinan Local Government Area); Professor Ignatius Ukpong (Ikot Iko Ibon, Onniong , Onna Local Government Area); Professor Etienne Enobong Essien (Ikot Udo Abia, Iman north, Etinan Local Government Area); Elder Esemie Essien (Ikot Ebiyak, Iman north, Etinan Local Government Area); Obong Asuquo Inyang Udo Etukeyen (Ikot Obong Ikot Inyang, Iman south, Etinan Local Government Area), and Mr. Udom Emmanuel (Awa Iman, Awa Clan, Onna Local Government Area). As far as we could verify from available records, no other clan in Akwa Ibom State has matched such enviable record (Akpan, 2017).

In addition to this, the clan has also been fortunate to produce a Deputy Governor, Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Speaker of the State House of Assembly, many Commissioners, Permanent Secretaries, Chairmen and Members of key Boards and Parastatals as well as captains of industries. Evidently, Iman clan is so far, the only clan in Akwa Ibom that has produced the Secretary to Government of the Federation (SGF) in the dignified personality of Obong Ufot Ekaette, who served under the Chief Obasanjo's administration from (1999-2007), and later became a Minister during the short lived Musa Yar Adua's administration.

Iman Ibom has also given to the nation's educational system, some of the finest University Vice-Chancellors, such as Professor Essien Udosen Essien Udom (University of Maiduguri); the first African Professor of Political Science in Nigeria's premier University, the University of Ibadan and one of the first Professors of Political Science in West Africa. (Akpan, 2016), Professor Akpan Hogan Ekpo, (University of Uyo), and Professor Sunday Peters (Akwa Ibom State University). (Akpan, 2017).

In the field of administration at local, national and international levels, Iman Ibom can be described as "first among equals". However, for

our own purpose, we have to document the strategic role of two ebullient Iman Ibom sons to national integration. They are Apostle Samuel John King and Obong Ufot Ekaette respectively.

As stated earlier, one of the most tragic events that has ever engulfed Nigeria as a nation was the 30 month Civil War. During the crisis period, one of the most outstanding challenges that confronted the nation was the availability of reliable and tested Nigerians who could support the Federal Government of Nigeria to crush the rebellion. During this trying period, General Yakubu Gowon considered some Iman Ibom sons, notably, Apostle Samuel John King and Obong Ufot Ekaette, trustworthy enough to handle secret state matters and to contribute meaningfully to the sustainability of Nigeria (*Forever in Our Hearts*).

As a technocrat, Apostle King was appointed to the State House, Lagos, the nation's seat of power, as the Principal Private Secretary to General Yakubu Gowon, the Head of State. He won the admiration and confidence of the Commander-in-Chief, during that period. The strategic placement accorded him the opportunity to contribute immensely to government particularly, the discourse on the creation of States which was a major strategy adopted by the Federal government, to weaken the hot campaign by Lt. Colonel Ojukwu to break up Nigeria. Apostle King also used his position to attract investment to the then South Eastern State. In August, 1968, Apostle King handed over to another Iman Ibom technocrat, Obong Ufot Ekaette, "who continued with the legacy of excellence and commitment which Apostle King had left in that office for another seven years" (*Forever in Our Hearts*).

The South Eastern State Liaison Office was a child of circumstance as it was a corollary to the Civil War. For the new State, it became imperative that an office should be opened in the Federal Capital in Lagos, to oversee events that would promote the growth of the State. Based on Apostle King's performance when he served both in the Cabinet Office and State House, his deep diplomatic knowledge and contact with the business community made the Governor of South Eastern State, Brigadier Udokaha

Esuene and the Secretary to the State Government Chief Michael O. Ani to appoint Apostle Samuel King as the pioneer Permanent Secretary of the Liaison Office, Lagos

His primary duty was to coordinate the Federal Government's post war policy of Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation. He had to creatively improvise most of the time to ensure that he served national interest and translated the gains of the "Rs" into practical reality for the people of Eastern Nigeria. Through his self sacrifice, the success of South Eastern State Liaison Office became a model and eventually led to the proliferation of States Government's Liaison Offices in the Federal Capital Territory. He served in that capacity for seven unbroken but eventful years.

An area that seems relevant to be properly contextualized is Apostle's King's instrumentality to the growth of Mobil Producing Nigeria (now Exxon-Mobil). Since history is an evidence based discipline, historical narration becomes more meaningful when placed within the frame work of evidence, therefore, a portion of the letter from Mr. George Larson of Mobil Producing Nigeria to his colleague, Mr. S.L. Waggoner, of Mobil Oil Corporation, International Division, New York, United States of America, on 20th of August, 1970, would validate our position thus:

It is with great pleasure that, by means of this letter, I have the privilege of introducing to you Mr. S.J. King, the Permanent Secretary for the South Eastern State resident in Lagos. In his capacity, Mr. King is directly responsible for representing the South Eastern State Governor, His Excellency, Colonel U.J. Esuene in contact with the Federal Military Government, Embassies and business headquarters in Lagos. Before his present assignment in Nigeria in December, 1966, Mr. King had various assignments in Nigeria's Foreign Service and following a Course in Diplomacy in Geneva, he returned to Nigeria and served as the Principal Private Secretary to the Head of State,

General Gowon. I personally value Mr. King's friendship and consider him to be a very good friend of Mobil. His sympathetic understanding of our problems and his willingness to use his substantial influence on our behalf has contributed greatly in the progress of the establishment of our operations in the South Eastern State. I am sure you will find it pleasant and worthwhile talking to Mr. King because of his warm personality, broad experience and current knowledge of matters considered important to both South Eastern State and Federal Military Government. I am confident that Mr. King will find the opportunity of talking to you equally rewarding (Cited Akpan, 2017: 707-708).

It should be noted that the journey of Akwa Ibom people to the destination of statehood within the Nigerian polity was not a walk through a highway but a crawl through a labyrinth. It was a slow and tortuous journey of struggle and perseverance. In the long process, many Iman Ibom fathers Chief Nathaniel Essien, Edidem Thompson Akpabio, Chief James Ekpeikpe etc., were in the forefront of the struggle. However, following the creation of the State in 1987, a distinguished Iman Ibom son, Obong Asuquo Etukeyen who was the pioneer Secretary to Akwa Ibom State Military Government was providentially saddled with the onerous responsibility of laying the foundation of greatness of the State. He excelled in the discharge of the serious assignment and earned himself the undisputed honour of "the father of Akwa Ibom State Civil Service".

Beyond his foundational effort at the home front, destiny later moved Obong Etukeyen to the Federal Civil Service where he served as the Director General (Permanent Secretary), Special Duties, Commissions and Tribunals in the Cabinet Office and later in the Council Secretariat, The Presidency. He used the unique privilege to

handle the on-shore/off-shore oil dichotomy issue. Although General Ibrahim Babangida had announced the abrogation of the obnoxious law, the abrogation could not be implemented because the enabling administrative framework had not been put in place; hence, the abrogation was only on paper. Moreover, some influential personalities from some section of the country did not want the implementation of the new law (Etukeyen, 2015).

It was Obong Etukeyen who used his experience as a seasoned technocrat to interpret the abrogation document and subsequently write the enabling memorandum which authorized its implementation which General Ibrahim Babangida signed. The skill and wisdom which he applied in the matter astonished the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Alhaji Aliyu Mohammed. When the then Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Obong Akpan Isemin, led a delegation of Akwa Ibom leaders to thank General Babangida for the abrogation of the dichotomy and the approval for the implementation of the abrogation law, the Secretary to the Federal Military Government jokingly described Obong Etukeyen “as a one man mafia in the Presidency” based on his skillful handling of the dichotomy matter (Etukeyen, 2015).

It was therefore through the untiring personal efforts of this unsung hero that Akwa Ibom State secured the payment of oil royalties to the State. It also led to the high placement of the State in the allocation of projects by the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) as well as the acceptance of Akwa Ibom to produce an Oil Minister. Ultimately, from the point of zero allocation from oil revenue Akwa Ibom now tops the chart as the highest receiver of federal allocation (Awakessien, 1997).

Chief Hanson Udo Akpabio, being the first indigenous Provincial Commissioner for Uyo Province between 1959 and 1961, was the man that laid the infrastructural foundation for the future development of Uyo. It is on record that he facilitated the opening of roads, electricity and pipe borne water. It was during his tenure that the



Uyo-Etinan, Uyo-Nnung Udoe, and Uyo-Ifiayong roads were tarred. Chief Akpabio later served as the Minister of State, Establishments in the old Eastern Region of Nigeria. In the same vein, Chief Effiong Udo Uko, as the Managing Director of the Manilla Insurance Company, built the Manilla House, along Aka Road, which was then the tallest building in Uyo metropolis (Akpan, 2017).

In the area of provision of private education, Iman Ibom can boast of Chief J.S. Etukudo the founder of the School of Accountancy and Business Studies now Uyo City Polytechnic, a leading institution in the provision of medium level man power for the country and the first of such private institutions east of the Niger. Others include, Elder (Dr.) Godwin Ema of the popular Modern Training Institute, Uyo, one of the oldest private schools in Akwa Ibom State, Obong Enoch Eno Udofia of Alta Academy, Etinan; Professor Monday Abasiattai and wife, Deaconess Affiong Abasiattai of Bright Stars Model School, Uyo and Afaha Ikot Akpan Nkpe, Awa Iman in Onna Local Government Area, among others (Akpan, 2017).

Other Iman Ibom sons who have contributed significantly to the development of Akwa Ibom in particular and Nigeria in general include: Chief A.J.U. Ema, a renowned Nigerian Arts teacher, who was honoured in 1993 as the “Father of Nigeria’s contemporary Arts” by the Universities of Nigeria Arts Graduates in Lagos. Chief Ema began his teaching career in 1927 and taught in several places in Nigeria and former Southern Cameroon, which was administered as part of the Eastern Nigeria. He was in-charge of Nigerian crafts exhibition during the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC ’77) (Ema, 2016).

Elder Onofiok Ufot, by virtue of his position as the pioneer Registrar of the University of Calabar helped significantly in piloting the institution to great height. Obong John Dickson Ekwere, a renowned artist, served as the Chief Information Officer and Permanent Secretary, South Eastern State Ministry of Information. Obong Ekwere was the pioneer Director-General of Akwa Ibom Television and later, Akwa

Ibom Broadcasting Corporation, comprising both the Radio and the Television. On his retirement, he served as the Paramount Ruler of Etinan Local Government Area and the Clan head of Iman Ibom (Akpan, 2017).

Two daughters of Iman Ibom have also reached the pinnacle of the legal profession as the Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom State, in the persons of Justice Eno Bassey Otu of Mbioto 11, Iman South of Etinan Local Government Area and Justice Idongesit Ntem Isua from Ikot Obio Inyang. Though these legal pearls are married outside Iman Ibom clan and indeed, Etinan local Government Area, one cannot fail to acknowledge their path-breaking profile. We also acknowledge the fact that Iman Ibom has given out in marriage many of her distinguished daughters across Nigeria, and they have given birth to many successful children, therefore Iman Ibom has been blessed with many “grand children and great grandchildren”. Space would limit us from mentioning them all, but Arc. Obong Victor Atah, the former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, whose mother was from Etinan Town, and his siblings, would suffice on behalf of others at this point (Akpan, 2017).

In the business enterprise, Iman Ibom, in time past paraded the likes of Obong Tom Akpan Obot of Samesta Fish, Obong Sunny Jackson Udo of Jackson Devos, Mr. Thomas Ekpo Etuk (Etesis), Okon Nelson Obot of Anon Lodge, Port Harcourt etc.

## **Conclusion**

All over the world, the development of any society depends on the level of capacity of human beings in the society. The primary instrument that has been used that enhances the process is Western education which in Nigeria was introduced by the Christian missionaries.

In Iman Ibom, Western education was introduced alongside Christianity in 1898 following the arrival of the Qua Iboe missionaries led by Rev. John Kirk. It is reported that in that same year, Rev. Kirk

introduced an Evening School in Etinan, with about 30 pupils in attendance. In 1915, Etinan Institute, Etinan was established. The Institute, being the pioneer post-primary school in Ibibio land, and the second largest in Akwa Ibom State, has become an “all-time human resource mill”. Many Iman Ibom sons and daughters acquired knowledge from the school and became prepared for the challenge of development since the colonial era. (Akpan, 2017).

As the study has shown, there is hardly any aspect of Akwa Ibom history and even Nigeria that would be completely discussed if the contribution of Iman Ibom people is not discussed. It is imperative for the present generation to be alive to the challenge of modernity and mobilise the younger generation for development. This is because time is running out and tremendous changes of global dimension occur in the present time and those who will not be left out in the march of progress must bestir themselves in time. One crucial area that requires attention is education. Substantial investment in human capital is what has made the Asian Tigers such as South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore etc., (Abasiatai, 1997). This should be a great challenge to this generation of Iman Ibom elite.

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