James Lawson Nsima: Ibibio Union Scholar and Nationalist: 1916-1998

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Abstract

In 1938, the Ibibio Union made history in the annals of higher education in Nigeria by sponsoring six scholars each from the then six Ibibio colonial districts of Calabar Province for overseas training. One of the beneficiaries was James Lawson Nsima from Eket District. He studied Education in the United States of America. While in the United States of America, Nsima displayed unparalleled brilliance in his academic endeavours. He got involved in African student unionism and served as the Secretary-General of African Students' Association while Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was the President. On his return to Nigeria, he helped in the establishment of Ibibio State College, Ikot Ekpene, an institution solely owned by the Ibibio Union. He also served as the pioneer Vice-Principal of the institution. He also taught in other schools in Nigeria and helped in moulding the lives of several future leaders of the country. In addition, Mr. Nsima served as a member of the House of Representatives, Lagos from 1954 to 1959 thereby helping to lay a solid foundation for Nigeria's democracy. However, despite his contributions to the development of Nigeria in particular and Africa in general, he has not been given sufficient attention like his peers who were also the beneficiaries of the Ibibio Union scholarship scheme. This paper is therefore an attempt to rescue his image by coherently documenting his contributions to the development of humanity. It adopts a historical narrative approach.

Keyword: James Lawson Nsima, Scholar, Ibibio Union, Higher Education Development

Introduction

The Ibibio people beginning from the pre-colonial period fully appreciated the crucial role of indigenous education in the development of the society and therefore accorded education its due priority. By 1928, it had become clear to the Ibibio people that in order to fit into the new scheme of things created by colonial rule, they would have to adopt aspects of the values of the colonising power and work for changes within limits imposed by the colonial authorities. This new system emphasised among other things, development along Western values and colonial prescription involving the adoption of Western type of education. By this time too, it had become clear that the indigenous educational system was inadequate when placed against the new economic, political and legislative demands (Noah, 1988; Akpan, 2014).

In the mid 1930s, the Ibibio Union began a vigorous campaign for the institutionalisation of overseas university scholarship for some deserving sons within the limit of the available resources. Consequently, in 1938, six scholars were selected from the six Ibibio districts of Abak, Eket, Opobo (Ikot Abasi), Itu, Ikot Ekpene and Uyo to study in European and American universities. One of the beneficiaries was James Lawson Nsima, from Eket District, who studied Education in the United States of America and returned to serve his people as a teacher, legislator and advisor.

It should be pointed out that one of the important consequences of the colonial government's lukewarm attitude towards higher education was the intensification of the interest by Nigerians in overseas education. In the absence of any true institution of higher learning locally, Nigerians went abroad in search of what became known in a popular parlance as the "Golden Fleece" – a degree or professional diploma of a recognised university or other examining body abroad. In this connection, Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, founded in 1827 primarily as a training institution for clergymen and teachers, played a very significant part in the education of Nigerians. The college was affiliated to Durham University in England in 1876 and became a degree awarding institution. Until 1948, it was the only university college in West Africa and the "academic Mecca" for many aspiring youths. Fourah Bay served Nigerians no less than it served Sierra Leone. Until about 1945, Nigerian students usually constituted more than 50 per cent of the college's degree students' population. Over the years, the college turned out men who played a vital role in Nigeria's development as educators and church men (Adewoye, 1973).

With such obvious inadequacy that entrenched frustration in the Nigerian social space, some Nigerians of Yoruba origin began to travel abroad. Yet they were still attracted more to Britain (Fafunwa, 1969; Umana, 2004). In the 1920s, a few Nigerian youths diverted their direction to the United States of America to acquire Western education. Two of such youths included Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Professor Eyo Ita. They demonstrated on their return that there was a brand of Western education that could effectively equip Nigerians to challenge the colonial establishment in America. This scenario must have influenced the decision of the leaders of the Ibibio Union to decide that three of the Ibibio scholars should study in the United States of America.

James Lawson Nsima from Eket District eventually studied Education in Storer College, Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, Hampton Institute, Virginia and University of Columbia and obtained M. Ed in 1943. While in the United States of America, he actively involved in student activism thereby ventilating Nigeria's nationalistic spirit. He returned in 1945 to

contribute his quota to diverse aspects of nation building particularly through the potent instruments of Western education and politics. However, despite that above pedigree, Mr. Nsima's life history has been very obscure. This paper is therefore an attempt to rescue the deplorable situation by discussing his life and works.

Birth and Early Life

James Lawson Nsima was born on Saturday the 22nd of March of 1916 into the royal family of Edohouqua Nsima of Idung Iso Nnung Uso Ekon, Idua, in the present-day Eket Local Government Area. His mother was an indigene of Nkana Iman, in the present-day Etinan Local Government Area. He enrolled for his primary education at Government School, Afaha Eket as one of the pioneer pupils of the institution and completed that phase of his Western educational pursuit in 1933. On completion, he was offered admission at Etinan Institute, Etinan, the pioneer post-primary institution in Ibibio land. He studied up to Class Three in the school. Like most of his contemporaries, while there, he enrolled for correspondence courses with Cambridge University, London and prepared through extra mural lessons for the Cambridge Preliminaries Examination which he passed in 1935. It should however be noted that during this period all important examinations were external and were administered by the University of Cambridge or Oxford. The only locally set and marked examination was the Standard Six and Normal School promotion examinations. The Standard Six Examination in the Province was marked by the Ministry of Education, Calabar (Nsima, 1986; Ekpe, 1987; Akpan; 2015).

On account of his excellent academic performance while at Etinan Institute, he was appointed a pupil-teacher by the school authorities on salary of One Guinea (£1.1) per month. After his success at the Cambridge Examination, his salary was increased to £2. 16 Shillings. He was subsequently transferred to Ikot Ubo Central School in the present-day Nsit Ubium Local Government Area where he spent only a year because he felt challenged to advance his educational pursuit. In 1937, he left for the Hope Waddell Training Institution to complete his secondary education and was admitted in Class Four because during his primary school days he did Lower Elementary 1 and II which were equivalent to Standard Five and Six respectively. Also the Cambridge Preliminaries which he passed while at Etinan Institute were taken as Class Three result. Expectedly for a brilliant student, he passed to Class Five in 1938, the year the Ibibio Union commenced the overseas scholarship scheme (Nsima, 1986).

The Ibibio Union Scholarship Scheme of 1938

During the selection process for a single candidate in Eket District, Nsima had some hurdles to cross. This was because the lone scholarship position was contested by other indigenes of the area. They included: Mr. S.U. Ukpong, a Higher Elementary teacher at

Ikot Ubo, Mr. Dan Akpe, a product of Normal College, Hope Waddell Training Institution and Mr. Edem from Ikot Udoma (Nsima, 1986).

Apart from the internal opposition that arose in Eket section of the Eket District which included the present-day five Local Government Areas in Oron area namely: Oron, Udung Uko, Mbo, Urue Offong/Oruko and Okobo, the candidature of Mr. Nsima was opposed by the Oron elements of the Ibibio Union. According to Udoma (1987); Udoyo and Wilson (2006), the Oron elites did not provide an alternative candidate, apart from insisting that any candidate chosen should come from Oron group. The Oron group led by Mr. Isong, the Native Administration Treasurer subsequently appealed to the leadership of the Ibibio Union for intervention. The Union demonstrated a non-interference posture on the choice of the selected candidate by the respective districts. As a result of this, Mr. Isong decided to withdraw with his Oron group from the membership of the Ibibio Union, with a view to creating a separate educational scheme for Oron. The Oron group justified their decision by sponsoring O. O. Ita to study law in London. He was called to bar in 1948.

The phenomenal scholarship award had beneficiaries from each of the Six Ibibio Districts. They were as follows:

Bassey Udo Attah	Uyo, Agriculture, United States of America
Obot E. Antia-Obong	Itu, Medicine, Scotland
Ibanga Udo Akpabio	Ikot Ekpene, Education, United States of America
Egbert Udo Udoma	Ikot Abasi (Opobo) Law, England
Lawson James Nsima	Eket, Education, United States of America
Asuquo Udo Idiong	Abak, Medicine, Canada

Nsima's Departure for the United States of America

Nsima was the only Ibibio scholar who could not leave for the overseas training in 1938. One of the reasons was that he was still in Hope Waddell Training Institution, Calabar. There were some travelling formalities he had to fulfill particularly the admission letter from the University of his choice. Also, Police recommendation was needed for the issuance of the admission letter by the school in the United States before he could be issued with a visa. After collecting his admission letter, he had no difficulty in obtaining the visa from the American Embassy in Lagos. Because he carried a British passport since Nigeria was then a British colony, this facilitated the issuance of the visa (Nsima, 1986).

After scaling the preliminary hurdles, he finally departed from Port Harcourt via a merchant ship called "Famous Albinzi", a mail boat in 1939. He was seen off by some family members and members of the Ibibio Union. They had a stop-over at Liverpool. From Liverpool he boarded a British ship known as "Queen Mary" and sailed to New

York, a journey that rather took seven weeks, because it was while he was at Liverpool that the British declared war against Germany. When the British crew was informed through cablegram they started meandering the ship, because being an English ship, there was fear that that the Germans submarine could torpedoed (Ekpe, 1987).

Nsima's Educational and Nationalistic Experiences in America

He was admitted into Storer College, Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. According to Nsima, he was the next African student to be admitted in Storer College after Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. The students became very curious. Some of them had never seen a Nigerian there after Dr. Azikiwe. But the impeccable academic and social records left behind by Dr. Azikiwe had not been erased. The students became very curious about Nsima. He recalled that "some of the students started asking me if I had a tail and whether I came from the jungle. One day when I went to have a bath, they all came in and saw that I had none and they concluded that a good surgical operation must have been done while I was in London" (Nsima, 1986; Ekpe, 1987).

In 1939, he did sophomore courses and general studies since the school was a liberal arts college. He however, concentrated in physical sciences - Physics, Chemistry and Biology. He also offered English Literature, French, Psychology, American History and Government. He did very well in all these courses and was especially good in English because he had a good foundation in the subject in Nigeria. He also did Mathematics which was divided into four areas: Geometry, Algebra, Arithmetic and Trigonometry.

In 1941, he transferred to Hampton Institute,Virginia, an institution founded in 1868 under the auspices of the American Missionary Association at Hampton, Virginia. It was conceived as a training centre for blacks under Charles Chapman Armstrong, a white President of the school, who preceded Booker Washington as the chief spokesman for industrial training as the appropriate form of education for the Blacks. However, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (as it was initially known) awarded trade certificates from 1895, it began courses at college level in 1920 and changed its name to Hampton Institute in 1930. From the late nineteenth century it had been receiving African students and in the 20th century it became the prime place to go particularly under the guidance of the Phelps-Stokes Fund (Ekpe, 1987).

Hampton University was not entirely strange to Nigerians. His choice may also have been influenced by those Nigerians who returned from America after successful completion of their studies. For instance, Eyo Ita who studied at Hampton came back and established an educational institution in Calabar known as the West African People's Institute, Before Eyo Ita, Paul Cardoso had been there completing his studies in Agriculture in the late 1920s as

the first Nigerian to do so. Consequently, he was admitted on the basis of his good academic performance in Storer College (Ekpe, 1987; Ina, 2015).

American education cut across as many branches as possible that is associated with the course the student has decided to study. In his elective course Nsima studied Zoology, Organic Chemistry, Botany and History which was compulsory. He had to study Education because his sponsor, the Ibibio Union sent him to study Education. The idea was to have one main course along with others, so even when he diverted, the agent of the British government who was monitoring their movement and progress alerted the relevant authorities that he was sent to study Education and nothing else. Nsima had summer and winter courses so that helped him to fulfill the requirement for the B.Sc degree in Physics which he obtained in 1941 (Ekpe, 1987).

After this remarkable academic feat, he registered in Teachers' College, Columbia University. Because Teachers' College was one of the colleges that made up the Columbia University. It had many departments such as Medicine, Law, Journalism, etc. Nsima also did a course in Journalism at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. He spent about a year in the pursuit of his higher degree in Education and obtained his M. Ed and a Diploma in Journalism in August 1943. He then proceeded to register for PhD. Shortly, the immigration Department initiated a process that robbed him of actualising that golden opportunity. The Department wrote to the school authorities and to Nsima that it was time for him to return to Nigeria having completed his M. Ed.

Activism in America

While in the university he was actively involved in students' politics. He was elected Secretary-General of African Students Association (ASA), while Kwame Nkrumah was the President. As the Secretary-General, Nsima was charged with the responsibility of writing and signing political letters to heads of African countries as being directed by the Association. He also wrote letters to the British, American and Indian governments etc. He and his colleagues from the British colonies did not know then that being British protected people they were not allowed to seek help from any other country. His activities helped in spurring Nigeria's nationalism abroad. Nsima's stout activism was probably one of the reasons he was denied the chance of registering for his PhD programme after a successful completion of his M.Ed., programme (Nsima, 1986; Ekpe, 1987).

His involvement in the ASA also opened a window for him to be involved in the process of improving the welfare of the distressed Africans in America who were not students. They were men from Africa who stayed back in the United States after World War II. They were unemployed and lived in slumps. The ASA was involved in the process of finding

jobs for them or get them sent back to their various African countries. The condition of these Africans was very appalling. Nsima used to visit them regularly and listen to their problems. The regular round of discussions with these men attracted the suspicion of the American intelligence network.

Apart from writing letters and minutes of meetings and related activities, Nsima also represented the ASA at the Aggrey memorial in New York, organised during his tenure in office. When an African student by name Basil was drafted into the army by the British government in New York, Nsima had to make a representation that the student came to the United States on a non-immigrant visa and therefore was neither an American nor a British and thus, on his status as a student could not be recruited into the army.

The ASA was the publisher of magazine known as *The African Interpreter.* Nsima served as the Editor-in Chief/Business Manager. His responsibilities included gathering, assessing and vetting of articles, monitoring of production. He was selected the Editor on the account of brilliance and robust Pan-African spirit while a Gold Coast (Ghanian) colleague, Ako Adjei, who was actually studying Journalism was only a member of the Editorial Board. His tolerance for all sections of Africa manifested when some of the members of the ASA, Nwafor Orizu and Kingsley Mbadiwe attempted to factionalise the association and attempted to remove Kwame Nkrumah as the President on the flimsy excuse that his election did not follow due process. An impromptu meeting was convened at New York to actualize the plan. When Nsima heard about it, he quickly travelled to Philadelphia to inform Nkrumah. Because of this Nkrumah had to attend the meeting and the plan was aborted (Nsima, 1986).

As the Secretary-General of ASA, Nsima was also selected by the British Consulate to go to Canada. This was because one of the Ibibio scholars who was studying Medicine at McGill University in Canada, Asuquo Udo Idiong was sick and hospitalised. He was operated upon but he did not survive. The deceased was buried in Canada but Nsima had to bring back the relics of his remains such as his hair and nails to Nigeria for re-burial at Abak, his hometown, this made Nsima to visit Nigeria while he was studying in the United States of America (Nsima, 1987. Ekpe, 1987).

His activities in the ASA enraged the British government and Nigerians were noted with notoriety and consequently an attempt was made by the British government to conscript him into the army. Nsima did not know about this development until he was about to leave America. When he left New York to Philadelphia and was about to return to Nigeria he was barred from going with his colleagues who departed in the night. He was repatriated on grounds of the contract which they said he signed with the British Army.

From all indications, he was conscripted without his knowledge. He decided to go to Washington D.C. to ask for an explanation and was referred to Charles Town, Virginia (Nsima, 1986).

According to Nsima's account:

> There the trouble started and I promised them real hard time; that they were going to see the real African from the jungle. I threatened to beat up an American lady typist and because of this threat; the lady brought out a release paper and concluded the necessary arrangement for my departure. But by this time the ticket I bought in Philadelphia was lost and I had to buy a new ticket that would take me to Nigeria…the ticket was supplemented by the British government because they were responsible for my delay (Nsima, 1986: 3).

At Storer College, Nsima was appointed Chairman of Socials, with the responsibility of organising ball-room dances, on Saturday nights, concerts and many social events. He also served as the disc jockey during some of the events. He was also an active member of the school's debating society. This offered him the opportunity to represent the college in many competitions. He won some like the one that was held at Springfield College. He also was a regular contributor to the College's Magazine, *Grapevine* (Ekpe, 1987).

Nsima also participated in the exhibition of African arts organised by the African Academy of Arts and Research established by Kingsley Mbadiwe. Mbadiwe broke away from ASA to form the Academy with Igbo students. The academy was for the unity and progress of Africans and for promoting African arts and culture. However, the African arts displayed were not original, they were somehow artificial and not what existed in Africa as a result of this Nsima and others disassociated themselves from the Academy. Besides, the leadership of the Academy demonstrated some form of discrimination and did not reflect all sections of Africa in its membership. Above all, the Academy was used as a conduit to make monetary gains by its leadership (Ekpe, 1987).

Work Experience in America

During his stay in America, Nsima experienced some financial difficulties because the war had disrupted the process of remittance from the Ibibio Union. He had to take odd and menial jobs ranging from mopping, waiter, porter and others. One of such jobs was the one he did at Hiltop Hotel, Harper's Ferry while at Storer College, and Hampton farm, then Columbia Teachers' College dining hall. He cooked at a shipping company, publishing company, soap factory, glass industry and many other places. In Hampton he engaged in both practical and scientific agriculture. He learnt animal husbandry, milking

cow, feeding dogs, cows, horses and many other animals. He also learnt how to plough, furrow, weed and harvest (Ekpe, 1987).

Nsima also worked in hide and skin factory and was involved in the stretching of the skin in the machines. He also worked as a shipping clerk in a shipping company and in a candy manufacturing industry, all in New York. He also worked in a glass manufacturing company putting the glasses into shape and a book publishing company.

Career After Returning to Nigeria

Nsima was caught up with World War II and had to come back by a ship owned by Portuguese as a non-immigrant and had to stop over in Muezo-Belgian colony and then another stop in banana, then moved to Congo Matadi and waited there for three months and finally had to enter a British boat which brought him to Nigeria.

Nsima states about his career after his return from America thus:

> I returned from the United States in 1945 and refused to work for the British colonial government. This was because I felt cheated and I also realised that the British government was exploiting Africans thereby making us appendages of their economy without giving much in return. For instance, all the trading companies they established such as UAC, GBO, Lever Brothers, etc., were agents which the British used to repatriate high profits back to the mother country. Besides, during our transit from America to Nigeria, we were ill-treated, discriminated against in hotels during our stay in the West Coast and even the Africans in these West African Coast suffered a lot from the hands of the colonial agents. When I left the shores of the West Coast during my departure, I stopped in Canary Island, Spain. I also realised that the Island was more developed than Nigeria and that even Lagos as the capital was still very backward and was nothing to be proud of compared to the colonial territories of other countries…..Moreso, when I made a stop-over in Britain, the mother country, I was not impressed at all about the whole set up. They were very conservative and the whole ally was archaic more or less an antiquated ally. But the United States was my dreamland. The difference was so much that I started wondering why Nigerians were not colonised by the Americans who were liberal and well developed with radicalism (Nsima, 1986: 7).

Besides, during Nsima's stay in America, he read many books about Africa. He was interested in the Garvey Movement and used to attend their lectures and symposia. The

books related to political activities in Africa, the quest for independence and their participation in the World Wars which he also watched on films. He also reflected on the effects the wars had on Africans.

He adds that:

> Because of the above reasons, I made up my mind right from the day I returned not to work for any white man and as a result I keyed into the vision of the Ibibio State College, Ikot Ekpene initiated by the Ibibio State Union and together with Mr. Ibanga Udo Akpabio, embarked on fund raising tour of the Ibibio districts to raise money for the establishment of the Ibibio State College. Mr. Akpabio was the Principal while I was the Vice-Principal (Nsima, 1986: 8).

While the Ibibio State College Ikot Ekpene did not start, Nsima taught at National College Kalabari National, Buguma in the present-day Rivers State for one year. He served as the Vice-Principal of the Ibibio State College till 1950. While at the Ibibio State College, he taught many students who became elites and contributed significantly to the development of the society. They included: Senator Ime Ikpat, Chief E.C.D. Abia, the current Paramount Ruler of Eket, Mr. Mbong James Mbong, a one-time Commissioner in the old Cross River State and one Mr. Douglas, a onetime Judge in Rivers State (Ekpe, 1987).

After 1950, Nsima left for the Salvation Army Teachers' Training College, Ubium as a Tutor and later Principal. He taught English Language, Literature in English and Current Affairs. In 1951 he was transferred to the Salvation Army School Akai Ubium. There were two graduate teachers in the school, including the Principal who was an American. Due to poor facilities in the school, he decided to leave for a private school in Ibeku, Umuahia, as the Principal. In 1960 he moved to Enitonia High School, Port Harcourt and served as the Principal. He left in 1965 to Eastern Commercial School, Aba. There, he was offered the position of a principal, but he rejected the offer. He was at Aba till the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War. After the Nigerian Civil War, he was appointed the Registrar on contract by the South Eastern State Civil Service Commission at the Advanced Teachers' Training College, Uyo (now the University of Uyo) (Nsima, 1987; Ekpe, 1987).

Nsima's records of political career show that he won election into the House of Representatives in 1955 – 1959, representing the old Eket Federal Constituency. The members of the House of Representatives were summoned to Lagos whenever the house met. He served as the Editor of Daily Success Newspaper, Lagos in 1951. He was also the Editor-in-Chief of *Nka Ikemesit*, published at Aba.

Available records also indicate that Mr. Nsima also participated effectively in the activities of the Ibibio State Union. For instance, prior to "The Ibadan All-Nigerian Constitutional Conference of 1950", convened to discuss the provisions of the Macpherson's Constitution of 1951, delegates from the various political and administrative districts of the Calabar Province were selected to agree on the features of the proposed constitution in the interest of the Province in particular and the nation in general. Mr. Nsima was one who led authors of the Ibibio Memorandum to the mini-conference and also the leader of the delegation to Calabar (Udoma, 1987).

Udoma (1987) records his pedigree thus:

> At the Provincial Conference, the Memorandum of the Ibibio State was acclaimed the best. It was decided as having properly thought out and carefully prepared. It was reported back to the Ibibio State Union National Assembly which was held at Ikot Etina, Ibiaku Clan in Ikpa Ibekwe-Opobo District on the 2nd of July 1949....It should be recorded with pride that prior to the handling of the Calabar Provincial Constitutional Conference on the revision of the Richard's Constitution, Mr. James Lawson Nsima had also handled most successfully another assignment of a political nature for the Ibibio State Union. On the 7th of August 1948, Mr. Nsima, having been fully commissioned, was assigned the onerous duty of presenting to, and defending before the Secretary, Eastern Provinces of Nigeria at Enugu, a memorandum on Nigerinisation of the Civil Service of Nigeria which had been prepared and approved by the Ibibio State Union. He discharged that duty most creditably to the honour of the Ibibio State Union. In appreciation of Mr.Nsima's achievements, it was recommended that he be and was accordingly elected National Chief Secretary of the Ibibio State Union. He thus became the first person to hold that post of high distinction and dignity which carried no stipends… he was a brilliant, talented and versatile teacher, journalist – a promising political leader, who was a devoted patriot (Udoma, 1987: 199-216).

Conclusion

The Ibibio as an integrated and organised ethnic group in colonial Nigeria were the pathfinders in the history of higher education in Nigeria. Ibibio land then consisted six districts corresponding with the present-day Akwa Ibom State. The Ibibio elites were aware of the changing Nigerian social landscape influenced by colonialism. They eventually realised that they had to make their environment dynamic by adopting Western variables particularly Western education in consonance with the emerging reality. Even though the British colonising authorities did not initially create effective opportunities and

institutions to enhance the participation of Nigerian youths in Western education, such deliberate policy did not constitute a disadvantage to the Ibibio.

In 1938 the Ibibio nation initiated the first community-based overseas higher education scholarship scheme in Nigeria. Six Ibibio scholars were selected as beneficiaries. The Union also went ahead to ensure that three of the scholars studied in the United States of America. Two of them, including Nsima studied education. This was in anticipation of the establishment of an indigenous Ibibio post-primary institution – the Ibibio State College, a dream which was realised in 1946. With the return of Nsima to Nigeria, he served as the pioneer Vice-Principal of the college.

Apart from the area of education, Nsima also made some significant imprints in the area of politics. At present, Ibibio land had been fragmented and the sections that were once integral and beneficial parts of the Ibibio nation have declared to be distinct "ethnic" nationalities. One of such areas is Eket, whose few elites of recent claim to be distinct from Ibibio. The paper has demonstrated that if a people concentrate their energy more on the things that unite them it generates more development strides than if they concentrate on the aspects that separate. This is a clear pointer to the present crop of Ibibio to adopt the paradigm of unity exhibited by their forebears to fast track the development of Ibibio land. The elites should also be available to contribute to nation building a feat demonstrated by James Lawson Nsima, an Ibibio scholar who became a patriot.

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