

An Appraisal of the Urban Status of Uyo as a Capital City, 1987-2012

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Abstract

By the end of the 19th century, Uyo like most Nigerian communities was a rural place. However, beginning from the early twentieth century, urbanization began to take roots at Uyo. Uyo had its own province which comprised Eket, Oron, Enyong, Opobo, and Uyo and all the major areas that constitute Akwa-Ibom State were administered from Uyo in colonial Nigeria. Akwa-Ibom State was created on 23rd September, 1987, with the promulgation of Decree 24 by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, the military president of Nigeria. The creation of the state marked the climax of a long and sustained struggle for a separate state by the people from the part of the former Cross River State then described as “Mainland”; Uyo was chosen as the capital of Akwa-Ibom State because of its centrality and historical import.¹ With the urban status, the city began to experience population growth, socio-economic restructuring, shift in labour mobility as well as infrastructural development. There has been no written work especially an appraisal by a professional historian and an Akwa-Ibomite on the growth of Uyo since it attained status as Akwa-Ibom state capital in 1987 and upon this, the paper set out to examine the changes that accompanied the rise of Uyo from village status to an urban city when it became the capital of Akwa-Ibom State by adopting the theory of intervening opportunities. It also identifies major changes that have taken place in Uyo and the strides achieved by successive governments in establishing various administrative machinery to ensure the development of the state and its capital as well as ease the processes of governance. The study is also designed to examine the factors that necessitated and facilitated the uncommon transformation of Uyo during the period. The qualitative method of research and enquiry was adopted where data collected which includes government reports, and relevant published literature are analysed and the content extracted for writing the paper. The paper finds that Uyo attracted a good number of migrants which comprised domestic servants, workers of all categories, elites, and providers of specialised services from far and near with the availability of wage employment, small-scale business, hospitals, water supply, electricity, good road network, educational institutions, and general services. It also finds that with its urban status, Uyo has recorded increased population in her urban centres and some nearby rural areas which has resulted in various impacts on the environmental systems; there have been changes in land cover and land use and these have opened new links and directions in political, economic, and social development projects and programmes.

Keywords: Change, Growth, Urbanisation

Introduction

Uyo is said to owe its urban status partly to colonisation and the activities of the British merchants who established trading posts in the hinterland in order to deal directly with farmers and local traders. While the slave trade needed seaports and coastal facilities to thrive, the legitimate trade in agricultural produce needed closer association with the people in the hinterland. Fundamentally, by the end of the 19th century, the slave trade and slavery had been abolished and replaced by the legitimate trade. The bulk of the goods that serviced this trade were mainly palm produce (palm oil and palm kernel). These goods were mostly produced in

the hinterland and consequent upon this, towns like Itu, which was once the biggest slave market in West Africa, declined because it was located in the coastal area.¹ The same fate befell Ifiayong along Nwaniba. Although by this time these areas already had branches of British mercantile houses such as AG Leventis, John Holt, and Peterson Zochonis (PZ), they struggled economically because they were coastal towns. Waterways using steamships and canoes were mainly used during the legitimate trade era to convey goods from one location to another and Itu and Ifiayong had the advantages of good ports but suffered loss because of their coastal location. Their loss became Uyo's gain. Like Itu and Ifiayong, Uyo had a river and a beach and most importantly, it was located in the hinterland. Thus, the centre of trading activities shifted to Uyo from Itu and Ifiayong because of its nearness to the source of goods and its centrality. It foreclosed the consideration of any other area in the Lower Cross River Basin for infrastructure or facilities.²

With the increase in the volume of trade and the influx of traders in Uyo, socio-economic services expanded rapidly. First, a rendezvous was created at Itak Uyo, literally translated to mean "the base of Uyo tree", for traders and travellers.³ The place was located at Barracks Road (present-day Akpabio Street). Just as Uyo was gradually becoming the economic nerve-centre of the area, it was fast assuming the headquarters of economic and administrative activities as well. In 1905, Uyo was made a District and Major R.B. Brooks was appointed the first District Officer.⁴ The district comprised Offot, Uruan, Ikono-Uyo, Etoi, Asutan Ekpe, and Ibesikpo clans. By 1959, Uyo had grown tremendously and upon this, it was made a Province. The Uyo Province comprised Eket, Oron, Enyong, Opobo and Uyo. By 1970, Uyo became a divisional headquarters following the introduction of the development area system in the local government system in 1968 by the South-Eastern State government. In 1976, the Olusegun Obasanjo regime introduced reforms in the local government system and Uyo was again made the headquarters of the newly created Uyo Local Government Area. Uyo continued to be the headquarters of Uyo local government until September 23, 1987, when it became the capital city of the newly-created Akwa-Ibom State.⁵ With Uyo as the capital of Akwa-Ibom State, a sizeable proportion of the nearby communities in the Uruan, Nsit Ibom, and Itu Local Government Areas were incorporated into the Uyo capital city area. However, with the creation of Ibesikpo-Asutan Local Government Area out of Uyo Local Government Area and the creation of Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area out of Itu in 1996, Uyo capital city now has its boundaries in five local government areas.⁶

¹ E.W. Amankpa, *A Short History of Ibesikpo* (Uyo: Modern Business Press, 1972), 21.

² Engineer Ephraim Udoh, C. 70, interviewed at Ukana Offot, Uyo, February 2, 2015.

³ I.A. Ema, *Uyo: The Capital City of Akwa-Ibom State* (Uyo: Ewet Press, 1989), 15.

⁴ Ema, *Uyo*, 16-18.

⁵ Valentine Attah and Otoabasi E. Akpan, *Before Our Eyes: A Compendium of the Transformation of Uyo by the Attah Administration, 1999-2007*, 27-33

⁶ *Towards a Greater Akwa-Ibom State*, A Publication of the Ministry of Education, Akwa-Ibom State, ed. Ebebe A. Ukong. (Uyo: Ekido Press, 2007), 7-8.

Among the activities that dictated the pace of socio-economic and political changes in these new centres included British private enterprises, the colonial government, and Christian missionaries. Indeed, the colonial government needed centres for administration and for the effective control of the country thus they created the urban centres. With the availability of wage employment, small-scale business, hospitals, water supply, electricity, road network, education and general services in the centre, Uyo attracted a good number of people. The first wave of migrants came from the neighbouring villages and clans and later, domestic servants, workers of all categories, elites and providers of specialised services from far and near.

The aim of the paper is to provide knowledge on the changes that have occurred in Uyo from 1987 when Akwa-ibom State was created to 2012 when the state marked her silver jubilee by examining some major transformations in the areas of physical planning through the Uyo Capital City Development Authority, the Uyo Masterplan, the establishment of federal and state government parastatals, restructure of the works and transport system, infrastructural provision of housing schemes, improved electricity, better provision of water supply, health care services and formal education.

Literature Review

Urban spread drastically transforms the physical environment of an area. It brings about growth of infrastructure and industrial centres, increase in rural and urban mobility of labour, changes in economic structure as well as population build-up. Urban areas have become centres and drivers of commercial, scientific, political and cultural life; they are characterized by redistribution of population associated with development and civilisation.²

As Akpan H. Ekpo would put it, the control political power influences the direction and rate of economic development. It facilitates the provision of basic infrastructure like good roads, power supply and a qualitative school system. It is expected that every centre of political power should be equipped with economic and educational infrastructure or facilities such as good roads, electricity water supply, industries and educational establishments, to stimulate commerce and promote creativity.³ Ekpo's submission avoids the fact that political power is only but one of the myriad of factors that determine the rate at which a city evolves or grows. Other determinant factors include the ideological convictions, character and morale of the people, natural resources, quality of government and leadership, geographical location, and even population.

The work of Beulah Ofem and A.A. Udida wholly concerns itself with urbanization and urban development of Akwa-Ibom State.⁴ It stresses that urbanization is one of the most remarkable developments in human settlements. The transformation of Uyo to a mega-city is a product of the vision and creative mind of the former governor of the state, Arch. Obong Victor Attah, who conceived and created the Uyo masterplan. This plan was an embodiment of the vision of a new city and aspirations of its inhabitants for the present and the future.

Enefiok E. Ibok and Ekpe Sunday E. Ibanga assert that human capital development is an indispensable component of the growth process which includes on-the-job training, appropriation of new technologies and ideas, acquisition of better knowledge and skills through education and training of the human resources.⁵ Human capital development is a continuum; a continuing process from childhood to old age for any society that is set out to survive and withstand the complexities of a dynamic world.

Uyo is one of the fastest growing cities in Nigeria.⁶ This growth has occasioned widespread changes in land use and land cover which are major indicators of understanding the relationship between environmental changes and human activities that occur in the environment.

Uyo Capital City Development Authority

When Uyo became a state capital following the creation of Akwa Ibom State in 1987, it became expedient for the state government to produce a befitting Master Plan to aid, guide, and direct the physical planning and development of the city. To facilitate the preparation of the Master Plan, the State Government passed the Edict No. 13 of 1988 which formerly established Uyo Capital City Development Authority.⁷ Consequently, one hundred and fifteen contiguous villages in Uyo, Itu, Nsit Ubium and Uruan Local Government Areas were affected and brought into the ambit of the Authority for development purposes. These villages, however, retained their constitutional identities with their respective local government councils. Functions of the Authority include: Preparation and implementation of a Master Plan for the physical development of the city; provision of appropriate infrastructures, amenities and recreational facilities; identification and promotion of the siting of appropriate industries in the city; planning and controlling the development of the villages in Itu, Nsit Ubium and Uruan Local Government Councils respectively, which are contiguous to the city and are listed in the relevant schedule to the Edict establishing the Authority; establishment of satellite towns around the city; promotion of the provision of adequate housing for the people; establishment of residential, commercial, industrial and other types of layouts in the city; controlling and regulating building standards in the city; and in addition, Section 12(1) of Edict No. 13 of 1988 appoints the Authority as the Planning Authority for the city and the contiguous villages, notwithstanding the provisions of Section 4 of the Town and Country Planning Law.⁸

The Uyo Masterplan

The growth of Uyo from a rural centre to an urban city has its foundation laid in the Uyo master plan. The Uyo master plan is a product of the vision and creative mind of Architect Obong Victor Attah. It is an embodiment of the vision of a new city and the aspirations of its inhabitants. These expectations are brilliantly encapsulated in the master plan. The master plan focuses on a brief history of Uyo, location, population, functions of the new town, goals and objectives as well as criteria and standards for organization; the physical characteristics of the new area-geomorphology, physiography, land form, hydrology and drainage, geology and soil, the ravine, climate and vegetation; it addresses the issue of transportation in areas of township road network, urban public transportation and traffic flow in Uyo; it evaluates housing projects by considering building types and structures, building age, condition and tenure; it addresses utility concerns such as water supply and distribution, power supply and distribution, telephone network system, sewage disposal scheme and solid waste disposal; it deals with social facilities such as education, health, recreation, and culture; it examines economic activities like banking and finance, hotels and guest houses, commerce and industry; it provides an insight into the opportunities as well as attendant constraints such as natural constraints, man-made constraints, land suitability and environmental impact, and the determination of city limits and implications for administration; it highlighted development plans where existing plans are addressed, and contains plans to incorporate the location for the military, additional industrial area outside the city limits, measures to monitor activity in the Central Business District after dark and the principle of minimal demolition to be respected in the alignment of roads and siting of projects. The master plan explains the spatial location of Uyo metropolitan area which is centrally located within Akwa-Ibom State and is easily accessible from the towns of Ikot-Ekpene, Itu, Abak and Etinan. The city of Uyo can be reached under one hour of driving time from most

parts of the state. The plan acknowledges the fact that before the creation of Akwa-Ibom State in 1987, Uyo had functioned as a local government. It had also served as a nodal town and the commercial nerve centre of Uyo local government area. The creation of Akwa-Ibom state upgraded Uyo town to a state capital and changed its status. Thus, the attendant influx in population, high demand for residential, commercial, and office accommodation as well as pressure on social infrastructure necessitated the preparation of the Uyo Master Plan in order to guide its orderly development.

The Intel Group proposed the goals and objectives of the masterplan to be the promotion of the functional actualisation of all listed functions of the metropolitan area within a realistic economic situation. Such goals and objectives include, among other things, to:

- establish a modern town that will promote the state administration and improve the status of the state capital among the community of cities in the country;
- facilitate the movement of people, goods and services through the removal of transportation conflict, traffic hazards and provision of viable alternatives. This will involve conscious and rational planning of all modes of transportation and effective combination of road hierarchies;
- provide decent and affordable accommodation and recreational facilities for the inhabitants of the city;
- promote educational, cultural and social development of the city and the state at large through an organized system of services;
- provide gainful employment to all people of working age within the metropolis;
- improve the spatial organisation of land uses for efficiency;
- provide ancillary services that will promote the development of the oil industry;
- reduce the effect of natural and man-made constraints such as the ravine and the land-tenure system;
- provide necessary facilities for the industrial take-off of the state to support the creation of employment opportunities;
- synchronize all the city elements into series of workable and efficient systems; and
- improve the image and aesthetics of the city.

In working on the master plan, the Inter-Designs Group adopted a method based on acceptable city standards as obtained in most of the modern Nigerian cities. However, the architectural firm noted that in dealing with the Uyo situation, efforts would be made to improve on these standards to accommodate local variations and values. The Uyo “New Town” as envisaged was to have an advantage from the outset since its development was to be gradual and controlled. The designers set the functions of the new metropolitan city thus to:

- serve as an administrative, educational, commercial and cultural centre of the new Akwa-Ibom state;
- serve as a regional centre for the oil producing companies and associated facilities and services;
- provide residential, recreational, commercial, and office accommodation for the effective running of the state;
- absorb all immigrants that would follow the enlargement of government, industrial and commercial opportunities; and
- serve as a centre for small, medium and large scale industries.

Land Acquisition and Allocation

Growth in the economy boosts the process of urban construction and expansion, with a large demand for land resources. In declaring occupation of a particular area, land is regarded as the

most important factor. Norman D. Palmer and Howard C. Perkins refer to land area of a state as an element of power itself, whether small or great.⁹ In the Southern Nigeria, during the colonial era, the colonial authorities introduced the concept of individual ownership of property and authorised the legal convergence of land that could be registered with the government.¹⁰ Prior to the enactment of the Land Use Act in 1978 which came into existence as a result of the report of the Land Use Panel of 1977, there were three main sources of law: Customary Law, English Law, and Local Legislation. In Southern Nigeria, customary system of land tenure governed land interest and land was owned by communities, families, and individuals. Land was acquired either by inheritance, first settlement, conveyance, gift or outright purchase.¹¹ The Land Use Decree (now Land Use Act) promulgated on 29th March, 1978 is an attempt on the part of the government to modify land tenure and access for purposes of development. It is a revolutionary legislation in the area of land holding in Nigeria, designed to make land more readily available for developmental purposes. In section 1(1) of the Land Use Decree of 1978, the Federal Government vested all land comprised in the territory of each state (except land vested in the Federal Government for its agencies) solely in the hands of the governors of the state who would hold such land in trust for the people and would thenceforth be responsible for allocation of land in all urban areas to individual residents in the state and to organisations, for residential, agricultural, commercial, and other purposes.¹² The 1978 Land Use Act gave the state government the right to acquire as much land as it wishes for public purposes and make it a criminal offence upon the obstruction of such acquisition.

In Akwa-Ibom State, land is acquired compulsorily while the landowners are compelled by law to surrender ownership of the land alongside the rights and privileges attached to it. The choice of Uyo as a state capital led to the acquisition of as much land as possible by the government for developmental purposes, construction of roads and creation of drainage channels for flood control in the city. The government of Akwa-Ibom State acquired 10747.6 hectares of land between 1990 and 2005 as shown in table 1.¹³ A total of 4621.7 (43%) hectares of the acquired land were developed for various uses while 6125.9 (57%) were left undeveloped. It is also observed that 1996 recorded the highest acquisition of hectares of land with a total of 2651.4 hectares.

Table 1: Yearly acquisition of land in Akwa-Ibom State 1990-2005

Year	Hectares Acquired	Developed Hectares	Undeveloped Hectares
1990	1108.1	599.6	508.5
1991	645.0	507.7	137.3
1992	458.0	315.8	42.2
1993	766.0	288.2	477.8
1994	1044.7	424.0	620.7
1995	112.7	73.4	39.3
1996	2651.4	309.2	2342.2
1997	628.2	505.0	123.2
1998	575.1	217.2	357.9
1999	1383.8	583.4	800.4
2000	687.2	352.8	334.4
2001	123.1	74.1	49.0

2002	40.1	12.3	27.8
2003	359.0	352.0	0.0
2004	80.6	0.0	80.6
2005	84.6	0.0	84.6
Total	10747.6	4621.7	6125.9

Sources: Akwa-Ibom State Ministry of Lands and Housing (2006) and Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Uyo (2006)

The Akwa-Ibom State Government acquired lands for residential, commercial and industrial purposes all around Uyo at Nwaniba, Ifiayong Usuk and Mbiakong for eco-tourism and expansion of Ibo Golf Resort; Ibiak, Mbo/Ibeno local government areas for Ibom Oil and Gas Free Trade Zone; Ikot Abasi for the development of North Industrial Estate; Ikot Ebom and Nkim Ibiono in Itu and Ibiono Ibom local government areas for the development of state government residential estates; Ifa Ikot Okpon, Etoi for Akwa-Ibom State Road Maintenance Agency; Udo Udoma Avenue for Ibom Tropicana Entertainment Galleria; Eki Itam Akpan Obong in Itu local government area for integrated Solid Waste Management, among others.¹⁴

Establishment of State and Federal Government Parastatals

Since the creation of Akwa-Ibom State, the main focus of the state government has been the provision of infrastructure, education, industries, health-care delivery, security and employment for the citizens of the state. The status of Uyo as a state capital has led to the establishment of several federal and state government institutions and structures which have contributed immensely to the development of Uyo. Some of the federal establishments include Federal Information Centre, Uyo, Independent National Electoral Commission, Federal Ministry of Education, National Population Commission Code of Conduct Bureau, Public Complaints Commission among others. Some of the state government ministries, agencies, departments and parastatals whose headquarters are situated in Uyo include: Akwa-Ibom State Ministry of Works, Akwa-Ibom State Ministry of Information and Communications, Ministry of Local Governments and Chieftaincy Affairs, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Economic Development, State Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health among others.

Changes in Works and Transport System

The nucleus of urban Uyo for several years has been the “circus’ or Uyo circus. Until the 21st century, the circus was a confluence of five major radial roads linking Uyo with other local areas, with Ikot-Ekpene Road serving as an inter-state highway with links to neighbouring states. The entire area of the circus served as the Central Business District of Uyo and consequently, banks and other finance houses located their businesses around it. The circus had commercial neighbours like Uyo main market, Uyo Motor Park, and the General Post Office. Other roads that radiated from the circus included Oron, Abak and Aka Roads which served as intra-state routes with links to other local government areas while Barracks Road (now Wellington Basseyy Way) served as a link to Government Offices.¹⁵

By the year 2000, traffic became very heavy around the circus as vehicles had to pass through the circus. The location of the Taxi Park and Motor Park in the axis and the heavy pedestrian flow, parked vehicles, vendors and petty traders did not help the situation. Upon this, the Intel Group wanted the state government to revisit the ring road projects that were in the plan for Uyo even before it became a state capital. The proposed ring roads were problematic because they were opened up but concrete efforts were not made to develop them. To address the problem, a partial loop was constructed around the circus at a wider radius than the circus. The loop would essentially run from Ikot Ekpene road opposite the existing motor park, across Abak and Aka roads and terminate on Oron road opposite the small Unipetrol Filling Station. The loop could in fact be extended across the motor park to link up with Eka Street. The circus would then become a three road intersection of Ikot-Ekpene, Barracks and Oron roads. Then a pedestrian plaza would be created around the circus. This project is said to not only have addressed the issue of heavy traffic but also aided urban renewal. This is how the famous Ibom plaza in Uyo capital city and its magnificent accompaniments-park, garden and water fountain came into existence in 2002.¹⁶

Roads are known to constitute primary infrastructure that can be utilised to boost productivity in other sectors of the economy. Essentially, roads aid movement of goods and services from one location to another. In Uyo, the construction of roads by the Obong Victor Attah administration (1999-2007) is said to have contributed to the growth and transformation of Uyo into a modern city. Various grades of roads, reflecting the investment aspirations and cosmopolitan status of the state have been constructed. Some of these roads are: The eight-lane General Edet Akpan road, Ring road I (Atiku Abubakar Way), Dualization of Abak, Oron, Nung Udoe roads, Akwa Ima Estate roads, Ewet Housing Estate roads Lot 1 and 2, Industrial Estate roads Lot 1 and 2, Uyo village road (Wellington Bassey Way) through Uyo Capital, Ibiaku Itam to Ntak Inyang at Calabar-Itu Highway, Ukana Offot Street, Ikot Ebido/Nkemba Street, Obio Urua/Umo Essien Street, Abak and Etinan roads, the construction of a N13.8 billion underground drainage for flood and erosion control in Uyo and the installation of modern traffic lights in Uyo, and Housing Estate roads among others.¹⁷

By 2007, many roads were in very deplorable conditions, making easy access to remote parts very difficult as well as driving in major cities. With the need to tackle the perennial problem, the Akpabio administration unveiled a robust road rehabilitation and reconstruction agenda. Among the major roads that were rehabilitated are the: Abak-Ikot Ekpene Road now dualised, Ekiok Itam-Ikot Oku Road Dual Carriage Way, Afaha Obong-Etim Ekpo-Iwukem Road, Aka-Nung Udoe Road now dualised, Eket-Etinan Road, Ekom-Iman-Nseghe Road, Uyo-Afaha Nkan-Nung Ukim Road, Uyo-Ikot Ekpene and the Third Ring Road in Uyo.¹⁸ Apart from these major roads, a lot of internal roads in Uyo were also rehabilitated and reconstructed. From Uyo to Eket, Ikot Ekpene and other parts of Akwa-Ibom State, new roads traverse the nooks and crannies that were hitherto inaccessible. The completed network of roads in Banks and Financial Institutions Layout and Union Park in Uyo measuring about nine kilometres added aesthetics and given a befitting status to the area. Other roads that received attention include the University of Uyo internal road network, commercially viable roads within Uyo metropolis, and dualization of Airport road from Uyo.

Infrastructural Provision in Uyo

The provision of infrastructure forms the key factor in the socio-economic and political life of any society. The entire society is indeed knitted together by the availability of infrastructures and effective service delivery to the people. Consequently, infrastructural development is the

bedrock of rural and urban growth. These basic infrastructures include electricity, water and housing.

Housing Development Planning

Housing refers to units of dwelling. Put differently, housing is our living spaces-it incorporates the totality of our home environment. Housing development started in Nigeria during the colonial era with the aim of providing shelter for civil servants. From 1928, the central government established a Lagos layout at Ebute-Metta for the civil servants.¹⁹ By 1945, the central government further extended the housing development to all Nigerians including those in the private sector. The Nigeria Building Society (NBS) was established and modelled after the British system where mortgage bankers are known as housing societies or buildings. From 1952-1960, the Northeast and the West Region developed housing corporation. The Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation (ENDC) built Uwani Real Estate and other ENDC quarters in Enugu.²⁰

In 1973, the General Yakubu Gowon administration established the Federal Housing Authority (FHA). However, it was not until 1976 that the Authority began operation under the regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo. Under the FHA, the National Housing Programme was established, with the aim of developing low-cost estates. In 1978, these estates were transferred to various state governments as take-off seeds for their various housing corporation.²¹

Until 1987, when Uyo became the capital of Akwa-Ibom State, it had been an urban town in spite of the fact that there was hardly development planning in all terms of consideration. Uyo had been a local government headquarters and even after the creation of Akwa-Ibom State in 1987 and its attendant influx of people, concerted efforts have not been put in place to improve on the housing situation. From 1988-1990, the government of Colonel Godwin Osagie Abbe (now Retired Major-General) poised to start permanent structures for the fledgling state and ameliorate the worsening housing situation in the state established through Edict No. 8 of 1988, the Akwa-Ibom State Property Development Authority.²² The Authority started off with the construction of 150 housing units at Itiam/Eniong/Ewet Housing Estate. In Uyo, the Presidential and Government Guest Houses were constructed and commissioned. Consequently, 40 political party offices were built in the then twenty local government areas of the state. Subsequent administrations up till 1999-the Idongesit Nkanga Administration (1990-1992), the Obong Akpan Isemin Administration (1992-1993), the Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Bako Administration (1993-1996), the Captain Joseph Adehurotimi Adeusi Administration (1996-1998), the John Ebiye Administration (1998-1999) recorded achievements which carried out people oriented programmes and touched the lives of the ordinary citizens of the state.²³

However, on assumption of office, the Attah administration adopted the Public Private Partnership (PPP) approach to address the problem of housing and this led to the strengthening of the Akwa-Ibom Property and Investments Company Limited (APICO).²⁴ All over Uyo, the government through this agency built a good number of houses. In the delivery of the housing project in the state, the government conceived it as not merely the provision of accommodation but also as a means of wealth creation. Accordingly, the state adopted a combination of several approaches with the main strategy being partnership. A typical example is the building of the famous Shelter Afrique Housing Estate at Mbiabong in Uyo; it was a partnership between the state government and Shelter Afrique, a development finance institution based in Kenya and intermediated by NOVONE Consult. They have over two hundred and thirty-five housing units comprising low, medium and high profile houses in Uyo. The Akwa Savings and Loans was

also encouraged by the Attah administration to build houses for the people residing in Uyo. In Uyo, the financial institution has built over 40 unit houses of three bedrooms each at Afaha/Offot. The company equally acquired 37.6 hectares of land along Aka-Itiam. The Attah administration also built a fifty Units Medium Density Housing Estates of two bedroom flats each in all the 31 Local Governments Areas and expanded the development of the Osongama Housing Estate in Uyo.²⁵

Classical economics lists shelter among the three major needs of man. The other being food and water. The Godswill Akpabio administration initiated various policies and programmes to ensure comfortable environment and healthy living standard for the people; his administration constructed about 10, 000 modern and affordable houses for the citizens in Uyo.²⁶ It issued certificates of occupancy to legitimate land owners and developers and also set up small and large recreation parks in Uyo for both leisure and social events. An example is the Millennium Park by the State House of Assembly on Udo Udoma Street, Uyo.

Power Sector

Owing to the fact that fund constraint impeded the adequate supply and expansion of power in Uyo, private residences, offices, small and medium scale businesses suffered a great deal. In 1999, the Attah administration set out to tackle the problem of poor power supply in Uyo by setting up the Inter-Ministerial Direct Labour Coordinating Committee which was headed by Sir Sunday Udo Akpan.²⁷ The committee earmarked about eight hundred and twelve projects comprising electricity, water, schools, and hospitals. In 2007, the Godswill Akpabio administration embarked on electricity supply projects for businesses and other human activities to thrive. One of such projects was the commissioning of the first phase of the Independent Power Plant in 2007. Having been incorporated in 2001 by the Akwa-Ibom Investment and Industrial Promotion Council (AKIIPOC), the Ibom Power Company operates the 190 megawatts capacity open cycle gas-fired Ibom Power Station. Since it commenced operation in 2009, Ibom Power located at Ikot Abasi, about 65 kilometres from Uyo, has remained fully operational. However, its provision to all parts of the town has in recent years been vigorously pursued. The plant is to enhance power generation in the South-South region through the existing national grid and provide uninterrupted power supply to existing and future industries in Uyo. Power projects driven by AKIIPOC achieved the following: Power purchase agreement with Power Holding Company of Nigeria; federal guaranty of payment with the Federal Ministry of Finance; support agreement with the Federal Ministry of Power and Steel; installation of power transmission lines from Ikot-Abasi to Eket and the construction of Gas Processing Plant (PPP) with 691km pipeline.

Water Supply

Water is a very fundamental human need necessary for the survival of man. The provision of water for the citizens is one of the social responsibilities of government. To this end, the state government, in 1999, installed urban water capacity of about 10,000 cubic metres a day and reinvigorated institutions such as the Akwa-Ibom Water Company Limited, the Akwa-Ibom Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (AKRUWATSAN), the Inter-Ministerial Direct Labour Coordinating Committee (IMDLCC) and the Ministry of Rural Development, and gave them mandate to provide potable water in Uyo. It also secured the cooperation of African Development Bank (ADB) to finance water scheme in Uyo Metropolis (Uyo East, Ekit Itam, Ewet, State Secretariat, Ifa Atai and Obio Etoi) and the outskirts of Uyo Metropolis (Idu, Utit Uruan, Etinan, Ikot Obong/Ikot Inyang, Afaha Nsit, Mbak and Mbak Atai in Itu).²⁸ Avenues were explored to ensure that enough portable water is supplied through maintenance and

sustenance of existing boreholes and water schemes in Uyo, shifting of emphasis to treating, piping and distribution of surface water in needy communities, and encouraging community participation in the protection of the facilities. An approval was granted for the procurement of pump motors and accessories to the State Water Board for re-activation of the pumping stations at the Idongesit Nkanga Secretariat, Uyo; installation of 196, 080 cubic metres water capacity for Akwa-Ibom Water Company Limited; a 70% water demand sustenance for Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Senatorial Districts; and laid 600km water pipelines in Uyo metropolis.

Health Care Services

Health care delivery in Uyo is anchored by the State Ministry of Health which has as its major function, the provision of health care services to the citizenry. In 1991, the Idongesit Nkanga Administration procured and supplied generating plants to five health centres in Itam, Afaha Udo Eyop, Ikot Akan, Ikot Esenam, Ikot Obio, Inyang and Itak.²⁹ Facilities in the existing health establishments were improved upon and the existing blocks were expanded, two mortuary buildings were constructed at Etinan and Itu General Hospitals, four health clinics were completed and commissioned in Etinan, Ikono, Onna, and Ikot Ekpene. A library building at the School of Health Technology, Etinan was built and expansion projects were completed at General Hospital, Ikono. The Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) activities was expanded and upgraded to cope with emerging needs.

By 1994, there were twenty-six hospitals with three thousand, two hundred and twenty-two beds, one hundred health centres, four maternity homes, twelve dispensaries, twenty-four maternal and child welfare clinics, four polyclinics, four schools of nursing, four schools of midwifery, a leprosy hospital, a psychiatric hospital, and a Family Life Centre at Mbribit Itam for the treatment of Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) patients.³⁰ By 1999, three more General Hospital Complex were completed at Utu Etim Ekpo and Mbioto II, equipment of the Central Medical Stores in Uyo, completion and commissioning of classroom and hostels at Psychiatric Nurses School, Eket, by the Direct Labour Agency, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with the German Leprosy Relief Association towards the control and possible cure of leprosy and tuberculosis with the Direct Observation Treatment Schedule (DOTS). The Specialist General Hospital was converted to University Teaching Hospital and free medical services also provided to children aged five and below, HIV/AIDS patients, ante-natal and post-natal cases.

Between 2007 and 2012, the health sector experienced an unprecedented revolution under the administration of Godswill Akpabio. In Uyo senatorial district, a world class Specialist Hospital at Ekim Itam, along Uyo Ikot Ekpene Highway was constructed, a 60,000 capacity oxygen plant with gas cylinders at General Hospital, Ikot-Ekpene was installed; eight Anti-Retroviral therapy centres, fifteen prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) centres and thirty-seven HIV counseling and testing centres all rendering free services were activated and expanded; state-of-the-art ambulances were procured and commissioned, free medical services were provided for such public health institutions as St. Luke's Hospital, Anua; Mary Slessor General Hospital, Itu; Methodist General Hospital, Ituk Mbang, Uruan; Mount Carmel Hospital, Akpa Utong, Ibesikpo Asutan; General Hospital, Etinan; St. Theresa's Hospital, Use Abat, Ibion Ibom and Staff Clinic, Idongesit Nkanga Secretariat, Uyo; construction of Cottage Hospitals in Essien Udim, Ibeno, Ukanafun, Eastern Obolo and Ika; provision of counterpart funding for all health programmes by donor organizations like UNICEF, UNFPA, Operation Roll Back Malaria, HIV/AIDS World Bank Assisted

Programmes, and the construction of renal dialysis centre and donation of seventeen dialysis machines to University of Uyo Teaching Hospital.³¹

Educational Institutions

In a narrow sense, education is a purposive activity towards positive productive ends and relates to formal training in a school situation. It is the systematic, organised process of teaching and learning that is acquired in a lifetime. Prior to 1987, formal education among the people of Uyo was very insignificant. This left education to an informal educational system where parents were primary and almost exclusive teachers, supported only by the village or clan on a very minimal scale. They were deeply committed to teaching their young not only crafts or trade for their livelihood, but also put in their utmost in forming the whole person. There was emphasis on the complementary two-way teaching and learning approaches: positive qualities to learn, acquire and put to use and wrongs, errors and evils to avoid.³²

However, with the creation of Akwa-Ibom State, free tuition was introduced in public schools in and around Uyo so that every citizen is given the opportunity to acquire sound education. In 1987, the Ministry of Education and Youth Development was established to provide equal access to education at all levels to all citizens of the state. In line with this responsibility some boards were established: State Secondary Education Board, State Technical Schools Board, and State Primary Education Board. In conformity with the requirement of the National Library Board, Akwa-Ibom State Library Board and the e-Library were set up in Uyo for the purpose of providing educational services in terms of reading and obtaining research and reference materials. The Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education was created and tasked with the responsibility for giving unrestricted access to formal education through informal measures, including work and study programmes to ensure education for all and to reduce illiteracy level; the agency also undertook the construction of Special Education Centre in Uyo.

During the Idongesit Nkanga Administration in 1991, the College of Education, Afaha Nsit, was established and formally opened for classes on 10th January, 1991.³³ The institution is science-oriented and aimed at producing science and technical teachers for the state's school system. A primary school was built at Ikot Asua, Ekpe Atai Local Government Area to replace the former Ikot Asua Primary School which was taken over by the Community Secondary School Ikot Itie Idung and then the Federal Technical College. Community Secondary School, Ikot Osute, Oruk Anam; Community Secondary School, Ikot Nya, Nsit Ubium; Father Finton Memorial School, Ikot Ntot, Mkpato Enin, and Adiaha Obong Girls Secondary Commercial School, Ikot Imo, Nsit Ubium were also renovated.³⁴

The Obong Victor Attah Administration (1999-2007) also embarked on extensive renovation of buildings in Primary and Secondary Schools in and around Uyo. A new model Science/Replacement School was constructed in Aka-Offot. Nine centres that double as Science Resource and Computer laboratory centres were constructed. One is located at Cornelia Comely College, Afaha Oku, Uyo. In March, 2007, about 1,000 teachers were recruited into the Secondary School System some of whom were deployed to teach in schools within Uyo.³⁵

The Godswill Akpabio Administration (2007-2015) provided all children of school age, resident in Akwa-Ibom State, free and compulsory education for the first twelve years of school life. Besides providing free tuition, the government gave subvention of one hundred naira per primary school child and three hundred naira per secondary school student each term. This

financial support helped schools run their overheads without charging parents for anything. The government also abolished the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) fees. Enrolment of pupils in public primary schools rose from 761,422 to 931,337 between September 2008 and January 2012.³⁶ In the post-primary schools' cadre, students' enrolment increased from 252,699 to 860,502 in the same period. To make room for this huge enrolment, the government embarked on massive rehabilitation and reconstruction of classrooms and hostels, as well as procurement of school desks and science and laboratory equipment for schools. The Akpabio administration renovated over six hundred public school buildings across the state, made available more than twenty-four thousand textbooks to schools, paid for the yearly placement examination for Primary Six Basic Education Certificate Examination for Junior and Senior Secondary promotion examination for all schools in the state.

To build the capacity of lecturers in its universities, overseas training of some lecturers in such countries as Canada, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom, in such areas as Oil and Gas Technology, Aviation, Aeronautical Engineering was sponsored. On the E-Library, his administration saw to the supply and installation of more library books, equipment and electronic components to satisfy the yearnings of the users for ICT-driven learning.³⁷

Conclusion

The paper has shown that Uyo was transformed from Uyo village, Uyo Local Government Area, Uyo Senatorial District, to Uyo Capital City, the seat of Akwa-Ibom State government as well as a commercial centre. The city become a phenomenon with different meanings and interpretations. Uyo as an urban centre has well-developed internal structure and a clearly defined business district. Even before its status as the state capital, Uyo was traditionally the major focus of effective urban planning. The masterplan of Uyo keeps changing because of infrastructural, socio-economic and environmental developments initiated by different governments. Managing and sustaining urban growth and spread is a challenge but if handled properly, could reduce urban poverty which has been recognized as one of the permanent features of urban life, squalor. Institutional and legal frameworks will aid the reinvigoration of urban life and environment.

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