

Post-Civil War Reconstruction in Eastern Ibibioland, Nigeria: An Appraisal

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Abstract

The end of a war is usually followed by a period of reconstruction. This involves three parallel and many of the time, inter-woven activities which include reconstruction of physical facilities damaged by the war; economic rehabilitation of individuals and groups; reconciliation which sees to the establishment of normal relations between individuals and groups that fought on either side of the (war) divide. The paper examines the situation of the people at the end of the war, the transition to peace and most importantly assesses the efforts made by the war survivors and the nature of the federal government expression of the policy of reconstruction, and rehabilitation in Ibibioland. In doing this, the paper adopts the qualitative method of research and enquiry where oral and documentary data collected are analysed and the content extracted for writing the paper. The oral data were sourced from unstructured interviews with persons who experienced the war and persons whose loved ones narrated the wartime experiences to them. The documentary data are made up of textbooks, government publications and newspapers of the war period. The intelligence reports on the Ibibio were sourced from the Nigerian National Archives in Calabar, Enugu and Ibadan respectively. The paper finds that the Ibibio who described themselves as reluctant Biafrans and showed antipathy towards Biafra acquired different skills and also learned different crafts that became useful after the war when reconstruction of damaged roads and bridges began. It also finds that reconstruction was done communally and heavily anchored by families, in-laws and kinsmen.

Keywords: Civil War, Reconstruction, Rehabilitation

Introduction

The end of the Nigerian Civil war was a clear-cut transition from one state of affairs to another. There was uncertainty as to what the immediate future portends. The war ultimately ended with a whimper with Nigeria's reoccupation of Biafran territories before the final surrender of 1970. The Nigerian government promised that the residents of the recaptured Biafran territories could expect decent treatment, humanitarian assistance, and whatever resources they needed to reclaim their property and resume their peacetime occupations. Whether these promises were fulfilled differed from place to place. There

were no large-scale and government sponsored or supported recriminations against the people of the defunct Biafra. There were also no formal trials and convictions of members of the Biafran High Command. Excerpts from the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which Nigeria subscribed to in 1961 made provisions for wounded soldiers as well as the civilian population within the theatre of war or armed conflict to be entitled to protection of lives without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion, sex, birth, wealth or any other similar criteria.ⁱ The foregoing provided the basis on which the relief issue in the Nigerian Civil War was internationalized.

One of the main objectives of peace and reconciliation is to assuage the feelings of the combatants and reintegrate them into the system. Any peace and reconciliation effort must examine and understand the causes of a conflict. Nigerian Civil War bore ethnic tinge and as such had broader ramifications in terms of causes. Resettlement and rehabilitation operations were effected at the end of the war by both the states' rehabilitation committees and the national rehabilitation commission. Relief materials which included food, drugs, clothing, building materials, improved seedlings, and even cash were obtained from internal and external sources. These relief materials did not adequately address the desperate need of the people.

Eastern Ibibio People

Geographically, Ibibioland is located in the south-eastern corner of Nigeria. In the Southwest, the Ibibio have a common boundary with the Ijaw of Rivers State; in the West and Northwest, their neighbours are the Igbo of Imo State; in the North and Northeast, they have a common boundary with the Ekoi and in the East with various ethnic groups in the Cameroons. The Bight of Bonny washes its Southern border.ⁱⁱ The Ibibio have a coastline which stretches from the Akpayafe River at the Nigeria-Cameroun border in the East to the Andoni River in the West, a distance of more than 130 kilometres; it extends far more than 110 kilometres Northwards to Itu Mbon Uso in Ini Local Government Area which lays Southeast of Bende in Abia State.ⁱⁱⁱ The Ibibio-speaking people and their principal towns include Uyo, Eket, Onna, Ikono, Ini, Ibiono, Itu, Nsit Ibom, Nsit Ubium, Uruan, Ibesikpo-Asutan, Nsit Atai, Ikot-Abasi and Mkpat-Enin. Ibibioland is one of the minority areas that lay in the periphery of the Eastern Region. The declaration of the independence of the Eastern Region under the name, the Republic of Biafra by Lt.-Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu on May 30th, 1967, had the enthusiastic support of almost all the Igbo. When the Republic of Biafra was declared, it was against the wishes of a large majority of the Ibibio people who had for long alongside their fellow minorities demanded a separate state free of Igbo domination. While Biafra claimed that the minorities were wholeheartedly in support of the secession, the federal government

maintained that the minorities had been longing to be liberated.^{iv} To Udoakaha Esuene, South-Eastern State Military Governor, the Igbo wanted slaves and not allies and he emphasized that the Ibibio will not be their slaves.^v However, loyalties were, in fact, divided in regard to the fact that the supporters of the Biafra secession were those who felt that the Easterners as a group had shared the same fate as victims of the 1966 massacres and expulsion from the north, while those who aligned with the Nigerian government saw it as an opportunity to have a separate state of their own and be free from any domination.^{vi} Some of the Ibibio were apathetic about the secession and the war with the federal government because they saw the declaration of the republic of Biafra was viewed both as an Igbo agenda and a manifestation of Lt. Col. Ojukwu's premeditated resolve. Their dissatisfaction was further fuelled first by the action of the Federal Military Government on May 27th 1967: Eastern Region was split into three: East Central State for the Igbo, with Enugu as its capital, South-eastern State for the Efik and Ibibio, with Calabar as its capital, and Rivers State for the Ijaw, with Port Harcourt as its capital.^{vii}

Ibibioland and the Nigerian Civil War

Until the declaration of Biafra, everyone within the borders of the nation was a Nigerian. The Nigerian Army was dominated by the Igbo in the middle officer ranks. When Aguiyi Ironsi approved twelve promotions from major to lieutenant-colonel in May 1966, the Northerners read it as another move by the Igbo to take over the army since eight out of the twelve gazetted officers were Igbo and only one was a Northerner.^{viii} The new promotions put the Igbo in operational command of infantry battalions, artillery units and direct establishments. The killings of the first coup in January 1966 worsened ethnic imbalance that ran through all the senior ranks of the army. For the next six months, Nigeria was thrown into a state of despair and the first step was to divide the army with the repatriation of Northerners from the East and Easterners from the North. In August 1966, the departing Northern troops from Enugu left with their arms and ammunition and the East was left with only one hundred and twenty rifles in the Enugu garrison.^{ix} The killings of people from Eastern Nigeria in the North went on with varying degrees of intensity. On September 19, 1966, Northern soldiers from the 4th Battalion, drove down to Makurdi and Gboko in Tivland and started killing Easterners. Troops and mobs ran frantically through the strangers' quarters of all the major towns in the North, killing, looting and burning. Thousands of Easterners were hidden and later smuggled back to the East abandoning everything they possessed. These killings were indiscriminate and there was nothing to differentiate one Easterner from the other and so the non-Igbo peoples of eastern Nigeria shared the same fears and fate as the Igbo.^x In other words, the military coup of January 15th, 1966 and the September-October 1966 massacres of Easterners in

Northern towns of Zaria, Kano, Gusau, and Sokoto sparked off a serious refugee problem. Over one million persons were displaced and evacuated to the Eastern Region.^{xi}

Before the war broke out in 1967, the Regional administration already had a major economic problem which was the rehabilitation of the large numbers of people who had fled their places of residence and work, and returned to Eastern Nigeria, seeking security, safety and stability. They were professionals, businessmen, income-earners who were suddenly made destitute without little or no alternative sources of income. The demobilization of the work force aggravated unemployment problem. Refugees from Ibibio areas were not readily welcomed into the region. A number of them particularly from Uyo, Ikot-Ekpene and Abak were discriminated against and even attacked when they tried to cross into Aba.^{xii} When the East started to recruit young men into the army, candidates from the non-Igbo areas which included the Ibibio were scarcely selected for recruitment while the Igbo candidates were selected and recruited; those who were already in the army and had returned to the East alongside their Igbo colleagues, were not readily accepted. In another development, there were occasional threats of attacks against the non-Igbo by the Igbo. These threats occasioned a direct petition to the Military Governor in September 1966, from personalities in the Old Calabar Province comprising the Ibibio, Efik, and Annang. The governor arranged for and met with representatives from the Old Calabar Province, the Old Rivers Province and the Old Ogoja Province and assured them of his determination to ensure that justice and fair play would in future be guaranteed for all. In the second meeting of the Consultative Assembly held on October 4th, 1966, representatives from the Old Calabar Province, the Old Rivers Province and the Old Ogoja Province frankly spoke and complained that the attitude of the Igbo majority made them lack a sense of belonging which was evident in the distribution of amenities, the siting of industries, and appointments to public offices. To this end, they proposed that a separate state for them would address these issues. However, even though the Ibibio and other non-Igbo lacked a sense of belonging in the Eastern Region, many members of the Ibibio educated elite were attached to the Eastern Nigerian civil service at least before the war. Other non-Igbo persons held certain positions worthy of mention in the Eastern Region: the first African principal of Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS) Onitsha from 1954-1958 was S.J. Cookey, from Opobo; the first African Principal of Government College, Umuahia was I. D. Erokosima, a Kalabari man; the first African Principal of Government Secondary School Owerri was S. F. Kombo-Igbete, from Nembe and the first African Principal of Government Secondary School, Afikpo was Ibi Mboto, from Itigidi.

Instead of creating states, a committee was set up and it presented a proposal for the establishment of fifteen provincial units under the Provincial Administration System upon

which executive and legislative powers would be devolved. Meanwhile, crisis deepened and molestation of the Ibibio increased. Interests were divided based on the political development in the Region which made the Ibibio uncomfortable in their relationship with the Igbo. The Eastern Region which was the main theatre of war was politically fragmented but the communities were linked with each other by a network of interlocking political, economic, religious and social relationships.^{xiii} The Igbo depended on the riverine areas for their trade. The people from the riverine areas married Igbo women.

Following Ojukwu's declaration, a good number of federal soldiers backed by several armoured ferret cars, a chatter of machine guns and artillery rockets were followed with war songs like *Ojukwu banza, Ojukwu shege*. The war started at 5:30am, July 6, 1967 in Garkem, Ogoja, Cross-River State with two battalions when Lieutenant Gado Nasko of the Nigerian Army fired the first heavy and sustained artillery shots. The Biafran troops that were already stationed at Garkem suffered casualties as a result of the strike but stayed still in their newly dug trenches where they took cover. The Federal Military Government mobilised troops to stop the secession by first advancing through the periphery into what was now Biafra. Every federal victory was ascribed to the work of saboteurs and lack of cooperation by the Ibibio people of the areas concerned. The immediate movement of the federal troops from Oron to Ikot-Ekpene within forty-eight hours was blamed on the inhabitants of those areas who either hid enemy troops in their houses or led them through bush paths.^{xiv} The only natural reaction from people was to turn and run in different directions. Families were displaced. The people were, in the Biafran sense, only moving from one part of Biafra to another, and, in the Nigerian sense, from one part of Eastern Nigeria to another. People were displaced internally and refugee camps were established at Nto Edino and Ikwen. The federal troops opened four fronts- Okutu and Obollo Afor in Nsukka and Gakem and Obudu in Ogoja and with mass artillery and infantry support, they were able to overrun these border towns in the first week of the fighting. After the fall of Calabar on October 19, 1967, the advance of the federal troops into the centre of South-Eastern State was very much facilitated. Between November 1967 and February 1968, the federal troops had taken areas stretching from Calabar to Ikang, Aningeye, Akamkpa, Mbarakom, and Ikot-Okpora. They continued their advance to Obom-Itiat and crossed over to Itu where they encountered serious opposition by the Biafran troops before eventually taking hold of the town. With the fall of Calabar, Itu, Uyo and the rest of the mainland were militarily threatened and pressured. The Ibibio area came under Federal control in 1968.

In Uyo province, thousands of refugees and natives had to be resettled in the feeding centres and sick-bays were opened for the care of the destitute children. Mobile clinics were also established for camps, villages, and feeding centers. The Biafra Rehabilitation

Commission ran medical clinics in all the six hundred and eighty-eight refugee camps. The scheme was established under the Commission's Refugee Medical and Health Service and run by a medical sub-committee comprising indigenous doctors and representatives of the various relief organizations. The shifting rhythm of the war subjected internally persons to continuous exodus from one community to the other as thick bushes, refugee camps, and school premises became provisional residence. Many who lived through the war lamented that they lost their sense of security and never regained it.

Individual and Community Reconstruction

Post-war rehabilitation of the Ibibio people gradually commenced in 1968. Individual and community efforts played vital role in the post-war reconstruction in Ibibio areas. The Ibibio people addressed their need for shelter themselves. Those who remained in the Ibibioland took to various livelihood activities so that internal trade became increasingly reactivated and the urban centers also began to bubble with human populations of all age grades and gender who strove to live normal life as much as they could afford. The villages also revived their traditions and sought ways to rehabilitate public utility facilities having been either destroyed or abandonment during the war years. People of the same quarter co-operated to solve problems such as clearing of paths to their common source of drinking water and also worked together with related groups to rehabilitate their village square, church, school, and common market. This progression led to the formation or reactivation of Town Unions as agents of reconstruction and development; they catering primarily for the social needs and interests of their members.^{xv} They were the rallying points for the energy, resources and resourcefulness of the people. In some places funds particularly for the joint payment of primary school fees were raised through the joint harvesting of communal oil palm groves.

People who acquired different skills and learned different crafts-hunting, fishing, building houses and exploiting economic trees became useful after the war when reconstruction of damaged and dilapidated structures began. The acquisition of new skills was made possible by communities in their places of refuge. After the news of the end of the war, Ibibio people were ready to rehabilitate themselves, their towns, and villages irrespective of the assistance from government and aid agencies. Ibibio people visited each other, empathized and rejoiced with one another on their survival. Rehabilitation and reconstruction were done communally and heavily anchored by families, in-laws and kinsmen. Days were fixed when everybody in the community came out for a general clean-up; foot paths, major roads were opened and trenches were dug along the roads. Those whose houses were destroyed were accommodated by their kinsmen until their

houses were reconstructed or new ones were built depending on the extent of the damage. For the reconstruction, building materials like stakes, roof mats and straps were provided for by the people themselves. On the day the building would be erected, food and drinks were provided through contributions made by members of the communities. The mutual encouragement given and received during these meetings was soothing to those who were terribly distressed by the war. Aid was communally organized in some towns. Food came through farmers in areas that were less hit by the war who were able to farm during the military operations. The end of the war was a particular cause for joy to Mr Itorobong Akanga, who was discharged from the Biafran army four months earlier before the war ended because he was shot in his left leg in October, 1969. His leg could not be saved and so was amputated. After the war, he was among the first to register at the Marist Rehabilitation Centre, Uturu (Hopeville) where he was supplied with crutches and taught carpentry and bag-making.^{xvi}

The need for rehabilitation led to multiple engagements as people took up as many as different occupations concurrently. Those who could combine agriculture and trade did so even with other formal jobs. According to Edet Anwana, rehabilitation and reconstruction did not take place at the same time in every area; schools were reopened in 1970 just a few months or weeks after the war ended. Palm trees were harvested and proceeds derived from the sale of palm oil were used to rebuild and repair school buildings and council hall. People went back to work as directed by the government though many worked without pay for some time.^{xvii} Communities battered by the war were encouraged to take steps to rehabilitate themselves before the government comes to their assistance.

For Iman Ekpeyong, rehabilitation started with the return of the farming cycle and when they began to move about freely without molestation. Obong Obot Hanson, a retired civil servant held the perspective that rehabilitation commenced when some people were allowed to resume their pre-war civilian occupation. People were re-employed soon after the war, paid salary advance with which to rehabilitate ourselves. The people developed their village community, Ikot-Abasi through community effort and it took them up to seven years. Schools reopened between 1971 and 1972. Irrespective of the attempts made by the federal governments at reconstruction and rehabilitation, Ibibio war victims were majorly responsible for their recovery through their self-help initiatives. As the former rhythm of life became considerably re-established, people forgot most of their wartime experiences and the tempo of individual rehabilitation gradually died down; the people laboured to rehabilitate themselves and reconstruct their areas through village clans, pressure groups, and improvement unions in various capacities as individuals, farmers, traders, manufacturers and entrepreneurs. In the area of commerce, many traders started trade with minimal sums. The long-established credit system became beneficial as traders

who had no capital could now receive cash or goods on credit. The system enabled impoverished traders to rehabilitate themselves and become independent again.

The East Central State government designed a program to support self-help projects undertaken by communities with additional funding but the role of government in providing any help for the reconstruction, to some persons, rarely reached the village level. However, the lack of public perception does not mean that the role of government in post-civil war reconstruction is irrelevant. Soon after the civil war; Mobil Producing Nigeria started its operations in the South-Eastern State in Eket Local Government. Several companies providing services to Mobil were also established. The Mobil Airstrip, Management Housing Estate, Mobil Pegasus School and Mobil Technical Training Centre were located in Eket while the Qua Iboe Terminal was located at Ibeno. Qua River hotels was established by the State Government. There were also the Sea state Sea foods Limited, Qua Steel Products and Dr. Pepper Bottling Company. East-West Federal Highway which passes through Eket-Etinan road, Eket-Jamestown Road was constructed; a public power transmission network, public waterworks, public and private motor parks, three urban markets- Urua Nka and Fionetok and Udoinyang were established. Many of the internal roads and drainage systems were constructed or rehabilitated by Mobile Producing Nigeria under its Community Program.

Individuals and organizations established schools in Ibibioland after the war. They include Community Secondary school, Ikot-Usoekong, Girls High School. Ikot Ibiok by the Eket Women Development Association, Nduo Eduo High School, Community Secondary School, Idong Ininag, Apostolic Church Secondary School, Esit Urua and others. The Health Centre at Mkpok was established by Senator Helen Esuene. Churches and non-governmental bodies such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Red Cross promptly offered facilitation to help the people in both the urban and rural communities to live well again; they also offered health care and other forms of assistance to individuals, families, women, children and the elderly.

Federal Government Expression of the Policy of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

In 1968, Gowon promulgated Decree 41, which provided for a National Relief Operation and Post-War Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reconciliation. The responsibility of the commission was to collect and distribute medication and other humanitarian gifts from foreign governments, international and non-governmental agencies to the three eastern states- East Central State, Rivers State and South-eastern State. It was to also restore the dislocated and damaged infrastructural services such as roads, ports and rails. In October 1968, the Federal Ministry of Information published an official pamphlet prepared by the

commissioner for finance titled *Blue Print for Post-War Reconstruction*.^{xviii} The document stated as follows that:

1. The surviving victims of past disturbances and of the present military operations shall be cared for with the utmost compassion.
2. The surviving Federal troops shall be amply rewarded for their gallant and devoted services to the nation.
3. All soldiers, no matter on which side they had fought shall be rehabilitated and faithfully employed at the end of the military operations. It must be noted that one good thing about the present emergency is that it helped to reduce unemployment throughout the country. It would be a mistaken policy of the worst kind to allow the Federal troops and the rebel soldiers to go unemployed.
4. Those whose property have been destroyed or damaged, as a result of civil disturbances, shall be reasonably compensated.
5. All those who had fled from their normal places of residence or business shall be resettled, and if possible, helped to make a new start.
6. All roads, bridges, and public building destroyed shall be reconstructed.
7. With immediate effect, a special fund into which an amount of 1 million pounds will be contributed annually, starting this year has been created.

It appeared that General Gowon's administration was genuinely committed to the promotion of peace and unity, justice, equity, fairness, reintegration, and reconciliation but subsequent events exposed the yawning gap between these pronouncements and the practicality of their implementation; there was no sense of urgency in the FMG's expression of the policy of reconciliation and reintegration. One of such events was the subject of the re-absorption of Biafran soldiers into the Nigerian Army which the Federal Government was reluctant to about. Quite a number of officers were re-absorbed; some were dismissed from the Nigerian military service while those Nigerian officers who were involved in the January 1966 coup and those that had aided the secessionist forces were detained for a longer period.^{xix} The Military Board's decision that all combatant officers above the rank of captains should be dismissed, discharged or retired without benefits and only junior officers were to be absorbed was contrary to General Gowon's assertion at the end of hostilities that there was no victor, no vanquished.^{xx} This action called to question, the commitment the Federal Government pledged towards reconciliation and rehabilitation. Even those who were reabsorbed faced the problem of upward mobility.

On 15th January, 1970, General Yakubu Gowon made a proclamation that there is no question of second-class citizenship in Nigeria and that all energies will now be bent to the task of reintegration and reconciliation. He also said that his government has directed that the former civil servants and public corporation officials should be promptly reinstated as they come out of hiding.^{xxi} This proclamation was seen as an extension of olive branch to the former combatants. The Federal Government established a Ministry of Economic Development and Reconstruction with Alhaji Shehu Shagari an administrator, federal minister in the First Republic and later Nigeria's first executive president as commissioner. The sum of four million and four hundred thousand pounds^{xxii} was all that was provided for the 3Rs in the Second National Development Plan. This was meant to cater for the Eastern Region, the Midwest and two northern states of Benue and Kogi.

The federal government's expression of rehabilitation appeared to have left the Ibibio people to grapple alone with the reconstruction and rehabilitation. There was little intervention here and there to enable the people recover from the war. Many communities that were burnt down never received help and some have remained destroyed until today. Some of the Ibibio interviewed denied that the measures taken by the federal government to reactivate farming operations was not felt or seen by the people; the schemes such as free distribution of seedlings, fertilizers, and free agricultural extension services which increased the output of food crops, food crop multiplication and palm groves rehabilitation and expansion that were put into operation hardly reached the grass root level. Reconstruction program was carried out in the East-Central in a devolving manner. The FMG paid money into the coffer of the National Rehabilitation Commission (NRC), which then disbursed the money to its satellite offices for reconstruction activities. The Ministry of Works and the Ministry of Agriculture were primarily involved in the execution of the plan. The relief and rehabilitation of the East-Central State was coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Development and Reconstruction. Provisions were made for the rehabilitation of schools, hospitals, rural water supplies, roads, bridges, markets, and public buildings and the resettlement of displaced persons. The FMG took responsibility for the humanitarian situation in the East Central State; it received a rather larger percentage of aid during the distribution of relief. Forty percent was remitted to the East Central State, compared to thirty percent for the South-Eastern State, twenty percent for Rivers State, and ten percent for the Mid-West.

Between 1970 and 1974, five different Reconstruction and Development Plans were established. These were: the Second National Development Plan; East-Central State Programme of Post-war Reconstruction; Mid-Western State Development Plan; Rivers State Development Plan; and the South-Eastern State Development Plan. These plans were general in tone and content even though there were similarities in their objectives

and priorities.^{xxiii} However, the Ibibio do not agree that they were considered as the central focus of the reconstruction efforts both at the national and state level. The South-Eastern State Development Plan was tasked with the assignment to resettle civil servants who were hastily disengaged from the work force by the war and also resettle displaced persons.

In 1976, the federal government introduced the Universal Primary Education programme and incorporated its rehabilitation scheme into the National Development Plan of 1979-1974. The federal and state governments' rehabilitation programmes did not have specific dates for their completion because they ended with the Gowon administration in 1975. With the new government, Brigadier Murtala Mohammed embarked on dismantling the government apparatus of Yakubu Gowon and the reversal of most of his programmes. In the expansion and improvement of health services in the health sector, the federal government shared the sum of 35.5million pounds (Nigerian pounds) to the twelve states of the federation. The federal government-initiated developments that were not easily noticeable: the re-absorption of civil servants, the takeover of private schools and the support for cultural activities.

Grass root rehabilitation committees were set up in towns and districts and placed under the supervision of local rulers in order to guarantee the efficient execution of the programme. The committees were formed according to the needs of various towns. The rehabilitation was generally aimed at healing the wounds inflicted by the war, to restore normalcy, mutual understanding, and better relations among the people. In support of the reconstruction of roads, bridges, schools and damaged public buildings, money was raised internally for the committee from the salaries of state commissioners and other civil servants for a period of three months. The Christian Council in Uyo launched an emergency relief project aimed at assisting Rehabilitation Commission with foodstuffs, clothing and money. The project supplemented the already existing services being rendered by state government welfare offices and the Biafra Council of Social Services. The state government addressed the needs of the Ibibio war victims by providing them relief and medical attention. The people were encouraged to expand their agricultural output as the quickest means to ensure rehabilitation. Food and medication were distributed to the returnees and the displaced in the affected communities.

In 1970, the government of South-eastern State, under Colonel J. U. Esuene constructed a bridge across the Itu River linking Calabar with the Ibibio mainland. Hitherto, the Ibibio mainland and hinterland used to access Calabar through Oron by sea. Ikot Offiong, where the Biafran soldiers camped, is about 100 metres from the bridge that was constructed after the war.^{xxiv} New ministries were established, new roads such as the Abak and Aka roads, Ring Road 1, Uyo village road (Wellington Bassey Way) through Uyo Capital at

Ibiaku Itam to Ntak Inyang, Ukana Uffot road, Etinan road were opened and some others were dualised, agricultural projects such as Women Agro Entrepreneurship Development Programme (WAEDEP), Accelerated Livestock and Fish Production Programme, Integrated Farmers Scheme were initiated. Three cassava processing centres at Nung Udoe, Ikot-Okudom and Ikot Ekeang in Ibesikpo-Asutan, Eket and Abak LGAs respectively were established, educational, health and other social services were initiated.^{xxv} Civil servants were reabsorbed, private schools were taken over and support was given for cultural activities. Some of the new establishments include- College of Health sciences at Use Ikot Ebio, Offot, Owot Uta-Nung Ette-Ikot Ambon Residential Estate, Ekpedit and Ibiaku Ikot Ukpong Residential Estate, Anua and Ifa Ikot Okpon Residential Estates among others. Some of the federal establishments include- Federal Information, Centre, Uyo, National Oil Spillage Detection and regulatory Agency, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water resources and Rural development, National Population Commission, National Agricultural Land Development Authority, National War Museum, National Library among others. Some of the new state ministries include- Ministry of Works, Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ministry of Lands and town Planning, Ministry of Housing and Urban Renewal, State Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Rural Development among others.

In 1973, the General Yakubu Gowon administration established the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) which began operation in 1976 under the administration 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.^{xxvi} Upon this, the Akwa-Ibom State Property Development Authority was established. The authority started off with the construction of one hundred and fifty housing units at Itiam/Eniong/Ewet Housing Estate.

In the area of healthcare, substantial efforts were made to provide facilities for preventive and curative health care delivery in Ibibioland. Power-generating plants were procured and supplied to five health centres in Itam, Afaha Udo Eyop, Ikot-Akan, Ikot-Esenam, Ikot-Obio, Inyang and Itak. Two mortuary buildings were constructed at Etinan and Itu General Hospital and four clinics were constructed and commissioned in Etinan, Ikono, and Onna, a Family Life Centre at Mbiribit Itam for the treatment of Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) patients was also opened and the Expanded Programme on Immunization activities was upgraded to cope with emerging needs.^{xxvii} Free medicals services were provided for health institutions like Mary Slessor General Hospital, Itu, St. Luke's Hospital, Anua, Methodist Hospital, Ituk Mbang, Uruan, Mount Carmel Hospital, Akpa

Utong, Ibesikpo-Asutan, General Hospital, Etinan, St. Theresa's Hospital, Use Abat, Ibiono Ibom and Staff Clinic, Idongesit Nkanga Secretariat, Uyo.

In Uyo, the Ministry of Education and Youth Development was established for the people to provide equal access to education at all levels. In line with this responsibility, some boards were created: The Secondary Education Board which exercises authority over the management of public schools, teachers and educational facilities; the Technical Schools Board which oversees vocational schools and vocational colleges; the Primary School Board which receives the finances and policy directives from the National Primary Education Commission. Colleges of Education were established and a special education centre was also established in Uyo by the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education. Schools in Ikot-Itie Idung, Ikot-Osute, Oruk Anam, Ikot-Nya, Nsit Ubium, Ikot-Ntot, Mkpatt Enin, Adiaha Obong, Ikot-Imo, Aka Offot, and Afaha Oku were renovated.

Conclusion

As the evidence above suggests, the governments at the federal, state and divisional levels tried to and in fact did make post-war reconstruction efforts but these efforts did not amount to much. The burden fell majorly on the Ibibio people who through their patriotic commitments showed that they had hearts and shoulders strong and broad enough to bear the burden occasioned by the war. The physical features of the post-war reconstruction efforts had varying degrees of measured success in Ibibioland. The fissures occasioned by the war have remained long after the war.

Endnotes

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