

EDUCATION, STABILITY AND SECURITY IN EKPEYE

My great audience and fellow attendees, I bring you fraternal greetings from Ekpeye people in Nigeria.

It would have been my pleasure to be with you physically but we must acknowledge the inevitability of the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the times and in our lives.

That we are meeting despite the challenges is a testimony of your determination as a body to live above circumstantial limitations and to salute the ingenuity of all the innovative minds that have made it possible for us to meet virtually from the very comfort of our homes, offices and even vehicles.

May I place it on record and sincerely appreciate all your efforts as an organization to ensuring the socioeconomic development of Ekpeye. You have made out time to think of the myriads of problems plaguing Ekpeye despite the pressure on your time and the need to earn the highly priced and valuable Dollar. It is indeed a worthy sacrifice you are making and we very sincerely commend you.

Today I am with you in the struggle for a progressive and prosperous Ekpeye Ethnic Nation. Coincidentally I am attending as your keynote speaker and brand new Patron. I therefore owe you a duty to speak to you frankly and with no attempts at embellishing facts. Going forward you should expect me to sometimes shoot from the hips as you would say and permit me to apologize way in advance of the hurt I may cause anyone of you by so doing.

I am an Ekpeye man. My origin on all fronts are Ekpeye. I cannot find refuge anywhere other than Ekpeye, As my only true home I owe it a duty to work hands in gloves with all those who have a development agenda for our ethnic nation. I truly cannot afford to be indifferent and that is probably why I have worked with you over the years as a partner and promoter of your cause.

In furtherance of your avowed target at contributing your quota for the development of Ekpeye, you have chosen the topic: “Education, Stability and Security in Ekpeye”. I can only imagine the man-hour that has been invested in the brainstorming sessions that preceded the choice of the topic. I am therefore going to be less academic while speaking on it as you would have done so much research on the topic already. My task is simply how to situate those key issues in our contemporary Ekpeye and to ask those salient questions that we all would need to answer if we truly want a 21st Century version of Ekpeye.

EDUCATION.

Education is the bedrock of every society. It is that necessary platform upon which development strives. According to Aristotle, Education is the process of training a person to fulfill his or her aim by exercising all their faculties to the fullest extent as members of a society. This position dwells on the contributions of the individual to societal growth. To do so will require a great deal of self-denial and self-development. By this concept, the individual can only be said to be educated when they exercise their faculties to the fullest extent. That is indeed a tall order but we all can do it and guess what? Ekpeye will be better off for it.

Education is a process which aims at bring out the best in us; it is a quest for learning and an insatiable thirst for knowledge. Today you have left the shores of Nigeria and have only but occasional contacts with your kith and kins. You have done so not because of the comfort the United States offers but more to improve yourselves, learn more and acquire more knowledge of progressive societies. Ekpeye need that knowledge; Ekpeye is in need of the benefits so much and even more now. Do not keep it to yourselves, allow for a ripple effect and exponential growth.

Ironically, education is getting a new meaning. It is no longer only the ability to read and write that makes a person literate but now you must be able to learn, unlearn and relearn. Who tells you therefore that you do not have the need to relate with us at home? You must learn our ways of life, unlearn certain primordial tendencies and beliefs and relearn our modern life and in so doing you would have made life a bit more pragmatic and brought about a common good.

Today we must rise from this convention determined to introduce a new mindset and ask ourselves if we have given our all for the development of the Ekpeye nation even as hunger still pervades our land; we must rise to stop the blame game that has become the order of the day where politics has become the cause of everything bad while we engage in evasive and self-absorbing mission. We must agree to put in our all for the development of Ekpeye land.

STABILITY

I found this aspect of your topic rather challenging. At some point I was going to ask the organizers for their intention but decided against that since I, like everyone else, will be expected to appreciate the topic from their own standpoints.

I then asked myself: What are we stabilizing? Should we stabilize now? In answer, I came to the brutal reality that we have nothing order than our culture to stabilize. On the economic side we are like non-starters. If we stability on that then we would be entrenching poverty, insecurity, poor school enrollment, very low per capita income, lack of innovative thinking and several other vices and inadequacies in our today society.

We will therefore need to first raise Ekpeye to an enviable height in its standard of living before we think of stability. This will truly be an uphill task but like every determined people, we can succeed and like President Obama would say "YES, WE CAN".

SECURITY

There has been no day gone by that the Nigerian media does not mention the problem of insecurity across Nigeria. Ekpeye land is not left out of the negative news.

Security is by its very nature a catalyst for development. Security in fact has a positive correlation with development thus poor security results in poor investment, poor economy, poor education, poor living standards generally.

On a happy note, the insecurity is no longer so bad. Many thanks to His Excellency the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Chief Barrister Nyesom Ezenwo Wike and our dear in-law who has warn all trouble makers in Ekpeye land to desist forthwith. Also worthy of note are the collaborative efforts of Eze Igbu Upata and other traditional rulers, The Local Government Council Chairmen of Ahoada East and West Local Government Areas, the Youth bodies, Community Development Committees and their leadership and others who have spent their time and resources to engage the erring youths in productive ventures.

The insecurity in our land though under control is not fully eradicated. Like education, we all need to play a part in this noble mission. Most of you, if not all are benefactors with a chain of dependents in Nigeria especially in Ekpeye land. You must be role models and play the role of mentors. You may have to employ the carrot and stick approach whereby you reward and sometimes threaten to withhold reward or mete out punishment. Studies have shown that youths are more likely to obey their benefactors than total strangers. Help Ekpeye to be out of the woods by accepting to inconvenience yourselves to be involved in the needed reorientation of our rather negatively active youth and reposition them on the part of meaningful life again.

My brothers and sisters of Ekpeye stock, may you continue to enjoy robust health even as you can count on me in the advancement of the Ekpeye agenda as we look forward to having you around to the usual warm hospitality of the Ekpeye man.

Ekpeye amekatuni!!!

Senator Osinakachukwu Ideozu, PhD

Uli Ekpeye of Ekpeye Land.