

Ibibio proverbs supportive of democratization practices

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Abstract

Proverbs are natural vehicles for the transmission of cultural ideals in any society where they are in use. In contemporary Nigeria, proverbs can be used to address the various cultural rubrics of the society, in this case Ibibio. Specifically too, they are used to address challenges of the electoral and democratic values and institutions. In this paper, we attempt to identify the various indigenous Nigerian proverbs that can be used to propagate, promote and sustain sound electoral and democratic ethics and values from the perspective of the Ibibio language spoken in the south-south geopolitical zone of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Democracy, Ibibio, Politics, Proverbs, Worldviews.

1. Introduction

A proverb is a short witty saying or short forcible statement that states a general/well-known truth or a piece of advice. Proverbs generally act as vehicle for transmitting, extending and conveying messages, ideas, knowledge and even news among a group of people in this case the Ibibio people. The Ibibio people form a storehouse of these proverbs which to them form a literature, practical philosophy, advice and law. To these people, proverbs form literature because of the meaningful sayings struck out like bright sparks from the hammer and anvil of life. They are idiomatic, arresting and practical wisdom. They are also philosophical because in many of them, an explanation of life's rules and exceptions to these rules are attempted.

Finnegan (1970:393) contributing to what constitutes a proverb states that, a proverb is "a saying in more or less fixed form, marked by shortness, sense, and salt and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it".

To Ogbonna-Onuche (1998:210), "proverbs are popular but short memorable and wise sayings usually with words of advice or warnings that embody some common place truths. They add flesh and flavour to our ... language usage because they make our expressions richer and concise."

Essien (1980:10) cited Obiechina (1975) and states that "proverbs are the kernels which contain the wisdom of the traditional people". He states further that proverbs "are philosophical and moral expositions shrunk to a few words, and form a mnemonic device in societies in which everything worth knowing and relevant to day to day life has to be committed to memory". They are the wise sayings of the elders which convey intelligent meanings on general issues of life and experiences.

A proverb is a pithy statement with global influence which is generally conceived of as the wisdom of many and the wit of one, a condensation of an experience one might say. They are seen to be the salt of communication ... and the orature of the people, (Iwaketok, 2014:1,2,5). However, there is the observed decline in the popularity of the genre as the spirit and the ornament of speech among the Ibibio people especially in the political/electoral settings such as during political campaigns, town hall meetings, etc., which has threatened the indigenous languages of the African/Nigerian descent.

Proverbs are usually given in the form of phrases and sentences. They are used to briefly express some recognized truth or shrewd observations that have been made about life generally in the society and which have been preserved by oral tradition from generation to generation. However, proverbs may be transmitted orally or as a written literature.

Proverbs provide useful resource materials for relearning what our forefathers thought and believed. That is, proverbs are ways of recording information of what was important in our forefathers' society that we would like the younger generation to learn and adopt.

Akɔp inua imenne ikon

"He who shuts his mouth swallows no fly"

The Ibibio language, like most Nigerian languages is very rich in proverbs which play a vital role in the daily life of the people. This work highlights on the role played by proverbs in supporting the democratization practices in Nigeria from the view point of the Ibibio language.

Democracy on the other hand presupposes representative government. Indigenous Nigerian democracy started on October 1, 1960 when the country gained independence from her British colonial overlords. There have been several hiccups in the country's democratic experiences with the incessant military interventions and their

associated draw backs. However, the political era under use and consideration in this work is the current democratic dispensation which started on May 29, 1999 and which for now remains the longest uninterrupted period in the democratic history of Nigeria.

In view of the bastardization of the cultural heritage of the Ibibio people by the colonial imperialists, the proverbs that are used in this work as much as possible are those of the pre-colonial period. That is, in this work, data were collected from sources representing proverbs as used in the pre-colonial period as the post-colonial era have been grossly affected negatively with very little or nothing left of our cherished culture. The data collected address the various themes on the values of proverbs that support the democratization process in the country. The themes under consideration in this work include: values and proverbs that support election (representation), values and proverbs that support fair hearing (justice and fairness), values and proverbs that support secret balloting (truthfulness/honesty), values and proverbs that support consensus building (nationalism) as well as values and proverbs that support preference aggregation (preferences). A minimum of ten (20) proverbs are used to support the selected themes.

2. Historical background of the Ibibio people and language

The name Ibibio is used to refer to both the group of people who, according to Essien (1990:ix), make up the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria after Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. The name is also used to represent the language of these people who occupy an area of land in the extreme south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. They are found predominantly in Akwa Ibom State where they are the major group. They are also found in neighbouring Cross River State (specifically in Akpabuyo, Calabar South, Odukpani, New Bakassi, Akamkpa local government areas as well as in Calabar Municipality).

The Ibibio country lies roughly between latitude $4^{\circ} 25'$ and $5^{\circ} 31'$ north and longitude $7^{\circ} 30'$ and $8^{\circ} 30'$ east. The Ibibio share common boundaries with the Ijaw of Bayelsa State on the Southwest, bounded to the south by the Atlantic Ocean known as Bight of Bonny, to the west by Cross River State and to the North and Northwest by Abia State.

Oral sources as well as written sources such as Waddell (1863), Jeffreys (1935), Forde and Jones (1967) cited in Udo (1983) and also Essien (1986) are all of the opinion that the Ibibio are made up of smaller subgroups or units including, Annang, Efik, Eket, Ibeno, Oron, Obolo, Itumbonuso etc.

The history of the development of the Ibibio language dates back to between 1846 and 1862. However, this attempt was not realized until 1983 when the Akwa Esop Imaisong Ibibio, a socio-cultural organization sponsored the production of an orthography for the Ibibio language.

Ibibio therefore according to Essien (1990:ix) became the first language in Nigeria “whose orthography has been designed and produced by the owners of the language themselves”.

Generally, the Ibibio language is spoken and understood throughout Akwa Ibom State with various dialectal variations or differences. Apart from Akwa Ibom State, the Ibibio language is also spoken in Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Calabar South, New Bakassi, Odukpani local government areas as well as in Calabar Municipality all in Cross River State.

These dialectal disparities among the various Ibibio groups can be attributed largely to long periods of isolation among the various groups. Linguistic homogeneity decreases with the rise in population; increase in geographical area occupied and reduced contacts such that the original speakers of the language tend to form variants of the same language. This has been the case with Ibibio language where the major dialects or variants include: Uruan dialect now popularly referred to as Efik; the Annang, Oro, Eki, Ibuno and the Ekoi dialects. However, all the subgroups speak and understand the same language “Ibibio”. In this work, we use the central Ibibio language.

3. Origins of proverbs in Ibibio

Generally, Ibibio proverbs and other literary genres in the language such as poetry, metaphor, fable and myth together form a large part of language for ordinary people, and it does not have to be logically consistent or literally true (Parrinder 1976:49).

Esen (1982) posits that proverbs are legacies derived from diverse and complicated cultural resources and have been handed down through the ages from ancestors to descendants. They could be gotten from the day to day detailed observations of the behaviours of human beings, animals, plants, natural phenomena, from folklore, beliefs and feelings.

According to Iwokedok (2014:8), “there are proverbs emerging from historical events, some proverbs echo happenings in some communities, some proverbs have their origin from the flora and fauna of their immediate environment, riddles, other proverbs, folktales and so on”.

Below are some of the different ways in which proverbs evolved in the Ibibio society.

3.1 Proverbs from folktales

Many of the proverbs that exist in Ibibio are derived from the literary genre of folktale. The proverbs derived

from this source include the wise sayings attributed to the various characters that play roles in a story. These characters may be animals, birds etc. Proverbs where animals speak as if they were human beings include:

Utai akebo ke akpa itok oson itok

“The alligator said that the first dash is decisive”

Okpok akebo ke owo mmitooroke imo, imo iyaitooro idem

“The lizard said that if nobody praises him, he will praise himself”

Nyin edi akebo eka inua ison ison, eka aboanye kpon di ke ayaadikit

“The piglet asked the mother why dig the ground, the mother replied you will know when you have grown up”

Akukon eto akebo ke nkpo ifonno uduak

“The woodpecker bird said that it is useless to boast about mere plans”

3.2 Proverbs from human experience

Ibibio proverbs are also derived from the everyday human experiences. These experiences include: family, agriculture (like planting and animal husbandry), hunting, daily social interaction, health and disease, religious life, taboos, festivals (like the new yam festival). Proverbs derived from this source include the following:

Idoho adifop nnuene akwa ason nte didappa

“It is not roasting the ant that is difficult but removing it from the fire”

Ikpada eka unen iwotto ndito

“Young chicks do not die from the tramping of their mother’s feet”

Atop ukaan adiokon ukaan, ukaan adiokon anditop

“The hunter knows the game that he shot”

Eba eka ebod nko etatuak ndin owuo mmon eba

“The breasts of the goat only produce milk when hit”

Idiok ayin aduok udok nkpo ete

“It is only an irresponsible child that loses the father’s treasure”

3.3 Proverbs from natural phenomena

Observed natural phenomena in the society provide the Ibibio people with some of the proverbs. These proverbs are derived from what have been observed in the workings of the natural world. Proverbs that are derived from the observation of natural occurrences are:

Eto idaaha ikpon ikappa akai

“A tree cannot make a forest”

Ini mme ot ibette owo

“Time and tide wait for nobody”

Isua akappa uson ablo

“As the years go around, the fragment of old pottery sinks deeper into the ground”

Utin utin aka ukan inyan, inyan ikaaha ukan utin

“Only the sun visits the sea, the sea does not visit the sun”

Oko asiip es idoho mbiaak

“Valour is not in size”

4. Values of Ibibio proverbs supportive of democratization practices

Proverbs are generally and in all cultures used to express a vast range of things in the life of the people. Specifically, the Ibibio people like people of other Nigerian/African cultures use proverbs to express different vast levels of roles and values (of their life and culture). Some of the proverbs in the language are used to teach moral lessons, some are used to provide warning, some are used to warn for precaution, some are used to stimulate imagination, and some are used to provide humour, fun and entertainment. Other proverbs in the language are used to express their economic life, their social life, their judicial life while others are used to

express ideas, thought, philosophies and values.

However, in this work we seek to identify the different values that Ibibio proverbs provide as support for different aspects of the democratic process. Below, we discuss the proverbs and the values they place in support of the identified electoral processes.

4.1 Values and proverbs that support election (representation)

Democracy which is generally described as the government of the people of the people by the people and for the people is basically a practice of representation or representative government. The Ibibio people adhere to the hierarchical flow of authority. At any occasion, the presence of the husband/head of a family is representative of the presence of the entire family.

Before the advent of contemporary democracy (representative government) the Ibibio people already promoted it though not in elective procedure. Thus heads of the nuclear families were members of the larger family (ekpuk) with a head who were in turn members of the village (idlan). At the village level, there is the village council with its chairman different from the village head who acts as the president. The different villages constitute the clan with all the village heads as members presided over by the clan head selected from among the village heads. All the clans for the different nations come together under one king which in the present political arrangement is the paramount ruler.

In the pre-colonial era, the clan councils were the highest traditional ruling bodies. However, with the creation of the area/local councils, the paramount rulers take over the roles of the king though due process is adhered to in the nomination of successors.

There are proverbs in Ibibio that are supportive of election (representation). These proverbs do not only support election but also mitigate violence among the electorates especially the youths. These proverbs include the following:

Table 1: Table showing proverbs that support election (representation)

S/N	PROVERBS	LITERAL TRANSLATION	IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION	REMARKS
1	Ayineka ibenne aditim ayineka ika nikan	A brother does not take a brother's problem to charcoal	Unity is strength	For effective representation there must be unity and togetherness. The people's representative must get the support of those he wants to represent
2	Oboon isiboono ikpoo	A king does not shout alone	A tree does not make a forest	Naturally every kingdom must necessarily have a king and that king must have subjects to rule over. Every person who contests election must have people to represent.
3	Anwan ikweeke ke mben nto	Fight does not end with the throwing down of the opponent	He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day	To every election, there must be a winner and there must be a loser. Whoever loses should not see it as the end of his life but be hopeful in winning the next time.
4	Ofon iyem obubit ebod dafa eyo mmiikimme	It is good to look for the dark goat before night falls	Make hay while the sun shines	This applies to both the contestant and the electorates. The contestant is supposed to start his electioneering campaign early and the electorates on their part should access their candidate and make their choice before casting their votes. Synonyms to this proverb include: Eñwan uñwoñ

				idaha eyo adaaha (dry tobacco leaf while the sun shines) Idaha edim oṭoṣṣọke abia ifiatta etab (when the rain has just started the rain maker does not spit saliva).
5	Aka afe idāñ atommo ikpaisōñ	He who goes to the village hall greets the ancestors	Seeing is believing	This seems to be against election by proxy. The people should see and know the candidate they vote for.
6	Aka mbọk isuaha iduọ	He who wrestles is not afraid of falling	He who is down needs no fall	This shows the danger of politics. It is not a gentleman's game as the contestant may be abused.
7	Akīm asīn ke udāñ, akīm asīn ke inua	As you put in the mortar also put in your mouth	Do unto others what you wish them do to you	Representation is both ways. As one serves his community, he should not forget about himself.
8	Abre isikponno ikan ikwa	The water yam is never bigger than the knife	No one is above the law	A people's representative should not be seen as being more powerful than the people because power resides in the people.
9	Aka ekōñ ye iwuud, ekōñ ye iwuud	He who goes to war goes with head war also is with head	Personal defence is important in war	Wisdom should be applied when one is involved in the game of politics. The politician should be tactical in all aspects of his political life before election (during campaign), during election and after election.
10	Akan owo ikanna abasi	He who is greater than man is not greater than God	One with God is majority	Contesting an election is not a game that one should venture alone. It needs the intervention of God.
11	Akpetip idiok ikod anye akoot omōn	If it is bigger than the gorilla it calls the chimpanzee	Unity conquers	Every fight needs the cooperation of everybody. For an election that would produce a good leader/representative the cooperation of all and sundry is required.
12	Abre (ama) mbre ewa ke ewa asiwai oṣōñ	He who plays with the dog gets his clothe torn	Once bitten twice shy	Anybody who gets into the game of politics should know that he may be tainted.
13	Amaubeghe ndek uyede	If it concerns you, you get dirty	Everything has its consequences	Contesting election is not without consequences. And anybody who chooses to stand in for an election to represent the people should be ready for the consequences.
14	Afia atip idiok owo	The trap catches a bad person	Nemesis catches up on the wicked	Whatever one does he should not forget that a day will come when he will be assessed by his works. If he

				did good things, then his works will be brought to bear on his votes during the election which is used as a trap.
15	Añwan adodo añwan ñkpekpem anana iwuo	When the fight is serious the bat loses its nose		Election is like a serious fight. It is so serious that it leaves marks afterwards either in cash or otherwise.
16	Abia ase idem ndiin abre idiõñ	The diviner looks at himself before making divination		Like the doctor who assesses his capability, the contestant should assess his ability before going into politics. First to know his chances of winning, second to be sure he will be able to represent his people well.
17	Ndiõõñ edim akpeyem uwem afeghe akedak inyañ	Flowing water that looks for life flows into the river		Any group of people who want good representation should vote for a good person who will give them the dividend of their votes.
18	Akpaisõñ ufok akaana ñwaan ñwet dañã ñkuwet	The ant of an old woman's house design me as I designed you	Respect is reciprocal	When the people elect their representative, they expect that elected representative to represent them well.
19	Aditim afon ke usen akpan ñkpo	Trouble is good on an important day	Exhibition of valour comes when necessary	A person may be seen as being gentle but when the occasion demands then the person can be daring.
20	(Ñkpo) amaafon ata, afon ekpad, amaafon ekpad, ekpad añwañña inua	If it is good with the hunter it is good with the bag, if it is good with the bag it opens its mouth	What is good for the goose is good for the gander	Election is likened to hunting the game. If the expedition is good with the hunter then, it would be good with the bag such that that the bag can be opened to accept the game.
21	Ñkparawa edo obio	Youths make up the village	Youths are the leaders of tomorrow	In any election, the youths play very important role. Therefore the youths of any community should not be side-lined in the affairs of the community.
22	Ñwot nta ikpoõñ anam unam anyõñ	Kill and eat alone makes the game escape	Greed takes the price away	Anybody who wins an election but forgets his people rather takes everything that comes there from risks winning subsequent elections. This means that dividend of democracy should be shared.
23	Ifonno awot ebod, ifonno ebod	It is not good with killer of goat and not good with the goat	Mischief pays no one	Any wrong choice of candidate must certainly affect representation on the people who voted for the candidate.
24	Ubak utõõñ anye ado	To start early is to	Early to bed early to	Election is not like fallen

	ubak uma	end early	rise	fruits that can just be picked. To win an election, one must start early to plan and build solid structures.
25	Ayìn akpeka idim anyoñ ye abañ, abañ akukpa, ikim akuwakka utoñ	If a child goes to the stream let her come back with the pot, let the pot not break nor the calabash be torn		This is a caution to the elected representative. He is seen as the messenger of the people who have sent him on an errand. He should be careful to represent the people well.

4.2 Values and proverbs that support fair hearing (justice and fairness)

The traditional Ibibio society was founded on justice and egalitarianism. The current democratic dispensation should emulate what was obtainable in the traditional society which enhanced peaceful coexistence and a society free of rancour and insecurity. Proverbs in this category can be used to educate the youths on their civic rights and responsibilities. They include the following:

Table 2: Table showing proverbs that support election fair hearing (justice and fairness)

S/N	PROVERBS	LITERAL TRANSLATION	IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION	REMARKS
1	Ọbọoñ akpono ebekpa, ebekpa akpono ọbọoñ	If the king respects the throne, the throne will respect the king	Respect is reciprocal	Respect should not be one-sided. The leader should lead by example by showing respect to his followers. This will in turn make the followers hold him in high esteem.
2	Atoro uduañ mben okpousañ andiyeeñe isifreke	He defecates on the road forgets but he who picks it does not forget	The day of reckoning will always come	A leader should always strive to do good for one day he will surely reap.
3	Atọ ikpoñ isidokko udia	He who grows cocoyam does not harvest yam	You reap what you sow	It is only fair for one to take out what he/she put in and not to reap where one did not sow Every politician should be adequately compensated according to his/her effort.
4	Adue ñkpọ aduma abenne anyen enyoñ	He who offends thunder looks up	The guilty are afraid	When a politician does the right thing, he is not afraid of the electorates. But if he does not represent the people well, he has reason to be afraid of the peoples' verdict in the next election.
5	Ke ete, ke ete idoho odusad	Father by father is no discrimination	Life is turn by turn	It is only just and fair to allow people to take turns. Ward by ward, village by village etc.
6	Añwana añwan akpedo iba amuum ayoho ita	When there are two fighters the peacemaker is the third	There is always opportunity for peace	In any case there is an arbitrator. In election, there is always an umpire who is expected to be fair in his declaration.
7	Andidia adadia abeam akwook isoñ	Another eats abeam sweeps the floor	One man's food is another's poison	One should be made to face the consequences of his action and not punish a

				person for the offence of another.
8	Owoñwaan akefọn ubok ke enọ esọ yak atem	A woman who knows how to cook is given a hare to cook	Diligence has its reward	Anybody who is deemed fit should be the one saddled with responsibilities and not one who is not dedicated.
9	Abine nyin unem asidiañña adak ube nyin unen afaha atañ	He who pursues the chick falls into the fit the passes through the fence	Caution is the key to life	That in everything caution should be taken so that the right thing is done. The right justice should be done to the actual culprit.
10	Ñwaiwañña ñkpọ ewañña usak-usak	What is to be untwine should be untwine slowly	Slow and steady wins the race	Care should be taken when doing anything in order not to make mistakes in the process.
11	Inuen afuroke ke enyoñ okpọ awot isoñ	The bird that flies up the feet face down	What goes up must come down	There is always a time for reckoning. Everybody should be careful of their actions as the repercussion will always be waiting.
12	Idiook utak اساساكا owo mmooñ-ayid	Bad cheating causes tears	Cheating is a game nobody wins	Justice and fairness should be applied to all to avoid negative reaction.
13	Edat ikọ inua owo ebiooro ikpe enọ owo	One is judged by what he says	A man is judged by his words	Tomorrow will surely come. A young person should be careful of what he does during his youthful days else he be judged by his actions of yesterday.
14	Adia ñkpọ aduma abenne anyen enyoñ	He who eats what belongs to the thunder looks up	It is an offender that fears the law	He who has not offended anybody has no reason to be afraid of anything.
15	Afia atip idiook owo	The trap catches a bad person	The law is no respecter of anybody	Irrespective of the person involved once an offence has been committed, the full weight of the law should be applied.
16	Adue ñkpọ adue ñkpọ, emum unen ebop okpọ	The offender offends but the hen's legs are tied	The innocents are punished for offences not committed	One should be made to face the consequences of his action and not punish a person for the offence of another.
17	Ndudonno ofon ke uyen	Valour is good at youth	What is worth doing is worth doing well	When one is young, he should not waste his opportunity. Any wasted opportunity may not be regained.
18	Etañ enọ nyin-unen, etañ enọ ndukpo	Talk to the chick talk to the hawk	To be forewarned is to before harm	Justice is like a two-edged sword.
19	Kuuyak ndidin etim aboiyo ekwoon	Let not the millipede's dirt be passed on to the snail	Bad company spoils good character	Only the offenders should be punished and not some other person instead or with the offender
20	Idim idorenyen ikpaaha iyak	Fish does not die in the stream of hope	When there is hope there is life	Justice is the poor man's hope in any democracy. The people therefore have hope in the justice system.

4.3 Values and proverbs that support secret balloting (truthfulness and honesty)

Sincerity of purpose drives good governance. The major democratic principles would include truthfulness and honesty in secret balloting even when nobody sees the voter, he/she should vote conscientiously. Here indigenous Ibibio proverbs are used to guide contemporary social and political actions. Proverbs in support of this practice include:

Table 3: Table showing proverbs that support secret balloting (truthfulness and honesty)

S/N	PROVERBS	LITERAL TRANSLATION	IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION	REMARKS
1	Ọkwọk atak anyen akeene mfịd abakpa, anie iñwañ anie idem	Though the bee may follow the stalk of maize, the farmer owns the maize	What must be, must be	It is a statement of fact that no matter how one tries the people's choice will always prevail.
2	Ayìn eti ete isinanake ñkpọ	A child of good father does not lack	A child thrives on the father's goodwill	An honest person and his generation never lack.
3	Afia ebod imaaha ndek	A white goat does not like dirt		A clean man's reputation should never be spoilt by the corrupt practices of others.
4	Asịn ñkpọ ke abek ifia adiọọño isọrọ	He who puts something in the bunch of wood knows how to squat	The guilty are afraid	A corrupt person will always seek for ways to circumvent his corrupt action.
5	Owo akpanikọ ikpaaha abioñ	He who tells the truth does not die of hunger	The upright needs not be afraid	It pays to be truthful in one's dealings as this will make him credible and open to trust and help.
6	Se owo atọ ke adiọọño emịne	A person knows the bud of what he planted.	Whatever a man sows that he shall reap	One is held accountable for his actions.
7	Itie nte ediọk adan, ifọno etop itiad esin	Where oil is kept is not good to throw stone	He who lives in a glass house need not throw stone	Honesty and truthfulness should be guarded jealously and not allowed to be destroyed.
8	Ibaaha se ikpa idibe nsan	Nothing dead is hidden from the fly	Nothing is hidden under the sun	Anyhow one tries to cover up insincerity; it would always come to limelight.
9	Ndinonno item afere ofon ke edisinne ikpan	Advice of coking is good when the spoon is not put	To be forewarn is to be fore harm	Good character should be built early enough to avoid being corrupted.
10	Ubok abop edib abop kpasak edib	The hand that holds twenty holds twenty	Situation does not corrupt a man	A corrupt person is a corrupt person; a good person is a good person. Good virtues should be encouraged.
11	Ayın uweene akpetoiyo ukuud unam afia ata unam ekpo	If a poor child remembers the sufferings of making trap he eats meat meant for the gods	Good virtues can be corrupted	This shows the susceptibility of the human being. One should not be corrupt because of the circumstances he/she sees him/herself.
12	Adia ñkpọ inọ, inọ ke ado	He who eats from the thief is a thief	bad company pervades good nature	Whoever takes shares from the spoils of a corrupt person is liable of the same offence.
13	Akara ñkara isinne ubok ke ekpad akara ñkara	A cunning man does not put his hand in a cunning man's pocket	When a cunning man dies a cunning man buries	A dishonest person finds it difficult to cheat another dishonest person.

14	Adue ñkpo aduma abenne anyen enyoñ	One who offends the thunder looks up	Insincerity causes fear	This means one should always be honest and truthful as this is the only thing that would drive away fear.
15	Yak ikò ikòd inyañ atak ke ikòd inyañ	Let what is said at Ikot inyañ end at Ikot inyañ		Secrecy should be maintained always.
16	Ndaidad ayob adat ukuud anò akim	The ripe palm fruit leads suffering to the unripe		The dishonest action of one person can cause suffering to the innocent ones.
17	Ñkò ided anyimme ukuud ndań adak	When the hair accepts suffering lice enters	Everything is subject to agreement	If one does not allow dishonesty, he/she cannot be corrupted.
18	Se owo atò ke adòk	What one sows he reaps	Whatever a man sows that he shall reap	Any act of unfaithfulness or dishonesty cannot go unpunished.
19	Owo ayaiya edu akan idem	A person is more beautiful in character than body	Good character makes a man	A man should always protect his good character by being honest and truthful.
20	Ntuaaha owo akpaaha ke afia idim	I do not cry for the person who gets drown in a clean/clear water	Cry not for the offender	Anybody who is made to suffer because of his wrong doings should not be pitied.

4.4 Values and proverbs that support consensus building (nationalism)

During the colonial period, the building of consensus brought about nationalism which was the total reaction of the Africans against the imperialist government which was oppressive in nature. In the present democratic arrangement, consensus building/nationalism implies togetherness against bad government. Indigenous Ibibio proverbs in this category are used to reinforce democratic values and institutions. Proverbs in support of this value include the following:

Table 4: Table showing proverbs that support consensus building (nationalism)

S/N	PROVERBS	LITERAL TRANSLATION	IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION	REMARKS
1	Anò owo inañ ndia ibe	He who gives salt and eats tasteless	A cheerful giver	This is when is involved in selfless service to his people and to his father land.
2	Ami ikpoñ ukuud iba, ñkpa ke itiad, ñkpa ke eded	I alone two sorrows, die on the stone die on the teeth	Double tragedy	One does not look at the suffering involved in serving the people and country no matter the price involved.
3	Okak ikpuikpu ofon ikpuikpu, owo ado inie	Money is nothing, clothing is nothing person is worth having	Love conquers all	A true patriot and selfless servant is an asset to his people.
4	Adinie owo ado mfon emana	To have somebody is good birth	A good man is a treasure	Having a credible and selfless person is likened to having a good birth.
5	Abok unen isitaaha ukpab	He rears the fowl does not eat the buttocks	He who builds a city does not inherit it.	Selfless service is a sacrifice to the people.
6	Aka ufok ikpo akit ofon owo ñkpa, aketimme akop ekim ikañ	He who goes to the mourning house sees the deceased, he who absents hears the sound of	Sitting on the fence	It is not advisable to sit on the fence but to be actively involved in the affairs of the people.

		the gun		
7	Anie ñkpetim akpedeghe, ñkpetim adeghe	If the owner of the medicine is strong the medicine is potent		When the people are united in their quest for victory, then victory is assured.
8	Mbaba ababa ekwoñ ababa nyaaratōñ	What the snail lacks is what the leaf nyaaratōñ lacks	What is good for the goose is good for the gander	Whatever bothers one person bothers another person so selfish consideration should be dropped for selfless service to the people.
9	Ayin isikponno ikan ete	A child never grows older than the father	Maintaining the hierarchy	Nobody is greater than his people and so whenever the call to service is made, it should be heeded.
10	Ndan ndiana anye ado ukpoñ idem owo	Living together is the soul of a person	Unity is power	There is power in unity, togetherness and peaceful coexistence.
11	Ataayo asitie ekpo	A challenger bears poverty	Live within limit	When one take up the responsibility of serving the people, he should not consider the cost.
12	Ñko owo akpa ndiin abokko atippe anyen	Except one dies one does not escape a broken eye	Life's struggles end at death	The struggle would continue until victory is attained.
13	Ifiok akpa etibe	Knowledge is contributory	A tree cannot make a forest	Service to one's community is contributory and should not be left in the hands of one person.
14	Ubok atuuk edem, edem atuuk ubok	The hand touches the back, the back touches the hand	Respect is reciprocal	This presupposes fairness to both the master and the served.
15	Se owo anie, adia ye ubok usen	What a person has he eats with the morning hand	Be proud of what you have	A patriot is a thing of pride to his people and should be accorded due respect.
16	Se uweene anie ke atop akpoñ ayin	What the poor man has he hangs the child	Be proud of what you have	Whatever resources, whatever virtue and ability to serve should always be offered by the leader and true patriot.
17	Imo ado ufen	Wealth is suffering	Service inconveniences	Selfless service and patriotism is not without its price.
18	Ubok ikpinieghe ofon inyim isin	The hand cannot have cloth and deny the waist	Love is sharing	Anybody who has the ability should not deny his people the service.
19	Ñkidikid idoho asen ke akai	The owl is no stranger to the forest	Practice makes perfection	A patriot is strange to the price of selfless service.
20	Isidooho ebod imaaha isan eyuup ikpad	If the goat does not like to walk the legs should not be beaten	Service is of the mind	Nationalism means willingness to serve. Nobody should be force into service to his/her motherland.
21	Mbrinyon akebaak itie ikpoñ adat nyin adian idem	The plantain hated loneliness a carried the child		A leader does not lead in isolation. He needs the cooperation of all and sundry to succeed.

4.5 Values and proverbs that support preference aggregation (preferences) Democracy is a culture that evolves over a period of time. Proverbs can be used to resolve administrative, legislative as well as adjudicative problems. Proverbs that are supportive of this preference aggregation include the following:

Table 5: Table showing proverbs that support preference aggregation (preferences)

S/N	PROVERBS	LITERAL TRANSLATION	IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION	REMARKS
1	Abasi abot owo abot ukem ukem	God who creates created equally	No discrimination in nature	Every arm of government should be seen as being equal and complementary to each other.
2	Ama owo isuaha idem n̄kañ ɔlak	He who likes a person does not hate the hand of charcoal	Love is blind	When the people like their leader, they give them support.
3	Atɔ ikpɔñ ayem n̄kɔk	He who plants cocoyam expects the buds	Reward for service	Every leader in every arm of government is likened to a farmer who expects to reap from what he sowed.
4	Ofɔñ akpetara ebip ubɔk, akpefɔrɔ ebip efad	If the cloth unties the hand is queried if it drops the buttocks is queried	Taking responsibilities	All arms of government are important. They should complement one the other because if one fails then the effect is shared by others.
5	Amaafɔn ata afɔn ekpad, amaafɔn ekpad, ekpad añwañña inua	When it is good with the hunter it is good with the bag, when it is good with the bag it opens the mouth	What is good for the goose is good for the gander	If it is good with one arm of government, the other arms would definitely benefit.
6	Anie ufɔk amaakoot ufɔk ataha abasi akim ikañ	When the owner of the house calls it useless God sets it ablaze	Be proud of who you are/what you have	If any arm of government does not see anything good in another arm of government, destruction is bound to set in.
7	Adia-usɔrɔ nsasak asitim̄me idañ ke ekɔd	A bird that eats without leaving removes arrow from its head	Wisdom in service	Any leader who does not learn to leave when the ovation is high risks being disgraced out of office.
8	Afia unen iwuɔɔhɔ udua n̄kaña	A white cock does not go to the market for nothing		Nothing goes for anything. If one arm of government criticizes the other then it is for the healthy development of the system.
9	Owo ikamake n̄kpɔ ubɔk iba idɔk enyɔñ	One cannot carry things in both hands and climbs a tree	One cannot serve two masters	There is division of labour in governance and one should make a choice on where to pitch his/her tent.
10	Abasi inɔhɔ idiɔk unam nnak	God does not give a wicked animal horn	No mistakes in creation	Bad leaders should not be given the opportunity to lead the different arms of government.
11	Obod ado ke mbeede mbed	The world is step by step	Life is turn by turn	Every leader in each arm of government should see their position as transient and make the best use of the opportunity to serve both the people and system.

12	Abasi iyakka enaĩ aman iba	God forbids that the cow should give birth to twins	Nature makes no mistakes	It is an abomination for a leader in any arm of government to deviate from the standard norm or commit a sacrilege.
13	Anie iso ñkọb-iyire akọp adad adat	Everyone should mind their side of the net	Service is personal	This presupposes division of labour. Every arm of government should concentrate on its constitutional role.
14	Akwe amaasaña iso isaĩ afon Ofod	When Akwe leads, Ofod is protected	Shielding inadequacies	When the leaders in each arm of government lead well, the others benefit.
15	Afeghe idiok ke obod abine ofiom ke mmofin	You run away from the gorilla on land and meet crocodile in the water	Danger/risk is everywhere	If one runs away from the law for instance, he risks facing the executor of the law.
16	Ñkpọ mmunamma usaĩ-iton udiqofinke ke etab ado ndiin	If nothing happens to your throat you would not know that saliva is a delicacy	Appreciating service	If no fault occurs in the system they cannot be properly appreciated.
17	Udara amaanem afaĩ adono	When the star fruit is sweet, the path that leads to it is clear.	The good taste of service	When the system works well, there is peace and harmony.
18	Afere anemme ñkpọ akpa atak	The soup that is delicious is expensive to cook	To everything there is a price	There is a price to every peace enjoyed in the system.
19	Anyen unam eyem ke iwuud	The eye of the meat is sought for in the head	Locating priority	The fault of the system is traceable to the leader (head).
20	Anie ñkpọ akop udu idan	It is the rich that hears the secret of the village	The rich have advantage in the society	The workings of government are shared among the three arms of government: executive, legislature and judiciary. One needs to belong to any one of the three to know what goes on there.
21	Nyara nyara iba isikoboke oko keed	Two male animals cannot be tied to one stake	Two captains cannot be in a ship	For the system to work harmoniously well there should be division of labour where every person is given defined role.
22	Amaanie adiaha eka itie eyob, akot ye ñkweed	When you have a sister at the mill you eat with the chaff		When the system works well, the people rejoice.

5. Conclusion

Everyone is a product of a culture and so cultural norms and genres should be made to impact on the lives of the people to bring about the desired positive change in the society. The democratization process should not only be promoted and encouraged but also enhanced as much as possible. One way of doing this is through the use of indigenous proverbs to exhibit some of the values of democratic principles. This work shows that Ibibio proverbs, which are part of the norms and literary genre of the people are capable of impacting positively on the democratization process in Akwa Ibom State in particular and in Nigeria generally. This can also be replicated in other cultures across the globe since there is no culture without proverbs.

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