

**HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF BABCOCK UNIVERSITY: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF LOCATING BABCOCK UNIVERSITY AT ILISAN AND ITS ENVIRONS**

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**Abstract**

*It has been argued from some quarters that the establishment of Babcock University has not benefitted its immediate environment and host community and that the tendency has been that the University have only profited its own—Adventists adherents, its workers and founders. This notion has further generated some controversies, creating room for doubts about the genuineness of the core values and founding spirit of the institution. This work is therefore fuelled by the sincere urge to investigate/ascertain the claims whether the institution has been able to create, fulfil its responsibility and impacted positively to Ilisan-Remo as a town, its people and their immediate neighbours. The work focusses on the historical antecedent of this institution since its establishment in September 15, 1959 to the present time 2015 giving prominence to various aspects of its developments. To*

*ascertain these doubts and crosscheck these speculations, the work has utilized a combination of oral and written sources in its assessment of the development to achieve a social-economic impact analysis of the institution since inception. The work's findings have mapped out certain challenges which clearly needs to be readdressed and have fully highlighted the major socio-economic advantages which has been derived by Ilisan-Remo and other towns around since the establishment of the university. The work concluded that more needs to be done in the areas of Babcock – Ilisan community relations in order to muster growth for the future of the institution whichever remains an illuminating beacon, not just for the students, staff and the indigenes of the town but to the entire nation as a whole. The work has been divided into six major sections. The Introduction, Literature Review, Statement of the Problem, Theoretical Framework, A Brief History of Ilisan and the emergence of BU/ the Birth of a Full-fledged University, The Impact of the University on the community and environs, the Summary and Conclusion.*

### **Introduction**

The social and economic impact of an institution, a town, local government or a nation could be measured by the amount of reforms and phenomenal changes which has been witnessed by the students, non-academic and academic staff, the indigenes of the locality and ultimately the nation at large. The key indices that informs the measurement obviously will have to do with the social amenities and facilities such as hospital and medical care services, sports and recreational facilities, educational developments and attainments, the level of social interaction between the workforce and the community based, religious interaction and freedom from religious bias or compositions, persecution from any of the groups in the society and cultural diffusion and inter-group relations between the various ethnics – the Igbos, Yorubas of the sub-groups, Benins, Hausas, Middle-Belters. Precisely, the study deals with the institutions and functioning of human society with the interpersonal relationship of individuals as members of society As denotable from the mission statement of the institution, these criterion could further be measured by the level of attaining excellence in the teaching of students, research program, and service delivery, imparting quality Christian education and instilling Christ-like character to the members of the Ilisan community.

All these expectations are to be achieved through the measurement of the instrumentality of the core-values of the institution which include excellence, integrity, team spirit, service-leadership, intellectual, freedom and responsibility and more importantly ensuring that all these are backed by the Adventist Christian heritage and philosophy which is the key guide of not just Babcock University, but several other Adventist institutions of higher learning in the world over.

On the economic realm, the major task which faces this work is that of assessing the level of economic improvement that has been recorded by the institution internally – that is giving the accountability record of transparent investment procedure since inception of the institution, the level of growth measurable through physical infrastructures, welfare of lives and improvement of economic structures to sustain the institution in every of its programs, the level of attainment/establishment of industrial ventures, agricultural transformation as an agrarian society within the university and finally the overall impact of the economic indices in transformational proceeds to the development of the Ilisan Community, its people generally and how they have been able to benefit from the reality of siting the university in their homeland and ultimately the socio-economic impact of the institution to the Nigerian state – trading activities, cultural, at large.

Therefore, the problem which confronts this study is to embark on an in-depth analysis of what genuinely seem to be the growth pattern of Babcock University since its establishment

since 1959 and the impact this effort has brought on the community in either positive and/or negative terms. The essence of embarking on such impact evaluation and institutional audit in its historical dimension is obviously aimed at cross-checking what has been done in the past to ascertain if this has been done within the framework of the set core values of the institution. As with all historical effort, the exercise is further aimed at enhancing the obtainable standards of the present, in order to project further into the future. More importantly, the curiosity elicited by such a historical stock-taking has been influenced by the author's length of residing and living with the indigenes spanning over forty years, which as a professional historian deserves attention and justification for the events of the period earlier highlighted.

### **Literature Review**

The introduction of Western education in Nigeria could be dated to the 1840s, when European Christian Missions made their first successful and enduring incursions into the territories bordering the Atlantic Ocean in the South, (Osoba and Fajana, 1980). Different studies have adequately demonstrated that in establishing themselves on the Atlantic Coast of Yorubaland and the Niger Delta, and in penetrating the hinterland the Christian missions relied on, among other methods, the attractions of western education. Thus, it was therefore a familiar strategy that when a mission established a new post anywhere in this area, one of the first facilities, it endeavoured to provide was a school to help them in their proselytization effort of converting the "unyielding adult 'pagans' to Christianity, and their younger ones whom they hoped would be more promising (Ibid, 1980).

In therefore tracing the history of Babcock University from its foundational roots, it must be asserted that many scholars of the Adventist faith have endeavoured to document the history of the institution in various perspectives. These include the works of David Babalola, the story of Babcock University in the Compass, (Babalola, 2002); Winston, G.C. *'The Adventist College of West Africa; Agboola, D.T, The Seventh-day Adventism in Yorubaland 1914-1964; Amanze Philemon O, Africa Traditional Medicine, 2011; Awoniyi, V. D et al, A Sketchy History of the Adventist Seminary of West Africa – 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASWA, 1984; Berkeley SP- A Twelve Years of Growth of the Adventist College of West Africa; Coon, Rodger, A miracle in the Jungle; Omolewa, M. Elder D.C Babcock 1954-1932, The Pioneer of SDA Missionary work in Nigeria* and finally Onasoga, S. and Odutale, A.T. – *History of the Foundation of Ilisan Town.*

Of these literatures, three are singled out for their relevance to this work. Prof. David Babalola's work on the Story of Babcock University: the first private university in Nigeria remains a monumental contribution to the History of the Institution as it clearly touches on every facet of development of the institution. From the beginning in 1959, through to the civil war and its effect on the college, the establishment of ASWA, and finally to the conversion to a full-fledged private university in 1999. He also highlighted the impact of the university with the following factors; training of manpower, impact on social life, impact on the economy of Ilisan, impact on education, health facilities and lastly the religious impact on the Ilisan community, (Ibid, 2002) These few pointers to the socio-economic impact of the institution, no doubt influenced the work and has been expanded to achieve the details of his expression. The only shortcoming of the work is that it was published in 2002, whereas a lot of progresses have been recorded in other phases of the institution which this work has focused on for elucidation. The work of Winston G.C, titled *'The Adventist College of West Africa'* was useful in the early history of the institution but was equally published in 1961, (Winston G.C, 1961), Pastor D.T. Agboola's work, *Seventh-day Adventist History in West Africa (1888-1988) – A Mustard Seed*, is quite useful for detailed enterprises of ACWA and ASWA up to 1988 as he recorded the events on a first-hand experience as a tutor of the institution in those years. However, it must be noted that the work covered the entire Seventh-day Adventist History in

Yorubaland, and recorded the Adventist College of West Africa phase of the historical experience of the Adventists. It failed to lay much emphasis on the impact of socio-economic trends of the university on the Ilisan community as Babalola's work had done, (Agboola, 1984).

*The Age of Transition: A Synopsis of Indigenous Leadership at Babcock University* is another great publication which has made useful effort to historically document the various stages of development in Babcock University. The work started from the search for a location to indigenous reactions for the establishment till ACWA was finally established. It further made effort to update the events to the Makinde's administration, (Alao, 2006). Amanze Philemon's comparative work titled *African Traditional Medicine* significantly highlighted on Economic Activities of Remoland in the chapter two of the book titled "Identification of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and the Location of Remoland" of which, Ilisan is part and parcel, (Amanze, 2011). He noted, 'Remoland as a whole is naturally endowed with good weather due to its excellent location within the rain forest region. This affords the people, the favourable opportunity of engaging mainly in agricultural activities and as such involved in food crops cultivation such as maize, cassava, rice, pineapples, cocoyam, cowpea, melon etc, (Awoniyi, J.D., Agboola, D.T. and Quartey, M. J, 1984). Some of the cash crops of the Remo people include Kolanuts, Oil Palm trees, Rubber, Timber, Poultry and Fishing. Apart from the above mentioned economic activities, Amanze noted the Ilisan people engage in Blacksmithing, Goldsmithing, Block moulding, Mat-making, Traditional cloth weaving (Aso-Oke), Dyeing, Soap-making, Pure Water production and Bakeries – breadmaking. Among the tertiary economic institutions listed in this work include Portland Cement, Portland Electrical Repairs, Maltex Industries, CPI Moore Ltd., Pefac Associates Ltd., Olusola Paper Industries. Others economic activities listed are banking, artisans - motor mechanics, Radio/TV technicians, Plumbing, Masonary and Photography. Although, some of these industries such as Olusola Paper Industries are extinct, yet it must be applauded that the work made a frantic effort to give a good account of the economic activities of the Remoland; some of which continue to affect the socio-economic impact likely to arise from the citing of Babcock University in the vicinity. For example, most of the artisans categories mentioned in the work, painters, maroons, photographers, plumbers, technicians (iron workers or electrical etc.) all form part of the beneficiaries of several projects arising from the Babcock, Strategy and Planning Unit in this era. The work briefly commented on the cultural, religious, social and economic activities and revenues of Remoland. All these advantages would be fully discussed in the work. No doubt, although skeletally, this work equally benefited from the works of Awoniyi, J. D. et al, *History of the Adventist Seminary 28<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*, (Awoniyi, J. D. et al, 1984), Onasoga S. and Odutale – *A History of the Foundation of Ilisan Town*, (Onasoga & Odutale, 1977), Berkeley S. P – *Twelve Years of Growth of the Adventist College of West Africa*, (Berkeley, 1971), Rodger Coon's – *A Miracle in the Jungle*, (Coon, 1999), A.A. Alalade: *The History of ASWA 1954-1976*, (Alalade, 2002) and Seaman John's – *Who are the Seventh-day Adventists?* (Seaman, 1988). All of these works in their perspectives have documented various phases of the growth and development of Babcock University. It must be pointed out that despite the originality of some of these literatures, none has specifically embarked on an assessment of the socio-economic impact of the establishment of the university from 1959-2015, as this work has done. Therefore, it may be stated that the work is a pioneering effort in the field of socio-economic history of this great institution and its community.

Perhaps, a brief mention should be made of Prof. Osuntokun's work entitled *Research Methodology across Disciplines* (Osuntokun, 2007), to cap off this exercise due to its relevance to this work. According to him, modern universities were established to have positive impact on the community in which they are established and the larger society in general. All courses whether sciences, engineering, social sciences or the humanities are targeted at providing practical solutions to community problems and also to help advance the development of the

society. A university, according to Osuntokun (2007) is established for three functions, namely: to teach, to conduct research, and to perform public service. If we are to go by perquisites, then it translates to the fact that this should be our gauge in measuring the expectations of Babcock University. In the sequence highlighted by Osuntokun, it means that after teaching and the conduct of meaningful researches which are productive, the next is the function of performing public service—which is the task of this work to ascertain, (Ibid, 2007).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Universities globally are established to have positive influence on their environment internally and externally. Most often, the presence of an institution in a community has unintended consequences. These include but not limited to loss of land by the host community to the university, exposure of the community environment to deforestation due to infrastructural development by the university and in the process loss of livelihood by some community members. In some instances, the activities of the students may hold the community to security risk, socio-cultural distribution and finally disharmony.

Arising from the above, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between Babcock University and its host community, Ilisan?
2. Does the socio/economic and cultural impacts of the institution on the community and its environs justify its corporate existence and social responsibility goals?
3. What measures are being put in place to ensure that both university and the community gain beneficially (symbiotically) from each other?
4. Are losses recorded in any wise of lives, security risk/ disharmony or socio-cultural disharmony?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical underpinning for this work is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). According to Bowen, cited by (Wartick, 2007), “Businesses (institutions) have an obligation to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of actions which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society.” (Bank, 2007). At the core of Bowen’s (Ibid), argument is the assumption that social responsibility rest on two premises:

1. Business (institutions) exists at the pleasure of society. Its behaviour and method of operation must fall within the guidelines set by society. Like government, business has a social contract – an implied set of rights and obligations. The specifics of the contract may change as societal conditions change but the contract in general always remains as the source of business legitimacy (Donaldson, 1983). Thus, social contract is the vehicle through which business behaviour is brought into conformity with society’s objectives.
2. Business acts as a moral agent within society (Ozar, 1979), Rawls (1971). Like states and churches, corporations reflect and reinforce values (Wartick, Ibid). As noted by McGuire 1963), “The idea of social responsibilities supposes that the corporation has not only economic and legal obligation, but also certain responsibilities to society which extend beyond those obligations”. This implies that social responsibility of any organisation include but is not limited to economic responsibility.

Social responsibilities are determined by society and not the organisation therefore, it is the responsibility of the organisation to:

- i) identify and analyse society’s changing expectations relating to corporate responsibilities.
- ii) determine an overall approach for being responsive to society’s changing demands, and
- iii) implement appropriate responses to relevant social issues (Strand, 1983).

As opposed to Friedman (1962, 1970), argument that “the only social responsibility of business is to maximise profits within the rules of the game”. Corporate Social Responsibility emphasizes the importance of economic and social responsibilities of organisation to the society. Community relations is rooted in social responsibilities of organisations to their host community in particular and the society at large.

### **A Brief History of Ilisan and the Emergence of Babcock University**

According to Onasoga and Odutale, Ilisan Remo is one of the original 33 towns that make up the subethnic group of the Yorubas called Remo (Remo metalogbon), who migrated from the Irewo quarters of Ile-Ife kingdom after the emigration which led other princes to form other towns in Yorubaland, (Onasoga & Odutale, 1977). The first Olofin of Ilisan called Isanbi started the journey with some other six contemporary princes of Oduduwa in what has been described as the Yoruba diaspora namely; the Akarigbo, the Elepe, the Alado (all in the present day Sagamu), the Olofin, the Onigbo, probably the founder of Ijebu-Igbo and the Alara of Ilara Remo, (Onasoga and Oduyole). The journey must have been in phases which involved challenges and confrontations until the king and his entourage arrived at the first settlement of the Ilisan people called Igborule, (Ibid). It was only after the Ogun Olomorodo – ‘War of the Pestle’ that a further movement brought the indigenes of Ilisan to their present site. The legend of origin further stated that the Olofin of Ilisan (Isanbi) brought with him two crowns from Ile-Ife, a beaded crown with five birds and a brass conical crown, (Ugwukah, 1987). This assertion was to prove the authenticity of the royalty of the “Olofin” of Ilisan which bears a striking resemblance with the “Alaafin” title of the Oyo kingdom.

It is pertinent that we relive the history of the foundation because without the foundation of Ilisan, there would not have been any foundation of Babcock University in the town itself. Ilisan Remo has been acknowledged as the fourth largest town among the thirty-three towns of the former Remo Divisions which has now split into various local government areas – Ilisan now under the Ikenne Remo Local Government Area of Ogun State. The town is situated at 68 kilometres, North West of Lagos, sixty kilometres away from Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital. The town is slightly evaded by the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway from Sagamu junction by eleven kilometres and from Ode Remo junction by some eight kilometres, while the Sagamu-Benin Expressway runs through the Ikenne end of the town, (Onasoga and Oduyole, 1977). The adjoining towns of Ilisan include Iperu, Ijesha, Ikenne, Irolu, Akaka, Shagamu, Ilara which are considered in the work as its environs.

In writing the history of Babcock University, one must not lose the understanding that the institution is a Seventh-day Adventist faith-based university whose foundational conception was brought by the need for missionary expansion. The need for an Adventist post-secondary institution in Nigeria began on the floor of the General Conference Session of 1954, when the Education Secretary of the West African Union Mission, D.V. Cowin pleaded the motion to start a tertiary institution in West Africa. The motion was thereafter strongly supported by Roger Coon who argued that since already four high school-level secondary schools had been established in Liberia, Ghana, and in Western and Eastern Nigeria, the next step would be to develop a post-secondary (college) institution to serve the advanced needs of African Adventist youths in these lands just emerging into political independence, (Babalola, 2002).

The siting of the proposed institution was highly influenced by the fact that it was to be geographically centrally located to serve the needs of the West African Union Mission. This consisted of Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Togo, Burkina Faso, Benin Republic, Liberia and Ghana. Other criteria for the siting of the institution included; adequate acreage for major campus development; adequate water supply, commercially generated electricity and the fact that the location must not be far away from big cities.

Thus, on one Friday morning in mid-August, 1957, the journey for the location of the institution with the duo of Gordon M. Ellstrom, then President of the West Nigerian Mission and Roger Coon, then Director of the Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence School of West Africa which was located in Ibadan started in earnest. Their first point of call to the provincial capital of Ijebu-Ode was not productive as it could not meet the required criteria for the siting. The next site was at Iperu, on the trunk A-1 highway, half way between Ibadan and Lagos, then Federal Capital of Nigeria. Driving from Ijebu-Ode and heading towards Iperu, they discovered and veered off to an unknown road, newly tarred which seemed to promise a shortcut. Some distance down this road, they arrived at the outskirts of Ilisan Remo, a village of some 2,000 inhabitants by then with a thriving large acreage and plenty of water and soon to be fixed electricity. Both missionaries were excitingly convinced that this new discovery could be the “promised land”. After inspecting a 370 acre land in the heart of the virgin rain forest, they went to pay the king (Kabiyesi) a courtesy visit in his palace. After the successful discovery, the missionaries sent the good news to Howard J. Welch, then President of the West African Union in Ghana who equally acknowledged the Ilisan site of the proposed college, (Alalade, 2002).

Thus, what is now known as Babcock University began its existence on September 17, 1959 as Adventist College of West Africa on the 370 acre site which was granted on a lease of a nominal rent of one shilling (then US\$14) for 99 years. By virtue of this calculation, Babcock University truly emerges as the second tertiary institution of higher learning in Nigeria, coming on the heels of University of Ibadan which was established in 1948. The families who owned the piece of land was led by Chief J.S. Kitoyi Osibodu, a prominent businessman in Ibadan, (Babalola, 2002). It was Chief Kitoyi Osibodu who extolled the values of locating the college in their community to not just members of his family but to other dissenting voices who had thought otherwise.

The foundation laying ceremony was covered by the existing media houses in Nigeria and in the United States at the period. Some of the important dignitaries at the launch included, His Royal Highness, the late Oba I.O. Green – Adebo, the Olofin of Ilisan, Honourable Ayodele Okusaga, then Minister of Education in the Western region, G.C. Winslow, the pioneering principal of the Institution, Pastor H.J. Welch, who later became the second President of ACWA and then the Secretary of the West African Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The first academic year saw an enrolment of seven students whose ages ranged between twenty to thirty-nine years. Four of them were married while their staff consisted of Pastor G.C. Winslow, Mrs. Dorothy Winslow and Pastor R.W. Coon, (Babalola, 2002). The names of the seven pioneering students were; Daniel Magaji, from Jengre, Plateau State; Benjamin Oferen from Alaja, Delta State; Joel, Dada Awoniyi from Oke Ode, Kwara State; David Izima from Abia State; James Okwandu from Onicha Ngwa, Abia State; Isaac Nwaobia, also of Abia State and Luke Anosike, who later became the Registrar of ASWA, (Babalola, 2002).

By 1966, when the college graduated the first set of Bachelor of Arts degree (Theology) in its own name, the enrolment included students taking Business Administration as potential accountants within and outside the church, and a two-year Pre-Nursing students in preparation to pursue a nursing career at SDA School of Nursing at Ile-Ife, Osun State, (G. C. Winslow, 1961).

The Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA) during the Nigerian Civil War which raged between July 1967 and January 1970, suffered a major setback as some students of Eastern Nigerian origin and other parts had to return back to their hometown of origin. The period also restricted movements of those from outside Nigeria to travel to the institution. Thus, as the war ended in 1970, life resumed fully for academic activities and for the students.

However, it must be noted that the college was not shut throughout the war years and did not affect social activities so much in Ilisan and environs.

As D.T. Agboola succinctly puts it:

In January 1970, when the political war was finally grounded to a halt, and the cannons were heard no more, and the bell that summoned ACWA community to prayer rolled on eternally, and the worshippers looked up to the heavens with sunlight faces, and the Easterner hugged the Westerner and the Westerner and the Southerner, the Northerner vice-versa, it was all because ACWA like the rest of the world, was thankful that it was over at last, (Alalade, 2002).

By 1975, another milestone was made when ACWA became affiliated to Andrews University, Barrien Springs, Michigan USA. This relationship afforded it the opportunity to award Bachelor of Arts Degree from Andrews University in Biology, Business Administration, History, Religion and Secretarial Studies. This development led to its being renamed Adventist Seminary of West Africa (ASWA) as a result of the socio-political dynamics of the country. Again in 1983, restricting local factors necessitated the phasing out of the Bachelors programmes in Biology and Business Administration.

In order to attain national recognition for its status and programmes, an attempt to obtain a local affiliation with University of Ibadan, under the name “Babcock College” was still in progress when the Federal Government of Nigeria under the Presidency of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo announced Babcock University (BU) as one of the first three private universities in the country on April 20, 1999. On May 10, 1999, history was again made when the Certificate of Registration was handed over to BU Pioneer Chancellor, Professor A.A. Alalade and Pastor Luka T. Daniel, the Chairman of the University Council in his capacity as the President of the Africa Indian Ocean Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The first batch of 1,006 students arrived on September 13, 1999 and then matriculation ceremony was presided over by the visitor to the university, President of the General Conference then, Pastor/Professor Jan Paulsen on January 28, 2000. The university took off in its new capacity as a full-fledged recognised private university with three faculties (which later became schools), Faculty of Education and Humanities, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Science and Technology. The 7<sup>th</sup> graduation on June 7, 2009 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the institution and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the university.

#### **Presidents of ACWA/ASWA/BU and their Tenures**

1. 1961-1967- H. Welch
2. 1967-1971- S.P. Berkeley
3. 1971-1975- Percy Paul
4. 1975-1976- C.O. Adeogun
5. 1976-1980- Dr Julius Korgan
6. 1980-1983- Dr Rowland Mckenzie
7. 1983-2006- Prof A.A. Alalade
8. 2006-2015- Prof J.A. Makinde

All of these principals, presidents of the institution contributed in various dimensions to the progress of the university during their tenures. However, time and space may not permit the entirety of such an appraisal in this work.

#### **Impact of the Establishment of the University on the Community and Environs**

Having ascertained the path treaded before the university was fully established as full-fledged and recognised institution by the Federal Government since its take-off in 1959, one is in no doubt that the road has been rough and full of challenges, which were surmounted in



phases and as the years passed by. Embarking therefore on the assessment of the impact of the university since its early years, it may be asserted that it has been a gradual process of affecting lives of both students, staff and the community at large. It can be equally stated that measuring such a trend cannot but go back to the pre-1959 years when the founding fathers encountered some disagreements between the indigenes on the reasons to establish the institution and why they should give up their land for missionaries. This first encounter would seem to be the first immediate challenge both for the community to receive the first set of white men and the interaction that ensued and eventually led to an agreement of ceding their land for developmental purposes. It has earlier been asserted that Chief Kitoyi Osibodu played a veritable role in meddling between the contending parties – the missionaries and the indigenes. No doubt, the Ilisan that was then, was relatively smaller than it is now especially in its population growth. As such, one major impact resulting from the inception of the institution was that of expansion of the community which was soon designated, “Oke Oyinbo” – meaning, ‘the white man’s hill’ was the site given to the white men really hilly? To a reasonable extent, one may be forced to believe that descending the path from the Ilisan Methodist Church valley, which now runs through the Medical Centre, the site was on an undulating hilly terrain which could still be observed today. Having stated the obvious relationship arising from the meeting of the two parties – the indigenes and the newcomers, the stage was fully set for the purposeful impact of the latter which was pre-planned and in effect derived from the Seventh-day Adventist Church philosophy.

### **Religious-Educational Development**

Since therefore, the university was wholly owned by the Adventists, the work would proceed its assessment of the socio-economic impact through the prism of the church philosophy. As John Seaman has noted, Seventh-day Adventists believe in improving the whole person spiritually, physically and mentally. Early in Seventh-day Adventist philosophy, the need for church-sponsored schools was realised. Given this view, today the Seventh-day Adventist Church has one of the largest private parochial educational systems in the world, with more than 6,000 schools and a combined enrolment of more than one million students, (Babcock University Employee Handbook, 2010). The church also operates a number of colleges and universities, subdividing home study international, which provides an accredited home study programme. The missionary impact of spreading the seventh day Adventist gospel to all the nooks and crannies of the town Ilisan –remo and its environs has been fulfilled and is an ongoing process that continues to the coming of Jesus Christ. There are well over 6 Seventh - day Adventist branch churches in Ilisan-remo and others in the environs. With this focus in mind, it would seem that the most important of the social impact of the establishment of the university was that of education both to the indigenous students and those arriving from the vicinities and from other parts of the country. The general mood of the community to the establishment and presence of a higher institution has actually set the tone for educating several indigenes of the town. As noted by Babalola, “educationally, Babcock University has had a great impact on the Ilisan people,” (Babalola, 2002). This could be measured from the earlier years when the town had no post-primary school as the Adventist College of West Africa was established. Apart from alerting the town’s indigenes to the needs of fundamental education, other church missionaries have followed suit by encouraging their children and wards to seize the opportunity of close by education from the university. The endpoint being that having established that Babcock University is morally sound and guided in its principles, both Christians and Muslims have sent their children to the institution, fully assured that they will attain the spirituality, mental and physical balance embedded in the system of education imparted to them.

It is equally important to note that Babcock University has helped to educate some of the town's people through its sponsorship programme. As the sage, Prof. Babalola has noted, Babcock "supports one Ilisan student to completion of a degree from Babcock University, then takes on another i.e. every 3-4 years, it sponsors one indigene of Ilisan. Some of those who have benefited from such gestures include Mrs. Dayo Adebawo, Elder Seyi Oduyoye and Pastor (Dr.) Sotunsa. The sponsorship program is still in effect as must be acknowledged also that the late Mr. J.O. Famodu got an honorary degree from Andrews University. Many have gotten from Babcock University in subsequent years.

It may therefore be added to the educational impact of the factor of training of manpower which is a culinary to educational attainment itself. The university has been able to marshal a force of enthusiastic workers, not only for Adventist concerns but to other spheres and segments of the society. As Prof. Alalade has noted, "Babcock has been able to fulfil her singular objective of preparing all persons who came under her influence for greater usefulness to their immediate communities," (Babcock University Employee Handbook, 2010). Not only have indigenes but others from the vicinities and without have prepared and are preparing themselves as doctors, dentists, business administrators, lawyers, historians and diplomats and educationists.

The next major impact that the university has had on the community is the provision of healthcare facilities. This factor was clearly averred by John Seaman, when he stated that "many Seventh-day Adventists venture to use their God-given talents in healing people with the aid of medical knowledge available today as led by the spirit of the Lord," (Seaman, 1998). For this reason, the church operates over 725 hospitals, clinics, health centres and children's homes. Following from the above philosophy of the church, it may be asserted that the location of the University Teaching Hospital (formerly Medical Centre) has made it possible for the Ilisan people to get good medical attention. Since the establishment of the institution, majority of the populace of the town resorted to the use of several white missionary doctors and nurses and others from the West Indies, US missionary health workers who had saved many a life in the community. Many of these patients have been drawn closer to the Lord as they have experienced the care given by Christian medical personnel. Thus, hospital employees are making their own contribution in fulfilling the mission of the church at the same time as they heal and cure the sick. Many indigenes have also been converted in the process of receiving their healing as pastors often minister to the wards of the hospital from time to time. In addition, many Seventh-day Adventist medical personnel in developed countries educate their talents to the citizens of the developing or economically deprived countries. One such group of volunteers is the Health Speciality team based at Loma Linda University Medical Centre, a denominational sponsored hospital. The team has visited Babcock Medical Centre on occasions to provide advanced life saving medical procedures to people who otherwise could not afford this service to not just the Ilisan indigenes with severe ailments, but to as many that have cared to benefit from such occasional medical care services.

The evangelical mission of the university cannot but have impacted tremendously on Ilisan and its environs since the establishment of the university. Thus, the religious impact on the Ilisan community has been one of the most important social responsibilities of the university since its establishment. The proliferation of Adventist church branches in Ilisan, Iperu, Irolu, Ilara, Ikenne, Sagamu, and Akaka is a clear manifestation of the 'proclamation of the word' which is a signal focus of Seventh-day Adventism. These feats has been achieved through several means, evangelists, pastors, Bible instructors, radio broadcasts, television transmission and a publishing work to help fulfil the mission.

Literature evangelists which at times comprise the students of the institution have made these work in not only selling Christian literatures but also evangelising alongside their work. In educating some of the indigenes, the university has helped spread the Adventist message,

while whole families have been converted. Some Ilisan families such as the Ogunlanas, the Awosanyas and Elder Bamidele are clear examples of the beneficiaries of missionary effort whom are now ardent Adventists.

### **Socio-Cultural Development**

Another importance of the socio-cultural impact of the establishment of Babcock University is the nature of the composition of Ilisan town, which accommodates almost every ethnic group in the country. The Hausas, Igbira, Igbos, the Efik, Middle Belters, Edo, Kalabari etc. and so on makes the town, a cosmopolitan melting port of sorts. Apart from those who genuinely migrated to the town in pursuit of education from the university, several others have come to join the university community in rendering other social services to Ilisan. Some are artisans – shoemakers, launderers, food sellers and hawkers and more importantly traders and businessmen and women.

Although critically, a farming community of Igbo descent made their impact on the town as from the early 1970s, it cannot now be justifiably restricted to these groups as from the year 2000, when other profitable ventures have assumed more importance than the ‘Ugu planters’ association highlighted by Babalola in his work. Take for instance, the multiplicity of businessmen and traders in Ilisan town has almost turned the town to a “mini Lagos” of sorts. The implication of this on the town’s social life is that it has produced inter-tribal marriages between even Yorubas and Igbos including Efiks, Edos etc., from not just the Adventist fold but from the integration process already in place in the community. The trend is not just limited to the infiltration by the Igbo group but exponentially other Yoruba sub-ethnic groups who have been involved in the migration trend for better employment opportunities in Ilisan. The tendency is that Ilisan indigenes often complain that their own sons and daughters are not patronised as others. Some have argued that contracts are awarded to non-indigenes ahead of them, even when they are qualified and could handle such contracts to its logical satisfaction. This may not be wholly true as a lot of the indigenes are in the employment of the university in various capacities in as much as they are qualified for the positions/contracts applied for. Respondents interviewed during this research have mixed feelings as to the satisfaction of their patronage in Babcock business or gains in any forms.

Although, the fact of the vegetable and other farmers influence and impact on Ilisan cannot be denied as pointedly observed by Babalola. This is because the assessment of this work covers from the inception and by which standard the measurement should stand. However, this factor would be fully discussed under the economic impact thereafter. Not only Easterners have settled in the town, but many foreigners including Ghanaians, Liberians, Sierra-Leonean and Togolese students who studied in Babcock all settled for a time in Ilisan with the town’s indigenes. The trend no doubt encouraged inter-group relations, even as there were conflictual moments which were always resolved amicably. Prof. Kofi Owusu Mensa in his book; *Ghana Seventh-Day Adventist* entitled a chapter—“Age of ASWA products since 1975” where he highlighted how a generation of ASWA-Babcock University graduates dominated both administrative and field work in the Ghana Seventh-Day Adventist Mission

As a matter of fact, Ilisan indigenes treasure visitors and clearly have manifested their willingness to cooperate with the visitors and settlers that flood their land since the establishment of the institution. With this development, the interaction and inter-group relations has led to cultural diffusion in various respects, language, cultural dances, festival celebrations have all attracted a multi-ethnic attendance from various groups now resident in the town. As noted, one can confidently assert that Ilisan has now grown from its relatively unknown status in the 60s to an international town of sorts. This has assumed a thriving dimension with the surge in population growth of about 2,000 in the 60s to about 500,000 people in recent times. Not only has there been more births from the settlers, but from the indigenes as well due to better medical facilities and healthcare attendance.

The community's demographic increase has been equally influenced by the recent developmental attainments which has witnessed a lot of infrastructural development on the campus. This has attracted many artisans; electrical and building engineers, technocrats, contractors, architects and developers, all who are permanently or temporarily resident in the town. Thus, the population of Ilisan from its initial 2000 in 1959 have swollen to close to 500,000. The population mix is quite different to what it was in 1959.

As a result of this, it is therefore not uncommon nowadays to find Igbos, Hausas or Edo Iteskiris in the town dress in Yoruba apparels and clothing's attending '*O wan be*' naming ceremonies, weddings or even graduation parties. By extension at such parties, you may find them singing and enjoying *fuji or apala* music like their Yoruba friends while the 'Ugu' vegetable soup could be found as one of the delicacies at the popular Ultimate Restaurant run by an Ilisan indigene, which is patronized by both students and staff in Ilisan town. It is not equally uncommon to find an Igbo man order for *Amala* with *Ewedu* and *Obe ata, ofe manu* stew and enjoy it with relish as the food culture is gradually becoming integrated. This was quite impossible in the early 1970's after the Nigerian Civil war, when there was much of separation by the various sects that converged in the town here in Ilisan. Today, several houses are shared by tenants of various ethnic backgrounds in the town and peace reigns among them. It could truly be asserted that social, political and economic integration now form part of the town's cultural heritage. It is noteworthy that several town unions and associations exist and thrive in the town.

Yet there are boundaries and limitations to cultural integration. Ilisan indigenous cultural practices do not allow other ethnic groups to participate in certain traditional festivals. The rules are quite clear and adequate information on such happenings are duly and timely circulated to the university authorities who in turn pass it on to both students, workers of the university and their relations in town. While acculturation could allow an '*Ajejin*' – meaning immigrant to watch the Egungun (Masquerade) festival, it is unlikely he/she would be allowed to be involved in pouring of libations and the sacrificial aspects of the practice. It is also a truism that he may be allowed to watch the 'Obalufon' festival from a distance, but it is unlikely that he would be allowed to beat the big tall traditional drums which are figuratively and melodiously accompanied by only the women singers of the town. More importantly, it is not to be allowed for even the strongest non – indigene to witness the '*Eluku*' festival when the gods and goddesses of the town are to be appeased – *ewo Orisa* – such an act would be rejected by the gods.

However, the Isanbi day celebration is free for all comers to the town and from the environs. There is hardly any restriction, in as much as the participant comports his/her self in joining the indigenes in the social event celebrated to mark the founder's days of the town. Thus, it may be asserted that the religious worships of the various churches in the town, apart from Adventist worship centres have equally witnessed growth in terms of membership as those who migrated to town are not all members of the Adventist faith. In essence, other churches in town such as the Anglican Church, Catholic, Methodist, Living Faith (Winners Chapel) and the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Ilisan have witnessed growth in their membership from different ethnic backgrounds. This picture quite clearly was not what it painted in the early 1970's, when Ilisan indigenes alone or few migrants were found in the African Bethel church, The Wesley Methodist Church or the St. Barnabas Anglican church. It may therefore, be argued that another impact of the Babcock University is that it has attracted competition among other Christian Churches to provide their services to Ilisan and environs.

The Catholic Church population in Ilisan have been increased (swollen) by the migrants in town and this has led to social upliftment within these churches and the emerging cultural dynamism. By and large, these developments have led to a population surge in the town and its environs. From Ilisan to Irolu – Remo, Ikenne, Iperu, Ilara, Ijesha, all spreading from the

initial migrant population in Ilisan whose roots of emergence can be traced to the initial Babcock University Community. The spread in population growth has been gradual but continuously impactful to the community. It must be observed that the establishment of the university has justified its existence in many ramifications. Indeed the surge for better accommodation has benefited indigenes as far as Ilara, Irolu, Ikenne where Babcock University workers now filter into, to avoid the high tenancy rate now experienced as epitome of town growth and manifestation in Ilisan itself.

Thus, over the years, it may be asserted that the socio – cultural life of not just the indigenes but settlers in the community have improved tremendously. Thus, the culture of hard work, effective communication between the various groups, good habits, honesty, sharing and progressive change which represents the basic structural capital needed for overall societal transformation and development can be said to have fully manifested in the community through the location of Babcock University in Ilisan Remo. It was unimaginable years back, that marriage could be contracted between an *Omoyinbo* (Igbo son) and Yoruba in the early years of the institution. Several inter – cultural / ethnic marriages have since taken place in most of the Adventist Worship centers and even the other churches earlier mentioned in the work. This is a continuous trend and will continue to manifest in as much as the university growth is unimpeded and with results – oriented policies which have continued to be put in place by the past and present administration.

### **Economic Development**

The economic impact of Babcock University on the community may be captured through various aspects of their lives. As expected, the major factors of the economy of a society rely to a great extent in its land resources, labour and skills and capital. While land could be said to be the most vital as it offers resources, however, the level of productivity that could be expected to yield from the land factor goes a long way in fulfilling economic aspirations of indigenes and immigrants as well.

In what ways could the establishment of Babcock be said to have impacted on the land factor? The first of the productive efforts of those attracted by Babcock University to Ilisan is that of land use and purchase in recent times. Prof. Babalola in his work noted “how Igbo traders in Ilisan – mainly the Ugu farmers who have to rent land from the indigenes on a yearly basis and have no real assurance of getting the same land the following year”. However, much more than renting farmlands, these days the emphases have shifted to outrightly land sales. In an unprecedented manner, property and estate managers have become a thriving business as “sons of the soil” now make fortunes out of land sales. Particularly sales of land in the Town Planning area of Ilisan have risen sharply from N300, 000 to N500, 000 or more for developers who need to purchase land to build their own houses. Also, rents and leases of buildings in the town, have generated a good source of income for indigenes as many staff and students of the university rent rooms or apartments in the town. This trend has equally led to increased rentals fee for settlers in the town and its environs such as Ilara, Irolu and even in Iperu Remo. Ikenne is now even a choice centre for new staff as it shields them from the cluster of several staff located in Ilisan. Although, renting of land is still practiced as a form of farming system, yet the trend of development in the town have attracted Ilisan indigenes in diaspora and in the cities to come home and build new structures in town for the Babcock workers and students to patronise.

It must be emphasized that the Igbo man and women are not just ugu farmers. They also cultivate and produce enough of yams and cassava, particularly, the cassava production (garri making) is another thriving trade of the Easterners in Ilisan. So, also is palm oil production and marketing which atimes is imported from Eastern Nigeria through 911 Mercedes Benz lorries. Some are brewers of local gins in farm.

Likewise, the presence of Babcock University in Ilisan has generated employment for many indigenes, settlers and Nigerians from all walks of life in the town. At the very least, institutions expect communities to provide adequate municipal services, fair taxation, good living conditions for employees, a good labour supply, and a reasonable degree of support for the plant and its products. In addition to employment, wages and taxes, communities expect from their institutions attractive appearance, support for community institutions, economic stability and a focus for hometown pride, (Seaman, 1998). The impact of community relations are both tangible and intangible. The intangible includes positive perception of the institution as a responsible corporate institution. It also gives the community the sense of belonging and association to the well-being of the university. Similarly, effective community relations have helped Babcock University to enjoy unalloyed loyalty and commitment from the community.

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that Babcock University has been encouraging the local economy and entrepreneurship through patronage of local merchants, artisans, contractors, labour services and other professionals. However, this patronage has been sometimes criticised on the ground that it has led to high cost of living in the town. For example, foodstuffs, prices of commodities are known to be inflated with comparative prices in other big cities like Lagos or Ibadan. Thus has been attributed to the fact that every marketer/seller believes Babcock staff are rich and well to do. By extension, Babcock University have made positive effort through the provision of security for the community. This service became paramount as there was increasing security threat, armed robbery in the community. To a very reasonable extent, the intervention with the Town's Vigilante Group and the purchase of Security Bus and support for the team has made life more tolerable for both Babcock staff and indigenes.

Testimonies have been made by both staff of Babcock and even the indigenes of the town that the security situations have improved with the coordination of the monitoring of the surveillance team support. In fairness to good Babcock community relations with Ilisan town, Oba F.R.O Fujamade observed sometimes:

The Ilisan hospitality was displayed early in the mutual relationship between the community and the School, when some people at Ilisan volunteered their houses as school and dormitory for the seven pioneering students of the school. From that time till today, the community has not witnessed any violence or misunderstanding between the community and the school nor any case of missing persons in the School from its inception in 1959, (Paul Fujamade, 2012).

It must be noted that the institution have always responded to emergencies in the town and have always commiserated with victims and provide relief materials promptly. Thus, it must be emphasised that respect and care for the community's culture and norms have been guarded strictly with adequate information always provided for oncoming traditional festivals of the town such as the *Oro*, and the *Isemo*, *Obalufon*, *Egungun* festivals and the Isanbi Day celebrations. Thus, it could be said that every activity of the institution has been geared towards the improvement of the socio-cultural relations of Babcock with the Ilisan community.

Capital creation is another factor of economics which has been achieved within the community as many artisans, sellers of provisions of goods and services around the campus gates (MSQ and the main Gate) and to other marketing outfits in the town where Babcock people go to do their shopping for essential needs when not on campus. Also, it must be admitted that the supply of labour has been enhanced too, through the Food Industries which produces Whole wheat bread, granola and peanut butter, and the Pure Water Ventures where a lot of indigenes have found jobs to keep their body and soul together. While some work in the food industries, others are drivers for the ventures marketing the products. More importantly,

the marketing and supplying of these products to the Ilisan community and its environs has been a complementarily project of the institution and its community. No doubt, more jobs and creation of wealth has been on the increase and many projects especially, infrastructural development in the most recent administration has known no bounds.

Apart from the horde of artisans who throng the building sites to work as labourers, many indigenes have been supplying sand, blocks, electrical equipment in as much as their qualities can satisfy the university specifications. At these sites, one could find the food sellers, suppliers of menial services from the town benefit themselves with life sustaining efforts. These high-rise buildings have indeed added to the beauty and colour of the Ilisan town as parents have commended the Boarding facilities of the university, which has become a hallmark for the university's reputation, (Ajao, 2002). The good moral impartation to the students of the university is also a veritable impact of the university to the outside world as the university's reputation is high and on the rise. Yet more people are migrating to Ilisan Remo for various reasons and purposes. Some have arrived to join the mass in town for employment and not for education and/or training or church related activities. A lot too, not even Adventists have joined several of their counterparts who arrived earlier as traders and farmers. The contemporary Ilisan town of today is composed of not just Igbo farmers alone, but Igbo and other ethnic groups who deal in spare part (Motor and other mechanical accessories) and commercial vehicle operators, pharmacy owners (i.e. Agram and Keledichukwu Chemists), food sellers of rice, beans, garri etc at the main market of Ilisan. Thus, it may be asserted that what we see emerging is a cosmopolitan commercial town with all its attendant problems of housing, congestion, crime, conflicts between the various factors and factions and development in various facets of their socio-economic life of both residents and indigenes of the town, (Prince Onashoga) Indeed, the development brought to the town is quite significant in all ramifications of modernity.

Worthy of mention is the Babcock University High School— an offshoot of the University with its own attraction too. Parents from various parts of the country have discovered the joy and stewardship stemming from the quality from this section of the university.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Given the challenges of growth in the town and the university, Babcock University need to be more productive and realistic in their approach to community issues, if they are to fulfil their responsibilities of teaching, researching and providing community service.

Weighing the positive and negative impact of the citing of the institution, Babcock to Ilisan, one would at once conclude that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. It must be emphasised that a lot of development has been recorded and a lot of attainments have been achieved through the institution's presence in Ilisan Remo. This is acknowledged by well-meaning citizens of the town and other neutral observers who have accorded great respect to the administrations of the University for their selfless service and monumental achievements. Could cultural decadence, especially in the reduction of sacrifices be anything to record against progress? No is obviously the answer as Babcock has influenced the community to conversion of lots of its indigenes to Christianity. These are indeed the fulfilment of its core values.

No doubt, it has been fully established that the citing of Babcock has brought much fame and prominence to the once quiet town. The socio-economic conditions and status has greatly improved since the institution was established. Apart from the fact that the community's banking services are now most reliant on the several banks on campus, the university renders educational facilities to indigent students in the town and its environs. Although, there may have been some misunderstanding between Babcock University and the community on land

matters yet the advantages of what such communal land were used for far outweighs the disadvantages of its deprivation from the community, yet the advantages of what such communal land were eventually used for, far outweighs the disadvantages of its economic deprivation from the community\*. Especially regarding the land opposite the university which will cater for the University College of Medicine eventually. The Babcock University Guest House also apart from serving the university has become a social monument for other social engagement and lodging in the community.

Taken together, this historical sketch, the key challenges facing Babcock University – that of generating funds from other sources apart from the school fees of students, the university should work further on making the ventures more competitive and venturing into agricultural productivity and other commercial industries to attract business into both the community and Babcock community. More so, management of resources, development plans and strategies, as well as prevailing socio-political attitudes should be properly blended to achieve sound and common educational standard in the university. Thus, the educational enterprise must be supportive of its environment in order to strike a balance.

### **The Future**

To what extent can a historian predict the future? Arthur Marwick has given us a clue to the puzzle. He asserts:

The later point is in some ways a bit of a red herring: the historians concern by definition is with the past; he may well as a result of his expertise make some intelligent predictions about the present and future, but that is not strictly his business, (Arthur, 2002).

E.H. Carr has given us an example of the kind of prediction the historian might indulge in:

The kind of conclusion (prediction) which a historian will seek to draw is partly from specific knowledge of the affairs of a place/institution/somebody or partly from a study of history, accompanied by estimates based on partly on the analogy of other attainments of the institution, realisable only through the occurrence of unique events to sustain the present conditions, (Carr as cited by Arthur Marwick above).

With the above calculations in mind, one may predict that if the current attainments are sustained (if somebody or the government does not touch off the gains of the present), the future of Babcock University is great and very promising. This can be articulated from these glowing words on marble asserted by Oba Fujamade:

The over 350 acres of farmland owned by sixteen families from Ilisan now converted to the School premises of what is now known as Babcock University remains our sacrifice, resolve and commitment for our genuine contributions to the success of the institutions. My predecessors on the throne—Oba J. O. Green and Oba Onasoga had laid a solid foundation of cordial and frank relationship between the town and the institution. They have made people realise that in the long-run, the School belongs to the Community and the Students, our children. And to the glory of God, in his marvellous grace, we have never recorded any unresolvable clash with the community nor has any student or



lecturer reported any case of molestation or ritual murder. This is a great achievement when compared with what obtains in other tertiary institutions and communities around. (Prince Fujamade).

In conclusion, it would be submissive to say that the future of Babcock University is indeed in God's hands and all the stake holders of the higher institution-the Management Team, Faculty and Staff, and indigenes of ilisan and its environs who are indeed truly our host.

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