

**THE PLACE OF CULTURAL REALITIES AND  
SYMBOLIC FORMS AMONG ANNANG PEOPLE  
OF AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA.**

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**SUMMARY**

*One of the negative impacts of Western civilization on our African society is the attempt to debase and destroy the entire fabric of our culture and misconstrue it as fetish. This unfortunate development resulted in a systematic alienation of many African societies from its roots and valuable cultural realities. Through qualitative method of study, this paper examines the place of cultural realities and symbolic forms in Annang society. One of the specific objectives of the study is to restore and highlight those salient cultural symbols of Annang people for posterity. Adopting Sapir/Whorf hypothesis as a theoretical anchorage, the paper supports the view that the realities of culture do not exist apart from individuals but lie in their interpretation of events and things around them. In the main, the study shows that cultural symbols are functional to Annang society. Such symbols not only express social realities in concrete terms but provide the tool to shape the world to conform to this reality. Findings from the study also show that cultural symbols play important role of maintaining social control and order in Annang society. The study concludes with the recommendation that useful cultural symbols should be harnessed in order to reinvent the past and reconstruct the present for sustainable future of the Annang society. This will enhance genuine enculturation by Africans.*

**INTRODUCTION**

It is our considered view that any deep understanding of an African society would be greatly enhanced by a conscious exposition or exploration of the vast forest of cultural symbols in that traditional Africa Society. The contact of black people with Western civilization has made them vulnerable to all forms of abuses. Their acknowledged home (Africa) is dubbed a “dark continent”. Africans are a people who must therefore be militarily conquered, politically dominated, economically exploited and culturally civilized (Rotberg, 1965). This is against the hallmark of Boaz (1976)

cultural relativism, which refutes the ethnocentric idea that there is only one true way of thinking and living, and that all people must be converted to this way.

Presently, many people have accused agents of civilization especially, the missionaries as destroyers of traditional beliefs, knowledge, values and practices. They were said to be bent on destroying material culture (e.g. artwork related to Pagan ritual) and alienating people from their own culture (Shirley, 2007). Despite the misconception about African culture, it is observed that Africans did have a culture worthy of being projected internationally with pride and satisfaction, and without embarrassment. The African mindset is a social mill of cultural symbols. Symbols provide the keys to understanding cultural forces that lie at the heart of human social behaviours and practices. Every social action initiated as well as ideas muted and expressed, are enveloped in symbols. It is common to come across symbolic actions in social interactions without much curiosity attached to them. Observations show that it is difficult in recent time to understand or interpret certain symbols in Annang society because no committed efforts have been made to transmit Annang cultural heritage from generation to generation by teaching Annang Language in schools.

Taking the symbol of machet (Eka Ikwua) as a case in point, the meaning of which is very familiar to Annang people but might not be necessary for the Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba people. They have their own symbols. But even for Ibibio which is a macrocosm of Annang society, the symbol of the machet may take on various meanings. This shows us that symbols are by nature open for various interpretations. A symbol is not identical with the object it symbolizes because it is not like photograph that reproduces an object accurately. The purpose of a symbol is rather to illuminate it. If a symbol is to work effectively, it has to be simplified and sharpened to a degree that reduces it to something like a sketch map intended to serve as a guide.

It is common knowledge that Annang child is a bundle of symbol. Right inside the womb, the mother had to take some concoction to enhance the formation of the fetus. The position of the baby in the womb and the attitude of the pregnant mother are viewed as symbolic of the sex of the baby. During child labour, the traditional birth attendant performs certain rituals and rites to appease the ancestors for safe delivery of the baby. The name given to the baby most often than not, is a memoriam of the circumstance of his birth or the parent's experiences. The baby spends his entire life, appreciating and interpreting symbols to enliven his vision, stimulate his imagination and deepen his understanding of social realities. At death, the elaborateness of burial ceremony and the quality of casket depict the social status of the deceased. Today, observations reveal a dwindling picture of cultural heritage of Annang people, pressurized by forces of Western civilization in one hand and the weakness of our elders in the other who are blackmailed by westernization to tag every cultural object, art and symbol as fetish or idolatry worship. In this regard the elders have failed to show good example. And sadly enough, a great deal of Annang material cultural symbols are exposed to adverse environmental condition and theft. Izugbara (2000) observed that the discipline of anthropology seeks to investigate and understand the specific social and cultural contexts of human interactions and relationship. Symbolic cultural values and usages therefore determine the dynamics of social activities and

offer its bearers the resources and orientations for fruitful interactions with their environment.

Taking a cue from the above, the main objective of this paper is to examine the cultural realities of symbolic forms among Annang people and to incorporate such an essential part of Annang cultural history into the general national historical pool. This paper is also hoped to restore those salient symbolic cultural heritage, in order to protect and project them for posterity. Ebewo (2005) observed that this could help in very significant manner to promote pride in Annang peoples and make them, especially the young people have better knowledge of, and greater understanding of themselves and their neighbours, which will ultimately lead to greater appreciation of, and respect for one another's institution and cultural concern.

### **THE PEOPLE OF ANNANG**

Scholars such as Ekong (1983), Omolewo (1985), Afigbo (1965), Buah (1981) and Amakun (1949) to mention but a few have difficulties agreeing on the exact origin of peoples of the Niger Delta (Ekpo, 1995). This development could be attributed in part to the fact that, the earliest immigrants do not hand down a history of their migration to the succeeding generation and this explains the apparent absence of a legend of Annang migratory root. But be that as it may, the name Annang is not a colonial heritage. It is an identity of the second largest tribe in the present Akwa Ibom State. In the word of Udoh (1983), the name Annang is derived from the characteristic behavior of a certain tribe who cannot resist the least provocation and who are clothed with furious nature and bequeathed with furious indignation or an inborn nature of intolerance. Contrary however, to Udoh's position, this paper observes that the people of Annang are courageous, resilient, bold, fearless and daring. This description is in consonant with the proverbial remarks that "An Annang man is a noble character" (Awo Annang ade awo uko).

The Annang people are territorially located in eight local government areas in Akwa Ibom State; Abak, Ikot Ekpene, Ukanafun, Ika, Obot Akara, Essien Udim, Oruk Anam and Etim Ekpo. Despite the fact that the Annang and Ibibio seem to possess the same cultural similarities and could be traced to the same ancestral root. The Annang absolutely disagree to be addressed as Ibibio. They do not regard themselves as belonging to the same tribe, though the dialects spoken by one can be understood by the other. According to them they are one race but not the same tribe (Udoh, 1983). According to Koeller (1954), a German missionary in Sierra Leone had attested that the Annang have existed as a tribe with a separate dialect called the 'Annang Dialect'. Koeller's account was substantiated by the fact that one of the languages spoken by the liberated slaves in Sierra Leone was the 'Annang Dialect'. The spokesman of the Annang people in Sierra Leone was "Ebongo". He told Koeller that he was a native of Nkwot village in the present Etim Ekpo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Ebongo said, he was sold to the Portuguese and was subsequently freed by the British Warship, and that he later settled in Waterloo in Sierra Leone (Udoh, 1983). There exist strong evidence that Annang and Ibibio people share a common ancestral root. This explains why there exists duplication of names of towns and villages across these ethnic groups such as Nkwot Ikono (Etim Ekpo), Ikono Uyo (Uyo). In fact, Ikono is

generally acknowledged as the cradle of Ibibio race. There is also Afaha Obong (Abak), Afaha Ibesikpo (Ibesikpo Asutan), Afaha Eket (Eket) and many others. The Ibibio and Annang peoples are therefore from one ancestral stock but different migratory history. The dialectical differences can be explained as a function of linguistic enculturation in their different geographical locations.

Farming was the major occupation of both men and women in Annang while hunting was reserved for only the male folk. It was the responsibility of the men to clear and burn the bush while the women planted vegetables and do weeding. Mixed-cropping was the popular farming practice. Cassava, being the staple food was planted by all. Yam was reserved for the rich. Though many planted yams in their farms and on pieces of land around their compounds, it was the rich men who could produce barns of yams (ise edia). The bigger a man's 'ise', the more respect he commands within the community (Ebewo, 2005).

Women plant vegetables such as, okro (nkoro), pumpkin (ubong), melon (ikpaan), maize (awukpa) and cocoyam (ikpong). Besides yams, a man's wealth was also measured by the acres of his oil palm fruit trees (aqwok ajob). To date, oil palm fruits are still highly revered in Annang custom and many people strive to own oil palm plots, be it the ones they cultivate on their own, or buy or pledge to them by other people. Families also own oil palm plots (ajob ekpuk) and no single individual were allowed to harvest the fruits without the expressed permission of the family. Usually, harvesting of family plot was done communally. Occasionally, the family or the entire village may decree that palm fruits may not be harvested at certain times of the year. This is known as "nwuuk ajob". The essence of this is to harvest the palms communally and use the proceeds for rural community development. Labour required in carrying out successful farming activities led to many men marrying many wives so that children produced from the relationship could become farm hands.

Many Annang youth were encouraged to work hard and be of good behavior in order to be able to marry and run families. A young man of age was expected to get married and start a family. Sometimes, parents married for their male children. Marriage intentions were thoroughly investigated by parents before allowing their children to marry from particular families. What was given uppermost consideration was the integrity of the family concerned. Marriage between a man and a woman went beyond the two individuals. It involved the whole community. A man who marries from a particular village is not just an in-law in the household he has married into, but also an in-law to everybody in that village. By virtue of his being an in-law, no harm could befall him in that village. Annang people respected and held three things in very high esteem – in-law (ukod), friend (nsang) and grandchild (ajejen). And hospitality to strangers is legendary across Annang land.

Traditional marriage was done in stages, for example, preliminaries like knocking of the door-first consultation (nkong udok), path-clearing-making the marriage intention public (nsiak afang) and the marriage proper, which involved payment of the bride wealth, feasting and exchange of gift. Polygamy was tolerated. In fact, wives form part of the riches that a man possessed (Ebewo, 2005). Women under a polygamous set up regarded one another as wives in jealousy (nwan ufup).

The husband was regarded as head of the household in every respect and wives were traditionally expected to obey and respect their husbands at all times.

The spiritual and ceremonial performances of the Annang elders on daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis create social solidarity and were attempts to establish contact with the supernatural. While the Egyptians worship the sun and the River Nile, the Yoruba worship sango the god of Thunder. The Annang people worship their ancestors. They call on the names of departed ancestors to intercede for the family by pouring drinks for them after incantations. All these are symbolic of overwhelming power of the supernatural over humanity (Ebewo, 2005).

Elaborate burial rites that may span through weeks were conducted for deceased with prominent social status such as traditional rulers. The deceased were buried inside one of the rooms in the living house or within the deceased compound. His favourite clothes and other personal effects were sometimes deposited for the deceased inside the coffin. If the cause of death is associated with abomination or suicide, the corps was deposited in the evil forest or buried in a bush far away from the neighborhood. These activities symbolise strong belief in life after life.

## **CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES**

### **CULTURE**

Culture is a wide and multi-dimensional concept that one cannot hope to deal with in its entirety in a single study. It is common for people to refer to arts, painting, sculpture, music and sometimes manners as culture hence, people are often described as being cultured. The phenomenon, culture was defined in a most scientific way by Tylor (1971) many centuries ago as “that complex whole which includes knowledge belief, arts, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Modo, 1998). This definition offered an integrative and summative view of culture. It does not place any particular emphasis on the behaviour of persons who are well behaved and therefore said to be “cultured” or those not well behaved or “uncultured”. Rather, culture is that entire package or blue print for living made possible by man. Charles (2012) appreciates culture as the works of man. Therefore, that which man does not make or invent is natural or spiritual and not cultural.

However, man is capable of manipulating and exploiting the natural environment to his advantage, using his ingenuity. He can use particular leaves or bark of trees to treat ailments. He can convert the moon or stars into the pantheon of gods for reference and worship. By so doing, he sees, bark of trees, moon and star as no longer natural objects but cultural images with symbolic significance (Charles, 2012). The mundane acceptance of culture as something, which connotes the dress codes or dance/music style of a people, is not only simplistic in concept but also out modeled in practice. Culture provides society with the inherited transmissible code of conduct as both part, and function of the total system of ideas, values, knowledge, philosophy, law, moral and belief systems, which constitute the content of life of a society. A study of culture plays a significant role in providing order and guidance for social behavior and stability amidst rapid change in society (Ebewo, 2005).

The Federal Republic of Nigeria’s Cultural Policy, defines culture as:

The totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempt to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization thus, distinguishing a people from their neighbours. The nation's cultural policy further enunciates that culture is not merely a return to the customs of the past. It embodies the attitude of a people to the future of their traditional values faced with the demands of modern technology which is an essential factor of development and progress (Ebewo, 2005:6).

It must be noted that culture is not a static concept. It is dynamic in nature. It changes as man evolves new ways of existence and also as man's physical natural forces transform environment (Modo, 1998). Culture is divided into two major aspects in anthropological studies: materials and non-material cultures. Material culture is overt and explicit, such as products of industry, technology, art. It includes every visible or concrete acquisition of man in society that is directly observable as cultural product of any society. The non-material culture consists of knowledge, philosophy, ideas, morals, languages, motivation, values and norms shared and transmitted in a society (Aluko, 2003).

## **SYMBOL**

A symbol is something such as idea, object, conventional or non-conventional that is used to represent something else. It could be abstract or not. Abstract symbols are those that do not depend on their concrete material substance. They are abstract entities that are capable of freeing themselves from their possible concrete substance (Moycart, 2004). The clearest examples of abstract symbols are mathematical symbols and names. You can refer to numbers by "A,B,C" or by "123". It does not matter the choice of symbols you are allowed to replace them as long as the internal coherence is suspended. But in the aspect of names, proper names can be approached from two sides, as an abstract symbol or not. A person's name can be replaced at anytime, that makes it abstract symbol (Okere, 1996).

Okere (1996) further adds that if there is a strong link between the name and person it becomes impossible to change it, once it has been given, then it is no more an abstract symbol. According to Mayeart (2004), to see a name as a concrete symbol brings it closer to sacredness. Ray (1997) viewed cultural symbols as sacred images, whether they are gods, ancestors, sacred actions or things, which make up the traditional universe. Such images enshrined and communicated in myth and ritual; provide a network of symbolic forms, uniting social, ecological and conceptual elements into locally bounded cultural systems.

## **THE SAPHIR/WHORF HYPOTHESIS**

This study adopts Sapir/Whorf hypothesis as its theoretical anchorage. Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis has been a particular source of stimulation for anthropologists since the 1920's and 1930's. It must be stressed that studies on culture benefit a great deal from Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Farinde and Ojo, 2005). The practice of symbolic analysis was influenced by the work of Benjamin L. Worf and Edward Sapir in

linguistics and ethno scientific studies (McGee and Warms, 2003). The fundamental interest of this theory was in examining how people formulated their reality. The concern is not with whether or not the views people hold are accurate in any scientific sense of the term. In social action, that which is thought to be real is treated as real. Sapir/Whorf hypothesised that culture does not exist apart from individuals but rather lies in their interpretations of events and the things around them.

Emphasis on culture as an organized collection of symbolic systems is typically American. While the British structural-functionalist style is concerned with the operation of symbols in the maintenance of society. To American School of thought symbols are means of transmitting meaning. But, unlike the British orientation, it is not interested in how symbols perform cultural function such as healing or killing through witchcraft. Its focus is on how symbols affect the way people think about world and how symbols operate as vehicles of culture (Orther 1994).

The British school pioneered by Turner (1969) viewed symbols as operators in the social process, things that, when put together in certain arrangements in certain contexts produce essential social transformations. He further argued that social solidarity had to be continually maintained. Ritual symbols, in his view, were the primary tools through which social order was renewed. Turner believed that the interpretation of ritual symbols could be derived from three classes of data (McGee and Warms, 2003). These classes of data include the following:

- (1) External form and observable characteristics.
- (2) The interpretations of specialists and laymen within the society.
- (3) Deduction from specific contexts by the anthropologists.

A blend of the British and American views above, explained symbols as models for behavior as well as modes of thought. Cultural symbols and ritual acts are thus, functional to the society. They not only say what reality is, but they also shape the world to conform to this reality. Symbols express a people's past and structure collective rites for corporate benefit. In Annang society, symbols are sources of insights into the people's orientations to life. In a most significant way symbols are used to communicate complex knowledge.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The paper adopts descriptive and secondary elaboration techniques in making symbolic beliefs of the Annang known. It looks at proverbs and other works of Annang scholars and elders and builds on them through explaining and bringing up their deep meanings to the surface. This study was anchored on anthropological field work participant observation method. Hence, the author had the benefit of observing behaviours in natural contexts and situations. This research approach enables the field worker access data which appear banal on the surface but very implicit in a people's social structure.

## **SOME SYMBOLIC FORMS AND SIGNIFICANCE AMONG ANNANG PEOPLE**

The Egg (Nkua unen): Is a sacred object that is very symbolic in Annang society. The egg can be used in variety of ways as cleansing agent antidotes for treating ailments, and a symbol of mother earth itself. Controversial issues can be

resolved using the egg and truth found out by manipulating the egg through incantations.

A respondent said:

Sometime in the 1970s, I had the privilege of being sponsored by the Federal Government of Nigeria to attend a conference in the United States of America, where I was given the opportunity to practically demonstrate the efficacy and symbolic usages of the egg (nkua unen) among Annang people. My presentation attracted standing ovation. In appreciation the organizers changed my hotel accommodation to a better one. (HRM Edidem E. O. Udoutun: *Personal Communication*, 2009).

The Red Palm Front (Ajei): Signifies danger, injunction, summon for meeting, demarcation of boundary, etc. depending on the context of its usage.

A respondent explained:

The red palm front (Ajei) has innumerable symbolic applications depending on the intention of the user and circumstances surrounding its usage. It can be used to ward off evil spirits; place injunction on disputed property; demarcate boundaries and a sign of warning against danger. The usage and meanings attached to Ajei is inexhaustible in our society (Akpakpan N. O.: *Personal Communication*, 2015).

White clay (Ndom): This may either be in powder or solid form, the substance is applied on the face, neck or whole body. Apart from being used as massaging agent, its application signifies happy event, peace and innocence.

According to a respondent:

*Ndom* (white clay) signifies any good thing you can think of nursing mothers rub it on their body as sign of fertility, peace and joy after birth, it shows acceptability. The contrast to this is black charcoal (nkang) which stands for shame, evil and ill fortune. Thieves are paraded round the community with charcoal rubbed on their body to serve as deterrent. The masquerade (Ekpo) that used charcoal is usually booed (Udoudo, A: *Personal Communication*, 2015)

Usoro (2004) identified the following striking cultural symbols found among Ika people of Annang society. *Anwa Abekpo* at *Ikot Esu village*, *Itak kiet Ebuk Edip* at *Ikot Esu village*, *Akpa Ifia* at *Urua Inyang village*, *Okpo Ekpe* at *Ikot Akpan Okure*, *Okom Ibok* at *Ikot Akpan Anwa*, *Ikorok* at *Ikot Akpan Anwa*, *Ukpong Otoro Mbele*, *Uyo Iso Awo* at *Nto Udo Enwan Udip Ito*, *Anwa Ekpat*, *Ikorok Ikot Akpan Anwa* etc. In those days, observations and information gathered suggest that these are not common placed phenomenon as uninformed visitors to Ika may be tempted to believe. But traditionally, these are sacred realities and images that made strong appeal for veneration from adherents or worshippers. They were feared and solemnly respected. These things played very important role of maintaining social control and order in the society. It was believed that anybody who swore falsely by any of these symbolic social facts would become sick and eventually die. This situation subsists up till now.

A respondent had this to say:

All these sacred images were identified and deified by our forefathers for our common good. They are still very influential and powerful, any one that goes against it risks severe sanction by gods. Our sacred cultural heritage should not be distorted or abandoned on the altar of exotic religion. (Ekwerewak, U: *Personal Communication*, 2015).

The spiritual and ceremonial performances of the Annang elders for any part of the day, week, month and year were attempts to establish contact with the supernatural. A certain traditional rites and ceremonies such as new yam festival (uchoro edia afa) mellon festival (uchoro ikpan) fathening (mbokpo) etc., are symbolic religious appeals to the unseen powers and imploring them to grant happiness progress, fertility and avoid harm among other good things. Most songs (ikwo) in Annang society are mechanisms for social control. Every occasion has its unique song accompaniments as the saying goes:

“When the occasion comes, a song also comes”. There is hardly any activity performed in Annang that is devoid of a song. When a child is born, there is singing and jubilation. During marriage ceremonies, songs are sung. The arrival of a visitor or a loved one can create a singing environment. Working-songs are employed by workers, especially those who work in farms, to lighten the burden of their task. When someone is angry, a song may be invoked to express some emotions, even when someone dies, the atmosphere may change from the sorrowful to merriment and singing. Traditional musicians and professional groups all compose songs alluding to complaints against neighbours, relatives, husbands, corrupt people and leaders (Ebewo, 2005: 48).

Throughout Annang land songs used for social control lampoon the pompous, and mock those who neglect their duties, or who are cruel and overbearing; Songs may also be applied to praise people, to criticize, to seek redress or they may be used to abuse or insult people. It could also serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for work.

Annang people possess a plethora of proverbs suitable for every occasion,. Where people gather together, or even when a father advises his children proverbs are colourfully employed. There are proverbs that deal with nature, animal world, birds, human anatomy and supernatural forces and even sex. The spaces provided for this paper are not enough for us to do justice to the wealth of proverbs that are found in Annang society.

### **SELECTED PROVERBS AND THEIR EXPLANATIONS.**

*Abem iso elung ama aluo abe, ukene ena eluo.*

When the sheep that leads a flock falls into a pit, those behind it must fall into the same pit. This is an exhortation for leaders to be exemplary in their character because if they misbehave, their followers are bound to misbehave too.

*Aben nkanya nkaa afe asejen sikene ikum*

When the maker of mat takes his matting to an open parlour, it is an invitation for neighbours to help. This illustrates that a problem made public, may find an easy solution.

#### *Ako isitureke itoro k'ubium*

There is always an occasion for pots on the rack to clash with each other. This is to say, no matter how close people are, differences will always exist. Creativity and imaginative inventiveness are so prevalent among Annang people. This is expressed through flourishing figurative expressions. Listed below are some special and common figurative uses of word to describe persons, things or situations in Annang. Akwook(bee). An expression in Annang to qualify those who indulge in excessive consumption of alcoholic drink.

Ewa(dog). This is a symbolic association with waywardness.

Utere(Vulture). This bird imagery is a traditional metaphor in Annang to describe people who are always present where there is a celebration or feasting.

Ebewo (2005) describes name as the sign post of every human being. In Annang everybody strives to own a name. Below are some of the common names and their meaning in Annang.

**Akpan:** The first male child of the family.

**Aliaha:** The first female child of the family.

**Ekpenyong:** The name given to a child who is born to a devotee of the traditional deity – (Iso ekpenyong)

**Ndarake:** This is the name given to a child who is born after the parents might have lost many other children. The name means “I am not jubilating” This is the equivalent of what the Yoruba people called, “Abiku” or what the igbo termed “Ogbanje”

**Uchoro:** Celebration or jubilation. This name is given to a child who is born during the festive period.

**Umoh:** By traditional belief, if a child's birth is believed to be his/her first entry into the world. The child is given this name. A child born during the period the father is initiated into the Inam cult is also called this name. Names are not just given to children by parent names are imbued with stories, prospects and experiences.

In the tradition of Sarpir-Whorf hypothesis and symbolic tradition of Turner. It is obvious that cultural symbols weave together different facet of human society by conveying deeper meanings and insights on social phenomenon.

## **SUMMARY**

In the foregoing analysis, cultural symbol is expressed as a powerful force for coding and transmitting information. A symbol opens the door into larger world. It goes beyond what is visible and tangible but transcend the world of mystery. In every department of human society and collective existence, symbolic expression is the way to creative freedom. Symbols stand for openness, for pointing towards alternative possibilities, for readiness to experiment in the hope of gaining a fuller understanding

of reality. Symbols are often used when words are unable to express complex realities.

From the discussions of this paper, much can be made of cultural symbols in Annang society. Symbol, as perceived in this study is a cultural institution because it reveals the institution of the Annang people. Cultural artifact should be clearly cherished by all and should not be dismissed with a wave of the hand. The observed scenario where cultural heritage of Annang people faces the threat of being swept ashore could combine with other factors to catapult mindless change and instability in the society, and eventually reconcile a people who are cut off from their cultural roots. Adopting the anthropological method of participant observation, the paper brings to lime light the rich cultural heritage of Annang people as embedded in symbolism. Apart from the above, informal and unstructured interview provides useful source of data for the study.

Using the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as its theoretical foundation, findings from the study highlight the way forward for Annang society among other things, as the need to harness indelible virtues enshrined in cultural symbols as a tool for better comprehension and appreciated of social reality, which will ultimately promote social control and order.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper therefore, suggests the need for Annang people to seam together the dismembered fragments of their culture by reviving and blending some important and useful cultural symbols that were erroneously jettisoned as pagan practices and strike a blend with modern realities for sustainable enculturation. This process involves the incorporation of new ideologies already adopted by the African with salient traditional symbolic values as a strategy to reinvent the past, blend with the present and attempt to construct a social projector for a sustainable future.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper therefore recommends that: (i) The teaching of Annang culture in schools in Annang land should be encouraged.(ii) The elders should show good examples for youth to emulate by recognizing the usefulness of our cultural symbols. (iii)Attempts should be made to document cultural symbols in Annang society. This documentation shall insure against a sweeping ashore of Annang rich cultural heritage.

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