

HISTORY

NON-CENTRALISED STATES OF NIGERIA BEFORE 1800

Meaning of non-centralised states: non-centralised states are those independent ethnic groups or states in pre-colonial Nigeria which did not develop the system of centralised administration. They usually have no kings or a powerful monarch who rules over the state

Examples of states that were non-centralised are Igbo, Birom, Idoma, Tiv, Ibibio.

The non-centralised states were known by the unified and relatively restricted socio-political structures in which they organised their states. The smallness of these states gave room for efficient democratic practices to take firm root in the governing process as everybody were involved in ensuring sanity and progress through family representation in the village elders council, clan meeting, age grade and village society.

COMMON FEATURES OF NON-CENTRALISED

Members of each autonomous community see one another as relatives and believe they have common ancestors.

They did not have city walls and their houses were scattered in the village.

They have no kingdoms and empires, they only had small autonomous communities.

They had no kings but had village elders council made up of eldest males from families who represent their various families in decision making in the village.

The citizens were guided by the customs, taboos and sanctions of the community as they did not have law courts and prisons.

They had secret societies and titleholders who also helped in the administration of the community.

THE IGBO

The Igbo people are described as a stateless, segmentary or acephalous people. That is to say that they did not have a king. (Igbo enwe eze). The Igbo are found in the southeastern part of Nigeria. They belonged to the Niger Condo dialect but subdivided into two subfamily groups: the Benue Condo subfamily and the Kwa subfamily.

The Igbo were individualistic and egalitarian, every man considers himself as good as everyone else and demanding a voice in his local affairs. The Igbo culture emphasised competition and hard work.

The history of the people has been a subject of speculation. Some of the traditions have it that they immigrated to their present abode from either middle east or North Africa. Others belied that had been in their present location from the beginning. This latter group believed that the Igbo was the centre of creation.

According to Igbo oral tradition such as that of the Nri, the Igbo ancestor. Eri, descended from the sky and sailed down the River Anambra and arriving at Aguleri, where he met the indigenous and settled with them. Another tradition stated that the Igbo originated from somewhere in present Awka or Orlu clan, from where the meeting of the village was held at the village square or in the elders' house. Then Igbo village government consisted of two basic institutions; the Amala which consisted of the heads of the extended families or lineages and the village assembly of the indigenous. In this Assembly, all adult male members met to perform legislative functions. In ancient times, the meeting of the assembly was held in the open village square. The assembly makes a final decision in matters affecting the village of individuals. The Igbo respect right of every individual and recognition in the society was based on

individual capacity and age. This was the system in Igboland before the imposition of colonial rule on Nigeria. This system was the reason for the failure of indirect rule system in eastern Nigeria.

ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

The major economic activities of the Igbos were: farming, trade, metalwork, weaving, salt making, carving, fishing, hunting, etc. They grew food crops such as yam, cocoyam, and cassava, maize, plantains and vegetables.

Trading was another popular and lucrative venture among the Igbos. The Igbo also developed craft and industries. They were experts in cloth making, metalwork especially in iron, copper and bronze. Igbo-ukwu was a notable town for bronze and copper work, Ezra and Awka, were famous towns in blacksmithing.

Fishing was also popular among the Igbo who resided at the riverine areas. They exchanged their fish with farm produce and salt. The Igbo were also good in wood caving, they made highly decorated doors, stools, spoons, Ikenga and other figurines used in their places of works.

Intergroup Relations; Impacts of Migration, Wars and Politics

This is the cooperation, interaction, connection, and relationship between different groups/states in **pre-colonial Nigeria**.

Do not be deceived by the word "inter", it's just a prefix meaning among, between, mutually.

So, by the definition given, we understood that the topic is discussing the various relations and connections which existed between states in Nigeria before 1800. And these connections could come in the forms of trade, sharing of common boundaries by states, war, diplomatic ties, and last but not the least, migration. Mere reasoning, could produce questions such as what could connect people? What could make people co-operate, etc.

FORMS OF INTER-GROUP RELATIONS

Migration

Trade

Sharing of common boundaries by states

War

Diplomatic ties

IMPACTS OF MIGRATION, WAR AND POLITICS ON INTERGROUP RELATIONS

Relationship promoted by migration: We understand that for two people or states to cooperate, they must come together for it to take effect. Migration was one of the means through which intergroup relations was promoted. There were the movement of people from their original abode to another for the search for a security, greener pasture, political reasons and flight to avoid capital punishment or banishment meted on a person who committed a crime against the laws of the land (as the case was with Okonkwo in "things fall apart"). There was also the movement of religious leaders. Eg, the South-Eastern people and people beyond made series of movements to Arochukwu to learn the practices of their religion and to consult the Ubini Ukpabi, the Arochukwu oracle

Trade: trade means buying and selling of goods and services. People/states made trade links with both proximate and distant neighbours. For instance, in our study of states such as Benin Empire, Hausa states, Efik, Nupe among others, we realised that trade was very instrumental to the growth

of those states and also we discovered that they traded with both proximate and distant neighbours.

Relationship promoted by War: War was also a means through which states interact. War itself is a form of diplomacy. It is regarded as a last diplomatic approach applied when other diplomatic approaches have failed. We could recall that states like Benin, Oyo, Nupe and Hausa states fought wars for different reasons. These wars brought about interaction among the various warring states. Finally, wars were ended after a formal agreement to restore peace was reached. In the process of ending wars, states had to come together either as victor or vanquished, this brought them closer and they coexisted either as ally or foe. Some states such as Kanem Bornu, Oyo Empire, Benin Empire, Nupe kingdom among others were able to conquer many states and build an empire. The conquered states either maintain friendship or enmity with the imperial state.

Politics: in the political sphere, ideas spread from one area to another. For instance, states/groups borrow or copy the political ideas/styles from other states that have better on a more sophisticated system of government. It is believed that Benin, Yoruba, Igala, Nupe and other states borrowed from one another politically. Politics also brought states together and made way for peace and trade links between States. Kings or leaders of every state decided measures which were taken to strengthen relations with one another.

INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGY, CRAFT AND INDUSTRIES IN NIGERIA

Definition of keywords.

1. **Technology:** this is the acquisition and application of skills, techniques, methods and processes in the production of goods, services or in the accomplishment of objectives.

Craft is an occupation that requires a special skill or art. Eg., carpentry, wood carving.

An industry is a group of businesses or manufacturers that produce a particular kind of goods.

PLACE OF INDIGENOUS INDUSTRIES IN THE ECONOMY

The indigenous Industries were an important sector of the economy. This is because, they produced service goods such as tools, utensils, ornaments, weapons and clothing needed by the people. It was a major source of income for some people and for others, it was a second source of income aside trade and agriculture. Nigerians utilize locally available resources to produce tools and weapons which have helped them to control and improve their living conditions.

TYPES OF INDUSTRIES

Pottery

Metal work

Cloth weaving

Salt production

Leather works

Soap making

Carving/sculpture

Boat making

Basket making.

POTTERY

This is the art of making earthen ware containers. It is the act of forming objects of clay in the moist plastic condition and drying them by either exposure to sun and air, fire and baking in kiln/oven. Pottery is one of the craft of the ancient Nigeria. It was practiced in most parts of the country. Pottery was majorly practiced by women. It is one of the cheapest arts practiced in Nigeria. This is because raw material used in making pottery are clay and water.

Production process: pottery making involves digging of clay at the waterside, pounding of the clay, soaking, shifting/ separating it from foreign matters, kneading it, decorating, firing the pot, etc. The making of pottery includes the following basic methods: shaping, molding, decorating and firing. Various types of clay products were made from pottery including; cooking vessels, food bowls, water pots, drinking bowls, etc.

Pottery was a source of income especially to many Nigerian women. It helped to reduce unemployment and as an important economic activity, it helped to increase the family income. Pottery was traded on every part of Nigeria it formed an important article of trading for both proximate and distant trade.

Background to European exploration of West Africa

West Africa had contact with North Africa, Arabs, Asians and the people of Europe through trade. Before the European exploration of West Africa, many North Africans, Arabs and Greek sailors had reached the West African coast. Portuguese was the first country to arrive the West African Coast before the European exploration began proper. Prince Henry the Navigator the son of King John I was the brain behind Portuguese exploration.

Prince Henry's interest in geographical matters helped him to acquire knowledge of the climate, vegetation, region and people of the world. He spent much time and resources in collecting available geographical knowledge of the World beyond. The Portuguese capture of centa (located on the coast of Morocco) from the Moore Muslim in 1415 strengthened Henry's desire for exploration. They also discovered Islands of Azores, Canary and Maderia in 1431. Exploration became a serious endeavour in Portugal that even the death of Henry in 1460 did not hamper exploration. The Portuguese explorers reached Sierra Leone (Lion Mountain) on the West African coast. They further sailed Cape of "Good Hope" by Bartholomew Dias and his team of explorers. The work of these explorers helped Portugal gain a sea route to India. By this time, the entire Western coast of Africa including Nigerian Coast land had been discovered. Henry's aims of sending out explorers was to acquire geographical knowledge, attract benefit to Portugal and possibly expand the country's sphere of influence.

European present on the coast of Nigeria

The first European to visit Nigeria were the Portuguese who visited Benin in 1472. Other Europeas Traders from Holland England and France letter joined. The Portuguese Traders exchanged items such as cheap beads, clothes, gun and gun powder, cowries, iron rods and other European goods for the African ivory, peppers, gold, slaves etc. The volume of the trade increased as other European countries joined the trade.

Portuguese Explorer Ray de Saqueira Visisted Benin in 1472. However, the first attempt to establish trade contacts was made in 1485, when Jao d' Aveiro visited Benin. Mention has already been made of the articles of trading between Nigeria and the European countries. The trade and friendly relations between the Portuguese and Nigeria coastal States increased leading to the establishment of Portuguese trading stations at Warri and and Gborodo. The British presence in Nigeria started in 1553 when English merchants under the leadership of Captain Thomas Wyndham and Antonio Pentaedo

sailed to port of Benin. They stayed about a month and purchase ivory, palm oil and pepper. the European also came in contact with the Efiks of the old Calabar in 1668. The joining of the British by the Dutch and the Portuguese in the trade at old Calabar triggered rivalry among them. The European merchants introduced varieties of European goods and different currencies to Nigeria. Eg., copper bars, rods, cowries and Manila.