

LESSON NOTE FOR WEEK SEVEN (7)

TOPIC : DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CENTRES OF CIVILIZATION IN PRE- COLONIAL NIGERIA

THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

MEANING OF POLITICAL STRUCTURES

Political structure implies the mode or method of governance used by a society or a state,

The following are noticeable differences in the political structures of these pre-colonial centres.

1. **centralized and non-centralized system of government;** centralized systems were used by empires and kingdoms, like Oyo empire, Nupe kingdom, Benin empire, Hausa states and so on, on the other hand ,non centralized mode of governance was used by Igbo, the idoma, and some Niger delta states like the Anang,Urhobo, etc
2. **Distribution of power;** In a non centralized states like Igbo there was power sharing, the different groups had power to carry out their function, power was not concentrated at the centre but in centralized system such as Hausa states, Oyo empire, Benin empire, Nupe kingdom power was concentrated at the centre, The king or the ruler controlled other arms of government with little or no power for people assisting him in lower levels of government,
3. **Enthronement of rulers;;** Different methods were used in installing kings on the throne in the pre-colonial states ,empire and kingdom, in Benin empire for instance, the Uzamas had the responsibility of installing the eldest son of the late Oba as the new king, the Oyo Mesi in Oyo empire had similar function of enthroning kings [the Alaafins] but also had power to deposed them whenever necessary, in some centres, the throne was inherited ,while in others it was rotated among selected royal families, some did not have clear rules for the enthronement of new leaders.
4. **Hierarchy in government;** while some of these pre-colonial centres had good hierarchical structures particularly among the centralized states, the hierarchy in most non-centralised states was not so clear
5. **degree of participation in government;** In centralized centres, like Benin empire, Oyo empire, Nupe kingdom for instances, power was in the hands of few individuals but in non centralized states ,power was shared among individuals.

DIFFERENCES IN CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF DIFFERENT CENTRES OF CIVILIZATION

Meaning of culture and custom

Culture and customs are other major area where there were a lot of differences of civilization in Nigeria such difference were very clear in the following;;

1. **Marriage;** Each major centres had different ways of contracting marriage or forming the new families, among the Hausa state, marriage process was conducted using traditional methods and much later Islamic ,but in Oyo Empire and some other centres the marriage process went according to the customs of the community.
2. **language;** The languages of virtually all the centres were different. In Hausa states,Hausa language was the dominant language while in the places like Oyo Empire and Ife ,Yoruba was dominant. The Niger delta city-states like Urhobo Anang,Ibibio and so on had their different languages, The Igbo had a common language called Ibo though not without slight difference but they could still understand themselves.
3. **Dressing;** Each centre had different ways of dressing, this was applicable to the rulers, regalias, the regalia of an Oba of Benin was different from that of Etsu of Nupe, The same applied to Alaafin of Oyo Empire in Yoruba land and Obong of Calabar in the Niger Delta, furthermore, the dressing of Yoruba men and women was different from that of men and women from Hausa states,
4. **Songs;** Each centre had peculiar songs and music for different occasions like installation of kings, rulers, naming, marriage and burial ceremonies, etc
5. **musical instruments;** centres of civilization in Nigeria had different musical instruments for different occasions; The musical instrument in the Hausa states included kakaki,goje and so on, The Oyo Empire also has musical instruments like ,Iya ilu, Omle, Dundu,etc, The Igbo had musical instruments such as udu, ogene, Ekwe, etc.
6. **Greetings;** each centre had ways of greeting themselves, in old Oyo empire, the subjects used to prostrate themselves, in old Oyo empire, the subjects used to prostrate for their king. And when the younger men were greeting their elders.

In Hausa states men would bend low to greet facing each other, shaking hands and touching chest particularly people of the same age, Among the Igbo, greeting was by handshake or bowing down.

WEEK 8

DIFFERENCES IN TRADE AND ECONOMY

1. **Differences in commodities sold;** Each centre had different commodities they sold ,this depended majorly on their geographical locations,
2. **Differences in Exchange systems;;** some of them used cowry shells and salt as means of exchange,
3. **Differences in market;** most of the centres had market days ,some had daily market while some fixed theirs at intervals of specific days.
4. **difference in weights and measures;** Each had different ways of measuring quantity of commodities to be exchanged for money or other goods ,some commodities were measure in bags.

5. **differences in foreign trade partners;** The coastal city states traded mainly with the Portuguese and the British ,Benin empire also traded with the Europeans exchanging slaves for foreign goods like gun, mirrors ,etc.

The Hausa states and Kanem Borno traded with the Arabs through trans-Atlantic trade. They also traded with people from Libya, Mali, etc.

DIFFERENCE IN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS WILL BE EXPLAINED IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

1. **Place of worship;**Almost all the pre-colonial centres of civilization had different places of worship. Those who worshipped river goddess did it near rivers, the three worshippers worshipped around the tree and son on kingdom conquered through Islamic jihad changed their worship centre to mosques, while Niger delta states and Benin empire which later embraced Christianity worshipped in churches or their houses.
2. **Deities;** each centre of civilization had the gods they worshipped, The worship of Ogun, Sango, Obatala were common in old Oyo Empire,in Nupe, they worshipped Egungun and Iggunnu at different places or shrines, Niger delta city states like Oron and Anang also had their different places of worship for their gods,
3. **Priest;** As the worship of deities differed, so was the priest that conducted and led the worship, each deity had its own priest who was conducting and leading worshippers each time, it was time to worship the deity.so there were priests and chief priests of these deities in different centres of civilization.

4. Consultation of oracles; In many centres of civilization, some critical decisions were taken by consulting oracles, each centre had a ways of doing this, in old Oyo Empire ,sometimes ,the choice of the king from a royal family was based on result of consultation of Ifa Oracle, other communities in Nigeria in precolonial days also had different ways of making decisions through their deity.

HOME WORK

1. Identify two major areas of differences in political structures of pre-colonial people of Nigeria.
2. Identify two major areas of differences in culture and customs of pre-colonial people of Nigeria .
3. Identify two major areas of differences in trade and economy of pre-colonial people of Nigeria.
4. Identify two major areas of differences in religious beliefs among pre-colonial people of Nigeria

