

COURSE MANUAL

People and Culture

SOW302



University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre
Open and Distance Learning Course Series Development
Version 1.0 ev1

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ISBN: 978-021-920-X

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Vice Chancellor's Message

The Distance Learning Centre is building on a solid tradition of over two decades of service in the provision of External Studies Programme and now Distance Learning Education in Nigeria and beyond. The Distance Learning mode to which we are committed is providing access to many deserving Nigerians in having access to higher education especially those who by the nature of their engagement do not have the luxury of full time education. Recently, it is contributing in no small measure to providing places for teeming Nigerian youths who for one reason or the other could not get admission into the conventional universities.

These course materials have been written by writers specially trained in ODL course delivery. The writers have made great efforts to provide up to date information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly.

In addition to provision of course materials in print and e-format, a lot of Information Technology input has also gone into the deployment of course materials. Most of them can be downloaded from the DLC website and are available in audio format which you can also download into your mobile phones, IPod, MP3 among other devices to allow you listen to the audio study sessions. Some of the study session materials have been scripted and are being broadcast on the university's Diamond Radio FM 101.1, while others have been delivered and captured in audio-visual format in a classroom environment for use by our students. Detailed information on availability and access is available on the website. We will continue in our efforts to provide and review course materials for our courses.

However, for you to take advantage of these formats, you will need to improve on your I.T. skills and develop requisite distance learning Culture. It is well known that, for efficient and effective provision of Distance learning education, availability of appropriate and relevant course materials is a *sine qua non*. So also, is the availability of multiple plat form for the convenience of our students. It is in fulfilment of this, that series of course materials are being written to enable our students study at their own pace and convenience.

It is our hope that you will put these course materials to the best use.



Prof. Abel Idowu Olayinka

Vice-Chancellor

Foreword

As part of its vision of providing education for “Liberty and Development” for Nigerians and the International Community, the University of Ibadan, Distance Learning Centre has recently embarked on a vigorous repositioning agenda which aimed at embracing a holistic and all encompassing approach to the delivery of its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Thus we are committed to global best practices in distance learning provision. Apart from providing an efficient administrative and academic support for our students, we are committed to providing educational resource materials for the use of our students. We are convinced that, without an up-to-date, learner-friendly and distance learning compliant course materials, there cannot be any basis to lay claim to being a provider of distance learning education. Indeed, availability of appropriate course materials in multiple formats is the hub of any distance learning provision worldwide.

In view of the above, we are vigorously pursuing as a matter of priority, the provision of credible, learner-friendly and interactive course materials for all our courses. We commissioned the authoring of, and review of course materials to teams of experts and their outputs were subjected to rigorous peer review to ensure standard. The approach not only emphasizes cognitive knowledge, but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The development of the materials which is on-going also had input from experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner-friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind. This is very important because, distance learning involves non-residential students who can often feel isolated from the community of learners.

It is important to note that, for a distance learner to excel there is the need to source and read relevant materials apart from this course material. Therefore, adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

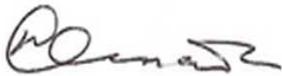
Apart from the responsibility for you to read this course material with others, you are also advised to seek assistance from your course facilitators especially academic advisors during your study even before the interactive session which is by design for revision. Your academic advisors will assist you using convenient technology including Google Hang Out, You Tube, Talk Fusion, etc. but you have to take advantage of these. It is also going to be of immense advantage if you complete assignments as at when due so as to have necessary feedbacks as a guide.

The implication of the above is that, a distance learner has a responsibility to develop requisite distance learning culture which includes diligent and disciplined self-study, seeking available administrative and academic support and acquisition of basic information technology skills. This is why you are encouraged to develop your computer skills by availing yourself the opportunity of training that the Centre’s provide and put these into use.

In conclusion, it is envisaged that the course materials would also be useful for the regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks. We are therefore, delighted to present these titles to both our distance learning students and the university's regular students. We are confident that the materials will be an invaluable resource to all.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bayo Okunade', written in a cursive style.

Professor Bayo Okunade

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About this course manual

People and Culture SOW302 has been produced by University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre. All course manuals produced by University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre are structured in the same way, as outlined below.

How this course manual is structured

The course overview

The course overview gives you a general introduction to the course. Information contained in the course overview will help you determine:

- If the course is suitable for you.
- What you will already need to know.
- What you can expect from the course.
- How much time you will need to invest to complete the course.

The overview also provides guidance on:

- Study skills.
- Where to get help.
- Course assignments and assessments.
- Activity icons.
- Study Sessions.

We strongly recommend that you read the overview *carefully* before starting your study.

The course content

The course is broken down into Study Sessions. Each Study Session comprises:

- An introduction to the Study Session content.
- Study Session outcomes.
- Core content of the Study Session with a variety of learning activities.
- A Study Session summary.
- Assignments and/or assessments, as applicable.
- Bibliography

Your comments

After completing People and Culture we would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to give us your feedback on any aspect of this course. Your feedback might include comments on:

- Course content and structure.
- Course reading materials and resources.
- Course assignments.
- Course assessments.
- Course duration.
- Course support (assigned tutors, technical help, etc.)

Your constructive feedback will help us to improve and enhance this course.

CourseOverview

Welcome to People and Culture SOW302

To offer social services, there is high need to understand the way of life of people. This course therefore exposes learners to how people live and transfer this way of life using Nigeria as a case study. Nigeria is regarded as one of the most heterogeneous societies in Africa with a population of over 140 million people and over 374 ethnic groups and sub-groups. Hence, the need to understand the complexity of Nigerian people, their various cultural practices, life styles and ways of life.

Course outcomes

Upon completion of People and Culture SOW302 you will be able to:



Outcomes

- discuss how man emerged on earth.
- describe human culture.
- present an historical overview of Nigeria.
- analyse the culture of selected ethnic groups in Nigeria

Timeframe



How long?

This is a 15 weeks course. It requires a formal study time of 45 hours. The formal study times are scheduled around online discussions / chats with your course facilitator / academic advisor to facilitate your learning. Kindly see course calendar on your course website for scheduled dates. You will still require independent/personal study time particularly in studying your course materials.

How to be successful in this course



As an open and distance learner your approach to learning will be different to that from your school days, where you had onsite education. You will now choose what you want to study, you will have professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself in areas such as essay planning, coping with exams and using the web as a learning resource.

We recommend that you take time now—before starting your self-study—to familiarize yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the web. A few suggested links are:

- <http://www.dlc.ui.edu.ng/resources/studyskill.pdf>

This is a resource of the UIDLC pilot course module. You will find sections on building study skills, time scheduling, basic concentration techniques, control of the study environment, note taking, how to read essays for analysis and memory skills (“remembering”).

- http://www.ivywise.com/newsletter_march13_how_to_self_study.html

This site provides how to master self-studying, with bias to emerging technologies.

- <http://www.howtostudy.org/resources.php>

Another “How to study” web site with useful links to time management, efficient reading, questioning/listening/observing skills, getting the most out of doing (“hands-on” learning), memory building, tips for staying motivated, developing a learning plan.

The above links are our suggestions to start you on your way. At the time of writing these web links were active. If you want to look for more, go to www.google.com and type “self-study basics”, “self-study tips”, “self-study skills” or similar phrases.

Need help?



Help

As earlier noted, this course manual complements and supplements SOW302at UI Mobile Class as an online course, which is domiciled at www.dlc.ui.edu.ng/mc.

You may contact any of the following units for information, learning resources and library services.

Distance Learning Centre (DLC)

University of Ibadan, Nigeria
Tel: (+234) 08077593551 – 55
(Student Support Officers)
Email: ssu@dlc.ui.edu.ng

Head Office

Morohundiya Complex, Ibadan-Ilorin Expressway, Idi-Ose, Ibadan.

Information Centre

20 Awolowo Road, Bodija, Ibadan.

Lagos Office

Speedwriting House, No. 16 Ajanaku Street, Off Salvation Bus Stop, Awuse Estate, Opebi, Ikeja, Lagos.

For technical issues (computer problems, web access, and etcetera), please visit: www.learnersupport.dlc.ui.edu.ng for live support; or send mail to webmaster@dlc.ui.edu.ng.

Academic Support



Help

A course facilitator is commissioned for this course. You have also been assigned an academic advisor to provide learning support. The contacts of your course facilitator and academic advisor for this course are available at the course website: www.dlc.ui.edu.ng/mc

Activities



Activities

This manual features “Activities,” which may present material that is NOT extensively covered in the Study Sessions. When completing these activities, you will demonstrate your understanding of basic material (by answering questions) before you learn more advanced concepts. You will be provided with answers to every activity question. Therefore, your emphasis when working the activities should be on understanding your answers. It is more important that you understand why every answer is correct.

Assessment



Assessment

There are three basic forms of assessment in this course: in-text questions (ITQs) and self assessment questions (SAQs), and tutor marked assessment (TMAs). This manual is essentially filled with ITQs and SAQs. Feedbacks to the ITQs are placed immediately after the questions, while the feedbacks to SAQs are at the back of manual. You will receive your TMAs as part of online class activities at the UI Mobile Class. Feedbacks to TMAs will be provided by your tutor in not more than 2 weeks expected duration.

Schedule dates for submitting assignments and engaging in course / class activities is available on the course website. Kindly visit your course website often for updates.

Bibliography



Readings

For those interested in learning more on this subject, we provide you with a list of additional resources at the end of this course manual; these may be books, articles or websites.

Getting around this course manual

Margin icons

While working through this course manual you will notice the frequent use of margin icons. These icons serve to “signpost” a particular piece of text, a new task or change in activity; they have been included to help you to find your way around this course manual.

A complete icon set is shown below. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with the icons and their meaning before starting your study.

			
Activity	Assessment	Assignment	Case study
			
Discussion	Group Activity	Help	Outcomes
			
Note	Reflection	Reading	Study skills
			
Summary	Terminology	Time	Tip

Study Session 1

Origin of Man's Existence

Introduction

In this Study Session, we will discuss how man came into being. In doing so, we will examine three major views on how man emerged on earth. We will also examine the importance of living together by man in a community.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Session, you should be able to:

- 1.1 *present* how man came into existence
- 1.2 *explain* the importance of living together



1.1 Views on How Man Emerged on Earth

Many social scientists, theologians and traditional leaders have often given one interesting explanation or the other on how man came into existence on earth. There are, as a result, claims and counter claims about man's emergence on earth. We shall now delve into some of the evidences given about man's existence from the past starting with the idea of creation.

1.1.1 Christians' Idea of Creation

The Christian answer to the question of man's emergence on earth is that God created Adam on the sixth day, following the creation of the earth. From Adam's ribs, He also created Eve and both lived in the Garden of Eden and became the ancestors of all mankind. Man is therefore the end product of six-day creation process.

Many eminent Christians and theologians have made various contributions based on these biblical facts. Prominent among them were Dr. Lightfoot, the master of St. Catherine's College, Cambridge; Bishop Ussher of England; Isaac de Prereyer etc. Bishop Ussher was the first to write about man's creation. In the 17th century, he, on the basis of literary evidence in the Holy bible, calculated that God created the earth in the year 4004 B.C. To this, Dr. Lightfoot added that the event took place on the 23rd October of 4004 B.C. at 9 o'clock in the morning. This fact was contained in his book written some years ago, In 1802, Isaac Prereyer also wrote something similar.

1.1.2 Local Ideas of Creation of Man in Nigeria

On Nigerian local evidence, the myths of the origin of man are as many as there are ethnic units. For example, Ife, Benin, Nri and Tiv are all centres of man's

origin on earth. For example, the Yoruba people have a tradition of their origin in the Ile-Ife, where God probably created the first on earth. From there, he travelled to other parts of the earth. But there are two legends of how this happened, both relating to Odudwa, the father of the Yoruba and the world at large. One states that God gave Obatala a calabash of sand, bird and chameleon to let down to earth. But, he failed to accomplish his task due to his carelessness. God therefore called another person, this time, a man called Oduduwa, whom God gave similar assignment. According to Yoruba tradition, Oduduwa was suspended from the sky by a web. On coming down to earth, Oduduwa threw his calabash on water and the whole area instantaneously became land. The bird scratched the land and spread it to other areas. After this, Oduduwa dropped the chameleon on the land and on, observing that the land bore the weight of the chameleon, Oduduwa descended to inhabit the earth. The place where this happened was believed to be Ile-Ife. The other version of the story, though historical, points to how the Yoruba came to inhabit their present area. According to this version, Odudwa, whom God first created in the far East made a long journey to the present Yoruba area and lived at Ile-Ife. There Oduduwa subdued his environment and made a living out of it. He had seven sons who became the first seven kings, and from one of these, the present Oba of Benin claims descendant.

1.1.3 Scientific Idea of the Origin of Man

Scientific views differ greatly from the earlier views treated here. In fact, scientists hold strong opposing views to those of the Christians. For example, scientists hold opposing view that man emerged on earth by just a bang simply because such an act could be performed by God and no more. In fact, many scientists have contended that life did not just start with a bang as the various myths of man's origin indicate. These scientists started to query this view by applying scientific explanation to man's emergence on earth. We still remember Lammare's theory (1744-1829) that more complex species developed from the simpler ones. And yet *the* famous Darwin's theory in his descent of man is still very fresh in our memories. In 1859, Charles Darwin published his revolutionary book on the origin of species by means of natural selection. In it, he set forth his theory that all life on earth began from simple organs out of which more complex organisms evolved. Man himself, said Darwin, had probably evolved over millions of years from Ape-like ancestors. Darwin's idea came like a bombshell; they seemed to contradict the creation story as told in the book of Genesis. Naturally, a storm of protests followed. Basic Christian ideas about man's place on the universe were seen to be threatened. To say that the human species had evolved from apes could be interpreted as suggesting that there was no difference between man and the lower animals and even as a denial of the Christian concept of man as a creature with a soul made in the image of God. Many people in the 19th century then believed that they were faced with a choice between Christianity and science.

Zoologists have scientifically proved that man belongs to the same general zoological class (Hominoidea) as the great apes. According to them, both man and ape share the same anatomical features, such as identical skull, skeleton, nervous system, muscles, brain structure; though, the brain of a man is more elaborate (average size of man's brain is 1350 cc while that of Ape is 650 cc) than that of the ape. These similarities have sometimes been erroneously taken to mean that man is a lineal descent from the apes. They only mean that man and apes had descended from a common ancestor in the remote past and the various

species that exist today are but terminal products of many divergent lines of evolution.

1.2 Importance of Living Together

No matter the theory of the origin of man one subscribes to, it is important to note that man's survival basically depends on its ability to cope with its environment, to overcome its changes and to utilize its resources and live together. Man's physical and social environment differs in many ways. The physical environment includes; land, vegetation, climate, rivers, lake, oceans, mountains, lowlands, etc. The forces of this environment determine man's pattern of life, forms of occupation and other forms of activities he undertakes in his day-to-day business of life. For example, man's occupation is determined by the type of vegetation and climate available in any given area.

Human settlement could be traced back to the new Stone Age when man started to practise agriculture and tame animals. Some ten thousand years ago, as the last Ice Age drew to a close, the environment occupied by man began to undergo radical changes. Drier and warmer period, no doubt, led to the development of vast grasslands where forests had flourished in earlier times. This stage of man's life led to hunting of animals and gathering of wild fruits and seeds.

Improved hunting techniques, in particular the wide spread use of the bow and arrow; and improved fishing techniques involving the use of boats, increased human capacity to exploit his environment. As time went on, many animals that were formally hunted for food became extinct. The specialized techniques for harvesting and processing of grass seeds became widespread and in some places led to the establishment of permanently settled communities of collectors largely dependent upon abundant of wild grasses. As man began to live in settled communities with his fellow man he began to enjoy the benefits of his venture.

The major advantages of living together are that:

- It helps man to have a companion. Since man is a gregarious being, he needs the company and association of other people to enable him live happily and comfortably in his group or society.
- It enables people of the same group to live together and foster their interest and aspirations beyond their own bounds.
- It is the way of perpetuating social, cultural, and religious identity of a group. People, who speak the same language, practise the same religion and possess the same culture also associate as people of the same group.
- It provides the means for socializing its members to become active participants in their society. For Example, it is through living together that individuals absorb the norms and cultural values that enable them to become active members of their group or society.
- It enables people to engage in self-help projects for the betterment of their group.
- It enables people to evolve rules and regulations that guide their actions and life in their group.
- It enables people to engage in recreational, social and sporting activities.

In order to achieve these benefits of living together peacefully, these factors must be taken into account. They include understanding individual differences,

displaying conformity to the norms and values of the society in which we live, having people to do their best for the survival and continuity of their society and displaying patriotism, loyalty and trustworthiness in our day-to-day activities of life.

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed the origin of man. We examined three views of man's emergence on earth: the idea of creation; local view which centred on the Yoruba's mythology; and the scientific view which centred on the idea of evolution. Finally, we highlighted some importance of living together in a community.

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Study Session 2

Human Culture

Introduction

In this Study Session, we will examine the concept and characteristics of culture. We will also point the factors that affect culture.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Session, you should be able to:

- 2.1 *define* and use correctly the term “culture”
- 2.2 *highlight* characteristics of culture
- 2.3 *explain* main influences that affect the culture of a people
- 2.4 *enumerate* the importance of studying Nigeria culture



2.1 Human Culture

Every society has a **culture**. The word “culture” is so inclusive a concept that it is often defined differently by different people in different environments. Simply put, culture refers to the totality of the ways of life a people.

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action.

Edward Tylor, an anthropologist has provided one of the most acceptable and comprehensive definitions of culture. He defined culture as that “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. This presupposes the holistic nature of culture. It, therefore, refers to the learnt, shared and transmitted behaviour in society. Stated more simply, culture is everything which is socially learned and shared by the members of a society.

Most social scientists today view culture as consisting primarily of the symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human societies. The essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them. It is the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that

distinguish one people from another in modernized societies; it is not material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies. People within a culture usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artifacts, and behaviours in the same or in similar ways

Culture can be divided into two major types; namely, *material culture* and *non-material culture*. The material culture, also called ideational or explicit culture, refers to those aspects of culture which can be seen and touched. They are tangible and explicit. They include things like; hoe, cutlass, computers, machines, etc. On the other hand, the non-material culture or implicit culture refers to those aspects of culture, which cannot be seen or touched but have a considerable influence on the behaviour of the people This includes things like moral, belief, law, knowledge, ideology etc. In order words, they are intangible and implicit.

2.2 Characteristics of Culture

The characteristics of culture are as follows:

- Culture is learnt and not genetically given.
- Culture is transmitted from one generation to the other through the process of socialization.
- Culture is dynamic because it changes from time to time.
- Culture is shared between and among members of the society.
- Culture is relative because what is acceptable in one culture may be detested by another culture.
- Culture is adaptive because it enables people to survive in the environment in which they find themselves.

On the whole, it is important to note that all cultures are equal and important to the survival of the people who practice it. The notion or attitude people always have that their culture is superior to other cultures is called *ethnocentrism*. Moreover, there are times when people seem happy to pay more for imported goods (culture) on the assumption that anything from abroad is better. Therefore, when a person prefers a foreign culture to his/her culture he/she is suffering from *xenocentrism*.

2.3 Main Features that Influence the Culture of a People

Culture which is often defined as the totality of what we think, do and have as members of the society is not in itself stable and unchanging. In fact, no form of culture however isolated from outside influence, adjusted to its environment and conservative in its outlook is truly stable and unchanging. The changes which nature undergoes with the passage of time are caused by certain factors. Such factors are transaction flow, functional inter-dependence and congruency of values.

2.3.1 Transaction Flow

This refers to the amount of communication, interactions and various forms of co-operation that exist between one cultural group and another.

5-c^ natural groups may have varying cultural traits like language, religion, racy adornment, living style, knowledge and skill. The amount of communication, forms of interaction and co-operation that have taken place between two varying cultural groups could be measured in terms of labour and occupational mobility, telephone calls, mails received, volume of trade and the strength of social and political ties.

The typical example of transaction flow between two varying cultural traits could be seen in the case between the British culture and the Nigerian culture with the former transmitting her cultural traits and the later consuming them. For example, during the colonial mind, the Europeans gained political control in Africa because they were able to weaken or destroy the authority of the local chiefs or rulers and their cultural values. Having achieved this, they would embark on re-socialization by introducing their own dresses, habits, table manners, funeral rites, religion, education, roles, associations, language, tasks, and methods of child rearing. All these are bound to affect and alter our traditional cultural structures including the manifestations embodied in norms, cultural products, symbols and social life of our people.

2.3.2 Functional Interdependence

This refers to the situation whereby two or more cultures from varying groups could co-operate and function together. But such co-operation could be induced on one by the other. Before the colonial assault on African territories, various small communities were closely tied together to their land or water, and from which they derived their subsistence without outside interference. Since limited size and relative isolation were associated with homogeneity, stability and resistance to change, these small communities were living happily with their cultural values fully preserved.

When the colonial masters first made an in-road into their colonial territories including Nigeria, they faced the opposition of the local chiefs who feared the pollution of their culture by an alien culture. If these local chief had succeeded in warding off this early intervention in their territories, they could have protected their culture from outside influence and distortion. But, because they failed to achieve that, they had no alternative but to allow the colonialists with their radical ideas to penetrate into their territories. In fact many historians of the colonial era have contended that the reason why the British practised indirect rule in her African territories and the French, assimilation policy in her own territories *was* not unconnected with the sole aim of creating fertile ground for domestication and infusion of their political, social and economic systems in their newly discovered territories.

There was therefore no doubt that the functional interdependence between the British culture and that of the African culture was not without force, by the former on the latter. This, however, gave impetus to the partial transformation of African cultural values.

2.3.3 Congruency of values

This refers to a situation whereby two or more cultural groups may have some cultural values in common. If two or more cultural groups can trade off some cultural values and norms, then a sense of common purpose could develop between them. This may lead to some form of cultural affinity between the two. This occurs is where two or more countries, out of sheer desire to achieve unity in diversity, may decide to integrate or disregard some of their cultural values to achieve the necessary uniting values.

2.4 Importance of studying the Nigerian Culture

As indicated earlier, the word “culture” is clearly so inclusive a concept that it is often defined differently by different people in different environments. Sociologists often define culture as the totality of what we think, do and have as members of the society. In other words, culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, religion, law, custom, music, dress, food, language, occupation, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of the society.

Culture has three different principal components, such as institutions which govern behaviour; ideas that is knowledge and belief of all varieties -moral, theological, philosophical, scientific, technological, historical sociological and so on; and the material products or arts facts which men produce and use in the course of their collective lives.

The study of Nigerian culture is important to its citizens for a number of reasons. These are:

- It is through the study of our culture that we may adequately acquire knowledge of the past history and tradition of Nigeria and its people. When in 1954, Sir Alan Burns, a well known colonial administrator in Nigeria, opined that "there is no Nigerian nation, no Nigerian language and no Nigerian tradition," he was saying so with his little knowledge of Nigeria. He, however, went further to assert that Nigeria was inhabited by a medley of formerly warring tribes with no meaningful culture and only united in so far as they were governed by a single power. By learning Nigerian culture today, we have come to realise that Alan Burns had little knowledge about Nigeria.
- We study our culture because most of our social institutions like marriage institution, chieftaincy institution etc. are in themselves the culture of our people. Cultural studies of various ethnic groups therefore enhance our knowledge of these social institutions in our society.
- We study our culture because of the immense cultural values of our ancient culture in works of art. For example, that Nigeria is rich in ancient culture is evidenced by various works of arts of Nok culture dating 500 BC - 200 AD; Igbo Ukwu culture 9th - 10th century, Ife art 12th - 15th century; Owo art 15th century; Benin court art 15 - 19th century. The Benin, Ife and Igbo-Ukwu Bronzes are ranked among the best of their kind in the world.

They serve as material evidence of Nigeria's pride and as the seat of some ancient African civilization.

- We study our culture because it is through our cultural studies that we come to live by it and practise it. For example, we come to live by our culture when we are socialized into it and we come to practise it when we engage in such things like painting, carving, drawing, drama, dance etc. There is therefore no doubt that Nigerians today gain culturally from the innate cultural ingenuity of her people. Nigeria has, for the past two decades, produced world acclaimed painters, dramatists and writers.
- We study our culture because it is through it that we can acquire knowledge of different cultural values of many ethnic groups in Nigeria. This enables us as planners to identify areas of need or otherwise of different tribal groups as well as to identify areas of cultural uniformities and diversities of our people.
- We study our culture because it is through it that we come to learn of our indigenous language, dance, music, arts and tradition of our people. By this learning, we are kept alive of what people think, do and have as members of a society.
- We study our culture because it helps us to understand our society, its norms and values as well as its productive resources and how they can be harnessed and promoted to the greater good of our people.
- The study of our culture enables us to equip ourselves with the knowledge and techniques that help us to survive both physically and socially, and to master and control, in so far it is possible, the world around us.

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed the concept of culture and explained that culture is the total way of life of a people. We also examined some characteristics of culture such as relatively, dynamism, adaptability, etc. Furthermore, We discussed main influences that affect the culture of the people such as transactional flow, functional independence and congruency of value. Finally, we highlighted the importance of studying the Nigerian Culture.

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Study Session 3

Historical Overview of Nigeria

Introduction

In this Study Session, we will present an overview of Nigeria state. In doing this, emphasis will be placed on the geography, economy, demography, environment, religion, government and politics of this country.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Session, you should be able to:

- 3.1 *discuss* historical view of Nigeria
- 3.2 *explain* the economy of Nigeria
- 3.3 *explain* the geography and demography of Nigeria
- 3.4 *differentiate* the government and politics
- 3.5 *describe* the concept of Nigerian culture



3.1 Brief History of Nigeria

Nigeria is located in the western part of Africa on the Gulf of Guinea and has a total area of 923,768 km² (356,669 mi²), making it the world's 32nd-largest country (after Tanzania). It shares a 4047 km (2515-mile) border with Benin (773 km), Niger (1497 km), Chad (87 km), Cameroon (1690 km), and has a coastline of at least 853 km.

The highest point in Nigeria is Chappal Waddi at 2,419 m (7,936 feet). Nigeria has a varied landscape. From the Obudu Hills in the southeast through the beaches in the south, the rainforest, the Lagos estuary and savanna in the middle and southwest of the country and the Sahel to the encroaching Sahara in the extreme north. Nigeria's main rivers are the River Niger and the River Benue, which converge and empty into the Niger Delta Niger the world's largest river delta. Nigeria is also an important center for biodiversity. It is widely believed that the areas surrounding Calabar, Cross River State, contain the world's largest diversity of butterflies. The drill monkey is only found in the wild in southeast, neighboring Cameroon.

Nigeria, officially named the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is a country in West Africa and the most populous country in Africa. Nigeria shares land borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. Its coast lies on the Gulf of Guinea, part of the Atlantic Ocean, in the south. Since 1991, its capital has been the

centrally-located city of Abuja; previously, the Nigeria government had its headquarters in the coastal city of Lagos.

The people of Nigeria have an extensive history, and archaeological evidence shows that human habitation of the area dates back to at least 9000 BC. The Benue-Cross River area is thought to be the original homeland of the Bantu migrants who spread across most of central and southern Africa in waves between the 1st millennium BC and the 2nd millennium AD.

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from the United Kingdom, and now consists of 36 states and the federal capital territory. Nigeria re-achieved democracy in 1999 after a sixteen-year interruption; from 1966 until 1999, Nigeria had been ruled (except the short-lived second republic, 1979-1983) by military dictators who seized power in coups d'état and counter-coups during the Nigeria military juntas of 1966- 1979 and 1983- 1998.

Newly independent Nigeria's government was a coalition of conservative parties: the Nigerian People's Congress (NPC), a party dominated by Northerners and those of the Islamic faith, and the Igbo and Christian dominated National Council Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) led by Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe, who became Nigeria's maiden Governor-General in 1960. Forming the opposition was the comparatively liberal Action Group (AG), which was largely dominated by Yorubas and led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

An imbalance was created in the polity by the result of the 1961 plebiscite. Southern Cameroon opted to join the Republic of Cameroon, while northern Cameroon chose to remain in Nigeria. The northern part of the country is now far larger than the southern part. The nation parted with its British legacy in 1963 by declaring itself a Federal Republic, with Azikiwe as the first president. When elections were held in 1965, the AG was outmaneuvered for control of Nigeria's Western Region by the Nigerian National Democratic Party, an amalgamation of conservative Yoruba elements backed heavily by the Federal Government amid dubious electoral circumstances. This left the Igbo NCNC to coalesce with the remnants of the AG in a weak progressive alliance.

This disequilibrium and perceived corruption of the electoral and political process led in 1966 to several back-to-back military coups. The first coup was in January and led by a collection of young leftists under Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna & Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu. It was partially successful - the coupists overthrew the embattled government but could not install their choice, jailed opposition leader Chief Obafemi Awolowo. General Johnson Aguiyi-ironsi, who was the head of the army then was invited by the rump of the Balewa regime to take over the affairs of the country as head of state. This coup was counter-acted by another successful plot, supported primarily by Northern military officers and Northerners who favored the NPC, and it was engineered by Northern officers, which allowed Lt Colonel Yakubu Gowon to become head of state. This sequence of events led to an increase in ethnic tension and violence. The second coup, which was engineered by Northern elements in the army, and mostly motivated by ethnic and religious reasons, was a bloodbath of both military officers and civilians, especially those of Igbo extraction.

The violence against Igbos increased their desire for autonomy and protection from the military's wrath. By May 1967, the Eastern Region had declared itself an independent state called the Republic of Biafra under the leadership Lt Colonel Emeka Ojukwu in line with the wishes of the people. The Nigerian side attacked Biafra on July 6, 1967 at Garkem signaling the beginning of the 30-month war that ended on January 1970. Following the war, Nigeria somewhat became more mired in ethnic strife, as the defeated southeast and indeed southern Nigeria was now conquered territory for the federal military regime, which changed heads of state twice as army officers staged a bloodless coup against Gowon and enthroned Murtala Mohammed who was replaced later by Olusegun Obasanjo after the former was assassinated.

During the oil boom of the 1970s, Nigeria joined OPEC and billions of dollars was generated by the Federal Government from oil production in the Niger Delta. However, increasing corruption and graft at all levels of government squandered most of these earnings. The Northern military clique benefitted immensely from the oil boom to the detriment of the Nigerian people and economy. As oil revenues fueled the rise of federal subventions to states and precariously to individuals, the Federal Government soon became the center of political struggle as well as the threshold of power in the country. As oil production and revenue rose, the Nigerian government created a dangerous situation as it became increasingly dependent on oil revenues and the international commodity markets for budgetary and economic concerns eschewing economic stability. That spelt doom to federalism in Nigeria.

Beginning in 1979, Nigerians participated in a brief return to democracy, when Obasanjo transferred power to the civilian regime of Shehu Shagari. The Shagari government was viewed as corrupt and incompetent by virtually all sectors of Nigerian society, so when the regime was overthrown by the military coup of Mohammadu Buhari shortly after the regime's fraudulent re-election in 1984, it was generally viewed as a positive development by most of the population. Buhari promised major reforms but his government fared little better than its predecessor, and his regime was overthrown in yet another military coup in 1985.

The new Head of State, Ibrahim Babangida, promptly declared himself President and Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces and the ruling Supreme Military Council and also set 1990 as the official deadline for a return to democratic governance. Babangida's tenure was marked by a flurry of political activities. He instituted the International Monetary Fund's Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to aid in the process of repayment of the country's crushing international debt, which much of the federal revenue was dedicated to servicing. He also inflamed religious tensions in the nation and particularly the South by enrolling Nigeria in the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

After Babangida survived an abortive coup, he pushed forward the promised return, to democracy and the new period was to be 1992. When free and fair elections were finally held on the 12th of June, 1993, Babangida declared that the results showing a presidential victory for MKO Abiola null and void, and this cancellation sparked off mass civilian violence in protest which effectively shut down the country for weeks and forced Babangida to keep his shaky promise to relinquish

office to a civilian-run government. Babangida's regime is adjudged to be at the apogee of corruption in the history of the nation as it was during his time that corruption became officially diluted in Nigeria.

Babangida's caretaker regime, headed by Ernest Shonekan, survived only until late 1993 when General Sani Abacha took power in another military coup. Abacha proved to be perhaps Nigeria's most brutal ruler and employed violence on a widescale to suppress the continuing pandemic of civilian unrest. Abacha was not only brutal but very corrupt. While Babaginda himself as well as his family, fraud etc. stole government money. Abacha made corruption a family affair. Money had been found in various Banks in Western Europe, which had been traced to him. He avoided coup plots by bribing army generals. Several hundred millions dollars in accounts traced to him were unearthed in 1999.

The regime of Abacha came to an end in 1998, when the dictator was found dead amid dubious circumstances. Abacha's death yielded an opportunity for return to civilian rule, and Nigeria elected Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba and former military Head of State, as the new President. Although the elections which brought Obasanjo to power in 1999 and again in 2003 were condemned as unfree and unfair, Nigeria has shown marked improvements in attempts to tackle government corruption and to hasten development. While Obasanjo showed willingness to fight corruption, he was accused by others of the same. Umaru Yar'Adua, of the People's Democratic Party was elected President in the general elections of 2007, but later died on the May 5, 2010. Ethnic violence over the oil-producing Niger Delta region, inter-religious relations and inadequate infrastructure are current issues in the country.

Table 3.1: States in Nigeria and Dominant Ethnic groups in them

State	Language(s) & Ethnic Groups
Abia	Igbo & Ibibio
Adamawa	Hausa, Fulfulde, Bachama, Mbula, Gude, Lunguda, Kanakuru, Yandand, Batta, Highi, Kilba, Bura, Yungur
Akwa-Ibom	Ibibio, Annang, Oron, Mbe, Okobo, HuMbuno, Eket, Andoni (Obolo)
Anambra	Igbo
Bauchi ,	Hausa, Fulfulde
Bayelsa	Kolokuma (Izon)
Benue	Tiv, Idoma, Igede

Borno	Hausa, Kanuri, Fulfulde, Margi, Schwa, Babur
Cross River	Efik, Ejagham, Bekwara
Delta	Enuani, Ika, Ndokwa, Okpe, Urhobo, Isekiri, Isoko, Ijo, Delta Pidgin, Igbo
Ebonyi	
Edo	Igbo
Ekiti	Edo (Bini), Esan, Esako, Okpameri, Owan
Enugu	
Gombe	Yoruba
Imo	Igbo
Jigawa	
Kaduna	Hausa
Kano	Igbo
Katsina	
Kebbi	Hausa
Kogi	Hausa
Kwara	Hausa
Lagos	Hausa Hausa, Fulfulde, (Zabaramanchi)
Nassarawa	Yoruba, Ebira, Bassa, Igala, Igbira-Koto, Basankomo, (Kakanda, Oworo)
Niger	
Ogun	Yoruba, Nupe, Baruteen, (Hausa)
Ondo	
Osun	Yoruba, Egun
Oyo	Hausa

Plateau	Hausa, Nupe, Gbagi, (Gwari), Kambari, Kamuku Yoruba
Rivers	Yoruba, Egberi (a dialect of Izon/Ijaw)
Sokoto	Yoruba
Taraba	Yoruba
Yobe	Yoruba
Zamfara	Berom, Ngas, Tarok, Mwashavul, Goemai, Eggon, Borghana (Hausa) (Fulfulde in preaching) Ikwere, Kalabari, Kana, Port Harcourt Pidgin (Special English) Hausa, Fulfulde Hausa, Fulfulde, Mumuye, Junkun Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri, Bolewa, Badenchi, Karikari Hausa

Source*: Multilingualism in Nigeria: The Example of Rivers State by Ethelbert E. Kari; Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Tokyo, Japan.

A Paper Presented at the Seminar on Multilingual Situation and Related Local Cultures in Asia and Africa Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, 25 March, 2002.

3.2 Demography of Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, but how populous Nigeria is exactly is still a subject of speculation. The United Nations estimates that the population in 2004 was at 131,530,000, with the population distributed as 48.3% urban and 51.7% rural and population density at 139 people per square km. National census results in the past few decades have been disputed. The results of the most recent census by the Federal Government of Nigeria, released on 29th December, 2006, gave a population figure of 140,003,542. The only breakdown available was Total: 140,003,542; Men: 71,709,859 Women: 68,293,083.

According to the United Nations, Nigeria has been undergoing explosive population growth and one of the highest growth and fertility rates in the world. By their projections, Nigeria will be one of the countries in the world that will account for most of the world's total population increase by 2050. According to current data, one out of every four Africans is Nigerian. Presently, Nigeria is the ninth most populous country in the world, and even conservative estimates conclude that more than 20% of the world's black population lives in Nigeria. 2006 estimates claim 42.3% of the population is between 0-14 years of age, while 54.6% is between 15-65; the birth rate is significantly higher than the death rate, at 40.4 and 16.9 per 1000 people respectively.

Health, health care, and general living conditions in Nigeria are poor. Life expectancy is 47 years (average male/female) and just over half the population has access to potable water and appropriate sanitation; the percentage of children under five has gone up rather than down between 1990 and 2003, and infant mortality is 97.1 deaths per 1000 live births. HIV/ AIDS rate in Nigeria is much lower compared to the other African nations, such as Kenya or South Africa whose prevalence (percentage) rates are in the double digits. Nigeria, like many developing countries, also suffers from a polio crisis as well as periodic outbreaks of cholera, malaria, and sleeping sickness. As at 2004, there has been a vaccination drive, spearheaded by the WHO, to combat polio and malaria. However, the commendable effort to combat polio and malaria have been met with controversy in some regions.

Education is also in a state of neglect, though after the oil boom on the oil price in the early 1970s, tertiary education was improved so it would reach every subregion of Nigeria. Education is provided free by the government, but the attendance rate for secondary education is only 29% (average male is 32% and female is 27%). The education system has been described as "dysfunctional" largely due to decaying institutional infrastructure. 68% of the population is literate, and the rate for men (75.7%) is higher than that for women (60.6%).

3.3 Politics of Nigeria's Polity

Nigeria is a Federal Republic modelled after the United States, with executive power exercised by the president and with overtones of the Westminster system in the composition and management of the upper and lower houses of the bicameral legislature.

The current president of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, replaced the late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua who was elected in 2007 and died on the 5th of May, 2010. The president presides as both Head of State and Head of Government and is elected by popular vote to a maximum of two four-year terms. The president's power is checked by a Senate and a House of Representatives, which are combined in a bicameral body called the National Assembly. The Senate is a 109-seat body with three members from each state and one from the capital region of Abuja; members are elected by popular vote to a four-year term. The House contains 360 seats and the number of seats per state is determined by population.

Ethnocentrism, tribalism, sectarianism (especially religious), and prebendalism have played a visible role in Nigerian politics both prior to and after Nigeria's independence in 1960. Kin-selective altruism has made its way into Nigerian politics and has spurred various attempts by tribalists to concentrate Federal power to a particular region of their interests. Nationalism has also led to active secessionist movements, such as MASSOB, Nationalist movements such as Oodua Peoples Congress, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and a civil war. Nigeria's three largest ethnic groups have maintained historical preeminence in Nigerian politics; competition amongst these three groups, the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, has fueled corruption and graft.

Due to the above issues, Nigeria's current political parties are declaredly pan-national and irreligious in character (though this does not preclude the continuing preeminence of the dominant ethnicities). The major political parties at present include the ruling People's Democratic Party of Nigeria which maintains 223 seats in the House and 76 in the Senate (61.9% and 69.7% respectively) and is led by the current President Umaru Musa Yar'dua; the opposition All Nigeria People's Party under the leadership of Muhammadu Bahuri has 96 House seats and 27 in the Senate (26.6% and 24.7%). There are also about twenty other minor opposition parties registered. The outgoing president, Olusegun Obasanjo, acknowledged fraud and other electoral "lapses" but said the result reflected opinion polls. In a national television address, he added that if Nigerians did not like the victory of his handpicked successor they would have an opportunity to vote again in four years.

Like in many other African societies, prebendalism and extremely excessive corruption continue to constitute major challenges to Nigeria, as vote rigging and other means of coercion are practiced by all major parties in order to remain competitive. In 1983, it was adjudged by the policy institute at Kuru that only the 1959 and 1979 elections witnessed minimal rigging.

There are four distinct systems of law in Nigeria:

- English Law, which is derived from its colonial past with Britain;
- Common law, a development of its post colonial independence;
- Customary law, which is derived from indigenous traditional norms and practices;
- Sharia law, used only in the predominantly Muslim north of the country. An Islamic legal system, which had been used long before the colonial administration in Nigeria but recently politicised and spearheaded in Zamfara in late 1999, with eleven

other states following suit. These states are Kano, Katsina, Niger, Bauchi, Borno, Kaduna, Gombe, Sokoto, Jigawa, Yobe, and Kebbi.

The country has a judicial branch, the highest court of which is the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Nigeria is divided into thirty-six states and one Federal Capital Territory. The states in Nigeria are further subdivided into 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The present plethora of states, which have grown out of only three regions at independence, reflect the country's tumultuous history and the difficulties of managing such a heterogeneous national entity at all levels of government.



Military Activity

Nigeria's military consists of an army, a navy, and an air force. The minimum age for military service is eighteen. The Nigerian military is the largest and best-equipped military in West Africa. As a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria is the major contributor to the organization's military branch, known as ECOMOG. Nigerian troops made up the vast majority of the ECOMOG forces deployed to restore peace following civil wars in Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone. Public dissatisfaction with Nigeria's participation in the Sierra Leonean crisis was extremely high due to high casualty rates among the Nigerian soldiers. Nigeria pledged to pull out of Sierra Leone in 1999, prompting the United Nations to send in peacekeepers in an attempt to stem the violence. While the foreign forces in Sierra Leone are now under the mandate of the United Nations, Nigerian troops still make up the majority of the peacekeepers.

Nigeria has a long-running border dispute with Cameroon over the mineral-rich Bakassi Peninsula, and the two nations have engaged in a series of cross-boarder skirmishes. Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad also have a long-running border dispute over territory in the Lake Chad region, which also has led to some fighting across the borders

3.3.1 Government

Nigeria is a republic, with the president acting as both head of state and head of government. Nigeria has had a long history of *coups d'états*, military rule, and dictatorship. However, this pattern was broken on 29 May 1999 as Nigeria's former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, took office following popular elections. Under the current constitution, presidential elections are to be held every four years, with no president serving more than two terms in office. The Nigerian legislature consists of two houses: a Senate and a House of Representatives. All legislators are elected to four-year terms. Nigeria's judicial branch is headed by a Supreme Court, whose members were appointed by the Provisional Ruling Council, which ruled Nigeria during its recent transition to democracy. All Nigerians over eighteen are eligible to vote. Currently, the President is Dr Goodluck Jonathan who replaced Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'dua elected in 2007 but died on May 5, 2010.

3.3.2 Leadership and Political Officials

A wealthy political elite dominates political life in Nigeria. The relationship between the political elite and ordinary Nigerians is not unlike that between nobles and commoners. Nigerian leaders, whether as

members of a military regime or one of Nigeria's short-lived civilian governments, have a history of doing whatever it takes to stay in power and to hold on to the wealth that this power has given them.

Rural Nigerians tend to accept this noble-peasant system of politics. Low levels of education and literacy mean that many people in rural areas are not fully aware of the political process or how to affect it. Their relative isolation from the rest of the country means that many do not even think of politics. There is a common feeling in many rural areas that the average person cannot affect the politics of the country, so there is no reason to try.

Urban Nigerians tend to be much more vocal in their support of, or opposition to, their leaders. Urban problems of housing, unemployment, health care, sanitation, and traffic tend to mobilize people into political action and public displays of dissatisfaction.

Political parties were outlawed under the Abacha regime, and only came back into being after his death. As of the 1999 presidential elections, there were three main political parties in Nigeria: the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples Party (APP), and the Alliance for Democracy (AD). The PDP has the party of President Obasanjo. It grew out of support for opposition leaders who were imprisoned by the military government in the early 1990s. The PDP is widely believed to have received heavy financial assistance from the military during the 1999 elections. The APP was led by politicians who had close ties with the Abacha regime. The AD is a party led by followers of the late Moshood Abiola, the Yoruba politician, who won the general elections in 1993, only to be sent to prison by the military regime.

3.4 An Overview of Nigerian Economy

The currency unit of Nigeria is the Nigerian Naira. Years of military rule, corruption, and mismanagement have hampered economic activity and output in Nigeria and continue to do so, despite the restoration of democracy and subsequent economic reforms. Petroleum plays a major role in the Nigerian economy, accounting for 40% of the GDP. It is the 12th largest producer of petroleum in the world and the 8th largest exporter, and has the 10th largest proven reserves and the country was also a founding member of OPEC. However, due to crumbling infrastructure, corruption, and on-going civil strife in the Niger Delta- its main oil producing region- oil production and export in Nigeria is below 100% capacity.

Mineral resources that are present in Nigeria but not yet fully exploited are coal and tin. Other natural resources in the country include iron ore, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, and arable land. Despite huge deposits of these natural resources, the mining industry in Nigeria is almost non-existent. About 60% of Nigerians are employed in the agricultural sector. Agriculture used to be the principal foreign exchange earner of Nigeria. Perhaps, one of the problems created by the discovery of oil was the decline of agricultural sector. So tragic presently is this neglect that Nigeria, which in the 1960s grew 98% of his own food and was a net food exporter, now imports much of the same cash crops it was formerly famous for as the biggest exporter. In the past Nigeria was such as noted

for agricultural products, include groundnuts, palm oil, cocoa, coconut, citrus fruits, maize, pearl millet, cassava, yams and sugar cane. It also had a booming leather and textile industry, with industries located in Kano, Abeokuta, Onitsha, and Lagos.

Like many Third World nations, Nigeria has accumulated a significant foreign debt. Many of the projects financed by these debts were inefficiently, executed, bedevilled by corruption or failed to live up to expectations. Nigeria defaulted on its debt as arrears and penalty interest accumulated and increased the size of the debt. However, after a long campaign by the Nigerian authorities, in October 2005, Nigeria and its Paris Club creditors reached an agreement that would see Nigeria's debt reduced by approximately 60%. Nigeria will use part of its oil windfall to pay the residual 40%. This deal will free up at least \$1.15 billion annually for poverty reduction programmes. As of April 2006, Nigeria became the first African country to fully pay off her debt (estimated \$30billion) owed to the Paris Club.

Nigeria also has significant production and manufacturing facilities, such as factories for Peugeot, the French car maker, Bedford the English truck manufacturer, now a subsidiary of General Motors, and also manufactures t-shirts and processed food. On the negative side, Nigeria is also the home of the infamous Advance Fee Fraud or 419 scam, which nets the country a significant amount of money.

Until the past few decades, Nigeria had been self-sufficient in producing enough food to feed the population. However, as petroleum production and industry began to boom in Nigeria, much of the national resources were concentrated on the new industries at the expense of agriculture. The oil-rich economy led to a major economic boom for Nigeria during the 1970s, transforming the poor African country into the thirtieth richest country in the world. However, falling oil prices, severe corruption, political instability, and economic mismanagement since then have left Nigeria no better off today than it was at independence.

Hint

More than 50 percent of Nigeria's population works in the agriculture sector. Most farmers engage in subsistence farming, producing only what they eat themselves or sell locally. Very few agricultural products are produced for export.

Since the restoration of civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has begun to make strides in economic reform. While hopes are high for a strong economic transformation, high unemployment, high inflation, and more than a third of the population living under the poverty line indicate it will be a long and difficult road.

3.5 Overview of the Culture of Nigeria

Nigeria's multiple ethnic groups shape the Culture of Nigeria. The country has over 374 different languages and cultures. The three largest are the Hausa –Fulani who are predominant in the north; the Igbo who are predominant in the southeast, and the Yoruba who are predominant in the southwest.

The Benin tribes are predominant in the region between Yorubaland and the Niger Delta. Eighty percent of the Benins tend to be Christian, while the remaining 20 percent worship deities called Ogu. These are followed by the Ibibio/ Annang/ Efik people of the coastal southeastern Nigeria and the Ijaw of the Niger Delta.

The rest of Nigeria's ethnic groups (sometimes called "mini-minorities") are found all over the country but especially in the densely populated south. The Hausa tend to be Muslim's while the Igbo tend to be Christians. The Efik, Ibibio, Annang people are mainly Christians as Christianity and Western system entered Nigeria through their capital city Calabar. The practitioners of both Christianity and Islam are found among the Yoruba. Indigenous religious practices remain important, especially in the south, and are often blended with Christian beliefs.

Nigeria has more than 374 ethnic groups, with varying languages and customs, creating a country of rich ethnic diversity. The largest ethnic groups are the Fulani/Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, accounting for 68% of population, while the Edo, Ijaw (10%), Kanuri, Ibibio, Nupe and Tiv, comprise 27%; other minorities make up the remaining 7 percent. The middle belt of Nigeria is known for its diversity of ethnic groups, including the Pyem, Goemai, and Kofyar.

3.5.1 Aspects of Cultures of Nigeria

Language, Literature and Art

The number of languages currently estimated and catalogued in Nigeria is 521. This number includes 510 living languages, two second languages without native speakers and 9 extinct languages. In some areas of Nigeria, ethnic groups speak more than one language. The official language of Nigeria, English, was chosen to facilitate the cultural and linguistic unity of the country. The choice of English as the official language was partially related to the fact that a part of Nigerian population spoke English as a result of British colonization that ended in 1960.

The major languages spoken in Nigeria represent three major families of African languages - the majority are Niger- Congo languages, such as Yoruba, Igbo. The Hausa language is Afro-Asiatic and Kanuri spoken in the northeast, primarily Borno State, is a member of the Nilo- Saharan family. Even though most ethnic groups prefer to communicate in their own languages, English, being the official language, is widely used for education, business transactions and for official purposes. English as a first language, however, remains an exclusive preserve of a small minority of the country's urban elite, and is not spoken at all in some rural areas. With the majority of Nigeria's populace in the rural areas, the major languages of communication in the country remain indigenous languages. Some of the largest of these, notably Yoruba and Igbo, have derived standardized languages from a number of different dialects and are widely spoken by those ethnic groups. Hausa is a lingua franca throughout much of West Africa, and serves this function in Northern Nigeria as well, particularly amongst the Muslim population. Nigerian Pidgin English, often known simply as "Pidgin" or 'Broken' (Broken English), is also as a popular lingua franca, though with varying regional influences on dialect and slang. The pidgin English or Nigerian English is

widely spoken within the Niger Delta regions, predominately in Warri, Sapele, Port-Harcourt, Agenebode, Benin City, etc. The Yoruba language has the most varied forms and dialects. This variation is usually based on the different towns or as it were Kingdoms that existed before the advent of Europeans. They are as diverse as the number of city states that there are. Examples are Awori, Ondo/Ekiti, Egba/Yewa, Oyo/Ibadan, Ijebu, Ijesa/Ife.

Nigeria has a rich literary history, and Nigerians have authored many influential works of post-colonial literature in the English language. Nigeria's best-known writers are Wole Soyinka, the first African Nobel Laureate in Literature, and Chinua Achebe, the legendary writer best known for the novel, *Things Fall Apart*.

Nigerian art traditionally served a social or religious purpose and did not exist for the sake of art per se. For example, dance was used to teach or to fulfill some ritualistic goal. Sculpture was used in blessings, in healing rituals, or to ward off bad luck. With increasing modernization, however, Nigerian art is becoming less oriented to a particular purpose. In some cases, Nigerians have abandoned whole forms of art because they no longer served a purpose. For example, the elaborate tombstones once widely produced by the Ibibio are becoming increasingly rare as Western-style cemeteries are replacing traditional burial grounds.

The government has recognized this decline in Nigerian art. In an attempt to promote Nigerian nationalism through art, it has launched some programs, such as the All-Nigeria Festival of Arts, to revitalize the Nigerian art world. Many wealthy Nigerians who are looking to recapture their roots, as well as Western tourists and collectors looking for an African art experience, are willing to spend money on Nigerian art. This has led to a slight revival of the art industry.

Literature

Nigeria has a long and incredibly rich literary history. Nigerians are traditionally storytellers. Much of precolonial history in Nigeria is the result of stories handed down from generation to generation. With colonization and the introduction of reading, writing, and the English language, Nigerian storytellers soon began sharing their talents with a worldwide audience. Perhaps, Nigeria's most famous writer is Wole Soyinka, who won the 1986 Nobel Prize for literature. His most famous works include *A Dance of the Forests*, *The Swamp Dwellers*, and *The Lion and the Jewel*. Other famous Nigerian authors include Chinua Achebe, whose *Things Fall Apart* is a favorite among Western schools as an example of the problems inflicted on African societies during colonisation, and Ben Okri, whose novel *The Famished Road* won Britain's 1991 Booker Prize.

Graphic Arts

Nigeria is famous for its sculpture. The bronze work of the ancient cities of Ife and Benin can be found in museums all over the world. These areas in southern Nigeria still produce large amounts of bronze castings. Woodcarvings and terra-cotta sculptures also are popular.

Nigerians are expert dyers, weavers, and tailors. They produce massive quantities of beautiful, rich, and colorful textiles. However, the majority of these are sold primarily for everyday wear and not as examples of art.

Performance Arts

Dance and music are perhaps the two most vibrant forms of Nigerian art. Nigerian music is dependent on strong rhythms supplied by countless drums and percussion instruments. Highlife is a type of music heavily influenced by Western culture. It sounds like an Africanised version of American big band or ballroom music. Afro-beat combines African rhythms and melodies with jazz and soul. One of Nigeria's best-known Afro-beat artists, Fela Kuti, was heavily influenced by American artists, such as James Brown. Palm wine music gets its name from the palm wine saloons where it is traditionally heard. Its fast-paced, frenzied rhythms reflect the rambunctious nature of many palm wine bars. Perhaps, Nigeria's most popular form of music is juju, which uses traditional drums and percussion instruments to back up vocals and complicated guitar work. Popular juju artists include King Sunny Ade, Ebenezer Obey, and Shina Peters.

Religion

Nigeria has a variety of religions, which tend to vary regionally. This situation accentuates regional and ethnic distinctions and has often been seen as a source of sectarian conflict amongst the population. The three main religions are Islam, Christianity, and Animism. Animist religious practices include traditional religious belief systems, such as Orishas and Igbo mythology. Christianity is concentrated in the southeast part of the country, while Islam dominates in the north of the country; some northern states have incorporated Sharia law into their previously secular legal systems, provoking controversies from various quarters. Kano State of Nigeria has sought to make Sharia law superior to the constitution.

Architecture and Urbanism

With the influx of oil revenue and foreigners, Nigerian cities have grown to resemble many Western urban centers. Lagos, for example, is a massive, overcrowded city filled with traffic jams, movie theaters, department stores, restaurants, and supermarkets. Because most Nigerian cities grew out of much older towns, very little urban planning was used as the cities expanded. Streets are laid out in a confusing and often maze-like fashion, adding to the chaos for pedestrians and traffic. The influx of people into urban areas has put a strain on many services. Power cuts and disruptions of telephone services are not uncommon.

Nigerian architecture is as diverse as its people. In rural areas, houses often are designed to accommodate the environment in which the people live. The Ijo live in the Niger Delta region, where dry land is very scarce. To compensate for this, many Ijo homes are built on stilts over creeks and swamps, with travel between them done by boats. The houses are made of wood and bamboo and topped with a roof made of fronds from raffia palms. The houses are very airy, to allow heat and the smoke from cooking fires to escape easily.

Igbo houses tend to be made of a bamboo frame held together with vines and mud and covered with banana leaves. They often blend into the surrounding forest and can be easily missed if you don't know where to look. Men and women traditionally live in separate houses.

Much of the architecture in the north is heavily influenced by Muslim culture. Homes are typically geometric, mud-walled structures, often with

Muslim markings and decorations. The Hausa build large, walled compounds housing several smaller huts. The entryway into the compound is via a large hut built into the wall of the compound. This is the hut of the father or head male figure in the compound.

Food

Food in Daily Life

Western influences, especially in urban centers, have transformed Nigerian eating habits in many ways. City dwellers are familiar with the canned, frozen, and prepackaged foods found in most Western-style supermarkets. Foreign restaurants also are common in larger cities. However, supermarkets and restaurants often are too expensive for the average Nigerian; thus only the wealthy can afford to eat like Westerners. Most urban Nigerians seem to combine traditional cuisine with a little of Western-style foods and conveniences. Rural Nigerians tend to stick more to traditional foods and preparation techniques.

Food in Nigeria is traditionally eaten by hand. However, with the growing influence of Western culture, forks, spoons, and knives are becoming more common, even in remote villages. Whether people eat with their hand or a utensil, it is considered dirty and rude to eat using the left hand.

While the ingredients in traditional plates vary from region to region, most Nigerian cuisine tends to be based around a few staple foods accompanied by a stew. In the south, crops such as corn, yams, and sweet potatoes form the base of the diet. These vegetables are often pounded into a thick, sticky dough or paste. This is often served with a palm oilbased stew made with chicken, beef, goat, tomatoes, okra, onions, bitter leaves, or whatever meats and vegetables might be on hand. Fruits such as papaya, pineapples, coconuts, oranges, mangoes, and bananas also are very common in the tropical south.

In the north, grains such as millet, sorghum, and corn are boiled into a porridge-like dish that forms the basis of the diet. This is served with an oilbased soup usually flavored with onions, okra, and tomatoes. Sometimes, meat is included, though among the Hausa, it is often reserved for special occasions. Thanks to the Fulani cattle herders, fresh milk and yogurt are common even though there may not be refrigerated.

Alcohol is very popular in the south but less so in the north, where there is a heavy Islamic influence. Perhaps, the most popular form of alcohol is palm wine, a tart alcoholic drink that comes from palm trees. Palm wine is often distilled further to make a strong, ginlike liquor. Nigerian breweries also produce several kinds of beer and liquor.

Food Customs at Ceremonial Occasions

Food plays a central role in the rituals of virtually all ethnic groups in Nigeria. Special ceremonies would not be complete without participants sharing in a meal. Normally, it is considered rude not to invite guests to share in a meal when they visit; it is even more so if the visitors were invited to attend a special event such as a marriage or a naming ceremony.

Cuisine

Nigerian cuisine, like West African cuisine in general, is known for its richness and variety. Many different spices, herbs and flavourings are

used in conjunction with palm oil or groundnut oil to create deeply-flavoured sauces and soups often made very hot with chilli peppers. Nigerian feasts are colourful and lavish, while aromatic market and roadside snacks cooked on barbecues or fried in oil are plentiful and varied.

Land Tenure and Property

While the Federal Government of Nigeria has the legal right to allocate land as it sees fit, land tenure remains largely a local issue. Most local governments follow traditional land tenure customs in their areas. For example, in Hausa society, title to land is not an absolute right. While communities and officials will honor long-standing hereditary rights to areas of land traditionally claimed by a given family, misused or abandoned land may be re-apportioned for better use. Land can also be bought, sold, or rented. In the west, the Yoruba kings historically held all the land in trust, and therefore also had a say in how it was used for the good of the community. This has given local governments in modern times a freer hand in settling land disputes.

Traditionally, only men hold land, but as the wealth structure continues to change and develop in Nigeria, it would not be unheard of for a wealthy woman to purchase land for herself.

3.5.2 Marriage, Family, and Kinship

Marriage

There are three types of marriage in Nigeria today: religious marriage, civil marriage, and traditional marriage. A Nigerian couple may decide to take part in one or all of these marriages. Religious marriages, usually Christian or Muslim, are conducted according to the norms of the respective religious teachings and take place in a church or a mosque. Christian males are allowed only one wife, while Muslim men can take up to four wives. Civil official weddings take place in a government registry office. Men are allowed only one wife under a civil wedding, regardless of religion. Traditional marriages are usually held at the wife's house and are performed according to the customs of the ethnic group involved. Most ethnic groups traditionally allow more than one wife.

Depending on whom you ask, polygamy has both advantages and disadvantages in Nigerian society. Some Nigerians see polygamy as a divisive force in the family, often pitting one wife against another. Others see polygamy as a unifying factor, creating a built-in support system that allows wives to work as a team.

While Western ways of courtship and marriage are not unheard of, the power of traditional values and the strong influence of the family mean that traditional ways are usually followed, even in the cities and among the elite. According to old customs, women did not have much choice of whom they married, though the numbers of arranged marriages are declining. It is also not uncommon for women to marry in their teens, often to a much older man. In instances where there are already one or more wives, it is the first wife's responsibility to look after the newest wife and help her integrate into the family.

Many Nigerian ethnic groups follow the practice of offering a bride price for an intended wife. Unlike a dowry, in which the woman would bring

something of material value to the marriage, a bride price is some form of compensation the husband must pay before he can marry a wife. A bride price can take the form of money, cattle, wine, or other valuable goods paid to the woman's family, but it also can take a more subtle form. Men might contribute money to the education of an intended wife or help to establish her in a small-scale business or agricultural endeavor. This form of bride price is often incorporated as part of the wooing process. While women who leave their husbands will be welcomed back into their families, they often need a justification for breaking the marriage. If the husband is seen as having treated his wife well, he can expect to have the bride price repaid.

Though customs vary from group to group, traditional weddings are often full of dancing and lively music. There are also lots of excitement and cultural displays. For example, the Yoruba have a practice in which the bride and two or three other women come out covered from head to toe in a white shroud. It is the groom's job to identify his wife from among the shrouded women to show how well he knows his wife.

Divorce is quite common in Nigeria. Marriage is more of a social contract made to ensure the continuation of family lines rather than a union based on love and emotional connections. It is not uncommon for a husband and his wife to live in separate homes and to be extremely independent of one another. In most ethnic groups, either the man or the woman can end the marriage. If the woman leaves her husband, she will often be taken as a second or third wife by another man. If this is the case, the new husband is responsible for repaying the bride price to the former husband. Children of a divorced woman are normally accepted into the new family as well, without any problems.

Domestic Unit

The majority of Nigerian families are very large by Western standards. Many Nigerian men take more than one wife. In some ethnic groups, the greater the number of children, the greater a man's standing in the eyes of his peers. Family units of ten or more are not uncommon.

In a polygamous family, each wife is responsible for feeding and caring for her own children, though the wives often help each other when needed. The wives will also take turns feeding their husband so that the cost of his food is spread equally between or among the wives. Husbands are the authority figures in the household, and many are not used to their ideas or wishes being challenged.

In most Nigerian cultures, the father has his crops to tend to, while his wives will have their own jobs, whether they be tending the family garden, processing palm oil, or selling vegetables in the local market. Children may attend school. When they return home, the older boys will help their father with his work, while the girls and younger boys will go to their mothers.

Inheritance

For many Nigerian ethnic groups, such as the Hausa and the Igbo, inheritance is basically a male affair. Though women have a legal right to inheritance in Nigeria, they often receive nothing. This is a reflection of the forced economic independence many women live under. While their

husbands are alive, wives are often responsible for providing for themselves and their children. Little changes economically after the death of the husband. Property and wealth are usually passed on to sons, if they are old enough, or to other male relatives, such as brothers or uncles.

For the Fulani, if a man dies, his brother inherits his property and his wife. The wife usually returns to live with her family, but she may move in with her husband's brother and become his wife.

Kin Groups

While men dominate Igbo society, women play an important role in kinship. All Igbos, men and women, have close ties to their mother's clan, which usually lives in a different village. When an Igbo dies, the body is usually sent back to his mother's village to be buried with his mother's kin. If an Igbo is disgraced or cast out of his community, his mother's kin will often take him in.

For the Hausa, however, there is not much of a sense of wide-ranging kinship. Hausa society is based on the nuclear family. There is a sense of a larger extended family, including married siblings and their families, but there is little kinship beyond that. However, the idea of blood being thicker than water is very strong in Hausa society. For this reason, many Hausas will try to stretch familial relationships to the broader idea of clan or tribe to diffuse tensions between or among neighbours.

3.5.3 Socialisation

Infant Care

Newborns in Nigerian societies are regarded with pride. They represent a community's and a family's future and often are the main reason for many marriages.

Throughout Nigeria, the bond between mother and child is very strong. During the first few years of a child's life, the mother is never far away. Nigerian women place great importance on breast-feeding and the bond that it creates between mother and child. Children are often not weaned off their mother's milk until they are toddlers.

Children who are too young to walk or get around on their own are carried on their mother's backs, secured by a broad cloth that is tied around the baby and fastened at the mother's breasts. Women will often carry their children on their backs while they perform their daily chores or work in the fields.

Child Rearing and Education

When children reach the age of about four or five, they often are expected to start performing a share of the household duties. As the children get older, their responsibilities grow. Young men are expected to help their fathers in the fields or tend the livestock. Young women help with the cooking, fetch water, or do laundry. These tasks help the children learn how to become productive members of their family and community. As children, many Nigerians learn that laziness is not acceptable; everyone is expected to contribute.

While children in most Nigerian societies have responsibilities, they also are allowed enough leeway to be children. Youngsters playing with

homemade wooden dolls and trucks, or groups of boys playing soccer are common sights in any Nigerian village.

In many Nigerian ethnic groups, the education of children is a community responsibility. For example, in the Igbo culture the training of children is the work of both men and women, within the family and outside it. Neighbors often look after youngsters while parents may be busy with other chores. It is not strange to see a man disciplining a child who is not his own.

All Nigerian children are supposed to have access to a local elementary school. While the government aims to provide universal education for both boys and girls, the number of girls in class is usually much lower than the number of boys. Sending every child in a family to school can often put a lot of strain on a family. The family will lose the child's help around the house during school hours and will have to pay for uniforms and other related items. If parents are forced to send one child to school over another, many will choose to educate boys before girls.

3.5.4 Etiquette

Age is greatly respected in Nigeria. In an area where the average life expectancy is not very high, those who live into their senior years are seen as having earned special rights of respect and admiration. This is true of both men and women.

Socially, greetings are of the utmost importance. A handshake and a long list of well wishes for a counterpart's family and good health are expected when meeting someone. This is often true even if you have seen that person a short time earlier. Whether you are talking to a bank teller or visiting a friend, it is considered rude not to engage in a proper greeting before getting down to business.

Shaking hands, eating, or passing things with the left hand are unacceptable. The left hand is reserved for personal toiletries and is considered dirty.

3.5.5 Religion

Religious Beliefs

It is estimated that 50 percent of Nigerians are Muslim, 40 percent are Christian, and that the remaining 10 percent practice various indigenous religions.

While Muslims can be found in all parts of Nigeria, their strongest footholds are among the Hausa and the Yoruba. Islam in Nigeria is similar to Islam throughout the world. It is based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, which are outlined in the Qur'an.

Christianity is most prevalent in the south of Nigeria. The vast majority of Igbo are Christians, as are many Yorubas. The most popular forms of Christianity in Nigeria include Anglican, Presbyterian, American Southern Baptist, and Methodist. Also, there are large pockets of Seventh-Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Conflict with the way some missionaries administered the churches during colonial times also created several breakaway African-Christian churches. Most of these adhere to the doctrines of Western churches but

have introduced African music and tradition to their Masses. Some have even eased Christian restrictions on polygamy.

Relations between Christians and Muslims are tense in many areas. Since late 1999, numerous clashes between the two have led to thousands of deaths. The northern city of Kaduna has been the flash point for many of these riots, as local leaders discussed whether to institute Shari'a law in the region. Demonstrations by Christians against the idea soon led to violent confrontations with Muslims. The debate over Shari'a law and the violence accompanying it continue in many of the northern states.

While Islam and Christianity are the dominant religions in Nigeria, neither is completely free of influence from indigenous religions. Most people who consider themselves good Muslims or good Christians often also follow local religious practices. This makes up for perceived shortcomings in their religion. Most indigenous religions are based on a form of ancestor worship in which family members who have passed into the spirit world can influence things in the world of the living. This mixing of traditional ways with Islam has led to groups such as the Bori cult, who use spirit possession as a way to understand why people are suffering in this life. The mixing of traditional ways with Christianity has led to the development of the Aladura Church. Aladura priests follow basic Christian doctrine but also use prophecy, healing, and charms to ward off witchcraft.

Many Nigerians follow the teachings of purely indigenous religions. Most of these religions share the idea that one supreme god created the earth and its people, but has left people to decide their own paths in life. Followers of the traditional Yoruba religion believe that hundreds of spirits or minor gods have taken the place of the supreme god in influencing the daily lives of individuals. Many Yoruba slaves who were taken to the Caribbean and the Americas brought this religion with them. There it was used as the basis of Santeria and voodoo.

Because the vast majority of Igbos converted to Christianity during colonialism, few practice the traditional Igbo religion, which is based on hundreds of gods, not a single creator.

Religious Practitioners

According to Muslim and Christian traditions, officials in these religions tend to be male. For most indigenous religions, priests and priestesses are common. Traditional priests and priestesses get their power and influence from their ability to be possessed by their god or by their ability to tell the future or to heal. In the Igbo religion, men serve as priests to Igbo goddesses, and women serve as priestesses to Igbo gods. While both men and women can rank high in the Yoruba religion, women usually are among the most respected of traditional priests.

Rituals and Holy Places

Because many of the indigenous religions are based on various spirits or minor gods, each with influence over a specific area of nature, many of the traditional rituals are based on paying homage to these gods and spirits. Likewise, the area of control for a spirit also marks the places that are holy to that spirit. For example, a tribe's water spirit may have a specific pond or river designated as its holy place. The Kalabari, Okrika, and Ikwerre tribes of the Niger Delta region all have festivals in honor of

water spirits sacred to their peoples. The Yoruba hold a twenty-day Shango festival each year to honor their god of thunder. Many Igbo consider it bad luck to eat yams from the new harvest until after the annual Yam Festival, a harvest celebration held in honor of the Igbo earth goddess Ani.

Death and the Afterlife

Christian and Muslim Nigerians believe that following death, a person's soul is released and judged by God before hopefully going on to Heaven. Many traditional religions, especially those of the eastern tribes, believe in reincarnation. In these tribes, people believe that the dead will come back as a member of his or her mother's or sister's family. Many in-depth ceremonies are necessary to prepare the body before burial. For example, if the person was inflicted with some physical disability, steps would be taken to prevent it from being passed on to him in the next life. An infertile woman may have her abdomen cut open before burial or a blind man may have a salve made from special leaves placed over his eyes. Regardless of religion, Nigerians bury their dead. This is customary among Christians and Muslims, but it also is based on traditional beliefs that the body should be returned to the earth that sustained it during life.

Muslims are buried so that their heads face the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. For others, it is customary to bury a man with his head turned toward the east, so he can see the rising sun. A woman is buried facing west, so she will know when the sun sets and when it is time to prepare dinner for her husband in the next life. People also cover the body with black earth during burial because many believe that red earth will result in skin blemishes in the next life.

The ethnic groups in eastern Nigeria believe that the more music and dancing at a funeral, the better that person's chances of a successful afterlife. The size of funerals depends on the social standing of the deceased. Men are expected to set aside money that will be used to ensure they have a properly elaborate funeral. Women, children, and adolescents tend to have much less elaborate funerals.

3.6 Social Stratification

3.6.1 Classes and Castes

The highest tier of Nigerian society is made up of wealthy politicians, businessmen, and the educated elite. These people, however, make up only a tiny portion of the Nigerian population. Many Nigerians today suffer under great poverty. The lower classes tend to have little chance of breaking from the vicious cycle of poverty. Poor education, lack of opportunities, ill health, corrupt politicians, and lack of even small amounts of wealth for investment all work to keep the lower classes in their place.

In some Nigerian ethnic groups, there is also a form of caste system that treats certain members of society as pariahs. The criteria for determining who belongs to this lowest caste vary from area to area but can include being a member of a minority group, an inhabitant of a specific village, or a member of a specific family or clan. The Igbo call this lower-caste

group *Osu*. Members of the community will often discourage personal, romantic, and business contact with any member of the *Osu* group, regardless of an individual's personal merits or characteristics. Because the *Osu* are designated as untouchable, they often lack political representation, access to basic educational or business opportunities, and general social interaction. This kind of caste system is also found among the Yoruba and the Ibibios.

3.6.2 Symbols of Social Stratification

Wealth is the main symbol of social stratification in modern Nigeria, especially in urban areas. While in the past, many ethnic groups held hereditary titles and traditional lineage important; money has become the new marker of power and social status. Today, the members of the wealthy elite are easily identifiable by their fancy clothing and hairstyles and by their expensive cars and Western-style homes. Those in the elite also tend to have a much better command of English, a reflection of the higher quality of education they have received.

Wealth also can be important in marking social boundaries in rural areas. In many ethnic groups, those who have accumulated enough wealth can buy themselves local titles. For example, among the Igbo, a man or a woman who has enough money may claim the title of *Ozo*. For women, one of the requirements to become an *Ozo* is to have enough ivory, coral, and other jewelry for the ceremony. The weight of the jewelry can often exceed fifty pounds. Both men and women who want to claim the title must also finance a feast for the entire community.

3.6.3 Social Problems and Control

Perhaps, Nigeria's greatest social problem is the internal violence plaguing the nation. Inter-ethnic fighting throughout the country, religious rioting between Muslims and non-Muslims over the creation of Shari'a law (strict Islamic law) in the northern states, and political confrontations between ethnic minorities and backers of oil companies often spark bloody confrontations that can last days or even months. When violence of this type breaks out, national and state police try to control it. However, the police themselves are often accused of some of the worst violence. In some instances, curfews and martial law have been imposed in specific areas to try to stem outbreaks of unrest.

Poverty and lack of opportunity for many young people, especially in urban areas, have led to major crime. Lagos is considered one of the most dangerous cities in West Africa due to its incredibly high crime rate. The police are charged with controlling crime, but their lack of success often leads to *vigilante* justice.

In some rural areas, there are some more traditional ways of addressing social problems. In many ethnic groups, such as the Igbo and the Yoruba, men are organized into secret societies. Initiated members of these societies often dress in masks and palm leaves to masquerade as the physical embodiment of traditional spirits to help maintain social order. Through ritual dance, these men will give warnings about problems with an individual's or community's morality in a given situation. Because belief in witchcraft and evil spirits is high throughout Nigeria, this kind of public accusation can instill fear in people and cause them to mend their

ways. Members of secret societies also can act as judges or intermediaries in disputes.

3.7 Gender Roles and Statuses

3.7.1 Division of Labour by Gender

In general, labour is divided in Nigerian society along gender lines. Very few women are active in the political and professional arenas. In urban areas, increasing numbers of women are becoming involved in the professional workforce, but they are greatly outnumbered by their male counterparts. Women who do manage to gain professional employment rarely make it into the higher levels of management.

However, women in Nigeria still play significant roles in the economy, especially in rural areas. Women are often expected to earn significant portions of the family income. As a rule, men have little obligation to provide for their wives or children. Therefore, women have traditionally had to farm or sell homemade products in the local market to ensure that they could feed and clothe their children. The division of labour along gender lines even exists within industries. For example, the kinds of crops that women cultivate differ from those that men cultivate. In Igbo society, yams are seen as men's crops, while beans and cassava are seen as women's crops.

3.7.2 The Relative Status of Women and Men

Modern Nigeria is a patriarchal society. Men are dominant over women in virtually all areas. While Nigeria is a signatory to the international Convention on Equality for Women, it means little to the average Nigerian woman. Women still have fewer legal rights than men. According to Nigeria's Penal Code, men have the right to beat their wives as long as they do not cause permanent physical injury. Wives are often seen as little more than possessions and are subject to the rule of their husbands.

However, women can exercise influence in some areas. For example, in most ethnic groups, mothers and sisters have great say in the lives of their sons and brothers, respectively. The blood relationship allows these women certain leeway and influence that a wife does not have.

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study Session, we presented an overview of the Nigerian state. In doing this, emphasis was placed on areas, such as its geography, economy, demography, government and politics, military activity and religion in Nigeria. We discussed Nigeria as a multi cultural and multi religious society consisting of more than 374 ethnic groups.

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Study Session 4

The Igbo of Nigeria

Introduction

The Igbo is one of the major ethnic groups in the eastern part of Nigeria. It is indeed the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria. As a result, the ethnic group deserves to be focused as doing this; the Study Session will start with providing the historical background of the Igbos by examining their history during the pre-colonial period, and modern Nigeria.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Session, you should be able to:

- 4.1 *describe* the Igbo people.
- 4.2 *discuss* the historical origin of the Igbos.
- 4.3 *describe* the culture of Igbo people.



4.1 The Igbos

Igbo people (sometimes referred to as the Ibo(e), Ebo(e), Eboansor Heebo) are an ethnic group in West Africa. Most Igbo people live in southeastern Nigeria where they are one of the larger ethnic groups. Further populations live in other African countries, such as Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, as well as in nations out of Africa due to migration and to the effects of the Atlantic slave trade. Their exact numbers out of Africa are unknown, but today many African Americans and Afro Caribbeans are of Igbo descent.

The Igbo in Nigeria are found in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Delta, as well as in some parts of Bayelsa and River State. The Igbo language is predominant throughout these areas, although English (the national language) is also spoken. Prominent towns and cities in Igboland include Aba, Owerri, Enugu, Onitsha, Abakaliki, Afikpo, Agbor, Orlu, Okigwe, Umuahia and Asaba and Igwe Ocha, amongst others. There is a significant number of Igbo people found in other parts of Nigeria in such places as the cities of Jos and Lagos.

4.2 Origin and History of the Igbos

According to several sources, the Igbo people evolved over a long period from 4000 BC to 500 AD in Igboland through waves of migrations. There is evidence that the ancestors of the Igbo people and most of their neighbors were the proto-Kwa group. This ancient group came from the

African Great Lakes and Mountains of the Moon of East and Central Africa and settled at the old Sahara grasslands. It was the desertification of the Sahara that forced some of the Kwa people to migrate further down to the north of the Niger Benue confluence and founded Nok. Elements of the Kwa people migrated south of the Niger Benue confluence and later became the Igala, Idoma, Yoruba, Igbo, and possibly the Tiv peoples. The Kwa people's first area of settlement in Igboland was the Nsukka-Afikpo- Awka-Orlu uplands over a 5000 year period. Elements from the Orlu area migrated south, east, and northeast while elements from the Awka area migrated westwards across the Niger river and became the Igbo subgroup now known as the Anioma. The Igbo share linguistic ties with the Bini, Igala, Yoruba, and Idoma peoples.

There is also an alternative view of origin of the people. According to this view, the Nri- Igbo believe that the Igbo are one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Isreal, although the Igbo people have not been officially acknowledged by Isreal or the Jewish community. Nri- Enwelená (the present Eze Nri) has said that the Igbo are descendants of Jewish Egyptains who had fled Egypt to come to their present settlement, with their leader being the Nri Kingdom's progenitor, Eri.

The city of Nri is considered to be the foundation of Igbo culture. Nri and Aguleri, where the Igbo creation myth originates, are in the territory of the Umeuri clan, who trace their lineages back to the patriarchal king-figure, Eri. Eri's origins are unclear, though he has been described as a "sky being" sent by Chukwu (God). He has been characterized as having first given societal order to the people of Anambra.

Archaeological evidence suggests that Nri hegemony in Igboland may go back as far as the 9th century, and royal burials have been unearthed dating to at least the 10th century. Eri, the god-like founder of Nri, is believed to have settled in the region around 948 with other related Igbo cultures following after in the 13th century. The first Eze Nri (King of Nri), Ìfikuánim, followed directly after him. According to Igbo oral tradition, his reign started in 1043. At least one historian puts Ìfikuánim's reign much later, around 1225 AD.

The Kingdom of Nri was a religio-polity, a sort of theocratic state, that developed in the central heartland of the Igbo region. The Nri had a taboo symbolic code with six types. These included human (such as twins), animal, object, temporal, behavioral, speech and place taboos. The rules regarding these taboos were used to educate and govern Nri's subjects. This meant that, while certain Igbo may have lived under different formal administration, all followers of the Igbo religion had to abide by the rules of the faith and obey its representative on earth, the Eze Nri.

Politically, the Igbo are a fragmented group. There are various subgroups which are set according to clan, lineage, village affiliation and dialect. There was no centralized chieftaincy, hereditary aristocracy, or kingship customs, as can be found among some of their neighbours. An exception to this was the Kingdom of Nri, the Kingdom of Arochukwu and the Kingdom of Onitsha. Traditionally, the responsibility of leadership is left to the village elders, titled men, and men who have established themselves in the community. This political system had changed significantly as a result of colonialism under the British during the late 19th century and one half of the 20th century; kings, which are known as

Eze, had been introduced to most local communities by Fredrick Lugard as "Warrant Chiefs".

Traditional Igbo political organisation was based on a quasi-democratic republican system of government. In tight knit communities, this system guaranteed its citizens equality, as opposed to a feudalist system with a king ruling over subjects. This government system was witnessed by the Portuguese who first arrived and met with the Igbo people in the 15th century. With the exception of a few notable Igbo towns, such as Onitsha, which had kings called Obi, and places like the Nri Kingdom and Arochukwu, which had priest kings such as Eze Nri; Igbo communities and area governments were overwhelmingly ruled solely by a republican consultative assembly of the common people. Communities were usually governed and administered by a council of elders and the group's leader was determined by who was the eldest.

Although title holders were respected because of their accomplishments and capabilities, they were never revered as kings, but often performed special functions given to them by such assemblies. This way of governing was immensely different from most other communities of Western Africa, and only shared by the Ewe of Ghana. Igbo secret societies (namely the Okonko fraternity) have a ceremonial script called Nsibidi. The Igbo have an indigenous ancient calendar in which a week has four days, a month consisted of seven weeks and thirteen months made a year. In the last month, an extra day was added. This calendar is still in use in villages and towns to determine the market days.

The Igbo people have a form of mathematics called Mkpisi and Okwe used for counting, measurements and a form of an ancient strategic Igbo game called "Okew". The Igbo created a banking system for saving and loans called Isusu which is still in use today. They settled matters of law via mediators. The Igbo produced bronzes from as early as the 9th century, some of which have been found at the town of Igbo Ukwu, Anambra State.

4.3 Culture of the People

Igbo culture includes the various customs, practices and traditions of the Igbo people. It comprises archaic practices as well as new concepts added into the Igbo culture either through evolution or outside influences. These customs and traditions include the Igbo people's visual art, music and dance forms, as well as their attire, cuisine and language dialects. Because of their various subgroups, the variety of their culture is further heightened.

4.3.1 Language and Music

The native language of the Igbo people includes various different dialects and Igboid languages. These dialects are spoken by Igbo sub-groups such as the Ikwerre sub-group who speak the Ikwerre dialect. Today, the majority of the Igbo speak the English language as a result of British colonialism. In rural areas, the Igbo are mostly farmers and their most important crop is the yam. Celebrations are put on every year to celebrate the harvesting of the yam.

There are several theories regarding the etymology of the word *Igbo*. It is presumed that the word has Sudanic origin, derived from the verb *gboo*. Theorists have suggested that the word may originate from the neighboring Igala, coming from the word *onigbo* (a word for slave), but the meaning and origin of the word is still unknown. *Igbo* had been spelled *Ibo* until the 20th century by British colonialist. *Ibo* can still be found being used to refer to the Igbo. Officially, *Igbo* is the correct spelling and has been used in many different publications such as in the novel, *Things Fall Apart*. The word now has three uses, to describe indigenous Igbo territory, domestic speakers of the language and the language spoken by them.

The Igbo people have a unique musical style, into which they incorporate various percussion instruments: the udu, which is essentially designed from a clay jug; an ekwe, which is formed from a hollowed log; and the ogene, a hand bell designed from forged iron. Other instruments include opi, a wind instrument similar to the flute, igba, and ichaka. Another popular musical form among the Igbo is Highlife, which is a fusion of jazz and traditional music and widely popular in West Africa.

Masking is one of the most common art styles in Igboland and it is linked strongly with Igbo traditional music. A mask can be made of wood or fabric, along with other materials including iron and vegetation. Masks have a variety of uses, mainly in social satires, religious rituals, secret society initiations (such as the Ekpe society) and public festivals, which now include Christmas time celebrations. The Ekpe society, introduced from the Cross River area, uses contrasting masks to represent the beautiful and gentle maiden spirit and the elephant spirit with its ugliness and aggression. Best known are the Agbogho Mmuo (igbo: *Maiden spirit*) masks of the Northern Igbo which represent the spirits of deceased maidens and their mothers with masks symbolising beauty.

Other impressive masks include Northern Igbo Ijele masks. At 12 feet high, Ijele masks consist of platforms 6 feet in diameter, supporting figures made of coloured cloth and representing everyday scenes with objects such as leopards. Ijele masks are used for honouring the dead to ensure the continuity and well-being of the community and are only seen on rare occasions such as the death of a prominent figure in the community. There are many Igbo dance styles, but perhaps, Igbo dance is best known for its Atilogwu dance troops. These troops performances include acrobatic stunts, such as high kicks and cartwheels. Each rhythm from the traditional musical instruments indicates a movement to the dancer in male and female dance teams.

4.3.2 Visual art and Architecture

Igbo art is anybody of visual art originating from the people of the Igbo. Igbo art is generally known for various types of masquerade, masks and outfits symbolising people animals or abstract conceptions. Igbo art is known for its bronze castings found in the town of Igbo Ukwu from the 9th century, the earliest sculptures discovered in Igboland. Here, the grave of a well established man of distinction and a ritual store, dating from the 9th century AD, contained both chased copper objects and elaborate castings of leaded bronze. Some popular Igbo art styles include Uli designs. The majority of the Igbo carvings use masks, although the

function of masks varies from community to community. Igbo art is also famous for Mbari architecture. It is near impossible to describe a general Igbo art style because the Igbo are heavily fragmented. This has added to the development of a great variety of art styles and cultural practices.

Examples of Igbo architecture are the Mbari houses of the Owerri-Igbo, which are large open-sided shelters, square in plan. They house many life-sized, painted figures (sculpted in mud to appease the deity Alusi and Ala, the earth goddess, who is supported by other deities of thunder and water). Other sculptures are of officials, craftsmen, foreigners (mainly Europeans), animals, legendary creatures and ancestors. Mbari houses take years to build. Because the process of building is regarded as a sacred act, they are left to decay, new ones being constructed rather than old ones maintained. Houses were commonly made of mud and thatched roofs with bare earth floors or with carved design doors. Some houses had elaborate designs both in the interior and exterior. These designs could include Uli art designed by Igbo women.

4.3.3 Religion and Rites of Passage

Today, the majority of the Igbo people are Christian, with Roman Catholicism being the dominant religion of profession any half of the Igbo people. There are also a small population of Igbo Jews. The traditional ancient Igbo religion is known as Odinani. In Igbo mythology, which is part of their ancient religion, the supreme God is called Chukwu ("great spirit"); Chukwu created the world and everything in it and is associated with all things on earth. Chukwu is also a solar deity. To the ancient Igbo, the Cosmos was divided into four complex parts: creation, known as Okike; supernatural forces or deities called Alusi; Mmuo, which are spirits; and Uwa, the world.

Chukwu is the supreme deity in Odinani as he is the creator in their pantheon and the Igbo people believe that all things come from him and that everything on earth, heaven and the rest of the spiritual world is under his control. Linguistic studies of the Igbo language suggests the name *Chukwu* is a portmanteau of the Igbo words: *Chi* (spiritual being) and *Ukwu* (great in size). Alusi, also known as Arusi or Arushi, are minor deities that are worshiped and served in Odinani. There is a list of many different Alusi and each has its own purpose. When there is no longer need for an individual deity it is discarded.

The Igbo also believe in reincarnation. People are believed to reincarnate into their former families when they were alive. Before a relative dies, it is said that the dying relative sometimes gives clues as to which family he/she will reincarnate into. Once a child is born, he or she is believed to also give signs of who they have reincarnated as. This can be through behaviour, physical traits and things that the child says. A diviner can also help in detecting who the child has reincarnated from. It is seen as an insult if a male is said to have reincarnated as a female.

Children are not allowed to call elders by their names without using an honorific. (As this is considered disrespectful). Children are also required to greet elders when seeing them for the first time in the day as a sign of respect and good upbringing. Children usually add the Igbo honorifics *Mazi* or *De* before an elder's name when addressing them.

4.3.4 Burials

After a death, the body of a prominent member of society is placed on a stool in a sitting posture and is clothed in the deceased's finest garments. Friends and relatives of the deceased visit and pay their last respects before the body is buried. Burial usually follows within twenty-four hours of death. The head of a home is usually buried beneath the floor of his house. Different types of deaths warrant different types of burials. This is also affected by an individual's age, gender and status in society. For example, children are buried in hiding and out of sight, their burials usually take place in the early mornings and late in the night. A simple untitled man is buried in front of his house and a simple mother is buried in her place of origin in a garden or a farm-area that belonged to her father. Presently, a majority of the Igbo bury their dead in the Western way, although it is not uncommon for burials to be practiced in the traditional Igbo ways.

4.3.5 Marriage

The process of marrying usually involves asking the young woman's consent, introducing the woman to the man's family and the same for the man to the woman's family, testing the bride's character, checking the woman's family background and paying the bride price. Sometimes marriages may have been arranged from birth through the negotiation of the two families involved.

In the past, many Igbo men practiced polygyny. The polygynous family is made up of a man and his wives and all their children. Men sometimes married multiple wives for economic reasons so as to have more people in the family, including children, to help on farms. Christian marriage and civil marriage have changed the Igbo family since colonisation. Igbo people now tend to enter monogamous courtships and create nuclear families, mainly because of Western influence.

4.3.6 Clothing

Traditionally, the attire of the Igbo generally consisted of little clothing as the purpose of clothing originally was to conceal private parts, although elders were fully clothed. Children were usually nude from birth till their adolescence (the time when they were considered to have something to hide) but sometimes ornaments such as beads were worn around the waist for spiritual reasons. Uli body art was used to decorate both men and women in the form of lines forming patterns and shapes on the body.

Women traditionally carry their babies on their backs with a strip of clothing binding the two with a knot at her chest, a practice used by many ethnic groups across Africa. This method has been modernised in the form of the child carrier. In most cases, Igbo women did not cover their breast areas. Maidens usually wore a short wrapper with beads around their waist and other ornaments such as necklaces and beads. Both men and women wore wrappers. Men would wear loin cloths that wrapped round their waist and between their legs to be fastened at their back, the type of clothing appropriate for the intense heat as well as jobs such as farming.

In the same era as the rise of colonial forces in Nigeria, the way the Igbo dressed also changed. These changes made the Igbo adopt Westernised clothing such as shirts and trousers. Clothing worn before colonialism became "traditional" and worn on special occasions. Although the Igbo wore them, the traditional clothing itself became Westernised with the introduction of various types of Western clothing including shoes, hats, trousers, etc. Modern Igbo traditional attire, for men, is generally made up of the Isiagu top which resembles the Danshiki worn by other African groups. Isiagu (or *Ishi agu*) is usually patterned with lions heads embroidered over the clothing and can be a plain color. It is worn with trousers and can be worn with either a traditional title holders hat or with the traditional Igbo stripped men's hat. For women, a puffed sleeve blouse (influenced by European attire) along with two wrappers and a head tie are worn.

4.3.7 Cuisine

The yam is very important to the Igbo as it is their staple crop. There are celebrations such as the New yam festival (*Iwaji*) which are held for the harvesting of the yam. During the festival yam is eaten throughout the communities as celebration. Yam tubers are also shown off by individuals as a sign of success and wealth. Rice has replaced yam for ceremonial occasions. Other foods include cassava, garri, maize and plantains. Soups or stews are included in a typical meal, prepared with a vegetable (such as Okra, of which the word derives from the Igbo language, Okwuru) to which pieces of fish, chicken, beef, or goat meats are added. Jollof rice, which has its origins in Sierra Leone, is popular throughout Nigeria. Palm wine is a popular alcoholic beverage among the Igbo.

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed about the Igbos people. We noted that the Igbo are one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria found in the eastern part of Nigeria. In discussing the Igbo, we started by providing the historical background. We discussed the culture of the Igbo as well as their political system. Aspects of their cultural practices discussed were language and music, religion and rites of passage, marriage, clothing and cuisine.

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Study Session 5

The Hausa of Nigeria

Introduction

The Hausa is one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria found in the northern part of Nigeria. It is indeed the largest ethnic group in Nigeria. In discussing Hausa ethnic group, we will explore through their historical background which will trace the Bayajidda legend. From this, we will move to discuss their culture with emphasis on such cultural practices as religion, clothing and food.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Session, you should be able to:

- 5.1 discuss the historic and origin of the Igbos.
- 5.2 describe the culture of Igbo people.



5.1 Origin and History

The Hausa are a Sahelian people chiefly located in the West African regions of northern Nigeria and southeastern Niger. There are also significant numbers found in the regions of Sudan, Cameroon, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Chad and smaller communities scattered throughout West Africa and on the traditional Hajj route across the Sahara Desert and Sahel. Many Hausa have moved to large near coastal cities in West Africa, such as Lagos, Accra, Kumasi and Cotonou, as well as to countries such as Libya. However, most Hausa remain in small villages, where they grow crops and raise livestock, including cattle. They speak the Hausa language, a member of the Chadic language group, itself a sub-group of the larger Afro-Asiatic language family.

Perhaps the best way to trace the origin of the Hausa people is to start from the legend which centred around Bayajidda. Bayajidda (Hausa: Bàyājiddà, also known as Abuyazidu) is a character from the mythology of the Hausa people of northern Nigeria and the central figure of the Bayajidda Legend. The various versions of the legend differ on minor points, but generally agree that he originated in Baghdad, travelled across the Sahara, and arrived in the Kanem- Bornu Empire, where he married a local princess. Tensions with her father, the king, forced him to flee. Leaving his wife in Hadejia, he made his way to Gaya, where he had the local blacksmiths forge him a knife. With this knife, Bayajidda proceeded to the final point on his journey, the city of Daura, where he

slew a serpent that had been terrorizing the townspeople. To show gratitude for this deed Magajiya Daurama, the local queen, married him. He had one child, Bawo, with Daurama, and Bawo's own children are said to have gone on to found the seven Hausa states. While some Hausa maintain that Bayajidda was real, others hold the view that he did not actually exist, but is instead a personification of a group of people from West African history.

According to the legend, Bayajidda was a prince from Baghdad (the capital of Iraq) and son of King Abdullahi, but he was exiled from the city after Queen Zidam, also known as Zigawa, took over the city. Once he left Baghdad, he travelled across Africa with a group of about 300 and arrived in Bornu.

Once in Bornu, tales differ as to what caused tension with the local king. According to one story, Bayajidda realized his forces were stronger than those of the king and because of this, he planned to overthrow him. However, the king heard of the plot and, after consulting with his advisors, gave Bayajidda his daughter, Magaram (also known as Magira), in marriage. Later, when the king attacked and took over several towns, he tricked his new son-in-law into leaving his own men to guard the towns, thereby decreasing the number of men Bayajidda had at his disposal. Bayajidda realised that he was being tricked when he had only his wife and one slave left; during the night, they fled to Garun Gabas, now known as Hadejia. While there, Magaram gave birth to Bayajidda's first child, Biram (also known as Gabas-ta-Biram or Biran).

However, according to another version of the story, Bayajidda was welcomed into Bornu, married Magaram and became popular among the people. Because of this, the king envied him and plotted against him; upon being informed of this by his wife, he fled Kanem-Bornu with her.

Bayajidda left his wife and 1st child in Hadejia and continued on to Gaya (a city in modern Niger), where he had the local blacksmiths make him a knife. He then came to the town of Daura (located in modern day Katsina State), where he entered a house and asked an old woman for water. She informed him that a serpent named Sarki (*Sarkin* is the Hausa word for emir) guarded the well and that the people were only allowed to draw water once a week. Bayajidda set out for the well and beheaded the serpent with the knife the blacksmiths had made for him, after which he drank the water, put the head in a bag, and returned to the old woman's house. (The well where this is said to have happened has since become a tourist attraction).

The next day, the people of Daura gathered at the well, wondering who had killed the snake. Magajiya Daurama, the local queen, offered the sovereignty of over half the town to whoever could prove that he killed the snake. Several men brought snake's heads forth, but the heads did not match the body. The old woman, owner of the house Bayajidda was staying in, informed the queen that her guest had slain it, after which Daurama summoned Bayajidda. Having presented the snake's head, proving to her that he was the one who had slain Sarki, he turned down the offer of half the town, instead requesting her hand in marriage; she married him out of gratitude for slaying the serpent.

Because it was against the custom of the people of Daura for their queens to marry, Daurama made a compromise with Bayajidda and said she

would only have sexual intercourse with him once. Because of this, she gave him a concubine named Bagwariya. (However, an version of the story claims that Daurama gave him Bagwariya because she wanted to break her "queenly vow to remain a virgin," but had to undergo rituals to do so).

Bagwariya had a 2nd child by Bayajidda and, with his permission, she named him "Karap da Gari," which means "he snatched the town" in the Hausa language. This worried Daurama, and when she had a 3rd child of her own (also fathered by Bayajidda), she named him "Bawo", which means "give it back."

Throughout his life, Bayajidda is said to have fathered two children with three different women. Bawo fathered six of his own sons, whose names were Daura, Gobir, Kano, Katsina, Rano, and Zaria (also known as Zazzau). Together with Biram, son of Magaram, these seven went on to rule the seven "legitimate" Hausa states, the Hausa Bakwai. (Some versions of the tale leave Bawo and Magaram out entirely, with Biram, Daura, Gobir, Kano, Katsina, Rano, and Zaria being the sons of Bayajidda and Daurama.) Karap da Gari's descendants, meanwhile, founded the seven "illegitimate" Hausa states, the Banza Bakwai.

There is a variety of views on the Bayajidda story, with differing opinions on the meaning and historicity of the tale. While some Hausa maintain that their legendary forefather existed, and contemporary royals trace their lineage to and draw their authority from him, others disagree with this literal interpretation and claim that Bayajidda never actually existed.

One such view is that the story of the marriage of Bayajidda and Daurama symbolises the merger of Arab and Berber tribes in North and West Africa. W. K. R. Hallam, meanwhile, argues that Bayajidda represents a "folk personification" of the supporters of Abu Yazid, (a Kharijite Berber warrior), who fled southwards from North Africa after Yazid's defeat by and death at the hands of the Fatimids.

Dierk Lange, a German professor, contends that the story parallels the biblical story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. He compares Abraham to Bayajidda (while also noting the similarity between Biram and Abraham's names), Sarah to Magaram, and Hagar to Bagwariya, and says that the Israelites are cognate to the Hausa Bakwai, while Arabs correlate with the Banza Bakwai.

In his 1989 book, *An Imperial Twilight*, Gawain Bell suggests that the marriage of Bayajidda and Daurama signals a "change from a matriarchal to a patriarchal system." (Prior to the arrival of Bayajidda, the Daura monarchy had been exclusively female.) Elizabeth Isichei, in her work, *A History of African Societies to 1870*, suggests that Bayajidda's stay in Borno prior to arriving in Hausaland is "perhaps a folk memory of origins on the Borno borderland, or a reflection of Borno political and cultural dominance."

Between 500 CE and 700 CE Hausa people, who had been slowly moving west from Nubia and mixing in with the local northern and central Nigerian population, established a number of strong states in what is now Northern and Central Nigeria and Eastern Niger. With the decline of the Nok and Sokoto, who had previously controlled central and northern Nigeria between 800 BCE and 200 CE, the Hausa were able to emerge as the new power in the region. Closely linked with the Kanuri

people of Kanem-Bornu (Lake Chad), the Hausa aristocracy adopted Islam in the 11th century CE.

By the 12th century CE the Hausa were becoming one of Africa's major powers. The architecture of the Hausa is perhaps one of the least known but most beautiful of the medieval age. Many of their early mosques and palaces are bright and colourful and often include intricate engravings or elaborate symbols designed into the facade. By 1500 CE the Hausa utilised a modified Arabic script known as *ajami* to record their own language; the Hausa compiled several written histories, the most popular being the Kano Chronicle.

In 1810, the Fulani, another Islamic African ethnic group that spanned across West Africa, invaded the Hausa states. Their cultural similarities however allowed for significant integration between the two groups, who in modern times are often described as "Hausa-Fulani" rather than as individuated groups, and many Fulani in the region do not distinguish themselves from the Hausa.

The Hausa remain preeminent in Niger and northern Nigeria. Their impact in Nigeria is paramount, as the Hausa-Fulani amalgamation has controlled Nigerian politics for much of its independent history. They remain one of the largest and most historically grounded civilisations in West Africa. The language of Hausa has more native speakers than any other language in sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 22 million native speakers, plus additional 17 million second language speakers. The main Hausa speaking area is northern Nigeria and Niger, but Hausa is also widely spoken in northern Ghana and northern Cameroon, and there are large Hausa communities in every major West African city. Most Hausa speakers are Muslims, and Hausa is often a lingua franca among Muslims in non-Hausa areas. There is a large and growing printed literature in Hausa, which includes novels, poetry, plays, instruction in Islamic practice, books on development issues, newspapers, news magazines, and even technical academic works. Radio and television broadcasting in Hausa is ubiquitous in northern Nigeria and Niger, and radio stations in Ghana and Cameroon have regular Hausa broadcasts, as do international broadcasters such as the BBC, VOA, Deutsche Welle, Radio Moscow, Radio Beijing, and others. Hausa is used as the language of instruction at the elementary level in schools in northern Nigeria, and Hausa is available as course of study in northern Nigerian universities. In terms of sheer numbers, Hausa thus ranks as one of the world's major languages, and its widespread use in a number of countries of West Africa makes it probably the single most useful language known in that region. Hausa's rich poetic, prose, and musical literature, more and more of which is now available in print and in audio and video recordings, makes it a rewarding area of study for those who reach an advanced level. Aside from the inherent interest of Hausa language and its literature, the study of Hausa provides perhaps the most informative entry into the world of Islamic West Africa. Throughout West Africa, there is a strong connection between Hausa and Islam. The influence of Hausa language on the languages of many non-Hausa Islamic people in West African is readily apparent. Likewise, many Hausa cultural practices, including such overt features as dress and food, are shared by other Islamic communities. Because of the dominant position which Hausa language and culture have long held, the study of Hausa provides crucial background for other areas

such as West African history, politics (particularly in Nigeria and Niger), gender studies, commerce, and the arts.

5.1.1 Culture

Kano in Nigeria is considered the centre of Hausa trade and culture. In terms of cultural relations to other peoples of West Africa, the Hausa are culturally and historically close to the Fulani, Songhai, Mandé and Tuareg as well as other Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan groups further East in Chad and Sudan. Islamic Shari'a law is loosely the law of the land and is understood by any full time practitioner of Islam, known in Hausa as a *Mallam* (see Maulana).

5.1.2 Religion

The Hausa people have an ancient culture that had an extensive coverage area, and have long ties to the Arabs and other Islamised peoples in West Africa, such as the Mandé, Fulani and even the Wolof of Senegambia, through extended long distance trade. Islam has been present in Hausaland since the 14th century, but it was largely restricted to the region's rulers and their courts. Rural areas generally retained their animist beliefs and their urban leaders thus drew on both Islamic and African traditions to legitimise their rule. Muslim scholars of the early nineteenth century disapproved of the hybrid religion practised in royal courts, and a desire for reform was a major motive behind the formation of the Sokoto Caliphate. It was after the formation of this state that Islam became firmly entrenched in rural areas. The Hausa people have been an important factor for the spread of Islam in West Africa.

Maguzawa, the animist religion, was practiced extensively before Islam. In the more remote areas of Hausaland, Maguzawa has remained fully intact, but as one gets closer to more urban areas, it almost totally disappears. It often includes the sacrifice of animals for personal ends. It is thought as illegitimate to practice Maguzawa magic for harm. What remains in more populous areas is a "cult of spirit possession" known as Bori, which still holds the old religion's elements of animism and magic.

5.1.3 Clothing

The Hausa people have a very restricted dressing code due to the fact of religious beliefs. The men are easily recognizable because of their elaborate dress which is a large flowing gown known as *gare* and *babban riga*. These large flowing gowns usually feature some elaborate embroidery designs around the neck. Men also wear colorful embroidered caps known as *hulla*. The females can be identified by their dressing codes in which they wear wrap-around rope made with colorful cloth with a matching blouse, head tie and shawl.

5.1.4 Food

The most common food that the Hausa people prepare consist of grains such as sorghum, millet, or rice and maize which are grounded into flour for a variety of different kinds of food. The food is popularly known as *tuwo* in Hausa language. Usually, breakfast consists of cakes made from grounded beans, which are then fried into what is known as *kosai* or

wheat flour soaked for a day then fried and served with sugar known as *funkaso*. Both of these cakes can be served with porridge and sugar known as *koko*. Lunch or dinner are usually served as heavy porridge with soup and stew known as *tuwo da miya*. The soup and stew are usually prepared with ground or chopped tomatoes, onions, and local pepper sauce or *daddawa*. While preparing the soup, most of the times spice and other vegetables such as spinach, pumpkin or okra are added to the soup. The stew is prepared with meat, which ranges from goat to cow meat with the exclusion of pork due to Islamic religion restrictions. Beans, peanuts, and milk are also served as a complimentary protein diet for the Hausa people.

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed the Hausa as one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria found in the northern part of country. We noted that it is the largest ethnic group in Nigeria. In discussing Hausa ethnic group, we explored through their historical background which we traced down to the Bayajidda legend. We also discussed the culture of the Hausas with emphasis on cultural practices, such as religion, clothing and food.

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Study Session 6

The Yoruba of Nigeria

Introduction

The Yoruba is one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria found in the south western part. It is indeed the second largest ethnic group in Nigeria with very rich cultural heritage. In discussing Yoruba ethnic group in this Study Session, we will focus on their cosmogonic origin, their pre-colonial existence, nature of their leadership, groups organisation and leagues, their religious and belief systems and as well as Yoruba calendar.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Session, you should be able to:

- 6.1 *explain* the historical origin of the Yoruba
- 6.2 *discuss* the cosmogonic origin mythology of the Yoruba
- 6.3 *explain* the pre-colonial Yoruba society
- 6.4 *enumerate* the groups, organizations and leagues in Yorubaland
- 6.5 *describe* Twins in Yoruba Society
- 6.6 *describe* the Yoruba Calendar
- 6.7 *explain* the marital process, family and kinship



6.1 The Yoruba

Yoruba people are one of the largest ethnio - linguistic or ethnic groups in West Africa. The majority of the Yoruba speak the Yoruba language (Yoruba: *èdèe Yorùbá*; èdè). The Yoruba constitute around 30 million individuals throughout West Africa and are found predominantly in Nigeria with approximately 21 percent of its total population.

The Yoruba are the main ethnic group in the Nigerian federal states of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo, they also constitute a sizable proportion of Kwara and Kogi states as well as Edo.

As well as having access to the sea, they share borders with the Borgu (variously called Bariba and Borgawa) in the northwest, the Nupe (whom they often call, 'Tapa') and Ebira in the north, the Edo who are also known as Bini or Benin people (unrelated to the people of the 'Republic of Benin'), and the Esan and Afemai to the southeast. The Igala and other related groups are found in the northeast, and the Egun, Fon, and other Gbe-speaking peoples in the southwest. While the majority of the Yoruba

live in western Nigeria, there are also substantial indigenous Yoruba communities in the Republic of Benin, Ghana and Togo.

The African peoples who lived in the lower western Niger area, at least by the 4th century BC, were not initially known as the Yoruba, although they shared a common ethnicity and language group. Both archeology and traditional Yoruba oral historians confirm the existence of people in this region for several millennia.

Some contemporary historians contend that some Yoruba are not indigenous to Yorubaland, but are descendants of immigrants to the region. It is believed that an important man called Oduduwa, (also known as Odudua, Odua or Eleduwa), who many believe to have arrived from an easterly direction, established a kingdom at 'Ile Ife' (also known as Ife) and thus became the first 'oba' (meaning king or ruler in the Yoruba language) of who today are known as the Yoruba people.

Between 1100 AD and 1700 AD, the Yoruba Kingdom of Ife experienced a golden age, the oba or ruler of Ife is referred to as the Ooni of Ife. It was then surpassed by the Yoruba Oyo Empire as the dominant Yoruba military and political power between 1700 AD and 1900 AD, the (oba) or ruler of Oyo is referred to as the Alaafin of Oyo. Ife, however, remained and continues to be viewed as the spiritual homeland of the Yoruba. The nearby Benin Empire, with its capital in the modern day Benin City in modern day Nigeria was also a powerful force between 1300 and 1850 AD, the ruler of Benin City is referred to as the Oba of Benin.

Most of the city states were controlled by *Obas* (rulers) with various titles and councils made up of Oloye, guild of noble leaders or chiefs, and merchants. Different states saw differing ratios of power between the kingship and the chiefs' council. Some, such as Oyo had powerful, autocratic monarchs with almost total control, while in others, such as the Ijebu city-states, the senatorial councils held more influence and the power of the ruler or *Oba*, referred to as the Awujale of Ijebuland was more limited.

6.2 Cosmogonic Origin Mythology

"Orisa'nla" (The Great Divinity) also known as Obatala was the arch-divinity chosen by Olodumare, the supreme deity, to create solid land out of the primordial water that constituted the earth and populating the land with human beings. Obatala descended from heaven on a chain, carrying a small snail shell full of earth, palm kernels and a five-toed chicken. He was to empty the content of the snail shell on the water after placing some pieces of iron on it, and then to place the chicken on the earth to spread it over the primordial water.

Recently, historians have attributed this cosmological mythology to a pre-existing civilisation at Ile-Ife which was invaded by militant immigrants from the east, led by a king named Oduduwa. Oduduwa and his group had been persecuted on the basis of religious differences and forced out of their homeland. They came to Ilè-Ifẹ where they subjugated the pre-existing Ugbo inhabitants (often erroneously rendered as Igbo but unrelated to the present Igbo people), under the leadership of Oreluere (Obatala).

Upon the death of Oduduwa, there was a dispersal of his children from Ile-Ife to found other kingdoms (Owu, Ketu, Benin, Ila, Sabe, Popo, and Oyo). Each made a mark in the subsequent urbanisation and consolidation of Yoruba confederacy of kingdoms, with each kingdom tracing its origin to Ile-Ife.

6.3 Pre-Colonial Yoruba Society

Monarchies were a common form of government in the Yoruba-speaking region, but they were not the only approach to government and social organisation. The numerous Ijebu city-states to the west of Oyo and the Egba communities, found in the forests below Oyo's savanna region, were notable exceptions. These independent polities often elected an *Oba*, though real political, legislative, and judicial powers resided with the *Ogboni*, a council of notable elders.

During the internecine wars of the 19th century, the Ijebu forced citizens of more than 150 Egba and Owu communities to migrate to the fortified city of Abeokuta, where each quarter retained its own *Ogboni* council of civilian leaders, along with an *Olorogun*, or council of military leaders, and in some cases its own elected *Obas* or *Baales*. These independent councils then elected their most capable members to join a federal civilian and military council that represented the city as a whole.

Traditionally, the Yoruba organised themselves into networks of related villages, towns, and kingdoms, with most of them headed by an *Oba* King or *Baale* a nobleman or mayor. Kingship is not determined by simple primogeniture, as in most monarchic systems of government. An electoral college of lineage heads is usually charged with selecting a member of one of the royal families, and the selection is usually confirmed by an *Ifá* divination request. The *Obas* live in palaces usually in the center of the town. Opposite to the king's palace is the *Oja Oba*, the king's market. These markets form an inherent part of Yoruba life. Traditionally, the market traders are well organised, have various guilds, and an elected speaker.

6.3.1 Leadership

Gerontocratic

Leadership councils that guarded against the monopolisation of power by a monarch were a proverbial trait of the Egba, according to the eminent Oyo historian Reverend Samuel Johnson, but such councils were also well-developed among the northern Okun groups, the eastern Ekiti, and other groups falling under the Yoruba ethnic umbrella.

Even in Oyo, the most centralised of the precolonial kingdoms, the *Alaafin* consulted on all political decisions with a prime minister (the *Basorun*) and the council of leading nobles known as the *Oyo Mesi*.

The monarchy of any city state was usually limited to a number of royal lineages. A family could be excluded from kingship and chieftancy if any family member, servant, or slave belonging to the family committed a crime such as theft, fraud, murder or rape. The kings were traditionally almost always polygynous and often married royal family members from other domains.

6.4 Groups, organizations and leagues in Yorubaland

The tendency to form associations, occupational guilds, social clubs, secret or initiatory societies, and religious units, commonly known as *Egbe* in Yoruba, included the *Parakoyi* (or league of traders) and *Egbe Ode* (hunter's guild) and corporations is very strong among the Yoruba. They are formed for the purpose of promoting and protecting common interest in the fields of politics, economics, religion, recreation and enjoyment. It has been argued that so strong is their influence that, in some communities, slaves in the days of slavery organised themselves into convivial associations. One interesting result of this tradition of association is that whenever there is an appreciable community of Yoruba, either outside Yorubaland or even only outside their own particular communities, an organisation will spring up complete with officers. This organisation will certainly have judicial function, and will have its convivial and mutual help strongly developed.

Thus in Yoruba we have political associations of which the *Ogboni* secret society. (known as *osugbo* among the Ijebu and Egba people) is a prominent feature. We also have associations of warriors, the hunters associations, the age group, women political association (*Egbe Iyalode*), religious associations, mutual help associations and convivial association. Each of these associations performs peculiar functions.

There are also examples of other peer organisations in the region. When the Egba resisted the imperial domination of the Oyo Empire, a figure named Lisabi is credited with either creating or reviving a covert traditional organisation named *Egbe Aro*. This group, originally a farmers' union, was converted to a network of secret militias throughout the Egba forests, and each lodge plotted to overthrow Oyo's *Ajeles* (appointed administrators) in the late 1700s. Similarly, covert military resistance leagues like the *Ekiti Parapo* and the *Ogidi* alliance were organised during the 19th century wars by often-decentralised communities of the Ekiti, Ijesa, Igbómìnà and Okun Yoruba in order to resist various imperial expansionist plans of Ibadan, Nupe, and the Sokoto Caliphate Sokoto.

6.4.1 Economic Organisation

Land and Market are very central in the economic organisation of the Yoruba. The majority of people predominantly engage in agriculture. Each man has the help of the dependent male members of his family in tilling the field, planting crops, as well as reaping. In the pre-colonial times, although there was no actual prohibition of women from hoeing and planting in kitchen gardens inside the towns, the Yoruba as whole did not make use of the labour of women on their farms in these capacities. And, a polygynist, whose wives may be following trades of their own, is by custom entitled to ask them to accompany him to the farm during harvest time in order to assist him. The more important part of women's work on the farm however, consist of changing the form of various crops harvested so as to bring them a stage or two nearer the point of ultimate consumption. The sexually division o labour between husband and wife is carried over to the disposal of the farm produce. The wife is responsible

for selling, either in an elaborately processed form or practically as harvested, some of the products of the farm that are in excess of the normal requirement of the farmer and his family. For these services, she may receive a commission. The only regular source of commercial labour which could be obtained in pre-colonial days was that of slaves and pawns. Otherwise, it was not the practice to sell labour. The labour of free-born men was freely given when required, but on the basis of mutual reciprocity.

Among the Yoruba, there are two kinds of markets. There are local markets and central markets. Local markets are for day-to-day buying and selling by townspeople, while central markets are meeting-grounds for people of different towns and villages, and may be situated in a town or outside towns on a conveniently situated highway, which links several centres. Local markets, in some towns, are held during the hours of daylight while others, even though not completely deserted during the daytime, have their peak period after sunset. How long after nightfall the market lasts depends on the habits of the people and comparative freedom of town and wards of town from burglars. Generally, the night market is held by lamplight. Central markets are held at intervals of four or eight days and last for greater part of the day. In some cases, the market does not begin to get really full until about four o'clock. Whether markets are local or central, the traders are usually compartmentalised on the basis of the line of goods they sell. Thus, the beer sellers are to be found together, so are palm-oil sellers, yam-flour sellers, the sellers of firewood, dried-fish sellers, dealers in fresh meat, sellers of calabashes (both worked and unworked) dealers in shea butter, palm-oil, cooked food of various kinds, cloth and garment, herbs and blacksmith, and so on.

6.4.2 Religion and the Belief System

The Yorùbá religion comprises religious beliefs and practices of the Yoruba people of old before the Yoruba community encountered Islam, Christianity and other faiths. Yoruba religious beliefs are part of *itan* — the complex of songs, histories, stories and other cultural concepts which make up the Yorùbá religion and society.

The philosophy of Yorùbá (also known as Irunmole, Ifa, Orisha or Aborisha) is that all humans have Ayanmo (manifest destiny) to become one in spirit with Olódùmarè (Olòrún, the divine creator and source of all energy). Each person in Ayé (the physical realm) uses thought or action energies to impact the community of all other living things including the earth, and so to move towards destiny. As such, one's destiny is in one's hands. To attain transcendence and destiny in Òrún-Réré (spiritual realm of those who do good and beneficial things), one's Orí-Inu (spiritual consciousness in the physical realm) must be elevated to unify with one's Iponri (Orí Òrún). Those who stop improving are destined for Òrún-Apadi (spiritual realm of the forsaken). Life and death are cycles of habitation in physical body and spiritual realms, while one's spirit evolves towards transcendence. This evolution is most advanced in Irùnmoḽe (oní irun, having unique hair that distinguishes humans from beasts; imo, enlightened of destiny; ile, on the land)

For most people, *iwapẹḽe* (gentle behaviour), meditation and sincere veneration sufficiently strengthen one's *Orí-Inu*. One is able to *gbadúra*

(pray) for support of the *Egungun* (one's elevated ancestors) or the *Orí-Òrún* for application of the *Odu* (knowledge of all ages) to one's benefit. Those with strong motivation to manipulate destiny may consult *Orunmila* through *Ifá* (good of divination) and *ẹ̀bò* (offering). In invoking the *Orunmila* so directly, care is required to ensure alignment of thought and action. The *Orunmila* brings into motion either *OríṢà* (benevolent or angelic forces) or *Ajẹ* (malevolent or demonic forces). All communication with the *Òrún* is energized by invoking *Àṣẹ* (the essence of *Olódùmarè* that gives life to all). *Àṣẹ* is delivered by *Elégbara* (*EṢu*, the divine messenger) who, without distortion or partiality for good or for bad, negotiates communication to the *Òrún* and navigates *Òrún* forces to the *Ayé*.

6.4.3 Deities

Yoruba deity "Ogun", also known as "Ogoun" is present in the Candomble and Umbanda religions of Brazil.

Yoruba religion and mythology is a major influence in West Africa. Notable deities in Yoruba include Oya (wind/storm), "Ifa" (divination or fate), "Eleda" (destiny), Orisha or Orisa "Ibeji" (twin), "Ọsanyin" (medicines and healing) and "Osun" (goddess of fertility, protector of children and mothers), Sango (God of thunder)

Human beings and other sentient creatures are also assumed to have their own individual deity of destiny, called "Ori", who is venerated through a sculpture symbolically decorated with cowrie shells. Traditionally, dead parents and other ancestors are also believed to possess powers of protection over their descendants. This belief is expressed in veneration and sacrifice on the grave or symbol of the ancestor, or as a community in the observance of the *Egungun* festival where the ancestors are represented as a colorful masquerade of costumed and masked men who represent the ancestral spirits. Dead parents and ancestors are also commonly venerated by pouring libations to the earth and the breaking of kola nuts in their honour at special occasions. Today, many contemporary Yoruba are active Christians and Muslims, yet retain many of the moral and cultural concepts of the *Aborisha*. *Yòrùbá* Orishas, literally, owners of heads, are the means to get into contact with the supernatural. The term is often translated as deities.

6.4.4 Olodumare

Olodumare is perhaps the most important divinity. Olodumare is so important, that there can be no gender assigned to this God, for Olodumare is seen mostly as a spirit. Olodumare is therefore more correctly referred to as an IT. IT is the owner of all heads, for during human creation, Olodumare gave the *emi*, or breath of life to humans. To the Yoruba, Olodumare is seen as their supreme in god. If there was a conflict among the other Orishas IT would take over and the fight would end.

6.4.5 Irunmole

The *irunmole* were spirits sent by Olodumare to complete various tasks, often between *Orun* (the invisible realm) and *Aiye* (the physical realm).

Some were acknowledged as Orisha for their accomplishments. The orishas help to create and maintain order on earth.

Among the Yoruba, it is believed that everything written is okay but *Orisa* is different from *Irunmole*. Human beings can become *Orisa* if they performed extra ordinary tasks in the world before they died and went to heaven. But the *Irunmole* are numbered; they are not more than 401. The number cannot increase. They are the ones *Olodumare* (Supreme Being) gave the rights to care for the earth before the human beings came to the world. And they also thought us how to live life as we are living today. We are worshipping God through them. We are not worshipping Orisas, they are human beings like us. In Yoruba belief, human beings cannot be worshiped, but they can be honoured. We are honoring Orisas and our Ancestors. The number of Orisas would continue to be increasing as the world is existing. There is no English word for *Irunmole*; hence it is better to leave it as *Irunmole*, the servants of *Olodumare*, God, the Supreme being.

The *egun* are ancestral spirits who made transition, but are still placated to assist and guide one throughout life. The Yoruba believe in reincarnation, similar to the Indian *dharma* and *karma*. They sometimes name children *Babatunde* ("Father returns") and *Yetunde* ("Mother returns") to signal this belief.

6.5 Twins in Yoruba Society

The Yoruba have the highest ratio of twin births compared to single births in the world. Twins are very important for the Yoruba and they are often known for tending to give special names to each twin. The first of the twins to be born is traditionally named *Taiyewo* or *Tayewo*, (which means 'the first to taste the world'); this is often shortened to *Taiwo*, *Taiye* or *Taye*. *Kehinde* (sometimes shortened to *Kenny*), is the name of the last born twin. *Kehinde* (or *Kenny*) is sometimes also referred to as *Kehindegbegbon* which is short for *Omokehindegbegbon*, which means, 'the child that came last has become the elder of the two.'

6.6 Yoruba Calendar

Time is measured in *isheju* or *iseju* (minutes), *wakati* (hours), *ojo* (days), *ose* (weeks), *oshu* or *osu* (months) and *odun* (years). There are 60 *isheju* in 1 *wakati*; 24 *wakati* in 1 *ojo*; 7 *ojo* in 1 *ose*; 4 *ose* in 1 *oshu* and 54 *ose* in 1 *odun*. There are 12 *oshu* in 1 *odun*.

The Yoruba calendar (*Kojoda*) year starts from 3rd June to 2nd June of the following year. According to this calendar, the Gregorian year 2008 A. D. is the 10050th year of Yoruba culture. To reconcile with the Gregorian calendar, Yoruba people also measure time in seven days a week and four weeks a month.

6.7 Marital Process, Family and Kinship

For a man or woman who has reached the age of marriage to remain single is against the mores of the Yoruba. Men get married even when they are sexually impotent in order to save either their own faces or the

faces of their immediate relatives, as well as to get someone to look after the domestic establishment. There are a few cases of confirmed bachelors, men, who have reached middle age without getting married even though they are in a position to do so. In the olden days among the Yoruba, no person remained unmarried by choice after passing, say, the age thirty in the case of men and twenty-five in the case of women. The position in the case of women was made easier by the fact that polygyny is socially approved; so that a woman who was still unbetrothed at the age of twenty-five may be absorbed in the harem of some prominent polygynist.

Among the Yoruba, the prevalent form of human dwelling-place is a collection of apartments for individual families. These apartments together are known as the compound, or to the Yoruba as *agbo ile*. They consisted of two or more rooms for each family – polygynous or monogamous – and adjoin each other, with a common wall between adjacent apartments. Whether a family is polygynous or monogamous, wife, husband and children are found under one roof, i.e. in the compound of the husband's extended –family. Each wife is allotted a room. The husband generally has a room, while the children sleep either with their mothers, if they are of tender age or female, or in the verandah. Each family confines its attention to its own part of the compound; and each person is, as far as possible, autonomous in the management of his affairs. However, people outside the immediate family are interested in its members and their welfare. Children are at liberty to go from one part of the compound to another although a self-respecting parent might try to check any excesses of this. Also, a feeling of solidarity is very strongly developed among the members of a compound.

There are three types of kinship in Yoruba society; namely; blood kinship, kinship by marriage and non-legal secondary kinship. Blood kinship refers to all those to whom relationship by blood can be traced, both in the paternal line as well as in the maternal. Kinship by marriage extends to the most distant kinsfolk of the man or woman to whom one is married or betrothed. Non-legal secondary kinship is relationship neither by blood nor by marriage, but by the choice of either both parties or of one with the tacit concurrence of the other. Examples of the latter are cases of adoption of or of assimilation of redeemed slaves. In kinship terminology among the Yoruba, father is referred to as *baba*; father's father is called *baba nla* (great father) or sometimes *baba agaba*. Also, mother's father is addressed as *baba*. The same applies to mother's brother and other male collateral cousin. Father's mother is called *iya* when addressed or *iya agba* (senior mother) or *iya nla* (great mother). Also, mother's mother is called *iya* (mother) when addressed. In her absence, she is *iya agba* (senior mother), *iya nla* (great mother) or *iya iya* (mother's mother), according to the need of the occasion. Husband's father is *baba oko* in terms of reference, but plain *baba* when addressed.

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed the Yoruba as one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. In this study session, we covered areas like their cosmogonic origin, their pre-colonial existence, nature of their leadership, groups, organisations and leagues, their religious and belief system and as well as Yoruba calendar. We also discussed belief about twins in Yoruba culture.

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Web resources

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Study Session 7

The Nupe of Nigeria

Introduction

The Nupe people of Nigeria are an ethnic group found in the north central with a rich cultural heritage. In this study session, we shall focus on the origin of the Nupe people, their cultural identity, characteristics of the people, their religion, occupation, dressing, language tone, marriage, festivals, special body marks, etc.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Session, you should be able to:

7.1 *explain* the historical origin of the Nupe

7.2 *discuss* cultural identity and characteristics of Nupe people



7.1 Origin of the People

The Nupe kingdom was founded by Tsoede, alias *Edegi* who was born in 1465. The early Nupe history recognised Tsoede and his fundamental contributions to the building of Nupe dynasty. Tsoede was the son of a Nupe mother and an *Igala* father who was raised at the *Igala* court in *Idah* but later returned to his natal home in Nupeland. He returned with magical and symbolic regalia bequeathed to him by his father, the *Igalaking*. On his return to his maternal home, he gained control over the vast area of Nupeland and extended his kingdom by conquering the lands of neighbours as well. The people conquered were the Yoruba in the south and the *Kamberi* and *Kamuku* in the north. He founded *Nupeko* as his administrative capital and from there asserted his political might and authority in the entire Nupe kingdom. *Tsoede* passed away in 1591 in one of his military expansionist missions, north of the Nupe kingdom. Hence, *Nadel* refers to *Tsoede* as the culture hero and mythical founder of the Nupe kingdom.

The Nupe people have been recognised for their tremendous achievements in the history of the black race, according to valuable information from the work of the renowned anthropologist, Professor S.F. Nadel, the author of the *Black Byzantine*, who spent over 20 years in Nupe Land and spoke Nupe fluently in those hectic years of anthropological research. His adopted Nupe name was *Ndakotsu Nasara* (Etsu's grandfather, the white man).

The Nupe people have historical links with the Hausas of Katsina, Kano and Borno people. This is made evident with few examples. Both the

towns of Abajia and Egga have traditions which confirm that they were founded by men from Katsina. Boka was first settled by a man from Kano (Hausa: *Bakano* i.e. a Kano man), while Kutigi and Enagi became the homes of settlers from Borno whose origin gave the whole region its name, *Benu*. They are said to be specifically from *Kukawa*.

Despite the ever-increasing connection in social and commercial relationships, which gradually spread over Nupeland from the north, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Nupe culture, especially prior to the nineteenth century, was firmly linked to that of its neighbours across the River Niger. Due to overwhelming data on Yoruba history over that of other Nupe neighbouring tribes, such as *Igala*, *Gwari* and *Borgu* we can see through documentation and interactions of the long-term connection between Yoruba and Nupe. There is reason to accept the evidence, in this connection, of major shifts in population as well as the emigration of individuals and small groups. For instance, western Nupe had once been settled by Yoruba-speaking people who, it was gathered, as a result of integration moved to the south of the River Niger.

It has been interesting to note that historically, it is established that *Oranmiyan*, a descendant of *Oduduwa*, the founder of the Yoruba race, married *Elempe*, the daughter of the Nupe King. Their son was the powerful god of thunder *Sango*. Thus, he was half-Nupe, half-Yoruba. He later became the *Alaafin* (King) of Oyo Empire. After *Sango's* brother invaded the Nupe people during his reign as the king of Oyo, the Etsu-Nupe, known then to the Yoruba as *Lajomo*, fought back strongly and the evidence of that historical event could be traced to *Ede* and *Ilesha* and the conquest of Oyo Empire. However, events of the following years showed that the relationship between the Nupe people and, the Yoruba became to be cordial. This explains the introduction of *Egugu* into Yoruba land by the Nupe. Subsequently, with the introduction of Islam into Nupe land, it equally spread fast to the neighbouring Yoruba towns like *Offa* and *Ibollo* communities.

The Nupe people live in the heart of Nigeria, spread over the low basin formed by the two rivers, Niger and Kaduna, popularly referred to as *Edu* and *Lavun* respectively.

Before the Fulani conquest of 1804, the Nupe Empire has reached the height of its fame. Later developments brought the kingdom under the domination of the dynasty of the empire of *Gwandu* – after the Fulani conquest of the entire Hausa states. After the seizure of authority from the natives (non-Fulani rulers) in 1810, *Mallam Dendo* (locally called *Manko*), a Fulani scholar from *Bangana* (a village near Brinin Kebbi) established himself as the new leader. He thus moved the then Nupe capital from Rabato Bida. On the world map, Bida lies between latitudes 6°20' and 7°15' North of the Equator and longitudes 5°40' and 6°33' East of the Greenwich Meridian. This geographically places the area almost in the centre of Nigeria. Bida is generally regarded as the capital of Nupe land in Nigeria. Its rapidly increasing population is put presently at more than 600,000 people.

History has it that by 1352, the Nupe people were already settled in this location. Geographically, this location shares boundaries with the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in the South East of Bida and Minna towards

Suleja. While to the North, it shares boundaries with Zungeru and North West with Zugurma towards Kontagora. In the South West end of Jebba, it shares boundaries with Yoruba villages near Kabbain the West of River Niger towards *Okene* down to Lokoja. Hence, the Nupe people are spread over a large space in central Nigeria.

7.1.1 Cultural Identity

The Nupe people are called different names by various tribes in Nigeria. For example, the Yoruba refer to them as *Takpa*; the Hausas call them *Nufawa* (Plural) or *Banufe* (Singular). *Gwaris* refer to them as *Anupeyi*. The Nupe people refer to themselves as *Nupecizi* (Plural) and *Nupeci* (Singular). The Nupe comprises other related ethnic groups or sub-tribes; namely, *Beni, Benu, Kusopa, Dibo, Gana-Gana, Kakanda, Basa, Cekpan, Kede, and Kupa*.

7.2 Characteristics of Nupe people

Nupe people have diverse physical characteristics in relation to body appearance. Some are tall, others are of medium and short heights. Some people are very light, others are light and majority are dark skinned while some are extremely dark. Interestingly, a mixture of fat, but not too many obese people, is common; though, there are fat and strong agile-looking people too. A minority of the people are lanky and slim-shaped. Also, within the social and political engineering of Nigerian nation, the Nupe people have come along way. Apart from the historic feat of the founders of Nupe Kingdom, the present generations have continued to blaze the trail.

7.2.1 Language Tone

There is a remarkable difference in the language tone of the Nupe people that distinguishes individual's location in the zonal distribution of Nupe people. For instance, Nupe people around *Lafiagi/Pategi* and *Bacita* have a distinct tone from others. Similarly, the tone of Nupes from *Lapai* is clearly different from that of others from other zones. The same thing goes with the tonal expression of Nupes in *Lokoja, Muye, and Budan* areas. However, there is a common definition and understanding when the central Nupe tone is used.

In another perspective, the use of Nupe in its spoken term is pure. However, it is noteworthy that due to long time or centuries of intercultural activities between Hausas and Nupes, certain words seem to have been integrated into the lifestyle and certain expressions in Nupe culture. Most importantly too, the sharing of practices based on the common principles of Islam that is the predominant religion of the Nupes and subsequent Jihadist activities have left traces of language sharing and combination of Nupe and Hausa words. A similar trend is observed among the Nupes in *Lafiagi* and *the Igbomina Yoruba* in the South Western Nupeland. The inter-relationships are so deep that in some Yoruba villages in the *Igbomina* area, in certain ceremonies, a Nupe head presides with deep sense of respect for ancestral backgrounds of the two

groups. This is particularly significant, given the history of several families formed as a result of Yoruba –Nupe intermarriages.

7.2.2 Occupations

Nupe land is made up of an agrarian population, where the economy and social life revolve round agriculture. The people are active farmers. Major crops grown are rice, sorghum, sugar cane, millet, melon, vegetables, yam, homestead livestock management and fishing. Food processing is entirely done by women. Also, marketing of farm produce is in the hands of women. However, many people are civil servants, employed in government establishments only.

There are very few industries and private companies that employ the services of people. Despite the unique history of the Nupes, they have not had a fair share in national development. The commonest occupation in Nupe land is teaching. Most of the schools in various zones are predominantly handled by teachers of Nupe origin. Those around the riverside areas are predominantly fishermen and their wives are actively engaged in processing and selling of fish.

7.2.3 Dress

The indigenous Nupe dress like “*bente*”. Under wears have been replaced by modern pants and boxer shorts have replaced “*Ganpegi*” knickers. It is also significant to note that due to the common mode of worship in Islam which requires long dress for prayers, the Nupe people are found of using the same type of dress common with Hausa people especially the “*Babariga*” (big flowing gown) and “*Dan Kano*” (long dress) that is now regarded as “Senegalese” because of the “over size” pattern of the dress. Interestingly, the Nupe youths are highly sociable and adventurous. Due to the inter-state travels and sojourn of these youths in cities like Lagos, Kaduna, Ilorin and Minna, they have brought along the western mode of dressing, for instance, wearing jeans-trousers and shirts to match.

7.2.4 Food

A major staple food that is common to many households in Nupe land is rice. This is prepared either as *jollof rice* or in the form of *eje boci* (mashed) rice. The reason for this development is that majority of the farmers both within and around fadama lands (Low land marshy areas) which allow for the cultivation of rice, in communities like Jima, Doko, Edozhigi, *Bacita*, *Katcha*, *Gbara* etc have rice production as a major and profitable venture. This gives the reason why rice is a common feature in households’ diet in Nupeland. Another delicacy that goes with rice is fish. Both smoked and fresh fish are in abundance, especially from adjoining tributaries around Rivers Niger and Kaduna. All villages and towns around the bank of these rivers and other smaller rivers engage in fishing activities all year round.

It is a tradition in Nupe land to welcome visitors with delicious meals from rice and fish soup. Also, during ceremonies, such as naming or marriage as well as festivals like *Sallah* (end of Ramadan) *Id-El-fir* or *Id-Kabir* celebrations, rice feast is a common feature. Other food types include mashed meal “*eje boci*” which Hausas refer to as “*tuwo*” from –

sorghum, millet, and maize. These are served on alternate basis with beans, cooked yam, potatoes and *garri*.

Sometimes, beans is mixed with “*Yiwara*” (ground sorghum) or millet sprinkled on beans after conversion into paste form. Other common foods are porridge from millet, sorghum or maize called “*Kunu*”. This is consumed along with certain snacks like *akara* (bean cake), “*masa*” sorghum cake, “*mashe*” (early millet cake) or “*Dankuwa*” special confectionery from a combination of fried ground nut and maize and lastly *Kuli-Kuli* made from groundnut after extraction of groundnut oil, where the paste from that process is fried; this is popular with students as African “biscuit”. These snacks are very important in Nupeland because they facilitate “casual” eating especially among children when they like to soak *garri* and drink along with these snacks of interest. Most significantly, they are used to take breakfast when served as porridge. This also brings to focus, the consumption of “left over” (*Jekun*) that is cooked with fresh ingredients. *Jekun* is the second cooking of leftover food from previous supper. This left-over is from “*eje boci*” (mashed food) of rice, millet, sorghum or maize origin.

Several dishes are served with specific soups in Nupeland. Some of these soups are stew made of tomatoes with either meat, chicken or fish. It is good for all kinds of food; it goes with “*eje boci*”, white rice, yam, etc. Other soups are *Ezowa* (bean soup) significant for “*eje boci*” from rice and vegetable soup that is sometimes mixed with melon that is served along with “*eje boci*” rice. Others are *Ningbana* (from liquid ground sorghum). *Ningbana* is delicious if served with left-over (*Jekun*) second cooking of left-over food. Other common soups are from *Herbiscus Sobderifa* (*Calyx*) known as “*Emagi*”, Okro soup, Baobab leaf soup (*Kuka*) among others. One significant soup ingredient in Nupe land is “*Kula*” processed locust bean that is Nupe’s version of “*Dadawa*” (Hausa) and “*Iru*” (Yoruba).

7.2.5 Religion

Islam is the predominant religion in Nupeland, though Christianity is a common religion in very few communities where the pioneer activities of missionaries were recorded. Traditional religion was practised before the introduction of Islam. Therefore, traditional religion is no longer recognised nor practiced in Nupeland. Where such practices still exist, there is no societal recognition and practitioners are in secrecy due to shame, isolation and degrading status and the condemnation, which the practitioners are likely to face. Therefore, Islam is undoubtedly the predominant religion in the entire Nupeland with Christianity as the other religion practised by a lower proportion of the population. Hence, the majority of Nupe people have their culture altered with the introduction and acceptance of Islam.

The Nupe culture contained certain practices, which when viewed from Islamic perspective, were good and some which were bad. Those customs that were consistent with Islamic values were preserved and those that were contrary to Islamic principles were rejected. For example, the local custom recognizes the right and consent of the parents or guardians in the marriage of their children, Islam recognizes such aspects of the culture.

But if, on the other hand, the local custom encourages illicit relationship between sexes or other degrading practices which are unacceptable in Islam, such cultural norms or practices are rejected.

7.2.6 Marriage in Nupe Culture

Among the Nupes, marriage is a sacred institution which is contracted between a man and a woman. The two people involved are referred to as “*eba yawo and yawo*” meaning husband and wife.

In the earlier Nupe tradition, young boys and girls did not on their own choose who to marry. This arrangement was left for the two families to decide on behalf of their children. However, this has changed significantly over the last three decades. Young boys and girls now meet and agree with one another before they involve their parents. However, one thing is very clear, the practice follows mutual understanding, consent and approval of both parents. It is against this background that when the boy’s family wants to ask for the hand of a girl in marriage that is, express the desire to marry their daughter to their son, one of the elders or a family friend (*Rinna*) is sent on delegate mission to meet with the girl’s family. The *Rinna* is very important in Nupe marriage; he is the intermediary between the two families, though with paramount interest of the boy’s family.

At the inception of negotiations, the *Rinna* goes to see the girl’s family on a mission called “*Egi wa*” meaning seeking for marriage of a girl. This mission is accompanied with Kolanuts and some money as evidence. The girl’s family collects the items and a reply will follow sooner or later. This is marked by the distribution of these Kolanuts and money (no matter how little) to immediate family members and distant relations of the girl’s family announcing that their daughter Miss A is now blessed with a husband, which the family after due consultations and investigations will finally approve of.

The next stage now is for the *Rinna* to broadcast same to the boy’s family that mission has been accomplished, marking a good beginning. Therefore, the boy and his friends will now carry on a special visit called “*emisa*” (greetings) to the girl’s family to show appreciation for such approval. This visit affords members of the girl’s family to know their son – in – law. The period usually attracts a lot of jokes from older women in the girl’s compound who will claim to be the first wife, hence, a big challenge for their future bridegroom or son-in-law. In fact, some will even go ahead to assess in joking pattern, his completion, physique and handsome looks. That is not a problem, as majority of Nupe people have similar looks – handsome, sociable and peaceloving. In the post-jihadist movement, there has been no reported communal, religious, ethnic or political upheaval of any magnitude in Nupeland. Hence, Nupe people are models in peaceful coexistence.

The subsequent stages are related to the wedding plans. These start with the negotiation of “*Ewo yawo*” (bride – price) which differs from one Nupe zone to another but majority are in accordance with the tenets of Islam. After a specific amount is agreed upon, the *Rinna* ensures prompt payment and other charges are set aside like “*Godiyagi*” (small thanks) and “*Godiyako*” (big thanks). The amounts are used to show appreciation

to relatives and the girl's parents respectively. The later in addition to other resources the girl's parents can afford are used to acquire wedding gifts such as plates, cooking utensils, dresses and new cloths for their beloved daughter. Any sacrifice in this direction is not too much. This is because in Nupe custom there is a wise saying that "The daughter of a bride must also become a bride" many women look forward to this landmark event in their lives. When all the conditions are fulfilled and the girl reaches puberty and is assumed "matured" to undertake maternal responsibilities, the *Rinna* meets with the boy's family to decide on the month of the year they want the marriage ceremony. He then communicates this to the girl's family who will give approval after due consultations with other family members. Finally, a specific date is fixed in the approved month and the wedding proper is arranged.

On the night preceding the wedding date, the girl is formally initiated into marriage "*yawo rufadan*". This date in the 19th Century up to the early 20th Century is kept secret and the girl does not know about it. However, things have since changed, that not only are Kolanuts distributed to all well-wishers from both sides openly, but also, the introduction of invitation card in accordance with the dictates of modern civilisation presently characterizes Nupe marriage in the 21st Century.

On the wedding date, *Mu'alims* (Islamic scholars) are invited by the girl's parents to carry out the solemnisation of their children's wedding *fatiha* with representatives of the boy's family in attendance and other well-wishers present to bear witness and share the joy of the occasion.

After the pronouncement of the couple as husband and wife, celebrations follow all through the night. In some families, Islamic preaching is observed all night, while in a majority, beating of drums and folk songs are engaged in with well wishers joining the families in celebrations.

Late in the evening of the wedding *fatiha*, the new bride is prepared for the journey to her husband's home. She goes round relatives to bid them farewell, that emotional moment is not always easy for both the bride and the parents as tears and prayers flow freely. Others give her final counselling and guidance for a successful marriage life. Thereafter, parents finally handover the girl to *Rinna* (*yawogo*) and she is usually accompanied by a little girl and another married woman to her new home.

In the new home, she is received into a newly prepared room by the groom's family. Here, another round of celebrations continue for the next 24 hours. This time around, it is merry making galore and the atmosphere becomes charged with dancing and singing as the common feature. In the traditional age-old Nupe culture, this ceremony may last between 5-7 days. But nowadays, the entire ceremony is completed within 24-48 hours.

Several traditional practices in Nupe marriage have been jettisoned due to the enlightenment created by Islamic preaching and educational programmes.

In Christian communities, church wedding systems are adopted based on the teachings of each denomination. However, varying degrees of celebrations are observed in terms of entertainment and support by friends, family and well-wishers.

7.2.7 Festivals

The common festivals in Nupeland are:

- *Pategi Regata* – A colourful canoe festival on River Niger in Pategi.
- *Bariki* celebrations in Bida – The fifth day of *Sallah* festival of both *Id-fitr* and *Id-Kabir* celebrations in Bida. Each of this celebration lasts five days. The fifth day is marked with fun fare, where the Etsu-Nupe rides on a horse backed with all titleholders on ground to support the Etsu Nupe in a beautiful procession of horses. People come from far and near to watch this colourful event. The procession is from the Emir's palace in *Wadata* through the heart of the city to the Governor's lodge in (GRA) Government Reservation Area known as *Bariki* (Elite's residential area).
- *Gani* festival in Kutigi – Annual traditional boxing contest, where men display their strengths. A strong confident person comes out and challengers file out and he chooses who he feels like taking on. It normally attracts large crowds from different parts of Nupeland and beyond.

7.2.8 Entertainment

Nupe people are generally lively and happy people. They enjoy entertainment in the form of music. Traditional music with folksongs are prominent features during marriage ceremonies at both the bride's and groom's houses. It is an occasion where friends and well-wishers come over to dance and spend money to the praise singers as a clear demonstration of love and best wishes. In the past, women dominated praise singing in Bida areas, but men featured prominently in *Lafiyagi* area. The youths have captured the scene in Bida area in recent years with the emergence of *Nma Gongoni* and *Umaru Lanle's* group, *Babaminin* and *Ahmed Waka* groups. This type of music has been quite sensational and the attractive one to the youths is the *Angale* (narrow drum) construction that the sets are erected on the flow as *Angale* drums. However, the foundation of Nupe music is rooted in the original "*Eyan dukun*" (pot drum) and later "*Gbagurasa*" bigger drum that can be hung on the shoulder.

The woman who brought Nupe music to national and international recognition is late Hajiya Fatima Lolo. She was a delight to watch and she no doubt brought beauty and glamour into Nupe music with her spectacular performances at various national and international festivals. Some of these include the Kaduna Durbar and Festac 77. Also, the memory of her wonderful outing at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, still lingers on. She was succeeded by her supportive lieutenants like Hajiya Halima Bida, Hajiya Kulu Lafiagi, Hajiya Nnasha Emigubagi, Hajiya Nnasha Ewonko, Hajiya Kulu Kuchi, late Hajiya Nnadzwa Egwa and late Fatima Raba. The adult men in the trade are Ndayisah Kusomunu, Alhaji Sheshi Emigubagi and Ndanuwa Kpandaragi.

Finally, Nupe music has served as a motivator in-group farming in the past, where *Gbagurasa* drum is used to praise men in action at the farm level on competitive execution of farm operations. In recent years, it has proved to be popular social mobilisation tool. Recent experience in HIV/AIDS awareness campaign reveals that Nupe *Angale* Music is a viable tool for mobilising people for change in Attitude, Knowledge and Practices. This was demonstrated with *Nma Gongoni* and *Umaru Lanle's* group during an HIV/AIDS entertainment-education experiment in Bida Emirate. The result of such effort was mass awareness from 83.4% lack of knowledge of HIV/AIDS in pre-intervention assessment in 1998 to 100% awareness and knowledge of the disease in post-intervention assessment in the year 2000

7.2.9 Special Body Marks

In the past, apart from the facial marks that are still practised on a lower scale in some parts of Nupe land, other body marks are common. Some people still inflict body marks on their chests, shoulders and stomach. In the last decades women used to have tattoos but this custom is no longer practised.

One prominent mark is the neck mark that is associated with traditional treatment of sleeping sickness. It is believed that those who are not treated thus will be stunted in growth and sometimes could lead to mental illness. Now, this belief system is almost extinct as it is not common to see people with neck bandage or fresh neck incisions again as practised in the past. The Nupes bear facial marks of different cuts that range from single vertical marks on both sides of the cheek (*kpelle*) to three horizontal cuts (*eyagi*). Sometimes the three horizontal cuts have additional three smaller vertical cuts all on both sides of the cheek. However, some others especially, the Kutigi people have a distinct single-long cut on the forehead (*yegunla*) and sometimes, additional three to five cuts on the chin (*nungbe*).

7.2.10 Nupe Kingship Structure

It is good to understand the evolution of leadership structure in Bida, the undisputed headquarters of Nupe people in Nigeria. The traditional inhabitants of the ancient city (*Banin Bida*) were known as *Beni*. These were very powerful people with mystical powers (now overtaken by Islam). The original house of *Etsu-Yisa* was the palace of the leadership where the *Etsu* came from before the conquest of Nupe land by the Fulani rulers (*Goyizhi*) in 1804, who displaced the Bida Nupe leadership structure in early 19th century. The Fulani leader-*Mallam Dendo* (*Manko*) who became the new leader of this empire started it all. His son, *Usman Zaki*, became the first *Etsu Nupe* in 1832. There are three houses in Bida where *EtsuNupe* rotates. These are: (A) Usman Zaki House (B) Masaba House (C) Umaru Majigi House.

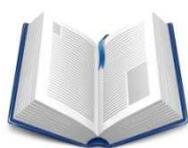
Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed the Nupe people of Nigeria. Areas where we concentrated on were their origin, their cultural identity, characteristics of the people, their religion, occupation, dressing, language tone, marriage, festivals, special body marks, etc. Finally, we admitted that with this, it is evident that the Nupes as a group of people have a very rich cultural heritage.

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Web resources

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Study Session 8

The Ibibio, Ijaw and Urhobo of Nigeria

Introduction

In this Study Session, three ethnic groups will be discussed. The first is Ibibio people. In this, their origin, political system, economy, religion and art will be discussed. The second ethnic group is the Ijaw. In this, their language, clan, economy, political system, life style and religious and cultural practices will be examined. The third ethnic group is the Urhobo. In this, the history, political system, culture, economy and religion of Urhobo people will be looked at.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Session, you should be able to:

- 8.1 *discuss* the economy and political system of the Ibibio
- 8.2 *explain* the lifestyle, religious and cultural practices of the Ijaw
- 8.3 *explain* the history and political system of the Urhobo people



8.1 The Ibibio People

Ibibio people (also known as **Moco** or **Moko** during slavery) are an ethnic group in southeastern Nigeria. They are closely related to the Annang and the Efik peoples. "Ibibio" may also refer to those who speak the Ibibio language. Ibibio was an ancient state in the old Calabar Kingdom. During colonial period in Nigeria, the Ibibio Union was formed asking for recognition by the British as a sovereign state (Noah, 1988)

8.1.1 Geography

The Ibibio people are found predominately in Akwa Ibom State and are made up of the related Annang community, the Ibibio community and the Eket and Oron Communities; although other groups usually understand the Ibibio language. Because of the larger population of the Ibibio people, they hold political control over Akwa-Ibom State, but government is shared with the Annangs, Eket and Oron. The political system follows the traditional method of consensus. Even though elections are held, practically, the political leaders are pre-discussed in a manner that is benefiting to all.

8.1.2 Origin

The Ibibio have lived in the Cross River area of modern day Nigeria for several hundred years, and while written information about them only exists in colonial records from the late 1800s on, oral traditions have them in the region much earlier than this. With common ancestors, the Ibibio also include the Annang and the Efik, Oron and Eket with combined population of over ten million. History has it that their ancestors were Egyptian Jews that resulted from the marriage of Israelites to Egyptian who migrated from Egypt through Ethiopia and Sudan into their present land via Ghana and Camerron.

"Ibio-ibio" means short or brief and doesn't have anything to do with height of the Ibibios. There are many areas in Ibibio land that have their dialectical differences. In some places family is called ekwere and ekpuk in other areas. Goat is called ibot in eastern Ibibio ikono (present day ikono local government area) but called eboto in others. Head is pronounced iwud in some areas but called ibuoto in others. Road is called okpo-di-ghe and usung in other places.

8.1.3 Colonial Period

The Ibibio people were located in the Eastern Nigeria of Nigeria under British rule. The Eastern region was split into three states (Southeastern State was where the Ibibio were located, one of the original twelve states of Nigeria) after Nigerian independence. The Efik, Annang, Oron, Eket and their brothers and sisters of the Ogoja District, where also found in the Southeastern state. The state (Southeastern State) was later partitioned into two states (Akwa-Ibom state and Cross River State).

The Ibibios are republican in nature. The issue of kingship in Ibibio is a modern day creation. First is the family head who oversees the family. After this is the village head; Ibibio is made up of villages though now there are towns like Uyo, Eket (a subgroup), Itu, Ibiaku, Ntok, Okpo etc.

8.1.4 Economy

The main economic staple in the region is the palm tree, the oil of which is extracted and sold to external markets. Among the Ibibio, those of the highest rank in the Ekpo society, Amama, often control the majority of the community wealth. The Amama often appropriate hundreds of acres of palm tree for their own use and ensure with the profits they earn that their sons achieve comparable rank, effectively limiting access to economic gain for most members of the community. The Ekpo society requires that its initiates sponsor feasts for the town, which fosters the appearance of the redistribution of wealth by providing the poor with food and drink. In effect, this allows the disparity in wealth to be perpetuated in Ibibio society.

8.1.5 Political System

Individual villages are ruled by a group of village elders (Ekpo Ndem Isong) and the heads of extended families. Their decisions are enforced by members of the Ekpo society who act as messengers of the ancestors

(ikan). Ekpo members are always masked when performing their policing duties, and although their identities are almost always known, fear of retribution from the ancestors prevents most people from accusing those members who overstep their social boundaries, effectively committing police brutality. Membership is open to all Ibibio males, but one must have access to wealth to move into the politically influential grades.

8.1.6 Religion

During the pre-colonial era Ibibio religion was based on paying tribute to the village ancestors. Failing to appease these ancestors will result in the wrath of the Ekpo society. The most important ancestors are those who achieved high rank while living, usually the house heads. They may control the fortunes of the descendants and are free to afflict those who fail to make the proper offering or those who fail to observe kinship norms. Ala is the earth deity and is appeased through Ogbom ceremony, which is believed to make children plentiful and to increase the harvest. It is performed in the middle of the year, every eighth day for eight weeks by each section of the village in turn.

During the colonial and post-colonial era, the Ibibios were introduced to Christianity through the work of early missionaries in the 19th century. Reverend Samuel Bill started his work at Ibeno. He established the *qua iboe* church which later spread places in the middle belt of Nigeria. The methodist church, the Roman Catholic church, and presbyterian church rode into the ibibio hinterland. Later, day churches were also introduced, for e.g. The Apostolic church, Independent churches, like Deeper Life Bible Church, came into the area in the second part of the 20th century. Today Ibibio people are predominately Christian area.

The Ibibio practiced the killing of twins before it was abolished during the colonial era, with help of missionary Mary Slessor. Twins born were taken to their communities local evil forest and left to die as it was a taboo for twins to be born. In places such as Ikot Antem, Ediene Usung Itu, Ikono local government area, such practices were common. This belief corresponds with the same taboo that has been previously found with the Igbo people.

8.1.7 Art

The masks and accouterments of the Ekpe society make up the greatest works of art in Ibibio society. Drumming and music are also important elements in Ekpe ceremonies. The wooden sculpture from this area is also very detailed, and artists are just as likely to capture beauty as they are the hideous forms of evil spirits.

8.2 The Ijaw

Ijaw (also known by the subgroups "Ijo" or "Izon") are a collection of peoples indigenous mostly to the forest regions of the Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States within the Niger Delta in Nigeria. Some are natives of Edo and Ondo states also in Nigeria. Many are found as migrant fishermen in camps as far west as Sierra Leone and as far east as Gabon

along the Western Africa coastline. They are believed to be some of the earliest inhabitants of southern Nigeria.

The Ijo people number about 9 million. They have long lived in locations near many sea trade routes, and they were well connected to other areas by trade as early as the 15th century.

The geographic conditions of the Niger Delta region have resulted in the Ijo being located astride trade routes throughout the region. Routes connecting them to other west African groups were established at least as early as the 15th century. In the 1600s the Ijo served as intermediary slave traders between Europeans and African groups to the north of them. Due to their central location, the Ijo have appropriated many outside ideas into their own expressive culture. This is most significantly expressed in Ijo fashion choices. In recent years many Ijo have moved to Port Harcourt in search of employment, but many of the wealthy still maintain residences in their homelands

8.2.1 Language

The Ijaw speak nine closely-related Niger –Congo languages, all of which belong to the Ijoid branch of the Niger-Congo tree. The primary division between the Ijo languages is that between Eastern Ijo and Western Ijo, the most important of the former group of languages being Izon, which is spoken by about four million people.

There are two prominent groupings of the Izon language. The first, termed either Western or Central Izon (Ijaw) consists of Western Ijaw speakers: Ekeremor, Sagbama (Mein), Ba ssan, Apoi, Arogbo, Boma(Bumo), Kabo (Kabuwei), Ogboin, Tarakiri, and Kolokuma-Opokuma (Yenagoa). Nembe, Brass and Akassa (Akaha) dialects represent Southeast Ijo (Izon). Buseni and Okordia dialects are considered Inland Ijo.

The other major Ijaw linguistic group is Kalabari. Kalabari is considered an Eastern Ijaw language but the term "Eastern Ijaw" is not the normal nomenclature. Kalabari is the name one of the clans of the Ijaw that reside on the eastern side of the Niger-Delta (Abonnema, Buguma, Bakana, Degema etc who form a major group in Rivers State, hence their involvement in the fight for greater oil control. Other "Eastern" Ijaw clans are the Okrika, Ibani (the natives of Bonny, Finima and Opobo) and Nkoroo. They are neighbours to the Kalabari in present day River State, Nigeria.

Other related Ijaw subgroups which have distinct languages but very close kinship, cultural and territorial ties with the rest of the Ijaw are the Epie- Atisaa clan, Engenni people and Udekama. These groups speak Delta-Edoid languages. The Ogbia clan, Andoni people, as well as residents of Bukuma and Abuloma (Obulom) speak Delta-Cross languages.

It was discovered in the 1980s that a nearly-extinct Berbice Creole Dutch Berbice, spoken in Guyana, is partly based on Ijo lexicon and grammar. Its nearest relative seems to be Eastern Ijo, most likely Kalabari (Kouwenberg, 1994).

8.2.2 Clans

The Ijaw ethnic group consists of 40 loosely affiliated clans. These clans are based along kinship lines and/or shared cultural and religious traditions.

The Ijaw were one of the first of Nigeria's peoples to have contact with the Europeans, and were active as a go-between in trade between visiting Europeans and the peoples of the interior, particularly in the era before the discovery of quinine, when West Africa was still known as the *White Man's Graveyard* because of the endemic presence of malaria. Some of the kin-based trading lineages that arose among the Ijaw developed into substantial corporations which were known as "Houses"; each house had an elected leader as well as a fleet of war canoes for use in protecting trade and fighting rivals. The other main occupation common among the Ijaw has traditionally been fishing and farming.

Being a maritime people, many Ijaws were employed in the merchant shipping sector in the early and mid-20th century (pre-Nigerian independence). With the advent of oil and gas exploration in their territory, some are employed in that sector. Other main occupations are in the civil services of the Nigerian States of Bayelsa and Rivers where they are predominant.

Extensive state-government sponsored overseas scholarship programs in the 1970s and 1980s have also led to a significant presence of Ijaw professionals in Europe and North America (so-called Ijaw Diaspora). Another contributing factor to this human capital flight is the abject poverty in their homeland of the Niger Delta Niger resulting from decades of neglect by the Nigerian government and oil-companies in spite of continuous petroleum prospecting in this region since the 1950s.

8.2.3 Political System

Peoples from eastern Ijo territory traditionally lived in compact villages and towns that were politically integrated through a system of chiefs who were family or clan heads. High status is normally awarded in accordance with elaborate hierarchical systems and often results only after payments have been made to those already holding titles. Peoples from western and central Ijo territory acknowledged no central political authorities until the British arrived.

8.2.4 Economy

The Ijo rely largely upon their relationship with the rivers and ocean for their survival. They depend on trading goods and fishing to supplement farming and hunting. Yams and processed palm oil are produced in large quantities for outside trade. Women normally participate in large market systems where people trade and sell wares for pleasure, as well as survival. Wealth is often redistributed through the institution of dowries. Usually bride prices paid to people outside the immediate community are larger, to compensate the bride's community for the loss of her children who will remain in the village of the husband. Those who live in Port Harcourt, the capital of the region, often work as professionals, traders, and civil service workers.

8.2.4 Lifestyle

The Ijaw people live by fishing supplemented by farming paddy-rice, plantains, yams, cocoyams, bananas and other vegetables as well as tropical fruits such as guava, mangoes and pineapples; and trading. Smoke-dried fish, timber, palm oil and palm kernels are processed for export. While some clans (those to the east- Akassa, Nembe, Kalabari, Bonny, Okrika and Opobo) had powerful chiefs and a stratified society, other clans are believed not to have had any centralized confederacies until the arrival of the British. However, owing to influence of the neighbouring Kingdom of Benin individual communities even in the western Niger Delta Niger also had chiefs and governments at the village level.

Marriages are completed by the payment of a bridal dowry, which increases in size if the bride is from another village (so as to make up for that village's loss of her children). Funeral ceremonies, particularly for those who have accumulated wealth and respect, are often very dramatic. Traditional religious practices center around "Water spirits" in the Niger river, and around tribute to ancestors.

8.2.5 Religion and Cultural Practices

Although the Ijaw are now primarily Christians (95% profess to be), with Catholicism and Anglicanism being the varieties of Christianity most prevalent among them, the Ijaw have elaborate traditional religious practices of their own. Veneration of ancestors plays a central role in Ijaw traditional religion, while water spirits, known as *Owuamapu* figure prominently in the Ijaw pantheon. In addition, the Ijaw practice a form of divination called *Igbadai*, in which recently deceased individuals are interrogated on the causes of their death.

Ijaw religious beliefs hold that water spirits are like humans in having personal strengths and shortcomings, and that humans dwell among the water spirits before being born. The role of prayer in the traditional Ijaw system of belief is to maintain the living in the good grace of the water spirits among whom they dwelt before being born into this world, and each year the Ijaw hold celebrations in honor the spirits lasting for several days. Central to the festivities is the role of masquerades, in which men wearing elaborate outfits and carved masks dance to the beat of drums and manifest the influence of the water spirits through the quality and intensity of their dancing. Particularly spectacular masqueraders are taken to actually be in the possession of the particular spirits on whose behalf they are dancing.

The Ijaw are also known to practice ritual acculturation (enculturation), whereby an individual from a different, unrelated group undergoes rites to become Ijaw. An example of this is Jaja of Opobo, the Igbo slave-boy who rose to become a powerful Ibani (Bonny) chief in the 19th century. Along with the Hebrew, they appear to be among the few living groups that carry out this practice.

8.2.6 Food Customs

Like many ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Ijaws have many local foods that are not widespread in Nigeria. Many of these foods involve fish and other

seafoods such as clams, oysters and periwinkles; yams and plantains. Some of these foods are:

- Polofiyai — A very rich soup made with yams and palm oil
- Kekefiyai— A pottage made with chopped unripened (green) plantains, fish, other seafood or game meat ("bushmeat") and palm oil
- Fried or roasted fish and plantain — Fish fried in palm oil and served with fried plantains
- Gbe — The grub of the raffia-palm tree beetle that is eaten raw, dried or pickled in palm oil
- Kalabari "sea-harvest" fulo— A rich mixed seafood soup or stew that is eaten with foofoo, rice or yams

8.2.7 Ethnic Identity

Formerly organized into several loose clusters of villages (confederacies) which cooperated to defend themselves against outsiders, the Ijaw increasingly view themselves as belonging to a single coherent nation, bound together by ties of language and culture. This tendency has been encouraged in large part by what are considered to be environmental degradations that have accompanied the exploitation of oil in the Niger delta region which the Ijaw call home, as well as by a revenue sharing formula with the Nigerian Federal government that is viewed by the Ijaw as manifestly unfair. The resulting sense of grievance has led to several high-profile clashes with the Nigerian Federal authorities, including kidnappings and in the course of which many lives have been lost.

One manifestation of ethnic assertiveness on the part of the Ijaw has been an increase in the number and severity of clashes between Ijaw militants and those of Itsekiri origin, particularly in the town of Warri.

8.3 The Urhobo

The **Urhobo** are a people of southern Nigeria, near the northwestern Niger River delta. The Urhobos are the major ethnic group in Delta State; the Delta State is one of the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They speak Urhobo, a language in Niger-Congo group. The Isoko and Urhobo are related in language and culture, leading to the missionaries erroneously labelling both peoples as Sobo. This name was strongly rejected by both tribes. The Urhobo nation is made up of twenty sub-groups, including Okpe^[1] the largest of all Urhobo sub-groups. The Urhobos are noted for having their own unique style of speaking Nigerian Pidgin English. Since their language is very demonstrative that translates into their style of speaking English and Pidgin English. As a result of their unique language style, their names are also unique. An example of a unique Urhobo name would be the name Onaodowan, belonging to the Onaodowan family from Warri.

8.3.1 Location

A bulk of the Urhobo people reside in the south western state of Delta in Nigeria also referred to as the Niger Delta. Many live in the Ughelli local

government region and in Warri and Ethiope, and in Okpe and Sapele Local Government Areas. Their language is also called Urhobo is believed to share similarities with the neighbouring Benin or Edo tribe.

8.3.2 History

Although the exact origin of the Urhobo peoples is not known, they are closely related to their immediate neighbors based on linguistic and cultural similarities. Urhobo oral history is contradictory in that it claims that their origins are related those of the Bini, but at the same time indicate that they are not Bini people. Other connections are made to the Igbo, Isoko, and Ijo. Since the Bini, Igbo, and Ijo all have cultural systems, which are distinct from one another, the notion that the Urhobo somehow emerged from all three seems doubtful.

8.3.3 Political System

Urhobo political authority is based on kinship groups, age-grades, and title associations. At one time Urhobo leaders (ivie) were officially installed by the Oba of Benin. Those who had achieved sufficient status within their community would travel to the Oba, who would endow them with ceremonial swords and insignia that would add weight to their quest for power among their kins people.

8.3.4 Culture

The Urhobos live very close to and sometimes on the surface of the Niger river. As such, most of their histories, mythologies, and philosophies are water-related. They have an annual fishing festival that includes masquerades, fishing, swimming contests, and dancing. There is also an annual, two-day, Ohworu festival in the southern part of the Urhobo area at which the Ohworhu water spirit and the Eravwe Oganga are displayed. The king in an Urhobo village is called the Ovie. His wife the queen is called Ovieya and his children Omo Ovie (child of the king). Often nowadays, these names are also given to children without royal heritage by their parents. A number of Urhobo sub-groups have other titles other than Ovie, for example, the Okpe call their traditional ruler Orogje and Olomu call theirs Ohworode and Okere-Urhobo theirs Orosuen.

The Urhobo produce numerous art forms, including freestanding sculptures (Ivwri), a type of wooden sculpture that is popularly associated with the cult of the hand, and masks and masquerading

8.3.5 Food

As with most tribes in Nigeria, a certain food is considered to belong to, or originate from, a particular tribe as in pounded yam and egusi soup from the Igbos, Eba and Ogbono soup (sometimes referred to as Ogbolo soup by people of Esan or Etsakor descent). For the Urhobos, there are two foods considered Urhobo in nature. They are: Ukhodo (a yam and unripe plantain dish sometimes cooked with lemon grass and potash) and Starch (actual name of this staple is not often used) and Owo soup. The starch is made from cassava plant. It is heated and stirred into a thick mound with oil palm added to give the starch its unique orange-yellow colour. The Owo soup is composed of smoked or dried fish, unique

spices, potash and oil palm juice. Other palm nut oil soups include *amiedi* or *banga*, which is also eaten with starch and or *garri*.

8.3.5 Economy

Living in the tropical rain forests has helped to shape the economic choices of the Urhobo. They practice slash and burn farming that requires frequent crop rotation for soil preservation. Fishing and hunting are also important sources for subsistence. They also gather palm nuts and process them into oil, a commodity which is eventually traded on the international markets.

8.3.6 Religion

The Urhobo recognize the existence of a dual cosmological system: the spirit world and the physical world. It is believed that everyone in the physical world has a replica in the spiritual world and that these two worlds have great influence over one another. Power, however, seems to be in the hands of the spirits, who are constantly making demands on and causing problems for the living, who in turn must appease the spirits through sacrifice. Every ten years the Urhobo hold a large masquerade ceremony for the entire community to honor the spirits (edjo).

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed three ethnic groups which include Ibibio, Ijaw and Urhobo. We discussed the origin, political system, economy, religion and art of the Ibibio. Also, the study session examined the history, language, clan, economy, political system, life style and religious and cultural practices of the Ijaw. Finally we discussed the history, political system, culture, economy and religion of Urhobo people.

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Study Session 9

Social Change and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Nigeria

Introduction

In this Study Session, we will discuss social change and inter-ethnic relations with specific reference to Nigeria. We will discuss the meaning of social change, sources of change, types of change and factors affecting ethnic relations in Nigeria.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Session, you should be able to:

- 9.1 discuss the concept of inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria
- 9.2 explain the sources of change in Nigeria
- 9.3 enumerate the types of social change in Nigeria
- 9.4 discuss the factors affecting ethnic relations in Nigeria



9.1 Inter-Ethnic Relations in Nigeria

Everything in the society changes, including the society itself. Social change can involve changes in ideas, subsystem, institution, or structure, person's lifestyles and human population. By definition, social change refers to significant alteration of social structure including consequences and manifestations embodied in norms, values and other cultural products, symbols, etc. We can also define social change as significant alteration over time in behavioural pattern and culture including norms and values. Social change can also be described as a total modification in society's dominant culture. Therefore social change is change in the structure and functioning of social relationship of society. It has been said that the only thing *constant* in human society is *change*. At this point it will be pertinent to state that when we talk of social change, it is the people that make up the society that change not the society itself because society is an abstract phenomenon which cannot be seen nor touched. Rather people are changing in the ways they talk, dress, eat, think, greet, sleep etc. That is people are changing in their way of life (culture)

No culture, however isolated from outside influence, adjusted to its environment and conservation in its outlook is truly stable and unchanging. Social change for the most part occurs gradually and without

design. The process of change is continuous in time and place. All societies change. The mode of change can be evolutionary or radical. When it is evolutionary, it maintains certain elements or characteristics with new one being introduced. Radical change usually involves fundamental changes in the structure i.e. subsystem, institutions, and persons, of the society. Such a change usually marks a radical departure from the past or formal system,

to the new structure or system which becomes dominant.

9.2 Sources of Social Change

There are different sources of change. There are internal sources and external sources. The internal sources include population, ideology technology, education and innovation, while external sources include diffusion and acculturation.

9.2.1 Population

This is one of the sources of change. As population changes, the society also changes. For example, over the years the Nigerian population has increased from a little over 88.5 million people in 1991 to over 140 million since 2006. This too has affected all other components of the Nigerian society. For example more schools and other infrastructural facilities are needed and indeed have to be established/provided to cater for the needs of the growing population.

9.2.2 Ideology

This has to do with changes in ideas. Ideology refers to people's beliefs on how things ought to be. For example, in the past, people believed that women should not work outside the home but presently this idea has changed tremendously to the extent that women have been elected into positions of power and authority. Changes in the status women may not be by design but may due to do circumstance society found itself. With rapid economic development in modern society, it has become inevitable that women (wives) have to pick up formal jobs outside their home to earn income to supplement whatever the husbands would bring home.

9.2.3 Technology

This is one of the most important sources of social change. This has to do with the technique of production. As technology changes the material base of the society also changes. For example, in the past people used crude/simple implements to farm thus engaging in the subsistent agriculture. However, today people use modern implements to farm. Even in the recent times, the prevalence of computers, internet services, Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) and other forms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have changed the Nigerian society as more and more people are being employed in the communication sub-sector. Also changes in technology have also led to the establishment of more industries.

9.2.4 Education

Education is another notable source of change in every society. Education is the deliberate and organised transmission of values, knowledge and skills. For this to be made possible in modern society schools are established to give formal learning to people. The formal learning compliments the informal education individuals receive at home. Formal learning has become very useful in meeting the challenges of modern societies. It has become the major force in the re-orientations of the attitude and value of individuals.

9.2.5 Innovation

Innovation refers to the process of introducing an idea or object that is new. There are two forms of innovation, namely; discovery and invention. A discovery involves making known or sharing the existence of an aspect of reality. The sharing of any new found knowledge with others is significant factor in the process of discovery. An invention, on other hand is the process that results, when existing cultural items are combined into a form that did not exist before. Examples are computers, democracy, internet, etc

On the other hand, the external sources are include the following:

9.2.6 Diffusion

This is a process whereby the ways of life of a group of people become influenced by other people's ways of life, either because they live close to each other or because they have traded with each other over a long period. Also diffusion means the exchange of cultural traits from one society to another. Diffusion can occur through a variety of means including, exploration, military conquest, missionary work, the influence of mass media and tourism.

9.2.7 Acculturation

This is related to diffusion. It refers to the adoption of new traits or pattern in the course of cultural contact. It is usually the way one learns from another and thereby enriches its life. Therefore acculturation is deliberate imitation of other people's way of life, for example, the use of "weave on" by some Nigerian girls and women. This is more deliberate than diffusion but it involves external influences.

9.3 Types of Social Change

Several types of social change exist. They include political change, cultural change, economic change, institutional change and changes in person, or groups of individuals in the society.

9.3.1 Political change

This often involves change of government, new regimes, new policies, and at times the system of governance i.e. from military to civil rule, or from parliamentary to presidential system of government.

9.3.2 Cultural change

This involves change in artefacts, mode of dressing, architecture, dancing, rituals, taboos, etc. Cultural change often involves changes in social life of the people, in terms of social aggregates, communal living, segregation, individualism, collectivism, etc. For instance, in the 1960s and 1970s wearing of trouser was not common among young ladies, infact people used to frown at ladies doing this, but today most people have not only accepted as a way of life but are actively encouraging young ladies to wear trouser because it makes them to look 'smart'.

9.3.3 Economic change

This at times involves changes in the production base of the society, such as industrialization with the advent of new technology. This can lead to new tastes for goods and services, high inflation or low inflation, capital markets and increase in demand and supply in the society.

9.3.4 Religious change

This often involves change in the belief system of the people. For example, from African Traditional religion, to Islam or Christianity etc.

9.3.5 Educational change

This may involve changes within the educational system itself whether formal or informal, or Arabic system of education. It can involve change in the curriculum or new system of learning, such as the 6-3-3-4 system of education being introduced in Nigeria.

9.3.6 Institutional changes

These usually involve change in the institutions of society such as new form of marriage, i.e. from traditional to Christian or church marriage, changes in the family set up, from an extended dominant system to the nuclear type especially in urban areas, and other forms of social networks within the kinship and family system.

All the ethnic groups discussed previously had undergone changes in their culture and way of life.

9.4 Factors affecting Inter-Ethnic Relations in Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society with over 374 ethnic groups and sub-ethnic group. Some of these ethnic groups included but not limited to: Afemai, Agbassa, Annang, Anwain, Aro people, Atyap, Aulliminden, Awori tribe, Baggara Arabs, Bariba people, Berom people, Buduma people, Chamba people, Damakawa, Defaka, Ebira, Edda tribe, Edo people, Efik people, Egba tribe, Eket, Ekoi people, Ekpeye people, Eleme people, Emai people, Esan, Etsakor people, Filipinos in Nigeria, Fon people, Gokana kingdom, Gwari, Hausa people, Hausa-Fulani, Ibibio people, Idoma people, Igala, Igbo people, Ijaw people, Ikpide, Ikwerre people, Isoko people, Itsekiri, Jukun people, Kanuri people, Kilba, Kiridi, Kofyar, Kurtey people, Longuda, Maguzawa Hausa people, Mumuye,

Ngizim people, Nkoroo people, Nupe people, Ogoni people, Ogugu, Oron people, Saros, Tarok, Tiv people, Ukelle people, Urhobo, Wodaabe, Yerwa Kanuri people, Yewa tribe, Yoruba people, and Zarma people.

More often inter-ethnic relations between and among these ethnic groups have been characterized by conflict and crises. Some of the factors that have brought about these conflicts and crisis are discussed below.

9.4.1 Religious Bigotry

Religion has been defined as man's relationship with external being. In Nigeria, there are three main religions; namely African Traditional religion, Islam and Christianity. The last two are foreign based religions and they have a lot of adherents. Within these two main religions, there are numerous denominations and sects, each claiming to present the only way to worship God. Over the years, religious bigotry by these religious adherents has resulted in acts of senseless killing of people all over Nigeria especially in the Northern part of the country. The politicians have manipulated religious differences between the various ethnic groups in Nigeria to achieve their narrow and personal interest. This has created mutual suspicion and distrust between and among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

9.4.2 Illiteracy

Most Nigerians are still not literate enough. That is the number of those who have acquired formal education is still small compared to those without formal education in Nigeria especially in rural communities. Education performs very useful functions in the lives of individuals and the nation at large. For instance, a person who is educated is likely to see things in a relatively broadminded way unlike a person without a formal education. For a person who is an illiterate, the person is more amenable to ethnic manipulation by the politicians than a person who is educated.

9.4.3 Fear of Domination

Nigeria has three major ethnic groups namely Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. It is important to note that since independence these three ethnic groups have dominating the economic and political landscapes to their own advantage and nearly exclusion of other minority groups. Other ethnic groups have been reacting and protesting this perceived domination and marginalization. Their fear is centered on the fact that if they do not protect their language and culture, these may go into extinction.

9.4.4 High Rate of Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment is very common and widespread in Nigeria. Unemployment has remained the common feature of the Nigerian labour market. Unemployment in Nigeria is one of the most critical problems facing the country. Available data from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) indicate that the unemployment rate in Nigeria, in the age bracket 15 to 64 years stood at 5.30 percent at the end of 2006, an improvement over the 11.90 percent recorded in 2005. Nigerian youths are facing myriad challenges, but the government does not seem to pay attention to their plights. Many of those who dropped out of secondary school (and

those who managed to pass through) lack the skills to compete in the rather weak economy and tight labor market. These unemployed youths have used repeated by the politicians to fan the embers of ethnic conflict and clashes in Nigeria.

9.4.5 Natural Endowment and Quest for Resource Control

Nigeria is a country endowed with different natural resource. For instance, in the North, ground nut is being produced, in the South west, cocoa, in the North central area of Jos, tin, in the South east, coal and oil palm. The south-south region of Nigeria, produces crude oil. Before and immediately after the independence, each region depended on the mineral resource produced in its area to develop its region. However, after the Nigeria civil war the country started to depend exclusively on the exportation of crude oil as its major foreign revenue earner. The region producing the crude oil felt that the activities of the multinational oil companies operating in the area have devastated the environment with little or visible development in the region. This perceived injustice has resulted into Youth militancy, kidnapping and other criminal activities in the region thereby heightening mutual ethnic suspicion and crises in the region and other parts of Nigeria. This has brought the youths of the regions into collision course with the security agents and the Nigerian State in general.

9.4.6 Clandestine Activities of the Ruling Class

The ruling classes especially the politicians and the military had at various times manipulated the ethnic differences to achieve their political ambition. They had manipulated the ignorance, illiteracy and joblessness of the youths in order to achieve their clandestine political goals. Because Nigeria a multiethnic and multi religious country the politicians and the military had exploited the differences in culture and religion in their attempt to legitimize their position. They have adopted divide and rule tactic to further their political nest and raise the tempo of ethnic and religious suspicion among the people. The incidence of June 12 election allegedly won by late M KO Abiola, a Yoruba, was exploited by the politicians and the ruling military class to further divide and polarize the Nigerians. The ethnic and tribal undertone and coloration the struggle to actualize the annulled June 12 election later took showed that most the ruling class could exploit the slightest difference to further their political interest.

9.4.7 Widespread Poverty

Poverty refers to the condition of not having the means to afford basic human needs such as clean water, nutrition, health care, education, clothing and shelter. Most people in Nigeria are poor. This includes relative and absolute poverty. Poverty is prevalent in the Nigeria and has been linked to degradation of agricultural lands and environment, lack of job, past years of mismanagement of the nation's economy, corruption etc. This is especially in the rural areas of Nigeria. Affected people became impoverished. In many cases, they tend either to migrate to

become part of the urban poor or to remain in their villages to grapple with the low yielding lands and poor sources of water. When people are poor they are vulnerable to all kinds of manipulation. In other words, they will become willing tools in the hands of politician to perpetuate all kinds of ethnic violence just for a token. The ruling class over the years had manipulated the desperate situation of the hapless Nigeria to achieve their aim. In the North part of the country which poverty is very rampant, the adolescent roaming the streets have been used by the politician to achieve their political goals.

9.4.8 Corruption

Corruption is very endemic in Nigeria. This obviously covered very aspect of Nigeria including religion, political, economic, education and bureaucracy. Because most people who perpetuate corrupt practices are mostly those in exalted political offices, only few resources are left for the development of the nation. The struggle for this few available resources has pitched one ethnic group over another.

However, despite the above named factors that have affected the ethnic relations in Nigeria, there are other factors that have bonded the people together. Some of the factors are:

9.4.9 Common Colonial Experience

All the ethnic groups in Nigeria were united in the fight against colonialism. That spirit which they used continued to bind them together even after the independence. They see themselves as one people bound together by a common destiny. All the nationalists that fought the colonial masters came from various ethnic background such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Chief Ernest Ukoli, Tafawa Belwa, etc.

9.4.10 Armed Forces

Members of the armed forces had intervened at very crucial times to keep the country together. Although there have debates on whether their involvement actually polarised the country or united the country. For instance, some scholars have argued that most of the problems Nigeria have today could be traced to the military intervention in the politics in 1966. No matter the opinion, the activities of the Nigerian military to keep the nation as one during the Nigeria civil war should be applauded. Also, the Gowon's administration even after the war declared that there was no victor, there was vanquish.

9.4.11 Federal Character and Quota System

The federal character and quota system as venues created by the Nigerian government to ensure that all Nigerians from various parts of the country are given sense of belonging in their fatherland. With this employment in the federal ministries, agencies and parastatals from Grade level 08 and above must reflect the federal character. Also, political appointment into federal cabinet must reflect federal character. Similarly, admission into Unity Colleges and federal higher Institutions must reflect the quota system so as to given all the candidates from each state opportunity to be

represented. Although scholars have criticized these measures as promoting mediocrity, nonetheless this has helped to redress the issue of perceived marginalization and allay the fears of domination thereby keeping Nigeria as one indivisible entity.

9.4.12 National Symbols and Institutions

The national symbols like the national anthem, the Pledge, the National Flag, and the coat of Arms serve to unite the Nigerians irrespective of their ethnic and religious affiliations. When people stand up to salute the national flag, sing the national anthem and recite the national pledge, they are reaffirming their collective desire to remain as one indivisible country. Also, some schemes like the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) which was started in 1973 has been an attempt to unite the nation by making the youths graduating from higher institutions in Nigeria to undertake a one year compulsory service in other localities and states other than their own. With this the youths are to learn and appreciate other people's cultures and ways of life as a way of uniting the people. Furthermore, the federal universities and unity schools are all established to foster national unity and integration. In addition to this, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) serves to propagate and enlighten the masses on the need for peaceful co-existence.

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed the concept of social change. We defined social change as a significant alteration of social structure including the consequences and manifestations embodied in norms, values and all other cultural practices of the society. The lecture also identified the sources of change to include population, ideology, technology, education, innovation, diffusion and acculturation. Furthermore, the lecture also examined type of change which included political change, religious change, educational change and institutional change. The lecture also identified and discussed the factors affecting the inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria.

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