



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

COURSE CODE: PAD 302

**COURSE TITLE: TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN
NIGERIA**

MAIN COURSE

PAD 302- TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Module 1: The Kanem Bornu Empire

- Unit 1: Background Of The Kanem Bornu Empire
- Unit 2; Kanem- Bornu As An Empire
- Unit 3; Organisation Of The Kanem- Bornu Empire
- Unit 4; The Last Phase Of The Kanem- Bornu Empire
- Unit 5; The Sefawa Dynasty

Module 2: The Hausa and The Fulani.

- Unit 1: Emergence Of The Hausa And The Fulani.
- Unit 2: Growth And Organisation Of The Hausa And The Fulani.
- Unit 3: Some Outstanding Hausa Rulers.
- Unit 4: Fulani Conquest Of Hausaland

Module 3:The Yorubas

- Unit 1: The Origins Of The Yoruba
- Unit 2: Rise And Expansion Of Oyo
- Unit 3: Government Of Oyo
- Unit 4: Strength And Survival Of Oyo
- Unit 5: Decline Of Oyo

Module 4: The Empire Of Benin

- Unit 1: The Origins Of The Benin
- Unit 2: The Rise Of The Benin
- Unit 3: The Cultural Heritage Of Benin

Module 5; The Ibo And The People Of The Niger Delta

- Unit 1: The Origin Of The Ibo
- Unit 2: Ibo System Of Government
- Unit 3: Origin Of The Niger Delta
- Unit 4: The Peoples Of Southern Nigeria.

MODULE 1: THE KANEM BORNU EMPIRE

UNIT 1: BACKGROUND OF THE KANEM BORNU EMPIRE

TABLE OF CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of the emergence of the Kanem Bornu Empire. In this study unit therefore, we shall discuss historical background of the Kanem Bornu Empire, the peoples of the and the notable early rulers of the Empire.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) trace the historical background of the Kanem Bornu Empire
- ii) identify the peoples of Kanem Bornu Empire
- iii) mention and discuss the contribution of early important rulers of Kanem Bornu Empire

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE KANEM BORNU EMPIRE

The historical background of the kanem bornu empire is very uncertain. According to the so-called Kisra legend, Kanem was founded by a prince called Kisra and his followers who migrated to the east of Lake Chad from eastern Africa. It is believed that the westwards movement of Kisra and his people took place as a consequence of, and sometime after, the destruction of the city of Meroe (in the present-day Republic of the Sudan) by the people of Axum (in Ethiopia) in about A.D.350.

Archaeologists have unearthed several historical remains in Kanem, which seem to point to the influence of Moroe. But historians are cautious about the implications of such similarities of culture, since each area could have developed them independently.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Trace the history of Kanem Bornu Empire.

3.1.1 Who were the peoples in Kanem-Bornu?

Some of the early peoples of the Kanem area were the following;

1. The So – The So people were the original inhabitants of the area.
2. The Zaghawa – A group of early settlers in Kanem were the Zaghawa. They were a nomadic people, and are believed to have immigrated from eastern Africa in early times, and to have settled to the east of the lake, in about the eighth century A.D.
3. Kanuri or Kanembi –Another important group of people in the kingdom of Kanem were the Kanuri or the Kanembi.
4. The Bulala – Some of the later arrivals into the kingdom were Bulala.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Trace the composition of the people of the Kanem Bornu Empire.

3.1.2 Early Important Rulers

The following are the famous rulers who, each in his turn, helped to lay the foundations of the future great empire of kanem-bornu.

1. The first known Mai (or ruler) who ruled these early settlers as a united people was Dugu; he founded the Sefawa dynasty in about A.D. 774. His capital was at N'jimi, situated to the north-east of Lake Chad.
2. The next ruler of importance, after Dugu, was the tenth Mai, called Umme Filmi who reigned from about 1085 to 1097. He was the first Sefawa king to be converted to Islam. Like other Sudanese Muslim rulers, he made an important pilgrimage to Mecca. And even though he died in Egypt, on his way to Mecca, he had attracted the attention of the Islamic world to his growing kingdom.

3. Umme was followed by his son, Mai Dunama 1 (c.1097-1150), another important ruler. During his long reign this powerful ruler made three religious visits to the home of Islam attracted the attention of the Muslim world. Islam began to exercise considerable influence on the social, political and economic life of the growing Kanuri kingdom.
Dunama 1 introduced into his kingdom a number of Muslim scholars and administrators who helped to run the empire. The king's pilgrimages also encouraged the growth of trade.
4. Another king of importance whose reign saw a remarkable expansion in the size of the kingdom was Dunama 11 (1221-59), who added several territories. He is said to have had a formidable calvary, consisting of about 30,000 men. Among his great military achievements was the successful war fought against the strong Tebu (or Teba) people, a struggle which lasted for about seven years. By the close of his reign this great ruler had extended his empire as far north as the Fezzan. He thus commanded control of trade with Tripoli. To the south he controlled the fertile area of Mabina which is now Adamawa. To the west, his influence spread as far as Kano, in Hausaland, and to the east his domain included Wadai.
5. But Dunama 11's uncompromising efforts to make Islam the state religion antagonised the majority of his people who would not give up their ancestral religions. This situation weakened the unity of the empire.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the historical background and the general overview of the emergence of the kanem bornu empire.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Trace the contributions of the early rulers of Kanem-Bornu Empire.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that the largest natural lake in the Western Sudan is Lake Chad. It is fairly shallow, but from time immemorial, the lake has helped the economic and, in consequence, the political development of the people living near it. To the east of the lake emerged, in about the ninth century, a kingdom comprising several petty states, this, over a period of time, developed into the great Kanuri empire. For many years, what came to be officially known as the Kanuri empire was made up of two parts, separated by the lake. Kanem was in the east, and Bornu on the west of the empire. Kanem served as the centre of the empire for many years, but in the fifteenth century, the seat of government shifted to Bornu in the west.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the historical background and general overview of the emergence of the kanem bornu empire.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a brief historical development of the emergence of the kanem bornu empire.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise 1

The following are the famous rulers who, each in his turn, helped to lay the foundations of the future great empire of kanem-bornu.

1. The first known Mai (or ruler) who ruled these early settlers as a united people was Dugu; he founded the Sefawa dynasty in about A.D. 774. His capital was at N'jimi, situated to the north-east of Lake Chad.
2. The next ruler of importance, after Dugu, was the tenth Mai, called Umme Filmi who reigned from about 1085 to 1097. He was the first Sefawa king to be converted to Islam. Like other Sudanese Muslim rulers, he made an important pilgrimage to Mecca. And even though he died in Egypt, on his way to Mecca, he had attracted the attention of the Islamic world to his growing kingdom.
3. Umme was followed by his son, Mai Dunama 1 (c.1097-1150), another important ruler. During his long reign this powerful ruler made three religious visits to the home of Islam attracted the attention of the Muslim world. Islam began to exercise considerable influence on the social, political and economic life of the growing Kanuri kingdom.
Dunama 1 introduced into his kingdom a number of Muslim scholars and administrators who helped to run the empire. The king's pilgrimages also encouraged the growth of trade.
4. Another king of importance whose reign saw a remarkable expansion in the size of the kingdom was Dunama 11 (1221-59), who added several territories. He is said to have had a formidable calvary, consisting of about 30,000 men. Among his great military achievements was the successful war fought against the strong Tebu (or Teba) people, a struggle which lasted for about seven years. By the close of his reign this great ruler had extended his empire as far north as the Fezzan. He thus commanded control of trade with Tripoli. To the south he controlled the fertile area of Mabina which is now Adamawa. To the west, his influence spread as far as Kano, in Hausaland, and to the east his domain included Wadai.

5. But Dunama 11's uncompromising efforts to make Islam the state religion antagonised the majority of his people who would not give up their ancestral religions. This situation weakened the unity of the empire.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2; KANEM- BORNU AS AN EMPIRE

TABLE OF CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of the emergence of the Kanem Bornu as an empire. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with the historical background of the Kanem Bornu as an empire.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) trace the historical development of the Kanem Bornu as an empire
- ii) outline contributions of Ali Ghaji to development of Kanem Bornu
- iii) outline contributions of Idris Katakarmabe to development of Kanem Bornu
- iv) outline contributions of Mai Idris Alooma to development of Kanem Bornu

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE KANEM- BORNU AS AN EMPIRE

The historical background of the kanem bornu empire as an empire is very uncertain.

3.1.1 New Capital

The long struggle resulted in the collapse of the first Kanuri empire and the removal of the capital from N'jimi to the west of Lake Chad, in the land of Bornu.

This occurred under Mai Umar ibn Idris (c. 1384-8). Situated to the south-west of the lake, N'gazargamu became the new capital. It was established by Mai Ali Ghaji. It remained the capital of the Kanuri empire down to 1812, when it was destroyed by the Fulani jihadists.

3.1.2 Ali Ghaji

The first important ruler in the new capital was Ali Ghaji (c.1472-1504). The records indicate that he was really responsible for the transformation of the kingdom into strong Kanuri empire.

The contributions of Ali Ghaji include the following:

- i) Ali Ghaji first crushed all internal opposition and stopped the civil wars which had plagued the kingdom for many years. He raised a permanent army which maintained internal law and order.
- ii) Having built up a strong army, Ali turned his attention to the neighbouring states which had been causing much trouble. By the close of his reign he had made Bulala in the east, Tibesti in the north, and Kano in the west into tributary states. Because of these successful conquests, he earned the title El Ghazi, meaning "the warrior"
- iii) Next, Ali Ghaji re-organised the administration of the growing empire more efficient. A fervent Muslim, the Mai made use of Islam as a unifying force, and Islamic laws and practices were introduced into the administration.
- iv) Ali also contributed to the economic growth of the empire by encouraging trade. Through her trading connections Bornu became known in distant places. It appeared on a Portuguese map drawn about the year 1487.

3.1.3 Idris Katakarmabe

Idris Katakarmabe succeeded Ali Ghaji in 1504. He and his son continue the work of his predecessor and increased the prestige of the empire.

- i) Shortly after his accession, Idris invaded Kanem and reduced the Bulala to submission. His attempt to take Kebbi in Hausaland was, however, unsuccessful.
- ii) Katakarmabe renewed diplomatic relations between his country and North African countries, including Tripoli. Friendly relations with these countries were important for the encouragement of trade.
- iii) Before his death in 1526, he had to renew his campaigns against the Bulala. He succeeded in bringing their ruler Dunama ben Salma, to the point of submission.

3.1.4 Mai Muhammad and Mai Ali

Idris was succeeded by Mai Muhammad (1526-45). He completed the total victory over the Bulala, and extended his conquests to the northern city of Air, then under the Songhai empire. The control of Air brought Kanuri into undisturbed commercial contact with northern Africa. The next king was Ali (1545-8). He was a mediocre ruler, and became involved in indecisive wars with the people of Kebbi.

The contributions of Idris Alooma including the following:

- i) After a period of about twenty-five years when feeble and incompetent rulers sat on the Kanuri empire came to power. His name was Idris, known after his death as Idris Alooma (c.1571-1617). He was named after Aloo, a marshy place near modern Maiduguri, where he met his death on one of his many military campaigns. We know more about his reign because of the detailed accounts of his work recorded by the chroniclers.
- ii) Alooma's reign was preceded by disputes over the succession. On the death of his father Idris, his son by Amsa, a daughter of a Bulala king, was a teenager. His mother managed to protect him from the plans of the rival adult claimants to the Kanuri throne, Mai Dunama and Mai Dala. After Mai Dala's death in 1573, the Magira Aisha usurped power in Bornu. Civil war followed, which lasted for about seven years, until Idris could be installed king.
- iii) Soon after assuming power, Idris sent an embassy to Tripoli, where he obtained muskets and a band of musketeers. He also obtained the best Arab horses and camels. With the help of these superior forces, he subjugated rebellious vassal states.
- iv) Idris extended the empire by further conquests. The areas brought under his control included the So stronghold of Damasak, Bilma, the Tuareg district of Air in the north and Mandara in the south, as well as other important places. He defeated the Tatala, a warlike people settled near Lake Chad.
- v) Idris also reformed the administration of his empire, basing all his reforms on Islamic principles and thus enhancing the greatness of the empire.
- vi) A devout Muslim, Idris made Islam the state religion, and introduced Islamic law.
- vii) Like the Muslim rulers in Mali and Songhai, Idris attracted many celebrated Muslim scholars and lawyers, who assisted him as teachers, administrators,

counsellors and judges. Some of these Muslim experts were posted to the provinces as governors. The qadi or Muslim magistrates tried most cases which in the past had been tried by traditional law.

- viii) In the ninth year of his reign, Idris made a pilgrimage to Mecca. He acquired a hotel in the Holy City for his people visiting Arabia on pilgrimage.
- ix) The contacts which Idris made with the Islamic world, including Turkey, helped to increase the prestige of his empire. He himself was regarded with great respect throughout the Muslim world. Addressing himself to an embassy which the Turkish emperor sent to Bornu, Ibn Fartua, the Kanuri chronicler of Idris recorder the following words; O, my wise friends and companions; have you ever seen a king who is equal to our Lord [Idris] at such a moment?
- x) Idris died when returning from an expedition in a marsh called Aloo. When he died;
 - a) He had expanded the Kanuri empire to its widest extent;
 - b) He had Islamised all aspects of life in the empire;
 - c) He had made his empire widely known and respected throughout the Muslim world in Africa, Asia and Turkey.
 - d) He left Kanuri at the peak of its power and prosperity. His reign coincided with the decline and fall of the Songhai empire.
- xi) The fame of Idris Aloomaa did not end with his death, but persisted down to the nineteenth century. The German explorer, Heinrich Barth, visiting Bornu in the mid-nineteenth century, testified to the greatness of Idris Aloomaa in the following words; ' Altogether Idris Aloomaa appeared to have been an excellent prince, uniting in himself the most opposite qualities; warlike energy combined with mildness and intelligence; courage with circumspection and patience, severity with pious feeling" The achievement of Idris Aloomaa were such that he deserves to be counted among the great men in history.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the general overview of the emergence of the Kanem Bornu as an empire.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Outline the contributions of Mai Ali Ghaji (1472-1504) to the growth of the Kanuri Empire.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show a general overview of the emergence of the kanem bornu as an empire. The century and a half following the death of Dunama 11 (from the middle

of the thirteenth century to the end of the fourteenth century), was a period of internal conflict between the aborigines, the So, and the Kanuri, in which the So killed as many as four of the Kanuri kings in succession. The Bulala were also very troublesome.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of the emergence of the kanem bornu as an empire.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a brief historical background of the kanem bornu empire as an empire .

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Ali Ghaji

The first important ruler in the new capital was Ali Ghaji (c.1472-1504). The records indicate that he was really responsible for the transformation of the kingdom into strong Kanuri empire.

1. Ali Ghaji first crushed all internal opposition and stopped the civil wars which had plagued the kingdom for many years. He raised a permanent army which maintained internal law and order.
2. Having built up a strong army, Ali turned his attention to the neighbouring states which had been causing much trouble. By the close of his reign he had made Bulala in the east, Tibesti in the north, and Kano in the west into tributary states. Because of these successful conquests, he earned the title El Ghazi, meaning " the warrior "
3. Next, Ali Ghaji re-organised the administration of the growing empire more efficient. A fervent Muslim, the Mai made use of Islam as a unifying force, and Islamic laws and practices were introduced into the administration.
4. Ali also contributed to the economic growth of the empire by encouraging trade. Through her trading connections Bornu became known in distant places. It appeared on a Portuguese map drawn about the year 1487.

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UNIT 3: ORGANISATION OF THE KANEM- BORNU EMPIRE

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of the organisation of the Kanem Bornu Empire. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with the organisation of the kanem Bornu Empire.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) trace the historical background of the organisation of the kanem bornu empire.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 ORGANISATION OF THE KANEM- BORNU EMPIRE

The Kanuri Empire lasted for over a thousand years. As can be expected, during this long period institutions of government underwent changes. However, the following may be regarded as an outline of how the vast empire was organised, when at the peak of its power.

3.1.1 Political Organisation

1. At the head of the central government was the Mai, or the king. He was regarded with such great awe that he did not show himself in public, expect on two great

annual festivals. Otherwise he remained always hidden behind a curtain, even when receiving guests.

2. Next in importance was the Magira, or queen mother who controlled the domestic arrangements of the royal court. Some of these Magira became so powerful that they had great influence over and occasionally vetoed the decisions of the Mali. Another influential person was the Gumsu, the first or eldest wife of the king.
3. In the early period of the Kanuri empire, Bornu passed through a feudal phase, when the king ruled indirectly through feudal lords. These men were very powerful. They collected taxes in kind from their subjects, which were then passed to the imperial treasury.
4. The Mai was assisted in the administration of the empire by a state council of twelve men drawn from the royal family. As well as a number of great officials. When the Mai was weak the council of state had considerable power over the state affairs.
5. The empire was divided up into four provinces. These were;
 - (a) The North, headed by the Yerima;
 - (b) The South, headed by the Kaigama, who was also Commander-in-Chief;
 - (c) The East, headed by the Mestrema, who was also warden of the king's household
 - (d) The West, headed by the Galadima;
 - (e) These provincial rulers also served as leaders of the four main divisions of the imperial army.

3.1.2 Military Organisation

1. As noted above, for the purposes of political administration, the empire was divided up into four provinces. These divisions corresponded to the military divisions into which the imperial army was organised. The provincial governor was the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of his territory.
2. Under each provincial leader were a number of commanders, called the Kacella.
3. The Mai himself had a bodyguard.
4. In the reign of Idris Alooma the Mai introduced arms and military instructions from Turkey. The instructors helped to build up formidable armed forces for the empire.

3.1.3 Judicial Organisation

1. The imperial high court of justice was presided over by a chief justice who ranked second in the empire. He was known as the Mainin Kanendi. Working with the Mainin Kanendi were twelve other judges.

2. The third most important person in the realm was the Talba. His official duty was to keep the records of the high court.
3. Members of the high court were, as to be expected, very learned in the Koranic law. As such, they advised the Mai on most legal and religious matters.
4. Besides the high court, there were local courts in all the important towns in the empire. These courts were presided over by local judges versed in Islamic law and justice. People could appeal from the local courts to the high court of justice.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the historical background of the organisation of the kanem bornu empire.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the three main types of organisation of the kanem bornu empire.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that the organisation of the kanem bornu empire lasted for over a thousand years, despite that there is changes in the institutions of government at this empire.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of the organisation of the kanem bornu empire.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a brief historical development of the organisation of the kanem bornu empire.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Political Organisation

1. At the head of the central government was the Mai, or the king. He was regarded with such great awe that he did not show himself in public, expect on

two great annual festivals. Otherwise he remained always hidden behind a curtain, even when receiving guests.

2. Next in importance was the Magira, or queen mother who controlled the domestic arrangements of the royal court. Some of these Magira became so powerful that they had great influence over and occasionally vetoed the decisions of the Mai. Another influential person was the Gumsu, the first or eldest wife of the king.
3. In the early period of the Kanuri empire, Bornu passed through a feudal phase, when the king ruled indirectly through feudal lords. These men were very powerful. They collected taxes in kind from their subjects, which were then passed to the imperial treasury.
4. The Mai was assisted in the administration of the empire by a state council of twelve men drawn from the royal family. As well as a number of great officials. When the Mai was weak the council of state had considerable power over the state affairs.
5. The empire was divided up into four provinces. These were;
 - 4 The North, headed by the Yerima;
 - 5 The South, headed by the Kaigama, who was also Commander-in-Chief;
 - 6 The East, headed by the Mestrema, who was also warden of the king's household
 - 7 The West, headed by the Galadima;
 - 8 These provincial rulers also served as leaders of the four main divisions of the imperial army.

Military Organisation

1. As noted above, for the purposes of political administration, the empire was divided up into four provinces. These divisions corresponded to the military divisions into which the imperial army was organised. The provincial governor was the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of his territory.
2. Under each provincial leader were a number of commanders, called the Kacella.
3. The Mai himself had a bodyguard.
4. In the reign of Idris Alooma the Mai introduced arms and military instructions from Turkey. The instructors helped to build up formidable armed forces for the empire.

Judicial Organisation

1. The imperial high court of justice was presided over by a chief justice who ranked second in the empire. He was known as the Mainin Kanendi. Working with the Mainin Kanendi were twelve other judges.

2. The third most important person in the realm was the Talba. His official duty was to keep the records of the high court.
3. Members of the high court were, as to be expected, very learned in the Koranic law. As such, they advised the Mai on most legal and religious matters.
4. Besides the high court, there were local courts in all the important towns in the empire. These courts were presided over by local judges versed in Islamic law and justice. People could appeal from the local courts to the high court of justice.

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UNIT 4: THE LAST PHASE OF THE KANEM- BORNUEMPIRE

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of the last phase of the kanem bornu empire. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with the last phase of the kanem bornu empire.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Trace the historical background of the last phase of the kanem bornu empire.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 THE LAST PHASE OF THE KANEM- BORNUEMPIRE

The last phase of the Kanuri empire was similar to that of Songhai, after Asika the Great. After Idris Alooma's death, there were three rulers who made some efforts to maintain the empire as the great Mai had left it. They did not have the ability however to improve on his work. These three rulers were Mai Muhammad 11 (1617-32), Mai Ibrahim (1632-9), and Mai Ali ibn Omar(1639-57)

1. Like Daud in Songhai, Mai Ali ibn Omar did his best to revive the declining power of the Kanuri empire. He maintained Kanuri's international reputation and the

diplomatic links which Idris Alooma had established. His work meant that the empire remained comparatively strong until the end of the eighteenth century.

2. Yet, throughout this period, Kanuri was not the powerful empire it had been under Idris Alooma. Although Bornu escaped the Moroccan invasion of the Western Sudan, she was affected by the general unrest and disorder which followed that invasion, and her trade suffered as a result.
3. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, Tuareg attacks on the empire became more frequent. Several vassal states began to assert their independence. The army was no longer strong. Indeed, the entire army of the last important Kanuri king, Mai Ahmad (1793-1810) perished in a military campaign against the Mandara in the south of the empire.
4. There were also internal conflicts in the eastern part of the empire. These divisions further weakened the empire, which reverted to the two separate states of Bornu and Kanem.
5. The old ties which linked the two sections of the empire did not, however, completely break apart. In 1808, when the Fulani jihadists attacked Bornu and drove the ruler Mai Ahmad from the capital N'gazargamu, in the east of the empire came across to the rescue of the west. His name was Muhammad Al-Kanemi.

(a) Muhammad Al-Kanemi had two advantages.

1. He was a great soldier, who could stand up against the Fulani commanders.
2. A devout Muslim, he adhered to a strict form of the religion. He could therefore argue convincingly against Uthman dan Fodio, his correspondence with dan Fodio's son, Muhammad Bello, he argued against the intentions of the Fulani, saying that, far from adulterating Islam, Bornu practised the purest form of the faith, and therefore needed no external reformer.

(b) When Mai Ahmad died, Al-Kanemi became the Sheik or Shehu of Bornu and ruled the territory until his own death in 1835. The new line he established replaced the Sefawa dynasty, which had lasted for about a thousand years.

(c) Under Al-Kanemi Bornu came into her own again. To the Shehu may be attributed the following achievements;

1. He carried out religious reforms, and made Islamic education compulsory in Bornu;
2. He built his own capital at Kukawa, which thus replaced N'gazargamu;
3. He made strenuous efforts but could not completely restore the frontiers of the ancient Kanem-Bornu empire.

6. Al-Kanemi was succeeded by his son, Umar (1835-80), who had a very long reign.
- (a) He tried hard to maintain and expand his kingdom, but he was not entirely successful.
 - (b) This was so because he encountered many difficulties. Chief among these were the following;
 - 1. He had to keep in check provincial rulers who wanted to revive the Sefawa dynasty;
 - 2. He was preoccupied with his own brother, Abd Al-Rahman, who was plotting to secure the throne for himself;
 - (c) He was also subject to the whims of some court officials who controlled his policy.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the general overview of the last phase of the kanem bornu empire.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write a brief account of the three rulers who made some efforts to maintain the empire as the great Mai had left it.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Assess the importance of Muhammad Al-Kanemi as an African leader.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

1. Muhammad Al-Kanemi had two advantages.
 - a. He was a great soldier, who could stand up against the Fulani commanders.
 - b. A devout Muslim, he adhered to a strict form of the religion. He could therefore argue convincingly against Uthman dan Fodio, his correspondence with dan Fodio's son, Muhammad Bello, he argued against the intentions of the Fulani, saying that, far from adulterating Islam, Bornu practised the purest form of the faith, and therefore needed no external reformer.

2. When Mai Ahmad died, Al-Kanemi became the Sheik or Shehu of Bornu and ruled the territory until his own death in 1835. The new line he established replaced the Sefawa dynasty, which had lasted for about a thousand years.
3. Under Al-Kanemi Bornu came into her own again. To the Shehu may be attributed the following achievements;
 1. He carried out religious reforms, and made Islamic education compulsory in Bornu;
 2. He built his own capital at Kukawa, which thus replaced N"gazargamu;
 3. He made strenuous efforts but could not completely restore the frontiers of the ancient Kanem-Bornu Empire.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses shows the efforts put in place by the three different rulers who made some efforts to maintain the kanem bornu empire as the great Mai had left it and in wish they did not have the ability however to improve on his work.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of the last phase of the kanem bornu empire.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Outline the contribution of Muhammad Al-Kanemi to development of

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UNIT 5: THE SEFAWA DYNASTY

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
3.1.1 THE SEFAWA DYNASTY
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general historical background of the Sefawa dynasty. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with the Sefawa dynasty.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- trace the historical background of the Sefawa dynasty.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE SEFAWA DYNASTY

As the records show, the Sefawa dynasty started in about A.D. 774 and lasted until 1810, more than a millennium. It was one of the longest lasting dynasties in world history. Outlined below are some of the reasons which historians give when explaining this phenomenon.

But we ought to consider these factors cautiously, since most of them, taken isolation, could apply to the history of other kingdoms and empires ruled by successive dynasties.

1. History shows that many dynasties fail to last long because of court intrigues, and disputes over the succession. The Kanuri empire was fortunate in that these occurred only very rarely in its long history.
2. It often happens that either because of natural causes, or because of an assassination, the rightful royal direct line dies out, and a new dynasty emerges. The Kanuri empire was spared this misfortune.
3. The location of a kingdom may also help to explain the length of life of its dynasty. Unlike the empire of Ghana, Mali and Songhai, which flourished in the heart of the Western Sudan, and which therefore had to face the constant threat of aggressive neighbours, the Kanuri empire, being in the extreme east of the territory, was not threatened by strong neighbours for a very long time. The relative tranquillity resulting from this helped the ruling dynasty to survive.
4. Added to the advantage just described was the fact that the Kanuri empire was blessed with a number of outstanding rulers who enjoyed long reigns. Notable examples, as we have seen, were the following; Dunama 1 (53 years), Dunama 11 (38 years), Ali Ghaji (32 years), Idris Katakarmabe (22 years), Mai Muhammad (19 years), and Idris Alooma (32 years). One effect of these long reigns was that the kings were able to consolidate their hold on the throne and prepare peacefully for their heirs to succeed them. There were very few attempts to replace these rulers, in spite of their long reigns because on the whole they concerned themselves with the development of the empire and the well-being of the people.
5. For a long time the vigorous trade of the empire meant that there was general prosperity. The people naturally attributed this situation to the kings who presided over them, and therefore saw no reason to overthrow their dynasty.
6. The fact that most of the rulers were closely involved with the cause of Islam and based their government on Islamic principles was also important. This practice, as we have seen in the case of other Sudanese empires, won for the empire and the rulers the respect and goodwill of the Islamic world.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the historical background of the Sefawa dynasty.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Why do you think the Sefawa dynasty lasted so long?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses showed that the Sefawa dynasty started in about A.D. 774 and lasted until 1810, more than a millennium and it was one of the longest lasting dynasties in world history and the reasons for this was explained by the historians.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general historical background of the Sefawa dynasty.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Why do you think the Sefawa dynasty lasted so long?

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Outlined below are some of the reasons which historians give when explaining this phenomenon.

But we ought to consider these factors cautiously, since most of them, taken isolation, could apply to the history of other kingdoms and empires ruled by successive dynasties.

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MODULE 2: THE HAUSA AND THE FULANI.

UNIT 1: EMERGENCE OF THE HAUSA AND THE FULANI.

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of the emergence of the Hausa and the Fulani. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with the historical background of the Hausa and the Fulani.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- trace the historical background of the Hausa and the Fulani.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 EMERGENCE OF THE HAUSA AND THE FULANI.

The Hausa land, before 1804, was made up of fourteen towns grouped into two. The first group of seven was called Hausa Bokwoi while the other group of seven was called Banza.

The Fulani took over the political leadership of the Hausa or Habe states in the early 19th century. The Jihad that preceded this occupation was seen as religious as well as political.

Othman Dan Fodio led the Fulani Jihad and took over the political leadership of the Hausa/Habe and established the Sokoto caliphate with outstanding centralized political system of government. He introduced a new system of selecting and appointing rulers described as Emirs to rule the caliphate. Each of the Emirs owed allegiance to Dan Fodio and his two representatives at Sokoto and Gwandu.

The Fulanis settled in Hausa land and intermarried with the Hausa people after conquering them and this was how the name Hausa-Fulani came about.

There are conflicting legends about the founding of the Hausa states. As is the case with several other early Muslim kingdoms of the Western Sudan, the later chroniclers whose accounts have reached us trace the origin of the Hausa to the Middle East, seat of Islam. The Kano Chronicle records that the people of Hausaland came originally from Baghdad. It is said that a certain Bayajidda emigrated from Baghdad to Kanem-Bornu. The precise date is not given. Though Bayajidda was privileged enough to marry the daughter of the Kanuri ruler, later developments in the kingdom forced him to flee westwards.

He first stayed at Biram-ta-Gabas, where his wife bore him a son. He left his family there and came to Daura, where he was said to have performed a great feat, killing a sacred snake, "Sarki" which had for years deprived the people of water from a well, except on Fridays.

In appreciation of this deed, the Queen of Daura married Bayajidda. Out of this union was born a son called Bawo. Later this Bawo-magari had seven children, who became the founders of the original Hausa states, called Hausa Bokwai.

3.1.3 Original Hausa States

1. The original Hausa states are believed to have been named after the founders. These were;
 - (a) Biram and Daura, said to be the earliest settlements;
 - (b) Katsina and Zaria, founded by twin brothers respectively;
 - (c) Kano and Rano, founded by another set of twin brothers, and
 - (d) Gobir founded by the youngest of the seven brothers.

2. Although, as time wore on, these became independent, for mutual benefit each of the founders assumed special duties.
 - (a) Gobir, the youngest, became the Sarkin Yaki, or war leader. As his state lay to the north, he assumed the responsibility of warding off attacks of the Tuareg
 - (b) Kano and Rano supervised the rich indigo industry.
 - (c) Zaria became the Sarkin Bayi, responsible for obtaining slaves.
 - (d) Daura and Kastina controlled trade and commerce.
 - (e) However, as time went on, each became more and more independent, but they never completely broke off their ties of affinity.

3.1.2 Another Seven Hausa States

The Hausa traditions records that another set of seven states emerged some time after the first seven were founded. These new states were collectively known as the Banza Bokwoi. They were; Kebbi, Zamfara, Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Ilorin and Kwararafa (or Jukun). Some historians hold that these new states were not pure Hausa, but were founded by the offspring of pure Hausa Bokwoi kings and their concubines. But this theory has not been proved.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the general overview of the emergence of the Hausa and the Fulani.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Write an account of the origins of the Hausa States.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that much of what we know about the early history of the Hausa comes from the celebrated Kano Chronicle, and a few other chronicles relating to the Hausa states. But although, as Sir Richard Palmer says in the Sudanese Memoirs, the ' Kano Chronicle offers precious evidence of states of the Hausa people that flourished in what is now Northern Nigeria in the late Middle Ages and long afterwards, it is important to note that the chronicle was written much later than the events it describes.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the historical background of the emergence of the Hausa and the Fulani.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Give a brief historical development of the origins of the Hausa States.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Original states

The original Hausa states are believed to have been named after the founders. These were;

Biram and Daura, said to be the earliest settlements;

Katsina and Zaria, founded by twins brothers respectively;

Kano and Rano, founded by another set of twin brothers, and

Gobir founded by the youngest of the seven brothers.

Although, as time wore on, these became independent, for mutual benefit each of the founders assumed special duties.

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Kano and Rano supervised the rich indigo industry.

Zaria became the Sarkin Bayi, responsible for obtaining slaves.

Daura and Kastina controlled trade and commerce.

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UNIT 2: GROWTH AND ORGANISATION OF THE HAUSA AND THE FULANI.

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of the emergence of the growth and organisation of the Hausas and the Fulani. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with the emergence of the growth and organisation of the Hausas and the Fulani. In this study unit, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the general overview of the emergence of the growth and organisation of the Hausas and the Fulani.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- trace the historical background of the emergence of the growth and organisation of the Hausas and the Fulani.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 GROWTH AND ORGANISATION OF THE HAUSA AND THE FULANI.

Each unit was a city state which comprised the walled capital and its immediate surroundings, and the neighbouring district consisting of villages and hamlets. Some

states grew stronger than the others. Among the leading states were Kano, Zaria and Kastina. By the eighteenth century Kastina had become not only a great centre of Islamic learning in Hausaland but also a great trade terminus. Visiting Hausaland in 1851, the German explorer, Heinrich Barth, recorded his impression as follows; Kastina during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seems to have been the chief city of -- -- Negroland and as well in commercial and political importance as other aspects. As could be expected, not all the fourteen states in Hausaland developed the same institutions. However, there were many which were common to most of the states.

3.1.1 Political Organisation/Political Administration

The Fulanis introduced centralized system of government after conquering the Hausa land. This gave rise to the Hausa- Fulani traditional or pre-colonial system being known as a centralized government.

The Caliphate was divided into emirates and each emirate was headed by an Emir. He had the responsibility of making laws, enforcing them and maintaining peace and order in his emirate. He was expected to administer the emirate in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic and sharia laws. He was believed to have the divine right to rule.

However, each emir was assisted in the administration of the emirate by a number of advisers. These were:

Sarkin Fada:- The spokesman of the Emir and organizer of palace workers.

Waziri:- The Prime Minister of the Emirate

Galadima:- The Administrator of the capital city.

Madawaki"- The commander and Head of the Emirate Army.

Magaji:- Government Treasurer in-charge of the government treasury.

Sarkin Dan Doka:- Inspector General of Police Force Called Dan Doka.

Sarkin Ruwa:- Minister in-charge of Water Resources.

Sarkin Pawa:- Head of Chairman of Butchers at the Abattoirs

Yari:- Chief Superintendent of Prisons in the Emirate

From the start, each Hausa state grew around the original settlement or principal trading centre of the area. As time wore on, many neighbouring smaller settlements

came under the control of the ruler in the principal city, which thus became the capital and chief market centre for the area.

Largely because of political and trading rivalries, each principal city was, generally, walled for protection against external attacks. Together with the surrounding communities over which it had influence, the principal city became the centre of an independent city state similar to those which existed in ancient Greece.

At the head of the city state was the Sarki, or king, who had under him many subordinate local rulers who were, in some cases, members of the royal family.

As noted above, there was no uniform system of government throughout Hausaland. But there were common characteristics. Under the over-all authority of the Sarki, the machinery of state was run by a number of important state officials. Typical of the officials in a Hausa state were the following;

The Galadima; he was often the heir but in some states he was always a eunuch; he was left in charge of the capital when the king was away from his seat of government. The Sarkin Fada, who was the chief official of the royal household sat with the Sarki to hear grievances.

The Madawaki (in some places known as the Waziri); as Commander-in-Chief, he ranked next after the Sarki. In many ways his position was like that of the modern prime minister. He advised the king on many important state matters, including the appointment to important positions. He summoned councillors to meetings. He replied to the Sarki's address on ceremonial occasions.

The Magaji; he was in charge of the state treasury.

The Yari; he was in charge of prison affairs.

Other state officials were;

The Sarkin Dogari, who was in charge of the king's bodyguard, and

The Sarkin Yan Doka, who headed the police, and kept in custody suspected criminals awaiting trial. He was also responsible for administering punishment to convicted persons.

Although each city state was independent, and there never really existed in Hausaland what today would be described as a federation, the city states developed certain ties which bound them together. This was found convenient for the purposes of collective protection against external enemies.

The chronicles record that many states had priest-kings. When from the late sixteenth century Islam was firmly established, the Sarki exercised great powers. But they could not become absolute rulers, because in most states, like Kano, from the time of Rimfa, the council of state could check the Sarki's official actions.

3.1.2 Administration of justice/Judicial Administration

The judicial administration of Hausa-Fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called Sharia. Sharia courts were established through out the Emirates and each was headed by a trained Sharia Court Judge called Alkali. The Emir, despite this provision, remained the head who had the final say in deciding critical judgments.

The chief justice of the Sharia courts was called Grand Khadi. Village heads settled minor disputes in their villages but more serious and criminal cases were referred to the Emir for final and adequate settlement.

As in modern times, justice was administered by a hierarchy of courts. The district head served as judge in minor cases. Appeals could be made to the superior courts of the king. Serious cases fall under the jurisdiction of the Sarki and his counsellors, advised by the chief Alkali. As the state came more and more under Islamic influence, the qadi (magistrate learned in the Islamic law) Played an important role in the administration of justice.

1. Economic affairs

- (a) Like other Sudanese kingdoms, the Hausa state benefited from the trans-Saharan trade, and trade with the southern kingdoms in the forest zone, notably the Yoruba and Benin states . There is evidence that they had trading links with Asante, Dagomba and Gonja, all in the present- day Republic of Ghana. In addition, the Hausa established prosperous trading links with Kanem- Bornu, with Mali and, later, with the Songhai empire . The most important article of trade were salt, natron, kola nuts, hides and eunuchs. As the states developed, wealth was also derived from the sale of the products made from wood, metal and clay. There was also a brisk trade in slaves in Hausaland. Describing the crafts of the Hausa , Leo Africanus wrote: "The (Hausa) people are in general, very civilised. They have many weavers and shoe- makers who make shoes like those that the Romans used to wear; and these they export to Timbuctu and Gao"
- (b) As well as the profits of trade, the states derived revenue from the different taxes which were levied. What Leo Africanus said of the state of Guangara which later became part of Kastina was true of all other states.

He wrote; " He {the king} draws a great revenue from dealing in goods and from commercial taxes". The following were the principal taxes;

1. Zakat or Zakka was income tax collected for charities;
2. Jangali, or tax levied on livestock;
3. Kharaj, or land tax;
4. Jizyah (or gandu) was a capitation or poll tax levied on conquered states often paid in the form of slaves; and
5. Gaisua was tribute from vassal rulers.

In addition to these were special professional taxes.

- (c) The revenue was used for social services and to maintain magnificent courts and other state institutions, including the army.
- (d) The wealth of these states unfortunately attracted the envy of stronger neighbouring empires. Both Kastina and Kano fell into the hands of Bornu and Songhai for a period of time.

2. The army

The different states set up and maintained strong armies. Most of the rulers could import superior weapons through their contacts with the merchants from the north and the Middle East. The armies included both foot-soldiers and cavalry. Speaking about the state of Guangara which later became part of Kastina, Leo Africanus said that state was " inhabited by a great number of people who are governed by the king with more than 7,000 infantry armed with bows, and 500 foreign cavalry on call" About the middle of the fifteenth century Hausa armies started using muskets which were acquired through their contacts with Kanem-Bornu.

3. Religion/Official Religion

The Emir is the religious leader of his people, whose duty is to ensure that commandments of Allah are obeyed in his territory. This accounts for the great authority which was wielded by the Emirs and which made them such suitable rulers even under the British protectorate.

The official religion was Islam and Koran was used as the holy book where all the teachings of religion were contained. Mohammed was seen as the founder of the religion. Some teachings that were contained in the Koran before the coming of the colonial administration include:

A good Moslem must fight a Jihad at least once in his life time. If such a person dies in the process he would go to paradise.

It is mandatory for all Moslems to perform hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca in the holy land at least once in the person's life time. Other Islamic ijunctions include the following.

- i) A good Moslem must not marry more than four wives.
- ii) A good Moslem must abstain from drinking alcohol
- iii) A good Moslem must fast during Ramadan period.

When Islam was introduced to Hausaland, at first its influence was limited to the royal courts. Islamic teaching affected many aspects of the life of the states though the indigenous religion remained untouched in many parts.

As happened in other parts of the Western Sudan, Islam was introduced to Hausaland by zealous Muslim merchants. The Hausa themselves claim that Islam was introduced to them from Bornu by one Al-Maghili. Other traditions say that Al-Maghili came from Algeria. He had such a reputation that on request he wrote for the king of Kano the celebrated manual, the Obligations of Princes. It was not until the fourteenth century that organised Fulani missionaries from the empire of Mali, started the work of conversion in Hausaland on a large scale. By the beginning of the fifteenth century the religion had taken a firm root, notably in the principal cities.

Islam did not spread to all parts of Hausaland at the same time. Some areas embraced the religion much earlier than others. Thus, according to the Kano Chronicle, one of the first Hausa rulers to embrace Islam was the king of the Kutumbawa dynasty, called Yaji (c. 1349-85)

As Islam became established, scholars from Sankore (Timbuctu) introduced Islamic learning to Hausaland. Among the great Sankore scholars who either visited or lived for a time in Kano and influenced the history of Hausaland were the following;

Al-Hajj Ahmad, who taught theology there towards the end of the fifteenth century;

Makluf ibn Ali, a great lawyer and geographer, who visited Kastina and Kano in about 1500;

Muhammad ibn Ahmad, who on arriving in Hausaland in about 1520, established a great reputation as a qadi (district magistrate) in Kastina.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Describe the political organisation common to most of the Hausa state.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that each unit was a city state which comprised the walled capital and its immediate surroundings, and the neighbouring district consisting of villages and hamlets and some states grew stronger than the others and not all the fourteen states in Hausaland developed the same institutions.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of the emergence of the growth and organisation of the Hausas and the Fulani.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain in details the political organisation common to most of the Hausa states.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Political Organisation/Political Administration

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The Sarkin Dogari, who was in charge of the king's bodyguard, and

The Sarkin Yan Doka, who headed the police, and kept in custody suspected criminals awaiting trial. He was also responsible for administering punishment to convicted persons.

Although each city state was independent, and there never really existed in Hausaland what today would be described as a federation, the city states developed certain ties which bound them together. This was found convenient for the purposes of collective protection against external enemies.

The chronicles record that many states had priest-kings. When from the late sixteenth century Islam was firmly established, the Sarki exercised great powers. But they could not become absolute rulers, because in most states, like Kano, from the time of Rimfa, the council of state could check the Sarki's official actions.

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UNIT 3: SOME OUTSTANDING HAUSA RULERS.

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of the some outstanding Hausa rulers. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the some outstanding Hausa rulers.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

Trace the historical background and the emergence of some outstanding Hausa rulers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 SOME OUTSTANDING HAUSA RULERS.

3.1.1 Muhammad Rimfa of Kano (1463-99)

The Kano Chronicle paid the following tribute to this great ruler of Kano; “He can have no equal in might , from the time of the founding of Kano , until it shall end.... Surely there was no Sarki more powerful than Rimfa ”

Rimfa's achievements show that these words were not far from the truth, even if at the time of writing the author did not know what the future had in store for Kano.

1. Rimfa made Kano invulnerable, by extending and strengthening the city walls. He built a magnificent palace which was named after him, the Dakin Rimfa.
2. To promote large-scale commercial activities, he built one of the greatest markets of the time, the Kurmi Market.
3. Knowing the importance of having a strong army both for internal peace-keeping and for offensive and defensive duties, he introduced the Dawakin Zaggi, an army formation in which foot-soldiers fought side by side with the horse soldiers, from whom the former took over. It was largely because of this formation that Rimfa was able to defeat his opponent in the sixteenth century wars with Kastina.
4. In the field of administration, Rimfa introduced the Council of Nine, called the Tara-ta-Kano, corresponding to Bornu's Council of Twelve. The Council included one eunuch who was in charge of the treasury. Eunuchs were also in charge of the town and palace guards and controlled the royal household.
5. His reforms extended to religion. He successfully wiped out all elements of paganism in Kano. He had the sacred tree in the city cut down, and he built a minaret on the site. Furthermore, he started the public celebration of the annual festival, the Id-al-Fitr, which follows Ramadan.
6. To add a touch of splendour to the court, he started the use of ostrich feather fans called Figinni on ceremonial occasions.
7. For these and many other things, Rimfa is regarded as the greatest ruler in Hausaland prior to the Fulani Jihad.

3.1.2 Kotal Kanta of Kebbi (1510- 45)

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Kebbi was a vassal state of Askia the Great. In the second decade of the country this progressive state gained its independence from Songhai. This was the work of her great military leader, Kotal Kanta.

1. After Kanta had assisted Askia the Great to win Air, a quarrel broke out between them over the spoils. This resulted in a war (1515-16). Kanta inflicted a crushing defeat on Askia's men and gained his country's independence. He then developed Surname into an important capital.
2. Following this victory, Kanta launched a successful attack on Air, Gobir, Kastina, Kano, Daura and Zaria.
3. He strengthened his army to protect and police his expanding kingdom.

4. How did he manage to control his expanding kingdom? Following the example of other Sudanese rulers, Kanta allowed the vassal states a considerable degree of self-rule and local autonomy, except for Zamfara and a couple of other states which proved too obstinate.
5. To offset the growing influence of the Fulani, Kanta refused to allow the Fulani immigrants to build houses in Kebbi. The Fulani resentment which this decision caused was later one of the reasons for the attack on Kebbi by the Fulani Jihadists.
6. The chronicles ranked Kanta among the greatest rulers in Hausaland. Indeed under Kanta there was a united Hausa empire. Even Muhammed Bello, Sultan of Sokoto, and son of Uthman dan Fodio, who had very little regard for ancient Kebbi, wrote the following words about Kebbi under Kanta; "No other kingdom in the past history of these {Hausa} countries ever equalled it {Kebbi} in power" Talking about the garrison town of Kebbi, Sultan Bello added;" Their ruins, though it is about a hundred years since their cities were broken, surpass any we have ever seen". The credit for this was due to Kanta. He died at the ripe old age of eighty, after a successful reign lasting nearly forty years.

3.1.3 Queen Amina of Zaria

Like Kebbi, Zaria rose to prominence in the Western Sudan in the sixteenth century. The state owed much of its development to its ablest ruler, Queen Amina, daughter of King Bakwa, the founder of the capital of Zaria.

1. Tradition tells us that Amina became famous for building walled camps which later developed into important townships. One need not attribute to her the introduction of walled towns in Hausaland. But the fact that up to this day, ancient town walls in Hausaland are called Ganuwar Amina, meaning "Amina's Walls"; would seem to indicate the importance of Amina's work.
2. The Kano Chronicle recorded the following about the queen; "At this time, Zaria, under Queen Amina, conquered all the towns as far as Kwararafa and Nupe. Every town paid tribute to her. The Sarkin Nupe sent forty eunuchs and ten thousand kolas to her. She first had eunuchs and kolas in Hausaland. Her conquest extended over thirty-four years. In her time the whole of the products of the west were brought to Hausaland". This passage points to several of Amina's achievements.
 - (a) She was a successful conqueror who annexed several territories to her kingdom.

- (b) Her royal treasury was replenish by the tributes paid by her vassal states.
 - (c) During her reign trade from many parts of the Western Sudan was passing through Zaria.
3. Although much of what has been credited to Queen Amina may be legendary, the very fact that such legends exist would seem to indicate that she was a dynamic personality. In the words of Dr C. C. Ifemesia; "While making allowance for some exaggeration in the accounts [about Queen Amina], they nevertheless serve to indicate the power and influence which Zaria, under Sarauniya {Queen } Amina, wielded in the late sixteenth century Northern Nigeria."
 4. The power of Zaria began to decline after the glorious reign of Queen Amina in the seventeenth century. This was as a result of the frequent invasions by the rulers of Kwararafa or Jukun. Indeed , the eighteenth century was a period of incessant inter-state warfare. This state of affairs weakened the Hausa states, and made it easier for the Fulani to conquest the territories in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the general overview of the some outstanding Hausa rulers. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the some outstanding Hausa rulers.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Assess the importance of the careers of Kotal Kanta of Kebbi and the Queen Amina of Zaria.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that some Hausa rulers had a great impact on the development of their state. Among these the most outstanding were Muhammad Rimfa of Kano, Kanta of Kebbi, and Queen Amina of Zaria.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the achievements of the some outstanding Hausa rulers in the development of their states.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Assess the importance of the career of Muhammad Rimfa of Kano.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Kotal Kanta of Kebbi (1510- 45)

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Kebbi was a vassal state of Askia the Great. In the second decade of the century this progressive state gained its independence from Songhai. This was the work of her great military leader, Kotal Kanta.

After Kanta had assisted Askia the Great to win Air, a quarrel broke out between them over the spoils. This resulted in a war (1515-16). Kanta inflicted a crushing defeat on Askia's men and gained his country's independence. He then developed Surname into an important capital.

Following this victory, Kanta launched a successful attack on Air, Gobir, Kastina, Kano, Daura and Zaria.

He strengthened his army to protect and police his expanding kingdom.

How did he manage to control his expanding kingdom? Following the example of other Sudanese rulers, Kanta allowed the vassal states a considerable degree of self-rule and local autonomy, except for Zamfara and a couple of other states which proved too obstinate.

To offset the growing influence of the Fulani, Kanta refused to allow the Fulani immigrants to build houses in Kebbi. The Fulani resentment which this decision caused was later one of the reasons for the attack on Kebbi by the Fulani Jihadists.

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Her royal treasury was replenish by the tributes paid by her vassal states.

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The power of Zaria began to decline after the glorious reign of Queen Amina in the seventeenth century. This was as a result of the frequent invasions by the rulers of Kwararafa or Jukun. Indeed , the eighteenth century was a period of incessant inter-state warfare. This state of affairs weakened the Hausa states, and made it easier for the Fulani to conquest the territories in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

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UNIT 4: FULANI CONQUEST OF HAUSALAND

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of how the Fulani conquered the Hausaland. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the Fulani Conquest Hausaland.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Trace the historical background and how the Fulani Conquest Hausaland

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 FULANI CONQUEST OF HAUSALAND

3.1.1 Uthman dan Fodio

Uthman, son of Fodio, was born in 1754 in Hausa state of Gobir. After receiving rudimentary Islamic education in his native Gobir. Dan Fodio continued his education at Agades, under the celebrated scholar, Jibril ibn Umar.

- (a) Returning to his native land at the age of about twenty, dan Fodio set himself the task of teaching the pure form of Islam. He settled at Degel where he attracted many followers who joined him in his crusade for reviving the orthodox Islamic religion. Dan Fodio and his disciples launched an intensive campaign against various social evils, such as corruption in public life, economic injustice and adulterated Islamic practices.
- (b) A renowned scholar, Dan Fodio was engaged by the ruler of Gobir to educate his children among whom it is believed, was the future ruler, Yunfa.
- (c) Dan Fodio became so popular as a result of his campaign against the pagan practices of the kings of Hausaland and the prevalent social and political injustices, that the king of Gobir came to regard him as a dangerous man. The ruler, who was now Yunfa himself, realised that unless dan Fodio was checked, he would cause dissension in the kingdom. Yunfa therefore withdrew all concessions granted to dan Fodio by his father, and indeed organised a plot which nearly resulted in the assassination of dan Fodio at Alkalawa, the capital of Gobir.
- (d) In the face of real danger to his life, and following the example of the Prophet Muhammad in A.D. 622, Dan Fodio and his disciples, including his father, his brother, Abdullah, and his son Muhammed Bello, fled from Degel to Gudu. This flight occurred on 21 February 1804, a date which, like the original Hijra of the Prophet, has since been observed in Northern Nigeria by Muslims with special reverence.
- (e) Gudu now became the centre of dan Fodio's crusading activities. Thousands of followers flocked to him. A new era in Hausaland was in sight. Dan Fodio's disciples elected him Amir al-Muminin, meaning the "Commander of the Believer" and a holy war was declared on all pagans. This again copied the action taken by Muhammad at Medina, and was to lead to the creation of a new Muslim empire.

3.1.2 The Holy War (Othman Dan Fodio Jihad)

Tension rose to such a pitch between Yunfa of Gobir and dan Fodio that war became inevitable. Yunfa was the first to attack. His men followed dan Fodio to Gudu but were repulsed. This initial success, like that of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, convinced Fodio's men that Allah was on their side. Soon after this dan Fodio produced two important manifestoes, these urged his followers to believe in the rightness of the cause of Allah, and to fight the

animism, the non-orthodox Islamic practices and the social and economic injustices which had plagued Hausaland for far too long.

3.1.3 Main Causes of Othman Dan Fodio Jihad

Many factors, some of which we have already noted in passing, combined to bring about the armed conflict between dan Fodio and the rulers of the Hausa states, which was to result in the creation of a Fulani empire in Northern Nigeria. Some of these causes were religious, but others were political, economic and social.

- (a) In the course of several centuries Islam in Hausaland had become corrupt. Animism and other pagan beliefs had deeply affected the conduct of Islam. The first aim of dan Fodio's crusade was to bring about a lasting reform in religion and so restore the pure form of Islam in Hausaland. Conflict with the rulers of the land was inevitable since they were not prepared to allow such far-reaching reforms in their kingdoms.
- (b) Because of their education and their commercial abilities, many Fulani in Hausaland felt resentful at having to serve under oppressive Hausa rulers, most of whom were illiterate, irreligious, and corrupt. Dan Fodio's attempts to bring about real reforms obviously aroused the bitter hostility of the powerful and autocratic rulers of the Hausa states.
- (c) The practice of enslaving Muslims and selling them into slavery was common among Hausa rulers. They were also enlisted into "pagan" armies which fought against fellow Muslims. Dan Fodio considered this to be against the precepts of Islam.
- (d) For centuries the Fulani and many ordinary Hausa citizens had been subjected to the oppressive rule and crippling taxation imposed by the Hausa rulers. This was another cause of discontent which made many Hausa prepared to join the Fulani in the struggle against their rulers.
- (e) It may also be mentioned that many followers of dan Fodio were looking for an opportunity to gain booty.

3.1.4 Course of the war

After the initial success of the Jihadists in Gudu, dan Fodio's men carried the offensive into Gobir. They had some success, but were unable to take the capital. After repeated attacks, however, Alkawala fell to the Fulani

invaders in 1808, and the ruler Yunfa was killed. Having gained a stronghold in Gobir, dan Fodio's generals embarked on a series of conquests in different directions.

- (a) Enthusiasts from different Hausa states came to dan Fodio to offer their support, they took flags as signs of the reformer's authority and started Jihads in their respective states. By 1809, the important Hausa states of Zaria, Kastina and Kano had all come under the control of the Fulani.
- (b) The Fulani turned their attention to Bornu in the east, where they scored a temporary success. The Mai of Bornu appealed to a veteran soldier, Al-Kanemi, who succeeded in repulsing the Fulani.
- (c) The Fulani swept southwards, and took Nupe and Adamawa.
- (d) With the conquest of these southern states, the gates were now opened for a further southward thrust into Yorubaland. In 1817, the commander of the Oyo army, Kakanfo Afonja, who was local ruler of Ilorin, rebelled against his overlord, the Alafin of Oyo and invited the Fulani to come to his support. To the Fulani this was a most welcome invitation. Before long Afonja realised the mistake he had made. Having helped him to gain independence from the Alafin, the Fulani began to assert their authority in Ilorin. The Fulani scholar, Abdul Salami, Mallam Alimi's son, usurped the throne of Ilorin, and caliphate. Ilorin was to remain under the sphere of influence of Northern Nigeria until 1967, when the modern Republic of Nigeria was into twelve federal states, and Ilorin regained its identity as the Kwara State, free from the influence of Sokoto.
- (e) Determine on pushing their conquest coastwards until they could "dip the Koran in the sea" the Fulani forces marched down into the heart of the Yoruba empire of Oyo, which at that time was weakened by internal strife, until they were halted and repulsed by Ibadan in 1840.

1. Reasons for rapid success

Within a matter of two decades, as we have noted, the band of Fulani conquerors had annexed all the Hausa states, as well as Nupe, Adamawa, Ilorin and the western part of Bornu.

3.1.5 Reasons for the Success of the Othman Dan Fodio Jihad

- (a) The state of affairs in the Hausa states was one factor. As we explained earlier, before the Jihad, the Fulani and many of the ordinary Hausa elements in present-day Northern Nigeria had become discontented with their rulers. Thus the followers of dan Fodio, whether Fulani or Hausa, saw in the Jihad a golden opportunity to rid themselves of their unpopular rulers, and they therefore fought with great determination.
- (b) While the Fulani were united in their dedication to a common cause, the Hausa states were, on the other hand, disunited and weakened by internecine wars. Thus, instead of presenting a united front against a common enemy, state after state had to face the ferocious invaders alone. Thus, when Gobir was attacked and Yunfa appealed to the other states for help, he received no response.
- (c) The two manifestoes issued by dan Fodio calling upon the "faithful" to fight a relentless war against all forms of "paganism" in order to revive the true worship of Islam also encouraged the flagbearers and their followers to fight with ruthless determination.
- (d) In the case of Ilorin, the treachery of Afonja opened the way for Fulani infiltration of Yorubaland.

3.1.6 The Consequences of the Fulani Conquest of Hausaland

The consequences of the Fulani conquest of the Hausa States in the first two decades of the nineteenth century were many and far-reaching.

- (a) With the defeat of the Hausa States came the end of the Hausa dynasties. In their place emerged a powerful, united empire or caliphate, with its headquarters at Sokoto. The sultan of Sokoto became not only the religious but also the political head of the numerous emirates which constituted Northern Nigeria down to the dawn of Nigeria's independence in 1960.
- (b) The unification of the Hausa states meant the end of the rivalry which had crippled their progress in the eighteenth century.
- (c) In atmosphere of peace which now prevailed throughout the caliphate, trade prospered, and the pure form of Islam spread. The standard of learning also increased.
- (d) The success of the jihad in Hausaland was infectious. Many admirers took inspiration from dan Fodio and his son, Bello, and

started reformist movements in their own countries, for example in Messina, Bornu, the empire of Samori Toure, etc.

- (e) The solidarity of the united Fulani emirates has persisted to this day. Even though today the territories have been carved up to form separate states within the federation of modern Nigeria, the Hausa States still share a common cultural and religious history.
- (f) From the time of their successful invasion of Yorubaland the ascendancy of the Fulani was to be a major factor in Nigerian history.

This was so even though they failed in their ultimate ambition of moving down to the coast until, as they put it, they “dipped the Koran in the sea”. It was not by accident that, on attaining independence in 1960, the first Federal Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa came from the former Fulani empire in Northern Nigeria.

3.1.7 Work of Muhammad Bello

When dan Fodio became certain of success, he divided the territory he had conquered in two, he allotted one part with its capital at Gwandu, to his brother Abdullah, and the other part to his son Bello who established his new capital at Sokoto, but the western province continue to recognise the Sultan of Sokoto as liege-lord. Dan Fodio retired to live a life of scholarship and asceticism. After Fodio's death, his son was proclaimed Amir al-Muminim, or leader of the faithful, and thus he became both the political and spiritual leader of the new empire.

1. Muhammad Bello's first task was to cope with an internal insurrection and to repel external attacks.
 - (a) Internally, he successfully subdued a rebellion led by the Hausa scholar, Abd al-Salam, and also put down risings in Kebbi and Zamfara.
 - (b) Bello dealt swiftly with a threatened attack from the Tuareg in the north who gained the support of Gobir.
 - (c) At about the same time, a force from Bornu under the leadership of Al-Kanemi attacked the caliphate from the east. Bello was able to repulse the Bornu forces.
2. Having restored peace to the caliphate, Muhammad Bello next turned his attention to reforming many aspects of national life.

- (a) To bring about unity, he merged all members of the caliphate, Hausa and Fulani alike, into one homogenous people. Every member of the community felt he belonged to the new empire and shared a common destiny with his fellow citizens. He gave equal opportunities in affairs of government to his kinsmen and the Hausa alike.
 - (b) To strengthen his own position, he reduced the powers of the Fulani military chiefs. Indeed, to ensure the peaceful administration of the caliphate, in some areas he replaced these military leaders with learned Mallams as local rulers.
 - (c) While remaining both the political and religious head of the caliphate, Muhammad Bello allowed a considerable degree of local autonomy and independence of action to the Emirs, the rulers of the constituent states of the empire. The emirs were to play an important role in Hausaland, especially during the period of the colonial rule in Northern Nigeria.
 - (d) Remembering the original objective of the jihad, Muhammad Bello set himself the task of reviving and encouraging Islamic learning. He himself took the lead in scholarship and produced many books of outstanding merit and of permanent value. His correspondence with Al-Kanemi of Bornu, for example, is regarded as a particularly valuable history of the jihad.
 - (e) Bello also saw the need to build frontier walled cities, Ribats, as a protective measure against possible external attacks.
 - (f) To ensure their loyalty, Muhammad Bello required the emirs of the caliphate to pay him annual tributes at the time of the Muslim festivals. Individual office holders also paid tribute or gave presents to the Sultan of Sokoto. It was one of the greatest tributes to Muhammad Bello that, although the payment of tributes was voluntary, the emirs in fact competed among themselves as to who could give most, this being regarded as evidence of their support and loyalty to the Amir al-Muminin.
3. Muhammad Bello died in 1837, having ruled successfully the new Sokoto Caliphate for twenty years. Al Haji Sa'id, a Koranic official who served under Sultan Ali (1842-59), Muhammad Bello's son and successor, has paid his master's father the following tribute;

The Hausa country flourished greatly under his [Bello's] rule. He spread respect for learning, and scholars came from different countries. He was very solicitous for their welfare; whether they came from east, west, south or north. He spent much time in writing; every time he finished one of his works he made it known to the public and had them read it, and then set himself to writing another volume.

If anyone posed him a problem he made it at once the subject of a publication. If he found out that such and such persons were in disagreement {with him} on a point, he at once composed a treatise on it. He supported himself by the fruits of his work, without asking for upkeep from the public purse...He was sympathetic to the people and full of care for them, calm, patient, indifferent to the wealth of other men. A skilful administrator, he watched over the work of the qadis, quashed their judgements if these had been given under the influence of passion, never allowing them to grow slack in their work. Ruddy of complexion, tall, bald of head, wearing long and tufted beads; such was his appearance.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give an account of the main consequences of the Fulani conquest of Hausaland.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show in details how the Fulani Conquest the Hausaland and established its territory there permanently.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of how the Fulani Conquest Hausaland.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Outline the causes of the Fulani conquest of Hausaland in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

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MODULE 3-THE YORUBA

UNIT 1: THE ORIGINS OF THE YORUBA

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a historical background and general overview of the origins of the Yoruba. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the origins of the Yoruba.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Trace the historical background and emergence of the Yorubas.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE ORIGINS OF THE YORUBA

The Yorubas form a large group united more by language than culture. The Yorubas trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Oduduwa

had seven sons who later founded the first seven kingdoms of the Yoruba land and these kingdoms were united under a central leader known as Alaafin of Oyo.

Hatred, jealousy, etc made the first seven kingdoms to split into fourteen new kingdoms and the central leadership now changed from the Alaafin of Oyo to Ooni of Ife who is the spiritual Head of the Yoruba. Oyo is regarded as the political headquarters of the Yoruba and was the most developed kingdom in the Yoruba traditional society and its administration is accepted as a model or a representation of the Yoruba. The king in Yoruba land is called Oba, the Yoruba kingdoms were headed by the Oba who must be a descendant of the Oduduwa.

Scholars have not yet been able to determine the true origins of the Yoruba. But the traditional stories are based upon two legendary accounts.

1. According to one legendary account, Oduduwa, the eldest son of Lamurudu, left Mecca, his ancestral home, as a result of his refusal to embrace Islam. With his followers, Oduduwa emigrated westwards into Africa, and finally halted in the present-day South West of Nigeria where he founded a settlement at Ile-Ife. In due course, as the population of Ile-Ife expanded, the sons or grandchildren of Oduduwa left the Yoruba cradle and founded for themselves and their followers the seven original states of the Yoruba. These were; Owu, Sabe, Popo, Ila, Ketu (now in Dahomey), Oyo and Benin. According to this legend, Oyo was founded by Oduduwa's youngest son, Oranmiyan. Probably the last foundation chronologically, Oyo was later to gain ascendancy over all the other Yoruba states.
2. Another legend, more mythical than the first, has it that Ile-Ife was the cradle of the creation of the world. At the dawn of time, we are told, the earth was covered with water. Then Olorun the supreme god sent his son Oduduwa down to the earth from the sky on a chain. (A chain preserved in Ile-Ife to this day is believed to be the celestial chain of the legend). Taking down with him a handful of earth, a cockerel and a palm nut, Oduduwa scattered the earth which formed the land where Ile-Ife was founded as a settlement. The cockerel dug a hole in which Oduduwa sowed the palm nut; it sprung up into a large tree with many branches. The Yoruba traditions use this mythical story to explain the origins of the ruling families of an early Yoruba state.

3.1.1 Importance of the legends

Although the above legends obviously have little historical accuracy, they do indicate one or two things about the very early history of the Yoruba.

- (a) Both legends point to Oduduwa as the founding father of the Yoruba people.
- (b) The legends also confirm the fact that Ile-Ife, in historical times, was the centre of dispersion of the later Yoruba kingdoms. This helps to explain why, to this day, all Yoruba people look to Ile-Ife as their original ancestral home. Indeed, the city and the Ooni of Ile-Ife as their occupy a special place in the political, social and the religious life of the Yoruba. All tradition rulers of the various Yoruba states had to be consecrated by the Ooni of Ile-Ife before they assumed office. In addition, it was regarded as sacrilegious for any Yoruba state to rise in arms against the state of Ile-Ife.
- (c) The legends seem to underline also the importance of the palm tree in the later economy of Yorubaland.
- (d) By describing one ancestor as the founder of both Oyo, for centuries the leading state of the Yoruba, and of Benin, the first legend attempted to teach posterity the close relations between the Yoruba and the Edo or Bini people.
- (e) It was historically true that, for a time, a large section of the southern Yoruba came under the imperial control of the Bini empire. One can perhaps see in the first legend an attempt on the part of the Yoruba to stress the ancestral primacy of the Yoruba over their latter overlords.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the historical background and the general overview of the origins of the Yoruba.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give a brief account of the stories of origin of the Yoruba people, and indicate the importance of these legends.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that according to legendary accounts, the Yoruba and the Edo or Bini in the Southern part of the present-day Federation of Nigeria were kinsmen. These legends confirm that both the Yoruba and the Bini were descendants of Oranmiyan or Oranyan who was said to have founded the Yoruba state of Oyo and

whose son, according to the legends, became first ruler of a new dynasty in the kingdom of Benin.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the historical background and the general overview of the origins of the Yoruba.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

What is the importance of Yoruba legends.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Scholars have not yet been able to determine the true origins of the Yoruba. But the traditional stories are based upon two legendary accounts.

According to one legendary account, Oduduwa, the eldest son of Lamurudu, left Mecca, his ancestral home, as a result of his refusal to embrace Islam. With his followers, Oduduwa emigrated westwards into Africa, and finally halted in the present-day South West of Nigeria where he founded a settlement at Ile-Ife. In due course, as the population of Ile-Ife expanded, the sons or grandchildren of Oduduwa left the Yoruba cradle and founded for themselves and their followers the seven original states of the Yoruba. These were; Owu, Sabe, Popo, Ila, Ketu (now in Dahomey), Oyo and Benin. According to this legend, Oyo was founded by Oduduwa's youngest son, Oranmiyan. Probably the last foundation chronologically, Oyo was later to gain ascendancy over all the other Yoruba states.

Another legend, more mythical than the first, has it that Ile-Ife was the cradle of the creation of the world. At the dawn of time, we are told, the earth was covered with water. Then Olorun the supreme god sent his son Oduduwa down to the earth from the sky on a chain. (A chain preserved in Ile-Ife to this day is believed to be the celestial chain of the legend). Taking down with him a handful of earth, a cockerel and a palm nut, Oduduwa scattered the earth which formed the land where Ile-Ife was founded as a settlement. The cockerel dug a hole in which Oduduwa sowed the palm nut; it sprung up into a large tree with many branches. The Yoruba traditions use this mythical story to explain the origins of the ruling families of an early Yoruba state.

Importance of the legends

Although the above legends obviously have little historical accuracy, they do indicate one or two things about the very early history of the Yoruba.

Both legends point to Oduduwa as the founding father of the Yoruba people.

The legends also confirm the fact that Ile-Ife, in historical times, was the centre of dispersion of the later Yoruba kingdoms. This helps to explain why, to this day, all Yoruba people look to Ile-Ife as their original ancestral home. Indeed, the city and the Ooni of Ile-Ife as they occupy a special place in the political, social and the religious life of the Yoruba. All traditional rulers of the various Yoruba states had to be consecrated by the Ooni of Ile-Ife before they assumed office. In addition, it was regarded as sacrilegious for any Yoruba state to rise in arms against the state of Ile-Ife.

The legends seem to underline also the importance of the palm tree in the later economy of Yorubaland.

By describing one ancestor as the founder of both Oyo, for centuries the leading state of the Yoruba, and of Benin, the first legend attempted to teach posterity the close relations between the Yoruba and the Edo or Bini people.

It was historically true that, for a time, a large section of the southern Yoruba came under the imperial control of the Bini empire. One can perhaps see in the first legend an attempt on the part of the Yoruba to stress the ancestral primacy of the Yoruba over their latter overlords.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2: RISE AND EXPANSION OF OYO EMPIRE

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of how the rise and expansion of Oyo. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the rise and expansion of Oyo.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Trace how the rise and expansion of Oyo took place.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 RISE AND EXPANSION OF OYO EMPIRE

As we noted, the Yoruba legends attribute the founding of Old Oyo to Oranmiyan, the youngest son of Oduduwa. As time went on, this Yoruba settlement grew and became the political headquarters of all Yorubaland and the metropolitan seat of one of the greatest West African empires. Ile-Ife remained the spiritual headquarters from where the Yoruba, wherever they were, drew spiritual guidance and inspiration.

A. Date of Foundation

Historians are not agreed as to when Old Oyo began to emerge as a state. But it is generally accepted that Oranmiyan's first settlement must have begun about the beginning of the fifteenth century or perhaps even earlier, if one accepts the view that Ile-Ife was founded in about the eleventh century A.D.

B. Early Rulers

In reading about the achievements attributed by legend to the early rulers, one is aware of the important work done by these men in founding the great empire of Oyo. Among the founding fathers the following have been immortalised in the myths and traditional history of the Yoruba.

3.1.1 Oranmiyan

According to the legends, the founding father Oranmiyan must have possessed magical powers. He was said to have possessed both a warlike spirit and indomitable courage and to have set the small settlement of Oyo on the road to expansion.

1. Ajaka

Oranmiyan was succeeded by his son, Ajaka, who occupied the Oyo throne twice before his death, with an intervening period during which he was deposed. Learning his lesson from the failure of his first term of office, Ajaka's second period of rule saw him as a great conqueror. He succeeded in annexing some neighbouring territories.

2. Sango

The legends ascribe more magical feats to Sango than to any of the other early rulers. A great warrior, Sango is said to have possessed the power of breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils and of controlling thunder and lightning.

(a) These legends seem to underline his great fighting spirit and courage and the extraordinary control he had over his kingdom and the tributary states he annexed.

(b) So great must have been his achievements that the Yoruba later deified him in the form of a ram as the god of thunder and war. He was also held in so much reverence that, in words of two modern historians, G.T. Stride and C. Ifeka, "throughout subsequent Yoruba history the dispatch of the symbols of Sango was sufficient to impose peace on quarrelling Yoruba states"

4. Kori

Among the achievements of this ruler was the founding of the town of Ede as a frontier post; this town was to play an important role in both the offensive and defensive wars of Oyo.

3.1.2 Less successful rulers

A number of other rulers who made varying contributions to the expansion of the empire ascended the Oyo throne after Kori

- (a) One of these was Onigbogi, in whose weak reign Old Oyo was sacked by her northern neighbours, the people of Nupe.
- (b) During the reign of his grandchild, Egonju, the seat of government of Old Oyo had to be shifted to Oyo Igboho.
- (c) Later, under Abipa, Old Oyo reverted to its former position as capital of the kingdom.

1.1.3 Southwards expansion

From the time of Abipa onwards, Oyo's expansion was directed southwards until the Bini halted them between 1578 and 1608. Oyo then directed her attention to states within present-day Dahomey.

1. By the end of the seventeenth century, many of these non-Yoruba states had been annexed as tributary states of Oyo, which had therefore become an empire.
2. Oyo derived several advantages from her annexation of the Dahomean states. Two of these were of special importance.
 - (a) Oyo had direct access to coastal ports like Porto Novo (Ajase Ipo) and Whydah where her traders could trade directly with the European merchants.
 - (b) Oyo derived worth of revenue per annum in the form of tributes from the Dahomean states it had conquered.
3. Oyo reached the peak of its power about the middle of the eighteenth century. From then on both internal and external reasons, combined to bring about the decline and fall of the empire.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the general overview of how the rise and expansion of Oyo took place.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Assess the importance of the careers of the early rulers in the rise and expansion of Oyo.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses showed how the early rulers contributed to the rise and expansion of Oyo.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of how the rise and expansion of Oyo took place.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Assess the importance of the career of Ajaka Oranmiyan in the rise and expansion of Oyo.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

In reading about the achievements attributed by legend to the early rulers, one is aware of the important work done by these men in founding the great empire of Oyo. Among the founding fathers the following have been immortalised in the myths and traditional history of the Yoruba.

Oranmiyan

According to the legends, the founding father Oranmiyan must have possessed magical powers. He was said to have possessed both a warlike spirit and indomitable courage and to have set the small settlement of Oyo on the road to expansion.

Ajaka

Oranmiyan was succeeded by his son, Ajaka, who occupied the Oyo throne twice before his death, with an intervening period during which he was deposed. Learning his lesson from the failure of his first term of office, Ajaka's second period of rule saw him as a great conqueror. He succeeded in annexing some neighbouring territories.

Sango

The legends ascribe more magical feats to sango than to any of the other early rulers. A great warrior, Sango is said to have possessed the power of breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils and of controlling thunder and lightning.

These legends seem to underline his great fighting spirit and courage and the extraordinary control he had over his kingdom and the tributary states he annexed.

So great must have been his achievements that the Yoruba later deified him in the form of a ram as the god of thunder and war. He was also held in so much reverence that, in words of two modern historians, G.T. Stride and C. Ifeka, "throughout subsequent Yoruba history the dispatch of the symbols of Sango was sufficient to impose peace on quarrelling Yoruba states"

Kori

Among the achievements of this ruler was the founding of the town of Ede as a frontier post; this town was to play an important role in both the offensive and defensive wars of Oyo.

Less successful rulers

A number of other rulers who made varying contributions to the expansion of the empire ascended the Oyo throne after Kori

One of these was Onigbogi, in whose weak reign Old Oyo was sacked by her northern neighbours, the people of Nupe.

During the reign of his grandchild, Egonoju, the seat of government of Old Oyo had to be shifted to Oyo Igboho.

Later, under Abipa, Old Oyo reverted to its former position as capital of the kingdom.

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UNIT 3: GOVERNMENT OF OYO EMPIRE

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of how the government of Oyo was administer as a great Empire for nearly four centuries through her effective form of government, this was made unique by a system of checks and balances.

In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of how the government of Oyo was administer as a great Empire.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Explain how did the constitution of Oyo ensure democracy in the empire.
- ii) Trace what account for the long survival of Oyo as an empire.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 GOVERNMENT OF OYO EMPIRE

3.1.1 Political Administration

The political head of every Yoruba kingdom is Oba but that of the Oyo and Ife kingdoms are called "Alaafin" and "Ooni" respectively.

The Alaafin as the political head of the Oyo kingdom is assisted by his son called Aremo, who is not allowed to succeed him immediately he dies. Oyemesi is the seven king makers headed by the Bashorun. The Oyemesi is stronger than the Alaafin and can overrule any decision made by the Alaafin which is not acceptable to it.

The other officials apart from the Aremo include:

1. Ilari:- He is the permanent adviser to the Oba
2. Bashorun:- He is the Chief Minister or Prime Minister of the Kingdom.
3. Baale"- He is the village Head of the administration of the villages
4. Kakanfo:- he is the commander of the kingdom Armed Forces.

The chiefs or Obas and the baale are not appointed by the Alaafin even though they receive his blessings. There are certain limitations or checks and balances to the power of the Alaafin. The limitations include:

- i If Alaafin disagrees with Oyemesi and Ilari, the only option open to him is to commit suicide
- ii. Oyemesi could authorize the Bashorun to send empty calabash to Alaafin symbolizing rejection by the people. Alaafin is not to commit suicide if this happens.
- iii. Disloyal army commander could revolt

The executive council members also formed the legislature. Laws made were executed by the Oba and his council of advisers.

The system of government in the traditional Yoruba society was a loose monarchical arrangement and highly democratic.

3.1.2 The Alafin

At the head of the empire was the Alafin or the king. He ruled the metropolitan territories of the empire directly, assisted by a host of officials and institutional bodies such as those which will be described below. The Alafin ruled the provinces and the tributary states indirectly through local rulers or Oba who were often assisted by the local chief priests of the great god Sango. Many of the provincial rulers were successful generals, appointed by the king. In these provincial states considerable autonomy and freedom of action were allowed to the local rulers whose activities, however, were watched and reported upon by imperial officers, called Ilari, and wives of the Alafin posted out for this purpose.

1. Succession to the Oyo throne stayed within the different branches of the direct lineage of Oranmiyan, founder of Oyo. Often the selection of a new candidate was done on the basis of rotation from the different branches. But, by custom, the eldest son of the king (who occupied the important office of Aremo) was never permitted to succeed his father. Indeed, he had to die at his father's death. This apparently curious and callous custom must have been instituted as a safeguard against an over-ambitious and impatient immediate heir intriguing to hasten the removal or death of the monarch, and to ensure that the eldest prince would protect the life and interests of his father.
2. Also, in order to give a new Alafin complete freedom in choosing fresh court officials, all the personal court officials of the deceased Alafia and a member of the Oyo Mesi had to accompany their master to the world. This was insisted upon by custom for three main reasons, namely;
 - (a) So that the deceased ruler should have faithful officials with him in the next world where, according to the Yoruba belief, the king continued his reign;
 - (b) To remove officials who, because of their great loyalty to the former Alafin, or even plot against him;
 - (c) To give the new Alafin the opportunity of bringing new blood into the corps of court officials, he could then be sure of their loyalty and help if he wished to introduce new policies.
3. The new candidate for the Oyo throne was selected from the royal lineage by a council of seven elders, called the Oyo Mesi. He was consecrated and initiated into his office by the Ooni of Ile-Ife, in his position as the ancestral and spiritual head of all the Yoruba. The consecration and initiation were marked by elaborate ceremonies.

4. Installed as ruler of the Oyo empire, the Alafin was regarded by his subjects as divine and a companion of the gods. In theory, at least, he was omnipotent in both administrative and judicial matters of the realm. The people looked up to the Alafin as father and protector both in the metropolitan and in the provincial states of the Oyo empire.
5. But a bad or tyrannical Alafin could be forced to take his own life, as described below.

3.1.3 The Oyo Mesi

Consisting of seven king-making aristocratic members, the Oyo Mesi was the supreme council of state. The members were the heads of the seven sections of the city of Old Oyo. Not being appointed by the king the Oyo Mesi enjoyed great freedom of discussion and action at the royal court. Together with the Alafia the Oyo Mesi held judicial authority in the capital, and appointed the army leaders. Representing public opinion, they were not only king-makers but also acted as watch-dogs on the actions and conduct of the Alafia.

1. At the head of this august council was the Bashorun, who held a key position in the affairs of state. Some writers have compared his position with that of the modern prime minister. Some Bashorun became very powerful indeed, Bashorun Gaha actually usurped the supreme power of the Alafin from about 1754 to 1774.
2. At the election of a new Alafin, the Oyo Mesi as the king-makers consulted the great oracle at Ife, before announcing the name of the candidate the gods were believed to approve.
3. As leader of the Oyo Mesi the Bashorun generally controlled the fate of the reigning Alafin. Annually, by religious divination, the Bashorun and other members of the Oyo Mesi determined whether or not the Alafin still enjoyed the confidence of the gods and, by implication, of the people.
4. By custom, the Alafin could not be deposed. But when he ceased to enjoy the confidence of the gods and of the people, he was compelled to take his own life. The procedure was as follows. Acting as head of the Oyo Mesi and on behalf of the greater body, the Ogboni (a secret society), the Bashorun presented the unwanted Alafin with an empty calabash (apparently meant to symbolise a poisonous concoction) or parrot's eggs, symbol of death. He then solemnly pronounced the ruler's rejection in the following words; "The gods reject you, the people reject you, the earth rejects you" Upon hearing this, the Alafin had to commit suicide by taking poison.

3.1.4 The Ogboni

This was a much larger body than the Oyo Mesi. Headed by the Oluwo, chief priest of Ife, seat of the great oracle of Yorubaland, and including members of the Oyo Mesi, the Ogboni was a secret society composed of a hundred aged men renowned for their wisdom and political and religious standing.

1. The society was dedicated to the worship of the earth and wielded considerable power in the affairs of state.
2. The members of the Ogboni represented the general will of the people. As such, important decisions of the Oyo Mesi, especially those affecting the rejection of an "unwanted" Alafin could be carried out only with the approval of the Ogboni. This tradition was an effective check on the possibly arbitrary decisions of the Oyo Mesi.

3.1.5 The Eso

Distinguish army officers also had an important role in the constitution of the Oyo empire. These military chiefs, seventy in number, formed the Eso which was headed by the Commander-in-Chief of the imperial army, called the Are-Ona-Kakanfo. It was customary for these veteran military chiefs to be posted as governors in the provinces and other tributary states. The Are-Ona-Kakanfo was generally placed in charge of a frontier post of strategic importance, to keep a watch on external enemies. Custom did not allow the Kakanfo to enter the capital city of Oyo.

1. Powerful members of the Eso in the provinces could become virtually independent of the Alafin. Indeed , some of them did succeed in breaking their territories away from the empire. A notable example was the Are-Ona-Kakanfo of Ilorin, Afonja, who as we noted above , with the assistance of the Fulani, seceded from Oyo in 1817.
2. Being non-hereditary but appointed as a result of military prowess and controlling the imperial armed forces, members of the Eso had considerable influence on the conduct of the Alafin, the Oyo Mesi, and of the Ogboni. However, inasmuch as they owed their appointment to the Alafin, their powers were normally limited.

3.1.6 Constitutional Checks

The Alafin, the Oyo Mesi, the Ogboni and the Eso each serve to strengthen the stability of the imperial structure. Each in turn served as a check on the other.

1. The Alafin could not afford to become tyrannical, as his future could be decided by the Oyo Mesi, acting according to the wishes of the other bodies and the will of the gods.
2. The Oyo Mesi could not act arbitrarily, since some of their most important decisions required the approval of the Ogboni, who represented the will of the people. Also the removal of the Alafin invariably meant the death of one of their own members; and it could be any of them.
3. Another constitutional safeguard was that the Alafin had a special representative who had great influence in the Ogboni. Furthermore, the Oluwo prevented any arbitrary attempts by the Bashorun to reject an Alafin.
4. The powers of the Ogboni were equally limited, in that they were controlled by public opinion and the general will of the people.
5. On the other hand, although the members of the Eso controlled the imperial army, they owed their appointments to the Alafin acting with the Oyo Mesi and held their posts at the pleasure of the Ogboni. Being generally of humble birth and often being eunuchs, they had very little political ambition.
6. The other groups could not act arbitrarily against the Eso who controlled the armed forces, and could therefore overthrow them by force if badly treated.
7. The long life and stability of the Oyo empire rested on this pattern of checks and balances. This system appears to have been unique in the history of pre-colonial Africa.

3.1.7 Judicial Administration

The Alaafin was the final court. Certain offences were regarded as serious offences, these include – murder, burglary,, land case, witchcraft, profaning the deities and homicide. This kind of offences that attract capital punishment is usually tried in the Oba's palace or court. Minor offences such as family quarrels, exchange of abusive words, owing of debt were hand from the family level to the level where the parties involved were satisfied with the justice they have obtained. This does not go beyond the Oba's court.

The age – grade usually referred to as the “Elegbe” has the responsibility of implementing the decisions reached in the Oba's court. For instance, if anybody is to be executed or imprisoned it is their duty to carry out the instruction or order to the last letter.

3.1.8 Official Religion

The Yoruba official religion was the traditional religion. The Oba was to perform sacrifice from time to time or as the need arises. The essence of the sacrifice is to

appease the Oduduwa the founder, ancestors and deities. He usually performs the sacrifice through some priests. The performance of this sacrifice is very important because it is the source of the Oba's power, legitimacy, respect and the basis of unity, solidarity and the progress of the Yoruba people. For instance if the Oba fails to fulfill these religious obligations the deities, ancestors and the Oduduwa might be angry and will cause pestilence, epidemics, drought, famine and calamities among the Yoruba people. Therefore, to prevent the gods from becoming angry, the Oba usually performs these sacrifices. Kwara as one of the Yoruba kingdoms and some parts of Oyo were conquered by the Jihadist of Usman Dan Fodio and converted from the traditional religion to Islam.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the general overview of how the government of Oyo was administer as a great Empire for nearly four centuries through her effective form of government, this was made unique by a system of checks and balances.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write brief notes on; The Oyo Mesi, The Ogboni and The Eso.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that the type of government operated in Oyo was among the factors which maintained Oyo as a great empire for nearly four centuries, this was made unique by a system of checks and balances.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of how the government of Oyo was administer as a great Empire for nearly four centuries through her effective form of government, this was made unique by a system of checks and balances.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Write brief note on the Alafin?

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

The Oyo Mesi

Consisting of seven king-making aristocratic members, the Oyo Mesi was the supreme council of state. The members were the heads of the seven sections of the city of Old Oyo. Not being appointed by the king the Oyo Mesi enjoyed great freedom of discussion and action at the royal court. Together with the Alafia the Oyo Mesi held judicial authority in the capital, and appointed the army leaders. Representing public opinion, they were not only king-makers but also acted as watch-dogs on the actions and conduct of the Alafia.

At the head of this august council was the Bashorun, who held a key position in the affairs of state. Some writers have compared his position with that of the modern prime minister. Some Bashorun became very powerful indeed, Bashorun Gaha actually usurped the supreme power of the Alafin from about 1754 to 1774.

At the election of a new Alafin, the Oyo Mesi as the king-makers consulted the great oracle at Ife, before announcing the name of the candidate the gods were believed to approve. As leader of the Oyo Mesi the Bashorun generally controlled the fate of the reigning Alafin. Annually, by religious divination, the Bashorun and other members of the Oyo Mesi determined whether or not the Alafin still enjoyed the confidence of the gods and, by implication, of the people.

By custom, the Alafin could not be deposed. But when he ceased to enjoy the confidence of the gods and of the people, he was compelled to take his own life. The procedure was as follows. Acting as head of the Oyo Mesi and on behalf of the greater body, the Ogboni (a secret society), the Bashorun presented the unwanted Alafin with an empty calabash (apparently meant to symbolise a poisonous concoction) or parrot's eggs, symbol of death. He then solemnly pronounced the ruler's rejection in the following words; "The gods reject you, the people reject you, the earth rejects you" Upon hearing this, the Alafin had to commit suicide by taking poison.

The Ogboni

This was a much larger body than the Oyo Mesi. Headed by the Oluwo, chief priest of Ife, seat of the great oracle of Yorubaland, and including members of the Oyo Mesi, the Ogboni was a secret society composed of a hundred aged men renowned for their wisdom and political and religious standing.

The society was dedicated to the worship of the earth and wielded considerable power in the affairs of state.

The members of the Ogboni represented the general will of the people. As such, important decisions of the Oyo Mesi, especially those affecting the rejection of an “unwanted” Alafin could be carried out only with the approval of the Ogboni. This tradition was an effective check on the possibly arbitrary decisions of the Oyo Mesi.

The Eso

Distinguish army officers also had an important role in the constitution of the Oyo empire. These military chiefs, seventy in number, formed the Eso which was headed by the Commander-in-Chief of the imperial army, called the Are-Ona-Kakanfo. It was customary for these veteran military chiefs to be posted as governors in the provinces and other tributary states. The Are-Ona-Kakanfo was generally placed in charge of a frontier post of strategic importance, to keep a watch on external enemies. Custom did not allow the Kakanfo to enter the capital city of Oyo.

Powerful members of the Eso in the provinces could become virtually independent of the Alafin. Indeed , some of them did succeed in breaking their territories away from the empire. A notable example was the Are-Ona-Kakanfo of Ilorin, Afonja, who as we noted above , with the assistance of the Fulani, seceded from Oyo in 1817.

Being non-hereditary but appointed as a result of military prowess and controlling the imperial armed forces, members of the Eso had considerable influence on the conduct of the Alafin, the Oyo Mesi, and of the Ogboni. However, inasmuch as they owed their appointment to the Alafin, their powers were normally limited.

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UNIT 4: STRENGTH AND SURVIVAL OF OYO EMPIRE

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of how the strength and survival of Oyo took place. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of how the strength and survival of Oyo took place.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Explain how the strength and survival of Oyo took place within the empire.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 STRENGTH AND SURVIVAL OF OYO EMPIRE

Oyo emerged as a small state about the beginning of the fifteenth century. It reached its peak as a vast empire about the middle of the eighteenth century. The empire did not totally collapse until the middle of the nineteenth century. Thus of all the empires that flourished in West Africa, Oyo lasted longest; it was one of the best organised

constitutionally; and it had the finest works of art. The reasons for its power and survival may be summarised as follows.

3.2 LOCATION OF OYO

The location of the capital of Oyo was in itself an advantage. Old Oyo was situated beyond the tropical forest zone, and this geographical position was helpful for the following reasons.

1. The flat nature of the territory helped to make the conquest of neighbouring lands easier especially when using cavalry, in the use of which the Oyo army excelled. The cavalry was less useful further south in the forest zone.
2. It also meant that communication between states within metropolitan Oyo was easy.
3. The fertile land of the area meant that food supplies were good; the ruling classes could therefore devote their attention not only to further conquests but also to the administration of the empire.
4. As we shall see below, Oyo was also a focal point for trade with merchants from all directions; the Western Sudan, Kanem-Bornu, and from the south.

3.3 ORGANISATION

Another helpful factor was the organisation of the empire. The details of this have been discussed in the preceding section. In summary those aspects of the governmental structure of Oyo which made for strength were the following.

1. In metropolitan Oyo political stability was brought about by a system of checks and balances by which neither the Alafin nor the other organs of government could assert too much power.
2. The degree of autonomy which the local rulers of the provinces and tributary states were allowed meant that there was little reason for rebellion. So long as they maintained their allegiance and paid their tributes they were, for all practical purposes, independent.
3. Military strength helped to sustain the empire for several centuries. Oyo always had at its disposal dependable armed forces consisting of infantry and cavalry and led by warriors of exceptional valour and ability. According to tradition, no army officer was permitted to return home defeated; he must kill himself. No wonder they fought with great determination.

3.4 WEALTH OF THE EMPIRE

It may also be added that Oyo had the financial resources to maintain its empire. Its wealth came from many resources.

1. It possessed valuable natural resources in the form of minerals and products of the forest.
2. It regularly received tributes from the vassal states. As mentioned elsewhere, at one time the Dahomean states were paying annually over in tribute.
3. Because of its location, Oyo became an important trading centre, attracting merchants from all directions.
 - (a) From the north, came traders from the Western Sudan.
 - (b) In the exchange of goods from the south, such as kola nuts Oyo played the role of middleman. Later, when the slave was at its height, Oyo middlemen reaped enormous profits.
 - (c) Their wars enabled them to capture thousands of men whom they sold to the white traders in exchange for Europeans goods.
 - (d) Goods from Kanem-Bornu also came to the Oyo markets.
4. Oyo also profited from selling the produce of the industrial skills of her people.
 - (a) The abundance of iron ore and the skill of the people in iron working meant the empire could produce efficient farming implements and military weapons, which were not only used locally but were also sold to external traders.
 - (b) Revenue was also gained from the products of skilled craftsmanship in weaving and dyeing, in carving and pottery. These works of art attracted traders from both the Western Sudan and from the forest zone in the south. Oyo's markets became great centres for trade in leather, salt, slaves, horses, kola nuts, ivory and cloth.

3.5 ETHNIC AFFINITY

Ethnic affinity among the Yoruba states of the empire also helped Oyo to survive as the centre of a great empire. After Oyo had established its ascendancy, all the other Yoruba states were proud to be associated with the kingdom with which they shared a common origin, culture, language and heritage.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to how the strength and survival of Oyo took place.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Account for the long survival of Oyo as an empire.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses showed that Oyo emerged as a small state about the beginning of the fifteenth century. It reached its peak as a vast empire about the middle of the eighteenth century. The empire did not totally collapse until the middle of the nineteenth century. Thus of all the empires that flourished in West Africa, Oyo lasted longest; it was one of the best organised constitutionally; and it had the finest works of art.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of how the strength and survival of Oyo took place.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

From what sources did the empire of Oyo derive its wealth?

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Location of Oyo

The location of the capital of Oyo was in itself an advantage. Old Oyo was situated beyond the tropical forest zone, and this geographical position was helpful for the following reasons.

The flat nature of the territory helped to make the conquest of neighbouring lands easier especially when using cavalry, in the use of which the Oyo army excelled. The cavalry was less useful further south in the forest zone.

It also meant that communication between states within metropolitan Oyo was easy.

The fertile land of the area meant that food supplies were good; the ruling classes could therefore devote their attention not only to further conquests but also to the administration of the empire.

As we shall see below, Oyo was also a focal point for trade with merchants from all directions; the Western Sudan, Kanem-Bornu, and from the south.

Organisation

Another helpful factor was the organisation of the empire. The details of this have been discussed in the preceding section. In summary those aspects of the governmental structure of Oyo which made for strength were the following.

In metropolitan Oyo political stability was brought about by a system of checks and balances by which neither the Alafin nor the other organs of government could assert too much power.

The degree of autonomy which the local rulers of the provinces and tributary states were allowed meant that there was little reason for rebellion. So long as they maintained their allegiance and paid their tributes they were, for all practical purposes, independent.

Military strength helped to sustain the empire for several centuries. Oyo always had at its disposal dependable armed forces consisting of infantry and cavalry and led by warriors of exceptional valour and ability. According to tradition, no army officer was permitted to return home defeated; he must kill himself. No wonder they fought with great determination.

Wealth of the empire

It may also be added that Oyo had the financial resources to maintain its empire. Its wealth came from many resources.

It possessed valuable natural resources in the form of minerals and products of the forest.

It regularly received tributes from the vassal states. As mentioned elsewhere, at one time the Dahomean states were paying annually over in tribute.

Because of its location, Oyo became an important trading centre, attracting merchants from all directions.

From the north, came traders from the Western Sudan.

In the exchange of goods from the south, such as kola nuts Oyo played the role of middleman. Later, when the slave was at its height, Oyo middlemen reaped enormous profits.

Their wars enabled them to capture thousands of men whom they sold to the white traders in exchange for Europeans goods.

Goods from Kanem-Bornu also came to the Oyo markets.

Oyo also profited from selling the produce of the industrial skills of her people.

The abundance of iron ore and the skill of the people in iron working meant the empire could produce efficient farming implements and military weapons, which were not only used locally but were also sold to external traders.

Revenue was also gained from the products of skilled craftsmanship in weaving and dyeing, in carving and pottery. These works of art attracted traders from both the Western Sudan and from the forest zone in the south. Oyo's markets became great centres for trade in leather, salt, slaves, horses, kola nuts, ivory and cloth.

Ethnic affinity

Ethnic affinity among the Yoruba states of the empire also helped Oyo to survive as the centre of a great empire. After Oyo had established its ascendancy, all the other Yoruba states were proud to be associated with the kingdom with which they shared a common origin, culture, language and heritage.

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UNIT 5: DECLINE OF OYO EMPIRE

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of how the decline of Oyo occurred. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of how the decline of Oyo occurred.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Explain how the decline of Oyo took place within the empire.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 DECLINE OF OYO EMPIRE

A number of forces combined, from the second part of the eighteenth century, to bring about the decline of the Oyo empire. The following is a summary of these causes which may be grouped under two main heads, internal and external.

3.1.1 Internal causes

Under this heading historians generally classify four classes.

1. Extent of the empire

The map shows the extent of the empire when at its peak in the middle of the eighteenth century. By this time, as one historian put it, " the Old Oyo empire had become overstretched" In the days when transportation and communication were not so easy, it required highly efficient administrative machinery to keep control over all parts of the empire. But from the second half of the eighteenth century this became particularly difficult largely because of the other forces at work described below.

2. Weakness of the central government

Taking advantage of weak rulers, Gaha, an ambitious and selfish Bashorun assumed power in the state. However, an able Alafin, Abiodun, was able to oust Gaha, wipe out the entire family of the Bashorun and restore the authority of the monarch. The last strong Alafin of Oyo, Abiodun died in 1789. After his death the central government of Oyo became much weaker.

His successor, Awole, acting against the time-honoured custom ordered his army to attack Apomu, an Ife town in the Yoruba cradle. All the leading personalities including the Bashorun and the Kakanfo, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, refused the orders of the Alafin. These great men made life intolerable for him until he committed suicide in 1796. His unconstitutional action had disastrous consequences on the subsequent history of Oyo.

- (a) Awole had lost the support of all the leading men in the imperial machinery of government.
- (b) Ile-Ife, the spiritual headquarters and mother state of the Yoruba states, refused to consecrate the Alafins of Oyo.
- (c) Because of this state of affairs, strong chiefs in metropolitan Oyo began to assert their independence, since they could not remain subjects of an Alafin who was not consecrated by the Ooni of Ile-Ife. Examples of these chiefs were Afonja , the Kakanfo and governor of the northern province, Ilorin, the Baale of Gbogun, and the Onikoyi of Ikoyi.

3. Weakened military strength

The empire would perhaps have survived but for the fact that, towards the close of the eighteenth century, the army too was losing its strength. The once invincible Oyo army suffered several defeats at the hands of the rebellious Egba (1775-80), the Borgu (1783), and the Nupe (1791). Because of her defeat by her northern neighbours, Oyo could no longer procure a

regular supply of horses to reinforce the cavalry which had been the mainstay of the imperial forces.

4. Economic decline

The trade which had been so important to Oyo began to decline steadily. The wars which characterised the latter part of Oyo's history also seriously dislocated the industry and economic life of the empire.

5. Yoruba civil wars

In the nineteenth century several states of Yorubaland waged wars against one another. These wars not only weakened but actually caused the complete disintegration of the empire. The Ijaiye wars of 1860 to 1865, which involved most of the leading Yoruba states were disastrous for Yorubaland as were another series of wars lasting from 1877 to 1893, in which all the leading states joined forces against Ibadan.

3.1.2 External causes

Long before these civil wars, Oyo had become dangerously weak. The empire was in no condition to cope with two external attacks, one came from the Fulani invaders from the north and the other from the British imperialists from the coast.

1. The Fulani invasion

In 1817, Afonja, the Kakanfo and governor of the Yoruba northern state of Ilorin quarrelled with the Alafin. In order to gain his total independence from the Alafin, Afonja asked the Fulani for help. The Fulani had conquered all the Hausa states to the north.

- (a) Having helped him to gain his goal, the Fulani killed him in 1831, and made Ilorin into an emirate under Sokoto Caliphate.
- (b) Now in complete control of Ilorin, which had been the northern outpost of the Oyo empire, the Fulani attacked Oyo itself in 1837, and destroyed the imperial capital. The Yoruba then founded a new capital at Ago-Oja, about 160 kilometres to the south, which became present-day Oyo.
- (c) The Yoruba forces did not give up completely. Under the leadership of Ibadan they were able to stop the Fulani from pushing further south when they defeated the invaders at Oshogbo in 1840.
- (d) The destruction of the city of Old Oyo meant that the empire was doomed.
 - (1) Trade with the north became completely dislocated.

- (2) Thousands of refugees fled southwards and founded new towns like Abeokuta and Ibadan. Refugees helped the rapid growth of other towns like, Modakeke, Ogbomosho and Oshogbo.
- (3) These new cities started civil wars as each fought for ascendancy over its neighbours.
- (4) Several other dismembered Yoruba states resorted to civil wars. Notable examples were the Owu and Ife wars of 1821 to 1825, and the Ijaye war of 1860 to 1865 caused by the defection of the Kakanfo Kurunmi, the founder of Ijaye.
- (e) The provincial vassal states were not slow to take advantage of the situation to gain their independence. Thus from 1821 Dahomey took the offensive against the Yoruba people, taking important Yoruba towns like Oke-Odan(1844), Otta (1848), and other towns in the Egbado district between 1851 and 1864.

2. The British thrust

The last straw which broke the back of Oyo was British imperialism. While trying to stop the slave trade and to introduce legitimate trade, the British bombarded Lagos in 1851 and annexed it as a colony in 1861. By the end of the nineteenth century the British had extended their sphere of influence over all Yorubaland. The Yoruba and other ethnic groups in what became known as Nigeria served under the British flag until 1960, when the people re-asserted their national sovereignty.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to how the decline of Oyo occurred.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write a brief account of the forces which brought about the collapse of the Oyo Empire.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that by the second half of the nineteenth century when the British planted their flag on Yoruba soil, the Oyo empire had lasted for nearly four hundred years. During this period the Yoruba had developed one of the most effective forms of both central and local government known in West Africa at any time. They operated a form of government which was both aristocratic and democratic. The

Yoruba civilisation also produced examples of art and culture unsurpassed by any other empire in West Africa. Yoruba works of art such as the celebrated Ife bronze heads made by the Cire Perdue method, leather work, and terra-cotta pieces, are all today highly treasured not only in Ile-Ife but also in most important museums in the world and a number of forces combined (Internal and External), from the second part of the eighteenth century, brought about the collapse of the Oyo empire.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of how the decline of Oyo occurred.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain in details the forces which brought about the collapse of the Oyo empire.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Internal causes

Under this heading historians generally classify four classes.

Extent of the empire

The map shows the extent of the empire when at its peak in the middle of the eighteenth century. By this time, as one historian put it, "the Old Oyo empire had become overstretched" In the days when transportation and communication were not so easy, it required highly efficient administrative machinery to keep control over all parts of the empire. But from the second half of the eighteenth century this became particularly difficult largely because of the other forces at work described below.

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MODULE 4-THE EMPIRE OF BENIN KINGDOM

UNIT 1: THE ORIGINS OF THE BENIN KINGDOM

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction	
2.0 Objectives	
3.0 Main Content	
4.0 Conclusion	
5.0 Summary	
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment	
7.0 References/Further Readings ...	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you an historical background and a general overview of how the origins of the Benin emerged.

In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the origins of the Benin.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Explain how the origins of Benin took place within the Kingdom.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE ORIGINS OF THE BENIN KINGDOM

3.1.1 Legends of Origin

As with other ancient states of West Africa, very little is known for certain about the early history of the Edo-speaking people who founded the Benin Kingdom. But the Bini legends and traditions firmly assert that they were the first people to emerge as an organised people in Southern Nigeria. The legends concerning their origin, are clothed in mythical stories. The following are some of these legends.

1. The heavenly prince

- (a) One popular legend says that the original founder of Benin was the youngest son of Osanobua, the supreme god. Descending from heaven and helped by a mythical bird, the heavenly prince was able to dry up the flood which covered the whole country. The land became fertile and the founder and his people were able to engage in crop cultivation, and to expand their kingdom. One sees in this legend a similarity to the Yoruba mythical story of Olorun, the supreme god who sent down his son Oduduwa from heaven, to found Ile-Ife.
- (b) The Bini traditions maintain that about fifteen rulers of the Ogiso dynasty followed the legendary founder. There then arose a dispute over the succession. This crisis resulted in a period of interregnum, during which Benin became virtually a republic, with two successive administrators, Evian and Ogiamwe.

3.1.2 The legend of Oranmiyan or Orayan

According to another legend, the founders of Benin emigrated from the "East" (possibly Egypt). After wandering through central Africa, they, with the Yoruba, their kinsmen, settled in Ile-Ife for many years. A section of Ile-Ife settlers moved southwards towards the coast and halted in Igodomigodo, original name of Edoland. One of the leaders, Igodo, became first ruler of the Ogiso dynasty which lasted for about a thousand years. Under the rulers of the Ogiso dynasty, the Edo people developed their country both politically and economically. They also developed advanced forms of arts and crafts.

(a) When there was a dispute over the succession, after the people had banished Awodo, the last Ogiso ruler, they suspended kingship and introduced a form of

republican system of government. The first administrator elected to preside over the affairs of the state was Evian. He was banished because of his misrule. The next was Ogiamwe who wanted to restore hereditary kingship.

(b) Vehemently opposing this move, the people sent to Oduduwa in Ile-Ife to send them a candidate to rule them. Oranmiyan was sent with a number of courtiers. Realising that the kingdom would prosper only under a true native of the land, Oranmiyan returned to Ile-Ife, after he had fathered a son by a local princess. On leaving the place, because of the troubles he had encountered while in Benin, he referred to the territory as "a land of vexation"; Ile Ibinu, which later became corrupted into Bini or Benin.

(c) The son of Oranmiyan was Eweka 1 who started a new dynasty in Benin.

2. Significance of the legends

Whatever the historical accuracy of these legends, one can learn a few important points from them.

- (a) Some scholars maintain that the first legend must have been encouraged by the Bini, in order to re-inforce their claim that they had a more ancient origin than the Yoruba since according to the mythical story they were well-established before Oduduwa founded Ile-Ife.
- (b) On the other hand, although the narrative of the second legend would seem to point to the same conclusion as the first legend, many historians interpret the coming of Oranmiyan to Edoland as indicating a possible invasion and annexation of the land by the Yoruba. The Yoruba use this legend to demonstrate their ancestral superiority over the Bini.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the historical background and a general overview of how the origins of the Benin emerged.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What are the legendary accounts of the origin of the Edo-speaking people.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses showed that with other ancient states of West Africa, very little is known for certain about the early history of the Edo-speaking people who founded the Benin Kingdom. But the Bini legends and traditions firmly assert that they were the first people to emerge as an organised people in the present-day Southern part of Nigeria.

The legends concerning their origin, are clothed in mythical stories and present you with the opinions of these legends about the origins of Benin.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the historical background and a general overview of how the origins of the Benin emerged.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

What is the significance of the legends?

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

The heavenly prince

One popular legend says that the original founder of Benin was the youngest son of Osanobua, the supreme god. Descending from heaven and helped by a mythical bird, the heavenly prince was able to dry up the flood which covered the whole country. The land became fertile and the founder and his people were able to engage in crop cultivation, and to expand their kingdom. One sees in this legend a similarity to the Yoruba mythical story of Olorun, the supreme god who sent down his son Oduduwa from heaven, to found Ile-Ife.

The Bini traditions maintain that about fifteen rulers of the Ogo dynasty followed the legendary founder. There then arose a dispute over the succession. This crisis resulted in a period of interregnum, during which Benin became virtually a republic, with two successive administrators, Ewe and Ogiamwe.

The legend of Oranmiyan or Orayan

According to another legend, the founders of Benin emigrated from the "East" (possibly Egypt). After wandering through central Africa, they, with the Yoruba, their kinsmen, settled in Ile-Ife for many years. A section of Ile-Ife settlers moved southwards towards the coast and halted in Igodomigodo, original name of Edoland. One of the leaders, Igodo, became first ruler of the Ogo dynasty which lasted for about a thousand years. Under the rulers of the Ogo dynasty, the Edo people developed their country both politically and economically. They also developed advanced forms of arts and crafts.

When there was a dispute over the succession, after the people had banished Awodo, the last Ogiso ruler, they suspended kingship and introduced a form of republican system of government. The first administrator elected to preside over the affairs of the state was Evian. He was banished because of his misrule. The next was Ogiamwe who wanted to restore hereditary kingship.

Vehemently opposing this move, the people sent to Oduduwa in Ile-Ife to send them a candidate to rule them. Oranmiyan was sent with a number of courtiers. Realising that the kingdom would prosper only under a true native of the land, Oranmiyan returned to Ile-Ife, after he had fathered a son by a local princess. On leaving the place, because of the troubles he had encountered while in Benin, he referred to the territory as “a land of vexation”; Ile Ibinu, which later became corrupted into Bini or Benin.

The son of Oranmiyan was Eweka 1 who started a new dynasty in Benin.

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UNIT 2: THE RISE OF THE BENIN KINGDOM

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of how the rise of Benin took place. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of how the rise of Benin took place.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

Explain how the rise of Benin took place.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE RISE OF THE BENIN KINGDOM

3.1.1 Early kings of Benin

Until it came under British rule at the close of the nineteenth century, Benin had survived as an independent kingdom for about five centuries. The kingdom owed much to the achievements of its early rulers, among whom were the following.

1. Eweka 1

As with his two successors, historians have not been able to date his reign with any certainty. But he must have reigned in legendary accounts, related above, Oranmiyan's son Eweka 1, became the first ruler of a new Benin dynasty which replaced the earlier one, the Ogiso. He is said to have had a very long and eventful reign.

- (a) Among the many achievements attributed in the oral traditions to Eweka 1 was the creation of Uzama-Nihinron. Like the Yoruba Oyo Mesi, the Uzama consisted of seven councillors of state and king-makers. The Uzama was, however, not as all-powerful as the Yoruba Oyo Mesi.
- (b) To strength the position of the king, Eweka 1 started the tradition of appointing his sons and other favoured persons as local rulers in the districts of the kingdoms.

2. Ewedo

A grandson of Eweka 1, whose work he successfully carried on, Ewedo succeeded his father Ehennihew, about whose career very little is remembered in the Benin traditions.

- (a) He ascended the throne after a period of succession disputes out of which he emerged victorious over a rival group led by Ogiamwe, son of the administrator of that time who had ruled during the earlier period of interregnum.
- (b) Having established himself firmly on the throne, Ewedo set about strengthening the kingdom.
 - (1) First, realising the importance of religion as a unifying force in the kingdom, Ewedo appointed a high priest through whom he influenced the religious beliefs of his people. They looked upon the Oba as a demi-god whose person and position was revered. Because of his promotion of religion, later historians referred to him as "the Idolator"
 - (2) Next, he introduced new political and legal institutions, designed to strengthen his position as a supreme ruler. He appointed a large number of officials, on whose loyalty he could rely. The king's prestige was further increased by the building of a new palace in the very heart of the city.
 - (3) Oguola Ewedo the Idolator, was succeeded by his son, Oguola, who is credited in the Benin traditions with two main achievements;
 - (a) The building of the magnificent city walls, many kilometres long, which protected greater Benin from external attacks;

- (b) The introduction of the celebrated brass-makers who enriched Benin sculpture and decorated the royal courts and the city with beautiful plaques, depicting and commemorating the great events of the early history of Benin.

4. Ewuare the Great (1440-73)

Following the murder of Oguola, another succession dispute disrupted the ordered life in Benin. However, Ogun Ewuare emerged as the rightful heir and was enthroned in about 1440. He assumed the title "Ewuare" meaning "the troubles are over", or it is cool" Much more is known about Ewuare than about his predecessors. This was perhaps because it was in his reign that Benin first came into contact with the Portuguese, who have left records of their visits to Benin. The first Portuguese adventurer, Ruy de Sequeira, visited the city in 1472.

- (a) According to oral tradition Ewuare constructed good roads in Benin-city; chief among these were the famous streets known as Akpakpava and Utantan.
- (b) A great magician, physician, traveller and warrior, he conquered and annexed to his growing kingdom more territories than any of his predecessors had. According to the oral traditions, he is said to have conquered over 200 towns and villages including places in Yoruba and Ibo lands.
- (c) He reduced the powers of the over-ambitious palace chiefs who had often opposed the policies of the Obas.
- (d) Perhaps the greatest achievements were the political and social reforms which he introduced in both the metropolitan kingdom of Benin and in the conquered states. The main innovation of the reforms was the creation of a strong centralised government.
 - (1) When Ewuare assumed power, the relationship between the Oba, the Uzama or councillors of state, and other palace chiefs was not well-defined. As a result the subordinate chiefs and the Uzama had assumed excessive powers which tended to handicap the authority of the Oba.
 - (2) To offset the powers of the palace chiefs, Ewuare created another group of chiefs, the town chiefs. The most senior of these royally appointed town chiefs became the Commander-in-Chief of the imperial army. To strengthen his own position even more against the palace chiefs, Ewuare created a state council; the town chiefs were given an important voice on this council. Being appointed by the Oba, the town

chiefs had to be loyal to the king, and helped him to pass important decisions of state.

- (e) Like Ewedo, Ewuare encouraged the beliefs of the people and in return the people regarded him with veneration, another factor which helped to strengthen his position as head of a centralised government.

5. Ozolua (1481-1504)

Benefiting from the reforms and achievements of his immediate predecessor, Ozolua extended Benin's sphere of influence westwards to the Yoruba coastal states. These territorial acquisitions were to be consolidated by his grandson Orhogbua (1550-78). Another significant event in Ozolua's reign was the second visit to Benin of the Portuguese, this time led by Afonso d'Aveiro who visited Benin in 1485-6. He introduced guns and coconuts into Benin. This contact was important because it initiated trade between Benin and European merchants. One Bini prince, the chief of Gwatto, went with d'Aveiro to Lisbon. On his return he set up a trading enterprise as agent of the Portuguese merchants. Soon Portuguese trade with Benin increased in volume dealing not only in ordinary goods but also in the export of slaves to the New World.

4. Esigie (1504-50)

Esigie is believed to have had the longest reign of all the early Obas of Benin since he ruled for nearly half a century. He is recorded by the Portuguese as a man of great learning and an astrologist. Several important achievements were attributed to him including the following.

- (a) Before his time a man's status in Benin society depended on birth. Instead, Esigie placed more emphasis on the individual's achievements rather than on the mere accident of birth. This approach inspired men of talent to work for the empire.
 - (b) Esigie also promoted trade with the Portuguese. In exchange for Portuguese imported goods, the Bini exported ivory, pepper, Bini cloth, leopard skin, and slaves. The commercial port of Gwatto played an important part in this trade.
5. At the Oba's request, through his ambassador to Portugal the Ohen-Okun of Gwatto, the king of Portugal sent out Roman Catholic missionaries to preach Christianity in Benin. But in Esigie's reign the Christian faith did not spread beyond palace circles.

6. Orhogbua (1550-78)

From the oral traditions and the written records, it would seem that Benin reached the peak of its expansion in the reign of Orhogbua.

- (a) Among the achievements attributed to his reign was Benin's effective occupation of Lagos Island which became known as

Eko, meaning the “king camp”. Indeed, according to the local tradition of Lagos, the town’s first Oba, the Eleko of Oko, is said to have been a son of Orhogbua 1.

- (b) Educated at one of the Portuguese colonial schools, and himself a Christian of the Roman Catholic faith, Orhogbua encouraged missionary work in his empire.
- (c) In his reign the first group of English merchants under Captain Wyndham visited Benin, in 1553, the same year as they had visited the coast of modern Ghana. This important visit was to open the way for future trading links with the British.

3.1.1 Subsequent rulers of Benin

From the end of Orhogbua’s reign, Benin began to decline. However, by the beginning of the eighteenth century the constitution was more stable because of reforms which were designed to prevent succession disputes. From that time until the present, generally only the eldest son could succeed to the throne as Oba of Benin.

3.1.2 Government of Benin.

In the preceding section we have outlined how, stage by stage, the Obas of Benin succeeded in concentrating power in their own hands at least as far as the government of the metropolitan area was concerned. On the other hand, in the provinces local rulers were virtually left to run their own affairs undisturbed as long as they expressed their allegiance to the Oba through the regular payment of tributes; these were generally in the form of crops or other goods.

1. There were three groups of officials in the Oba’s household:
 - (a) The Iwebo, who were charged with the custody and care of the royal regalia;
 - (b) The Iweguare, who served as the Oba’s personal attendants;
 - (c) The Ibiwe, who supervised the harem.
2. In addition to these domestic officers, there were three title holders who played key roles in the administration of the state. These were the Iyashere, the Ebohon and the Ologboshere. These office-holders corresponded to the present-day prime minister, the minister of external affairs, and the Commander-in-Chief respectively.

3. In metropolitan Benin, the king presided over the machinery of government. Certainly, from the time of Ewuare the Great, whose reign ended in 1473, all real power in the state was in the hands of the Oba. As we noted earlier, there were several important groups who assisted him in the government of the empire. These were the seven-member Uzama, the State Council, the palace chiefs and the body of town chiefs.
 - (a) While the palace chiefs inherited their position, the town chiefs were all appointed directly by the Oba.
 - (b) Ewuare strengthened the position of the town chiefs on the State Council, so that with their support he could be sure his policies would be approved.
 - (c) This is not to say that the Uzama and the palace chiefs were not important. Indeed, they worked hard to protect the interests of the people whom they represented at the royal court.
4. The government of the conquered states was generally left in the hands of the local kings. They left their own laws and observed their own traditions. Occasionally officials were sent round to see that royal edicts were followed. But as long as the local rulers kept the peace within the empire and contributed their tributes, the Oba of Benin left them undisturbed. It was only where local rulers showed signs of disloyalty and rebellion that the Oba of Benin found it necessary to impose a ruler and provide a garrison to enforce the people's loyalty. This happened, for example, in the island of Lagos in the time of Orhogbua, in the second half of the sixteenth century.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the historical background and the general overview of how the rise of Benin took place.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give an account of the contributions which each of the following rulers made towards the rise of the Benin Kingdom; (a) Eweka 1, (b) Ewedo, (c) Oguola, and (d) Ewuare the Great.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses showed that the Benin empire reached the peak of its power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and lasted as an important kingdom up to 1897 when, in a weakened state, it came under British rule. At the height of its glory as an

empire Benin stretched from the Niger, in the east, to the west across the present Lagos State down to Badagry. The empire enclosed a large territory of Yorubaland including Ijebu. The foundations of the empire were firmly laid by the early Obas or kings of the Benin kingdom.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the historical background and a general overview of how the rise of Benin took place.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Give an account of the contributions which each of the following rulers made towards the rise of the Benin kingdom; (a) Ozolua, (b) Esigie, and (c) Orhogbua.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

Eweka 1

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To strength the position of the king, Eweka 1 started the tradition of appointing his sons and other favoured persons as local rulers in the districts of the kingdoms.

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Oguola Ewedo the Idolator, was succeeded by his son, Oguola, who is credited in the Benin traditions with two main achievements;

The building of the magnificent city walls, many kilometres long, which protected greater Benin from external attacks;

The introduction of the celebrated brass-makers who enriched Benin sculpture and decorated the royal courts and the city with beautiful plaques, depicting and commemorating the great events of the early history of Benin.

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A great magician, physician, traveller and warrior, he conquered and annexed to his growing kingdom more territories than any of his predecessors had. According to the

oral traditions, he is said to have conquered over 200 towns and villages including places in Yoruba and Ibo lands.

He reduced the powers of the over-ambitious palace chiefs who had often opposed the policies of the Obas.

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When Ewuare assumed power, the relationship between the Oba, the Uzama or councillors of state, and other palace chiefs was not well-defined. As a result the subordinate chiefs and the Uzama had assumed excessive powers which tended to handicap the authority of the Oba.

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Like Ewedo, Ewuare encouraged the beliefs of the people and in return the people regarded him with veneration, another factor which helped to strengthen his position as head of a centralised government.

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UNIT 3: THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF BENIN KINGDOM

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4. 0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you a general overview of the cultural heritage of Benin, the wealth of Benin and the decline of Benin in details.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Explain how the cultural heritage of Benin took place;
- ii) Explain the sources of Benin wealth;
- iii) Explain the decline of Benin;

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF BENIN KINGDOM

The early Portuguese, who came into contact with Benin, have left records emphasising the very high degree of civilisation which the Benin empire had reached prior to their arrival. The many works of arts in wood, ivory, bronze and terra-cotta preserved in both local and overseas museums confirm these records.

1. Before the arrival of the white people, the kingdom was well-established. Order and peace prevailed. The capital itself was a well-laid-out city with broad streets and well-kept quarters, and enclosed with high walls.
2. The craftsmanship displayed in Benin appears to surpass that of most other ancient African kingdoms. Some scholars maintain that the pieces of art were the creation of the Yoruba. This, to say the least, is very debatable. Recent archaeological finds in Benin include works in copper and its alloys and forged and engraved tin bronzes which experts have dated back to at least the thirteenth century A.D, that is, before the legendary episode of Oranmiyan's stay in Benin.
 - (a) What is likely, from the archaeological findings so far available, was that the Bini learned the art of bronze casting from the Ife artists. But once having acquired this art, Benin became a cultural centre in its own right.
 - (b) As in the bronzes of Ife the bronze casting was done by the Cire Perdue (a French expression meaning "lost wax") method. The object to be cast is first made in wax which is easy to mould into the required shape. For some objects, like bronze heads, a core of inner clay was first made and then covered with a thin layer of clay. The model was heated until the wax melted away; hence the expression "lost wax"
 Molten metal was then poured into the space left by the wax. After a time the bronze or metal cooled and became solidified. The clay was then broken off leaving the metal in the desired shape. These figures were famous for their naturalism, though many were in a more stylistic form, not representing any actual person or animal. These pieces of art were mainly representations of heads, models of animals and other human figures.
 - (c) According to the descriptions of the Portuguese, these works of art were used to decorate the royal palace and other important state buildings. They depict Bini chiefs in a variety of occupations and leisure activities. As such, they depict much of the history and social life of the Bini at the height of their greatness.
3. The different craftsmen formed themselves into guilds, and enjoyed royal patronage.

3.1.2 WEALTH OF BENIN KINGDOM

1. From some of the objects which archaeologists have unearthed in Benin, historians believe that, long before the advent of the Europeans, the Bini were involved in trading with merchants in the hinterland and beyond. They had thus established trading links with

the people of the Western Sudan. Their own craft products were exchanged for imported goods. The revenue from trade was thus a great source of wealth.

2. Another source of wealth were the products of agriculture and fishing in the many rivers of the Niger delta area.
3. When it became an empire, Benin gained a considerable amount of its revenue from tributes received from subject states which were largely paid in kind.
4. With the advent of the Portuguese other opportunities of trade opened up. The Bini became middlemen and profited greatly from the large-scale trade which developed with the Europeans; this was dominated by the trade in slaves.

3.1.3 DECLINE OF BENIN KINGDOM

Benin reached its peak at the end of the sixteenth century. Thereafter it began to decline. The following were some of the more important reasons for this.

1. The frequency of succession disputes was a constant source of weakness in Benin. More often than not, on the death of an Oba, there emerged a number of different claimants for the throne. Even though from the eighteenth century it became customary to appoint the first son of the deceased Oba as the new ruler, there were still times when intrigues caused disunity.
2. After Orhogbua the administration proved to be too weak, even under strong kings, the provincial rulers were allowed too much autonomy.
3. With the growth of overseas trade, from the seventeenth century onwards, it was found that the ports of Benin were not reliable, for example, the mouth of the Gwatto river tended to silt up. The traders therefore began to use the the river Warri instead, and this move was obviously against Benin's interests.
4. From the seventeenth century onwards, Oyo's political ascendancy had a harmful effect on Benin, part of which, in fact, as we have seen was annexed by the Alafins of Oyo.
5. Despite these weakening factors the kingdoms of Benin remained important down to the end of the nineteenth century when it came under the British colonial sphere of influence.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the general overview of the cultural heritage of Benin, the wealth of Benin and the decline of Benin in details.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write a brief account of the cultural heritage of the Benin kingdom.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that Benin, now capital of the Edo State of Federal Nigeria, has been a city of great importance since at least the beginning of the fifteenth century. It became the centre of a great kingdom and, later, of a large empire which stretched from the Lower Niger in the east, to the frontiers of modern Dahomey in the west, and far inland taking in much of Yorubaland. The people of the kingdom, called Bini, spoke the Edo language. Some historians hold the view that Benin owed its rise to power to its early contact with the Portuguese.

This view is not supported by the records of the Portuguese themselves who, on their first arrival in Benin, spoke of the kingdom's high degree of civilisation; these records clearly show that the Europeans were extremely impressed with the size of the empire and the effective system of government.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the general overview of the cultural heritage of Benin, the wealth of Benin and the decline of Benin in details.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Describe how and why the kingdom of Benin fell.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

The Cultural Heritage of Benin Kingdom

The early Portuguese who came into contact with Benin, have left records emphasising the very high degree of civilisation which the Benin empire had reached prior to their arrival. The many works of arts in wood, ivory, bronze and terra-cotta preserved in both local and overseas museums confirm these records.

Before the arrival of the white people, the kingdom was well-established. Order and peace prevailed. The capital itself was a well-laid-out city with broad streets and well-kept quarters, and enclosed with high walls.

The craftsmanship displayed in Benin appears to surpass that of most other ancient African kingdoms. Some scholars maintain that the pieces of art were the creation of the Yoruba. This, to say the least, is very debatable. Recent archaeological finds in Benin include works in copper and its alloys and forged and engraved tin bronzes which experts have dated back to at least the thirteenth century A.D, that is, before the legendary episode of Oranmiyan's stay in Benin.

What is likely, from the archaeological findings so far available, was that the Bini learned the art of bronze casting from the Ife artists. But once having acquired this art, Benin became a cultural centre in its own right.

As in the bronzes of Ife the bronze casting was done by the *Cire Perdue* (a French expression meaning "lost wax") method. The object to be cast is first made in wax which is easy to mould into the required shape. For some objects, like bronze heads, a core of inner clay was first made and then covered with a thin layer of clay. The model was heated until the wax melted away; hence the expression "lost wax"

Molten metal was then poured into the space left by the wax. After a time the bronze or metal cooled and became solidified. The clay was then broken off leaving the metal in the desired shape. These figures were famous for their naturalism, though many were in a more stylistic form, not representing any actual person or animal. These pieces of art were mainly representations of heads, models of animals and other human figures.

According to the descriptions of the Portuguese, these works of art were used to decorate the royal palace and other important state buildings. They depict Bini chiefs in a variety of occupations and leisure activities. As such, they depict much of the history and social life of the Bini at the height of their greatness.

The different craftsmen formed themselves into guilds, and enjoyed royal patronage.

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MODULE 5; THE IBO AND THE PEOPLE OF THE NIGER DELTA

UNIT 1: THE ORIGIN OF THE IBO

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you the historical background and the general overview of the origins of Ibo. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the origins of Ibo.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Explain how the early history of the Ibo emerged;
- ii) Explain the Ibo groups;

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE EARLY HISTORY OF IGBOS

The Igbos are republican by nature. They maintained a decentralized and a cephalous society. Igbo society was democratic and egalitarian. In Nigeria, the Igbos generally occupy the former Eastern Region and a part of the former Mid-Western region. The Igbo unlike the Yoruba and the Hausa – Fulani, had a complex and complicated system of administration in pre-colonial era. The Igbo, generally had no kings or chiefs. They operated a democratic system of government. The executive, legislative and judicial powers were vested in the Oha-na-eze, the council of elders; the Ofo title holders; the family; the Ozo title holders; the Age – Grades, the Umuada, and the “Ala” or the Earth’s goddess represented by a Chief Priest.

The Ibo generally followed what is called a segmentary pattern of political and social organization. In place of the large units which formed kingdoms in other place, Ibo society was based on small units. Because of this pattern the Ibo and some of their southern neighbours never develop great empires or kingdoms. This may be one reason why much less is known about the early history of the Ibo than about other west African peoples.

1. Oral tradition of a section of the Ibo allege that their ancestors originated in the north; possibly, as some historians maintain, in Egypt. the traditions are, however, silent as to the precise location of their original homes.
2. Coming to historic time the Ibo traditions maintain that Awka and Orlu were the earliest settlement which the Ibo made in present-day Nigeria. it is believed that they emerged in this area as an important people about the beginning of the fourteenth century or perhaps even earlier.
 - (a) As the population increased, the Ibo moved out in different directions from the original areas of settlement. Towards the south, they moved as far as the Niger delta where they success in expelling the Ibibio who had to find homes.
 - (b) This southward move was of great significance for the history of the Ibo. The southern Ibo gained possession of the celebrated ibini shrine of the Ibo. It also become the symbol of unity of the Ibo people, despite the segmentary system of Ibo political organization. later similar shrines were installed in many part of Iboland. Notable among these were the Agballa at Akwa the Igweke oracle of Umunora, and the Amadioha oracle at ozuzu

3.1.2 IBO GROUPS

At the height of their development, in about the sixteenth century, the ibo population spread over a vast territory , extending far beyond the frontiers of the present day East century state .

As the ibo settlements increase, so the people become separated into five principal groups .different disdincts also developed . The five principal group of the nof the lbo were the following:

The Onitsha ang nri awka lbo; they lived in the north of lboland;

The owerri lbo, who lived in the south;

the western lbo lived on the west bank of the Niger; they are now part of the mid – west sate of Nigeria; to the east were the cross river lbo.

In the north- eastern territory were the ogoja lbo. As the ibo spread and became established in different localities, the groups different from one another not only in language and religious practices, but also in customs and methods of government . as one historian has explained: some of these differences have been in response to veyring natural condition and problems in the locality .thus, it was to be expected that the nri awka lbo faced by stong northern neighbours would develop centralized government, strong enough to face external forces , whereas the southern groups such as the cross River lbo facing on fears of this type, developed small unit governments.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the historical background and the general overview of the origins of lbo. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the origins of lbo.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the meaning of the term “ village”, “house” in the history of the lbo.

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

The lbo generally followed what is called a segmentary pattern of political and social organization. In place of the large units which formed kingdoms in other place, lbo society was based on small units. Because of this pattern the lbo and some of their southern neighbours never develop great empires or kingdoms. This may be one reason why much less is known about the early history of the lbo then about other west African peoples.

Oral tradition of a section of the Ibo allege that their ancestors originated in the north; possibly, as some historians maintain, in Egypt . the traditions are,however, silent as to the precise location of their original homes.

Coming to historic time the Ibo traditions maintain that Awka and Orlu were the earliest settlement which the Ibo made in present –day Nigeria. It is believed that they emerged in this area as an important people about the beginning of the fourteenth century or perhaps even earlier.

As the population increased, the Ibo moved out in different directions from the original areas of settlement . Towards the south, they moved as far as the Niger delta where they succeeded in expelling the Ibibio who had to find homes.

This southward move was of great significance for the history of the Ibo. The southern Ibo gained possession of the celebrated ibini shrine of the Ibo. It also became the symbol of unity of the Ibo people , despite the segmentary system of Ibo political organization . Later similar shrines were installed in many parts of Iboland. Notable among these were the Agballa at Akwa the Igweke oracle of Umunora, and the Amadioha oracle at Ozuzu

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses showed that among the most dynamic and progressive peoples of Nigeria are the Ibo, now numbering well over twenty million people. Their principal home is the Enugu State of the Federation of Nigeria. But many Ibo have their permanent ancestral homes in the present-day South-South States and South-East States of Nigeria.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the historical background and the general overview of the origins of Ibo. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the origins of Ibo.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

What is the meaning of the phrase 'segmentary system of government'? How did this operate in Iboland?

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UNIT 2: IBO SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you the historical background and the general overview of how the Ibo system of government was administer. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with the general overview of how the Ibo system of government was administer.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Explain how the Ibo system of government emerged;
- ii) Explain the sources of the wealth of the Ibo;

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 IBO SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

3.1.1 Political Administration.

The structural organization of Igbo political system was based on the following:-

Village Administration:- A village is seen as inhabited by a group of related families. Each family head held the Ofo title and all of them put together formed the council of elder. The council governed the village.

The Age – Grade:- The age – grade are people of the same age group, they perform the following functions:

- i. Perform the public duties such as:- clearing the paths, construction of roads, and markets etc.
- ii. They were involved in the administration of the villages
- iii. They served as army for the defence of the villages against external enemy.
- iv. They acted as the police force for the maintenance of law and order.
- v. They helped in the implementation of policies made by the council of elders.
- vi. They assisted in checking abuse of powers by the paramount rulers and the council of elders.
- vii. They also perform ceremonial and cultural functions during important ceremonies in the village or communities.

The affairs of the village are discussed from time to time by family head.

The villagers make laws for themselves and even the age-grades can enact a law which the elders would accept.

Succession to leadership position was not hereditary in Igbo political system.

The political system was of a Republican on. Decisions were reached by consensus, different institutions played different important roles in the administration and powers were shared by them.

Wealthy and influential men in the community or village are given the Ozo title holders. This title makes the holder to be recognized in the society and could then preside over meetings about issues affecting the community with elders.

3.1.2 Judicial Administration.

Minor disputes were settled by the family while major disputes were handled by the council of elders or "Amala". The final adjudication of cases was done by the deities.

The age – grades settled cases that are minor among themselves. The Earth goddess (Ala) plays a great role in judicial functions, for example, offences such as homicide, murder and birth of abnormal children are crimes against Ala.

The chief takes part in judicial settlement; the whole village may constitute itself into a court for the purpose of settling disputes. The native doctor called Dibia could also settle disputes amongst people.

3.1.3 Official Religion

The official religion practiced in pre-colonial Igbo land was the traditional religion. They had chief priests who performed sacrifice from time to time to appease the gods.

The Igbos have great respect for the deities and the departed ancestors. The chief priests were the link between the people and the deities, as well as the departed ancestors. The Igbos believe in re-incarnation. Profaning of deities was a very serious offence among the Igbos. The religious lives of the Igbos were surrounded by mysticisms and superstitions.

Many writers have given the impression that, in the pre- colonial days, all the different groups of the Ibo had the same pattern of government, namely that of the city state and village units or group government. This, indeed, was not the case. The truth was that some groups of the Ibo, especially those in the awka area, had kingship institutions similar to those which existed in other large west African states. In other part of based on village' political units.

1. The best example of Ibo segmentary political unit appear to have existed in the territories of owerri, Aba, orlu and okigwi. The pattern was as follows:

(a) the smallest unit in the segmentary political system was the extended family with a common lineage ;

(b) server extended families formed a word;

(c) many ward constituted a "village ' generally with a market, around which the words were grouped:

1. as a village became large, a division occasionally took place: two or more communities emerged out of this split.

2. on the other hand, the marging of two or more small lineage into a larger and stronger unit was not uncommon.

3. all the lineage in a village community were believed to trance their origin to one common ancestor.

4. the government of a village community was controlled by two institution. One was the general assembly of the citizens, the other, a restricted body, body was the council of Elder called the Ama-ala As well as being heads of the exercised families of the community, most of the member of the council of Elder exercised priestly function. General one of the elders acted as the 'father 'of the group.

3.1.4 Ama-ala, or Council of Elders.

(1) The Ama-ala thus consisted of heads of the extended families in a village community. But to safeguard democracy, any adult male could sit on the council. In routine matters, the council was composed of the heads of the extended families; but when an individual felt that his interests demand his own presence, he had the right to attend the session of the Council of Elders handling his case.

(2) Every adult could attend the village assembly which was summoned by the town crier on the direction of the elders.

(i) Each individual was entitled to a hearing at the assembly. Decisions were based on the unanimous vote of the members present at the assembly.

(ii) When the elders refused to call the assembly, the commoners could force their will on the elders who, to maintain their dignity, could not ignore the wishes of the people. In this way the ordinary citizens had their rights guaranteed against arbitrary rule of the Council of Elders.

How was justice administered? In early Ibo society there were no formally constituted courts of justice in the modern sense. In common with nearly all other communities their courts were ad hoc ones.

Generally, serious cases came before the assembly of the citizens and the Council of Elders.

Minor quarrels between individuals were often settled privately, or before a small group of elders in the ward. Where one party still felt aggrieved, he could always appeal to the Ama-ala, or Council of Elders.

In cases where a formal hearing was necessary, both parties put forward their cases. They then withdrew and returned to hear the judgement after the adjudicators had examined each side's case.

More often than not, however, the settlement of disputes was achieved by arbitration rather than through formal court procedure. Blame was then apportioned.

Despite the segmentary institutions of the Ibo, there existed links which brought several groups together as one people.

One of these links was marriage. Normally an Ibo married outside his village group. This was the practice since members of the village lineage, as we noted above, were descendants of a common ancestor.

Inter-village trade was another link which brought people of different communities together.

Perhaps the most important link were the oracles which brought all the Ibo together to common shrines.

3.2 ORACLES AND SHRINES IN IBOLAND

There were many shrines in Iboland which the people frequented either to consult, to settle a dispute, or to ask for special favours through the intermediary of the oracles.

Four of these oracles became famous throughout Iboland for their supposed "powers" and "gift of prediction" and for their impartiality when disputes were brought before them. These were the following;

i) The Agballa oracle at Awka;

- ii) The Igweke Ala oracle at Umunora;
- iii) The Amadioha oracle at Ozuzu;

The most celebrated of them was the Ibini Okpabe oracle (referred to by Europeans as "Long Juju") at Arochuku. The name means "the voice of God". It was so called because it was held to be the most powerful of the oracles. Because it was situated in the land of the Aro, the people of that territory had considerable influence in Iboland. It also gave them an advantage when trading with their neighbours.

In addition to this segmentary political system, some Ibo other than the Owerri instituted what were called "age-sets" whose membership cut across ward boundaries.

Each age-group in society had the responsibility for special community services. In this way the different age-groups maintained the tradition of solidarity among the different lineages.

In certain areas the young age-group or youth were given an effective voice in the council of Ama-ala. Among some of the Ibo any freeborn male could buy a title which enhanced his status and also initiated him into such title societies as the Ozo, Ama, and the Ekpe.

As we noted earlier it is not entirely true that kingship was unknown in Iboland. Indeed, the Ibo near the Niger (e.g. those of Onitsha) and those of Nri and Awka had kings chosen from royal lineages, who had all the centralised powers which were enjoyed by monarchs in other West African kingdoms.

It is important and worth stressing that, even in the territories where centralised kingship was unknown, there was no lack of effective government. In a sense the segmentary system offered a form of true democracy unknown elsewhere. The only danger was that the system was open to unhealthy inter-village rivalry which often retarded progress and made a united front against external forces difficult. But the inborn ingenuity of the Ibo as a people was able to overcome these dangers and to prevent them being a real threat to their security.

3.2 WEALTH OF THE IBO

Most parts of Iboland were within the forest zone. For this and other reasons the Ibo did not come into direct contact with the coastal European merchants until the nineteenth century; this also happened with the other forest states of West Africa. They did not benefit therefore from the wealth which the West African coastal

peoples gained from trading directly with the whitemen. Nevertheless they had their own sources of wealth.

1. A forest-dwelling people, the Ibo grew enough food to feed themselves. This enabled them to produce luxury goods for sale.
2. Being a gifted and industrious people, the Ibo developed certain crafts to a very high standard quite early in their history. They also developed industries such as cloth-making (e.g. the Akwete cloth), salt manufacture, pottery, etc. Their smiths produced agricultural implements and weapons. The sale of these products brought in a useful revenue.
3. Although they had no direct contact with the white traders on the coast, many of the slaves which the Europeans exported from the delta came from or through Iboland. This was another source of income.
4. The Aro in particular became prosperous merchants who helped the economy of the Ibo as a whole. The celebrated oracles also attracted revenue from thousands of people who assembled at the shrines.
5. With their distinctive democratic segmentary pattern of government, and being by disposition industrious, the Ibo emerged as enterprising people both during the colonial era and in independent Nigeria.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give an account of the sources of wealth of the Ibo up to about 1800.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses showed that the Ibo and the other people, by and large, shared common political and social institutions and had similar cultures. Moreover, in the colonial period and, indeed, up to 1967, when the area was carved into three federal states, the Ibo and their southern neighbours came under one provincial administration.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the historical background and the general overview of how the Ibo system of government was administer.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

How was justice administered in Iboland in early times?

Answer to the Self Assessment Exercise

WEALTH OF THE IBO

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UNIT 3: ORIGIN OF THE NIGER DELTA

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings ...

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, attempt is made to present to you the historical background and the general overview of the origins of the Niger Delta. In this unit therefore, we are concerned with a general overview of the origins of the Niger Delta.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Explain how the early history of the Niger Delta emerged;
- ii) Explain the Niger Delta organisations;
- iii) Explain the sources of the wealth of the Ibo;

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 ORIGIN OF THE NIGER DELTA

3.1.1 Important Peoples of Niger Delta

To the west of the delta were the Itsekiri and the Sobo; in the central territory were the Ijaw; and to the east on the coast were the Ibibio; the Efik of Old Calabar had their homes in the eastern delta.

1. The Itsekiri

The origins of these people are not certain. Some traditional accounts maintain that the founding fathers came from Yorubaland; other accounts trace their origin to the Benin kingdom. The latter view seems to be stronger than the first.

(a) According to the second traditional account, the son of a Bini called Ginuwa made a settlement near Warri towards the end of the fifteenth century. Later the king's palace was removed to the site of modern Warri and this new settlement became the capital of an important delta kingdom.

(b) Early in the sixteenth century, the people came into contact with the Portuguese. European trade began to influence the history of the Itsekiri. The records also give an account of Portuguese Christian missionary activities in this territory in the late sixteenth century.

2. The Ijaw

The Ijaw formed three important city states. These were Nembe (Brass), Kalabari and Bonny.

(a) According to a Nembe born historian, E. J. Alagoa, Nembe emerged from three waves of immigration.

(1) The earliest was the foundation made by three men, namely Obolo, Olodia, and Onyo who were believed to have hailed from Benin.

(2) The second immigration is believed to have been led by Ogidiga, probably a descendant of Ginuwa, founder of the Itsekiri kingdom of Warri.

(3) The third group of immigrants established the coastal ports of Twon and Akassa.

(b) Among the important rulers of the Nembe were the following;

(1) Kala-Ekule (1450-1500). He established a system of government in his kingdom. Ekule was succeeded by a number of rulers about whom very little is remembered in the oral traditions of the people.

(2) The last ruler of this dynasty was Basua who did much to carry on the work of his great ancestor, Kala-Ekule. After Basua's death in about 1700, civil war broke out because of a succession dispute between two of his sons, Mingi and Ogbodo. The outcome of the war was indecisive, and the state was split in two and ruled by the two rivals. Because Mingi was tyrannical, many of his followers transferred their support to his brother, a peace-loving and kind ruler.

(3) The Kalabari

The capital of the Kalabari was Elem Kalabari which emerged from two waves of immigration; one of Ijaw stock and the other of Ibibio stock. The two great early rulers of the people were Owerri Daba and King Amakiri; the latter established valuable trading contacts but his reign was characterised by a series of wars and disasters. He did, however, set up a permanent system of administration.

(4) The Efik

The first Efik settlement was made in about the seventeenth century, by a section of the Ibibio people at the estuary of the Cross river. As a result of civil war, a section moved from Creek Town and settled in present-day Old Town. Because it had a better anchorage, Old Town in due course assumed more importance than the original settlement. Other settlements were later made, the inhabitants being attracted by European trade.

3.2 ORGANISATION OF THE DELTA STATES

While the Itsekiri, founders of the Warri kingdom, developed their own separate institutions similar to those of their neighbours, the Edo or Bini, the eastern groups of the delta people had many institutions in common.

Like the Ibo, the Kalabari, the Efik and the Ijaw tended to organise themselves politically into small "village" units; state affairs were managed through the system of "houses". Secret societies also played an important role in these communities, sepecially in Old Calabar, where control of the government was in the hands of the members of the secret societies rather than in those of the lineage groups.

1. The delta state of the Itsekiri had a centralised kingship pattern of government, similar to those of their neighbours, the Bini and the Yoruba. Their system of government through hereditary monarchs was therefore similar to that of many other West African countries.
2. The people of the central and eastern delta area, however, developed institutions based on "houses"
 - (a) The "house" system correspond, more or less, to the "ward" and "village" system of government of the Ibo.
 - (1) Originally, the term "house" applied to the members of an extended family, and later to a "ward" in a village community. Like the system in most parts of Iboland, government in this segmentary system was in the hands of the elders of a house.

(2) In time, the concept of the house changed in certain areas. With increasing involvement in the overseas slave trade and later legitimate trade, the house system previously organised on the basis of lineage groups, was replaced by what was called the "canoe house" system. In this system people who did not descend from the same lineage (princes, freemen, and even slaves) combined to form a corporation for the purposes of trading.

(a) In this new organisation of the house system political office ceased to be the prerogative of people of a particular lineage group. Ascent to a high position in society now depended on merit or wealth rather than birth.

(b) Any man of wealth could start a canoe house, provided he could maintain a fleet of canoes and men for trading.

3. The canoe house system in Ijaw territory started long before it became common in Efikland.

(b) One important result of the new canoe house system, as we noted above, was that social status which had previously been determined by birth and class now became increasingly dependent on the wealth and the size of the fleet and the number of men a head of a house could command. Since it was no longer determined by the sheer accident of birth, social status now became highly competitive.

(c) The chief of a canoe house wielded much power. Indeed he had power of life and death over members of his house. He had also to be a man of outstanding ability, since the house's success in business depended almost entirely on his qualities.

(1) In most parts of the delta, several canoe houses joined to form city states. Notable among these city states were Nembe, Kalabari, Bonny and Old Calabar.

(2) Each city state had a capital and satellite villages and a trading region in the hinterland.

(3) As trade increased, there emerged among the various canoe houses one chief who assumed the role of king. Important examples of such kings were Amakiri of Kalabari and Pepple of Bonny.

(4) Though in many respects only Primus Inter Pares, the canoe house king, because of his increased wealth and prestige, came to be the middleman with whom the European merchants negotiated.

3. Secret societies also played an important part in the political organisation of the delta states.

(a) One of these societies was the Ekine in Nembe and Kalabari.

(1) Membership cut across house divisions, so that the secret societies promoted the integration of the different houses into a city state.

(2) The elderly members of the Ekine were the executive which took the decisions to be carried out by the youngest members.

(b) Another secret society was the Ekpe in Old Calabar. Government of the city state was in the hands of members of the society ranked hierarchically; at the top came the king, his deputy and the senior members, who were councillors, legislators and judges, and below them came the lower members who policed the city state.

3.3 Wealth of the Niger Delta

Because of the geography of the delta with its hundreds of creeks and rivers, it was natural that the most important occupation of the delta people should be fishing and salt making. Their coastal position also helped them to benefit from trade with the Europeans.

1. The delta people sent their catch of fish and salt inland to sell to the Ibo. This brought in a useful amount of revenue.
2. Another source of wealth was trade with the European merchants on the coast. In addition to the trade they themselves conducted in slaves and other commodities, the delta people served as middlemen between the European merchants and the inland people.
3. The canoe houses also brought wealth to their states through the carrying trade. These canoe men conveyed goods as far inland as Onitsha, Idah and Lokoja.
4. How did they conduct trade with the European merchants? The system used has been described as "trust trade". The European merchants gave goods to the middlemen. The middlemen sold them and used the income (in the form of a copper bar currency) to purchase slaves. These slaves were brought to the Europeans. The difference between the original advance and the value of the

slaves was paid to the middlemen. In addition, some of the middlemen received commission for their services.

5. When the slave trade was abolished, the people continued to make profits from legitimate trade with the European merchants and from their carrying trade.

In this study, therefore, we shall limit our discussions to the historical background and the general overview of the origins of the Niger Delta.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write a brief account of the government and social organisation of the Niger Delta states before the twentieth century.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The above analyses show that the Niger delta encloses a vast territory. It covers over 480 kilometers from the west to the east, and about 160 kilometers inland. The most notable geographical features of the area are the networks of creeks, waterways and mangrove swamps.

Although water communication was easy, because of the character of the terrain towns and cities tended to be independent of one another. As a result of this city states rather than large kingdoms emerged, especially in the main delta areas.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has thrown light on the historical background and the general overview of the origins of the Niger Delta.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

How did the people of the Niger Delta obtain their wealth?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 4 THE PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The Itsekiri

3.1.1 Origin of the Itsekiri People

3.1.2 The Socio-Political Organization of the Itsekiri People

3.2 The Urhobo

3.2.1 Origin of the Urhobo People

3.2.2 The Socio-Political Organization of the Urhobo People

3.3 The Ijaw

3.3.1 Origin of the Ijaw People

3.3.2 The Socio-Political Organization of the Ijaw People

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is the prolongation of the preceding one. Remember we are still discussing the people of the present-day Southern Nigeria.

This present unit focuses on the last three (03) major ethnic groups of the Niger Delta (present- day Southern Nigeria). These are: the Itsekiri, the Urhobo and the Ijaw.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- i) Identify the peoples of Niger Delta
- ii) discuss the Origin of the peoples of Niger Delta;
- iii) Explain the culture of the peoples of Niger Delta

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Peoples of the Niger Delta

3.1.1 The Itsekiri

1.Origin of the Itsekiri People

Iginuwa is known as the man through whom the kingdom of Itsekiri is said to have been established. History tells us that Iginuwa was the son and heir apparent of Oba Olua of Benin in about 1473. You should remember that unlike the Yoruba, Bini and Igbo peoples, the Itsekiri do not have many versions of their origin. According to the Itsekiri tradition, Iginuwa at a time wrongly advised his father on a particular issue. The advice was so disastrous that Iginuwa became very unpopular to the extent that his people vowed never to let him succeed his father.

When his father, Oba Olua, noticed the seriousness of the anger of his people against his son, he decided to arrange a kingdom outside Benin for him. This was according to him, the best way to avoid problems in his kingdom.

According to the tradition, Iginuwa was then sent with some chiefs and servants to an area by the sea to establish a kingdom of his own. On his arrival, Iginuwa met with some Ijaws who took him along with his followers by canoe to an Island where they finally settled. To most of the Itsekiri, this settlement is known as Itsekiri Kingdom till today.

2. The Socio-Political Organization of the Itsekiri People

The Kingdom Iginuwa founded was made up and is still made up of the Itsekiri, Ijaw and a good number of other elements. Ode Itsekiri is the capital. Other settlements such as the Forcados, Escravos and Benin Rivers surround the capital. The socio-political organization of the Itsekiri people was very close to that of Benin Kingdom. The Palace and titles for instance were modeled after that of Benin Kingdom. But in the Itsekiri case, the Kingdom was ruled rather by the Olu. He alone presided over a council known as Ojoye which was made up of seven nobles or title holders. The Olu combined in himself spiritual and temporal powers.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

The Socio- political organization of the Itsekiri Kingdom was similar to that of the Benin Kingdom. Discuss.

3.1.2 The Socio-Political Organization of the Urhobo People

Just like the Itsekiri, the Urhobo people are found in the Niger Delta region. However, unlike the Itsekiri, the Urhobo are fragmented and live in different places in the Niger Delta area. This may be the reason why the Urhobo people, unlike the Itsekiri and Benin, have never established a single Kingdom. Socio-politically speaking, each Urhobo Village had its own traditional institution headed by a ruler (Ovie). Just like the Itsekiri, the socio-political organization of the Urhobo people was modeled after that of Benin Kingdom.

The Ovie for instance, had a court made of prominent individuals and titleholders. Moreover, just like in Igboland, the adult male members of the Urhobo society were divided into age sets corresponding with youth, middle age and elders. Of course, each of the age sets performed specific duties in the societies.

3.2 The Ijaw

3.2.1 Origin Of the Ijaw People

As one of the major ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region, the Ijaw people share almost the same stories of origin with their Itsekiri and Urhobo counterparts. That is to say there is no clear-cut demarcation on the history of the origin of the Ijaw from that of the Itsekiri and Urhobo.

3.2.2 The Socio-Political Organization of the Ijaw People

Socio-politically speaking, the traditional Ijaw did not develop any centralized system of government. For some scholars, this might be so because the Ijaw were scattered in small fishing settlements in the creeks of the River Niger. The "House System" characterized Ijaw societies. Ijaw people were traders especially fishermen. The traditional major Ijaw states were Bonny, Kalabari, Ibrika, Opobo and Brass-Nembe.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit dealt also with the Niger Delta (present-day - Southern Nigeria) Specifically in Pre-colonial times. The Itsekiri, the Urhobo and the Ijaw have been the main focus. It should be clear to you by now that the Itsekiri, the Urhobo and the Ijaw people are located in the Niger Delta region. You should also remember that although the Itsekiri, the Urhobo and the Ijaw people have many things in common, they do have notable differences as well. It is also obvious that there is a kind of socio-cultural shift from what happened to the traditional Itsekiri, the Urhobo and the Ijaw to what we witness today.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, I discussed and analyzed the three last major ethnic groups of the Niger Delta. That is, the Itsekiri, the Urhobo and the Ijaw. Therefore, at the end of this unit you are expected to know:

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Although the Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ijaw are all from the Niger Delta area, discuss what differentiates them.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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