

Introduction to Nigerian History

GNS 102 / CGNS

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Colonial Rule and Colonial Economy

Here we shall examine how the British Colonial Government administered the colony and the kind of economy they practiced. In other words, we shall look into the method used for the effective government of the colony and the indigenous response. Furthermore, we shall look at the nomenclature of British colonial economy and the impact it has on the economy and even contemporary times

Colonial Rule (Indirect Rule and Its Impact)

- This is the system by which the British ruled Nigeria through the traditional institutions, like the Sultan, Emirs, Obas etc.
- Part of the reasons for the adoption of the system were shortage of funds and personnel – Britain lacked adequate financial resources and qualified personnel to run overseas colonies.
- Others included language barrier, tropical diseases, preservation of the traditional system and its success in India and Uganda

- The system was successful in the North, partially successful in the West but a total failure in the East. It was successful in the north because there were fief-holders who could help the new system. There also existed a revenue system, which provided adequate revenue to run the indirect rule system while there was a form judicial system based on the Sharia. The Hausas were also submissive to their Leaders.
- In the western part, the institution of Obas and Chiefs provided a favorable background for the introduction of Indirect rule system and accounted for its partial success in the area. Education was also a factor.
- The system failed in the East because Lugard failed to understand the traditional political system there. In place of the council of elders, he created warrant chiefs and the people were against this. This in addition to the issue on taxation led to the Aba Women's Riots of 1929. The use of warrant chiefs and issue of taxation led to the Nwaobiala Dance Movement 1925 and Aba Women's riot of 1929.

The Colonial Economy and its Impact on Nigeria.

- The colonial masters encouraged the production of cash crops. Dictated prices of the products in their favour. Raised the prices of the imports, wedding gowns, coats etc Encouraged mass importation of manufactured goods. Discouraged the growth of industries. Other characteristics of the colonial economy were:
- It Replaced indigenous traders with Lebanese
- Nigeria was made a service economy to fulfill the colonial economy
- Banks did not give credit facilities to Nigerian traders
- The Europeans headed the marketing boards and administration
- The education rendered was for servicing and not developmental or technological for innovations
- The railway system was geared towards the maximum exploitation of the resources