

# New Government

for Senior Secondary Schools

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## Preface

This book covers the basic concepts in Government as outlined in the new Government curriculum produced by NERDC. The contents have been arranged in a systematic, direct, engaging, and success-oriented format, to ensure that students meaningfully interact with the changing policies and reforms in the society.

A conscious effort has been made to use brief sentence structures to make it easy for users to comprehend the subject. The course has been patterned along the line of government and politics in Nigeria. Genuine efforts have also been made to draw examples from countries with older and more stable polity.

Over the years, Government, as a school subject, has won a prominent position in Nigerian school curriculum. A proper understanding of this subject is an asset to Nigerians. First, as an academic discipline and second, as a source of knowledge in establishing a healthy and rational relationship between citizens, on one hand, and citizens and government on the other hand.

Perhaps, this explains why the concept Government is nowadays on the lips of all Nigerians. It also explains why every Nigerian is familiar with basic functional government terms and phrases. This indeed is an evidence of the importance of Government to our daily life. It is, however, unfortunate that there are shortages of well-written books on Government that cover these topics adequately. We have, therefore, presented here all that is required to enable a student cover the syllabus requirements for the Senior Secondary Schools. Revision questions have been carefully selected to cover all the domains of learning, and prepare students for school and public examinations. Students of the various higher institutions, within and outside the country, will also find this book useful.

It is our hope that each intended user would find this book a rich knowledge resource.

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## Chapter 1

### Electoral process

#### Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 explain the meaning of, and purposes served by, elections.
- 2 explain the meaning and types and development of suffrage.
- 3 discuss the meaning of franchise.
- 4 list the types and characteristics of electoral system.
- 5 discuss the merits and demerits of each electoral system.
- 6 explain the meaning of free and fair elections.
- 7 mention the stages of conducting elections.
- 8 define electoral commission.
- 9 list the functions of electoral commissions.
- 10 enumerate the roles of the various electoral officials.

#### Elections and the electoral process

##### Meaning of electoral process

The electoral process can be defined as the procedure by which citizens of a democratic society choose their leaders. This process of choosing leaders is called an election and it may be through direct or indirect voting. By direct voting, citizens exercise their rights to choose those to represent their interests and opinions, either in the legislature or

in other government positions. Election or choosing of representatives and leaders is done by qualified persons who exercise their franchise.

Citizens who are qualified under the law to vote in an election, that is, voters who exercise their franchise in order to elect their representatives, are called the electorate or the electors. What then is franchise?

##### Suffrage or franchise

Suffrage or franchise may be defined as the right of qualified adult citizens of a given society to vote and be voted for in an election. In an election, the electors are constitutionally known as the electorate, while those seeking to be elected are called candidates.

##### Types of suffrage/franchise

There are two main types of franchise or suffrage. These are:

- 1 limited or restricted franchise, and
- 2 unlimited or universal franchise or universal adult suffrage.

In limited or restricted franchise, all qualified adults are allowed to vote or to be voted for. The right to vote is restricted or limited to certain citizens who meet the requirements laid down by law. The law may stipulate the minimum age, as well as mental and moral standards for voting. The criteria for voting

and to be voted for vary from one country to another. For example, in Nigeria and the United States of America, the minimum age is 18 years; while in Germany and India, it is 20 and 21 years, respectively.

The second type of suffrage or franchise is the universal adult suffrage. This type of franchise, also known as unlimited or universal franchise, allows all qualified adults—men and women—to vote and be voted for.

### **Development of suffrage**

The voting right is not always extended to every citizen in the country. Sometimes, the citizens fight for it. For example, it was in the early 20th century that women gained their voting rights in Britain and America. And how did it happen? The activists among them formed the suffrage movement which eventually won voting rights for adult women like their male counterparts.

During the colonial period in Nigeria, the right to vote at elections especially in Lagos and Calabar was based on property, educational qualifications and social status of citizens. These determined those who could vote and be voted for. But over time this has changed and today it is all qualified adult citizens that can vote and be voted for. The voting age in Nigeria is 18 years.

### **Characteristics of electoral system**

The following are the characteristics of electoral systems:

- 1 There must be an impartial and independent electoral commission.
- 2 There must be periodic and regular elections.
- 3 The secret voting system should be adopted.
- 4 Delimitation of the country into constituencies should be in place.

- 5 Adoption of universal adult suffrage should be exercised; that is, the right of voting should be given to qualified adult citizens.
- 6 The voting atmosphere should be free from intimidation, victimisation and molestation.
- 7 There should be an acceptable method of nominating candidates for elections.
- 8 There should be a comprehensive voters register that embraces all qualified voters. The voters register should be subject to review from time to time.
- 9 Adequate political education should be given to the electorate.
- 10 There should be an independent judiciary that will handle election petitions without fear or favour.

### **Purposes of elections**

The following are among the purposes or functions of elections:

- 1 Avenue for choosing leaders
- 2 Accountability of government
- 3 Peaceful change of government
- 4 Political participation
- 5 Existence of the opposition
- 6 Political education
- 7 Testing of popularity
- 8 National unity

### **Avenue for choosing leaders**

Elections serve as avenues for choosing our leaders. They present an opportunity for citizens to exercise their voting rights; that is, to have a say as to who should rule them.

### **Accountability of government**

Elections impose an effective check on law-makers, and make them answerable to the people. Because every elected representative knows that he has to act according to the wishes of his electors, he

has to be accountable to them if he wishes to be re-elected.

### ***Peaceful change of government***

Elections enable political systems to change governments peacefully and constitutionally.

### ***Political participation***

Elections present every citizen the opportunity to participate meaningfully and effectively in the political process.

### ***Existence of the opposition***

Elections necessitate the existence of opposition groups who act as watchdogs over the activities of the government.

### ***Political education***

Elections help to educate the masses on political issues through the numerous campaign rallies, conventions, meetings and jingles. Through elections, the public gets to know more about the government and its policies as well as the programmes of competing parties.

### ***Testing of popularity***

Elections are a means of testing the popularity of the government in power.

### ***National unity***

For the candidates to win more seats in the national legislature, political parties competing in elections seek supporters in every nook and cranny of the country and by so doing, people of similar political beliefs but of different ethnic backgrounds are brought together.

## **Types of electoral system**

The following are the various types of electoral systems and their characteristics:

- 1 Simple majority or plurality system
- 2 Absolute majority system
- 3 Second ballot system/run-off system
- 4 Alternative voting system
- 5 Proportional representation
- 6 Ballot or voting system

### ***Simple majority or plurality system***

This system, as the name implies, is simple and it is also referred to as *first-past the post*. This is a system in which the candidate with the highest number of votes cast is declared the winner, no matter the proportion of votes cast during an election. Examples of countries that operate this system are Britain, USA, Canada, Nigeria and Ghana.

For example, if election candidates A, B, C scored 4 800, 4 500 and 700 respectively, in an election, candidate A is declared the winner because he scored the highest number of votes cast.

### ***Merits of simple majority system***

- 1 It is very simple to operate.
- 2 It makes it easy for the election result to be determined.
- 3 It discourages the formation of a coalition government.
- 4 It does not encourage the formation of many political parties.

### ***Demerits of simple majority system***

- 1 It is undemocratic because it neglects the wishes of the majority of the voters.
- 2 Majority ethnic groups can use their numerical strength to secure a simple majority at the expense of minority groups.
- 3 The system leads to waste of surplus votes of the majority of voters.
- 4 It encourages election rigging in order to secure the highest number of votes.

## **Absolute majority system**

The absolute majority system requires that for a candidate to be declared the winner of an election, the candidate must have scored more than 50 per cent of the total votes cast.

### **Demerits of absolute majority system**

- 1 It cannot work well where most of the people voting are illiterate.
- 2 It is complicated as it involves a lot of calculations and administrative bottlenecks.
- 3 It is expensive both in time and in money.
- 4 The result of the election is unnecessarily delayed.
- 5 It leads to voters' apathy. Voters whose candidates are dropped in the first ballot may not wish to participate in the second ballot.
- 6 The system tends to weaken other smaller political parties.
- 7 It encourages electoral malpractice.
- 8 It can lead to political tension and violence.

## **Second ballot system/run-off system**

The second ballot system is adopted if none of the candidates contesting in an election wins an absolute majority. A second ballot will be called for and the weak candidate will be advised to withdraw while the candidates with highest votes will contest for a winner to emerge. Examples of countries that operate this system are France and Germany.

### **Merits of second ballot/run-off system**

- 1 It encourages the emergence of a winner with the support of the majority of the electorate.
- 2 It gives room for the elimination of unpopular candidates.

- 3 It makes it imperative for political parties to present credible candidates if they are to win the election.

## **Demerits of second ballot/run-off system**

- 1 Organising a second election is time consuming.
- 2 It is expensive because the electoral commission and the candidates have to commit more funds and materials to another round of election.

## **Alternative voting system**

In this system, the organisers of the election number the candidates, (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and arrange them in order of preference; that is, the voter will rate the candidates by numbering them in order of his preference. The candidate who has more first positions will be declared winner.

Australia is a good example of countries that operate this system.

### **Merits of alternative voting system**

- 1 The system leads to the election of representatives backed by the majority of the voters.
- 2 The system represents the interests of the various groups in a country.
- 3 It shows a picture of government with the support of the people.
- 4 It is democratic.
- 5 It avoids waste of votes.

### **Demerits of alternative voting system**

- 1 The system gives room for the formation of many political parties.
- 2 It is complex and this makes it difficult to operate.
- 3 It gives room for election malpractices in the process of recounting and redistribution.
- 4 It is very expensive.

- 5 It is not suitable for developing nations where the majority of the citizens are illiterate and poor.

## Proportional representation

Proportional representation is a process adopted in electing representatives in multi-member constituencies, and is used to secure representation in the legislature. In the system, every association or political party gets seats in proportion to the percentage of votes cast. The more the percentage of the votes cast that a candidate gets, the more the seats that will be allocated to the favourable party. This system results in producing representation for diverse interest groups in a locality or community.

There are two different types of proportional representation. These are the single transferable vote or the quota system; and the multi-member party list.

### Merits of proportional representation

- 1 It gives a true picture of popular votes.
- 2 All interest groups in a community are represented.
- 3 The system makes for durable democracy.
- 4 Both the interests of the majority and that of the minority are protected.
- 5 Voters have wider choices especially in a multi-member constituency.
- 6 Opportunity is given to a voter to choose candidates of his choice based on party and personal merits.

### Demerits of proportional representation

- 1 The multiplicity of political parties may bring about violence in the system.
- 2 The system is prone to political instability.
- 3 The absence of a clear majority in the legislature may bring about the formation of a coalition government

which does not make for durable and efficient government.

- 4 Voters can easily vote blindly in this system. This is as a result of too many political parties that cannot be easily assessed by the people.
- 5 The system is too expensive to operate.
- 6 It is a difficult form of electing representatives.

## Ballot or voting system



A ballot box

There are two major ballot or voting systems, namely:

- 1 Secret ballot voting
- 2 Open or public ballot system

### Secret ballot voting

The secret ballot voting system came into existence in 1856 when it was adopted in the British colony of South Australia. That is why it is tagged *Australian ballot*. Today, it is the universally accepted method for electing representatives and other public officials.

In this system, the voter casts his vote in an enclosure called *polling booth*. He secretly marks the candidates or party of his choice on the ballot paper. In this system, secrecy is guaranteed and a voter can vote as he wishes without any form of victimisation. Secret ballot is one of the requirements for a free and fair election.

### ***Open or public ballot voting***

Before the 19th century, there was no secret ballot as it operates today. It was the open ballot that existed. The open ballot involves the voters either queuing up to be counted openly, or standing behind the candidates of their choice to be counted publicly, or announcing the candidate's name publicly. The candidate with the highest votes or support is declared the winner. Examples of countries that operated this system are Denmark (until 1901) and the Soviet Union (until 1936). It is still adopted in small village elections where voters choose officials by a show of the hands.

## **Electoral constituency**

An electoral constituency may be defined as an electoral district divided for the purposes of representation of the interests and opinions of the people of an area in the parliament. When a country is divided into constituencies, it is regarded as *delimitation* and this is done in order to distribute parliamentary seats equitably. This is to encourage equal representation in government. There are two types of constituency: the single-member constituency and the multi-member constituency.

### **Single-member constituency**

In a single-member constituency, the country is divided into small electoral districts or

constituencies. Each district or constituency elects a candidate that will represent it in the parliament. Examples of countries that operate this system are Britain – (House of Commons) and Nigeria – (National and States legislatures).

### **Merits of a single-member constituency**

- 1 The small nature of the constituencies gives room for person-to-person contact between the voters and their representatives.
- 2 It is simple and straightforward.
- 3 It forms the basis of political and economic development.
- 4 It allows for equitable distribution of seats in the parliament.

### **Demerits of single-member constituency**

- 1 It leads to electing men and women who regard themselves as representatives of their local interests rather than the interests of the nation.
- 2 It can be used to favour or penalise small communities.
- 3 The system may lead to the election of representatives who are not favoured by a majority of the voters.
- 4 It may lead to unhealthy rivalry between one constituency and another.

### **Multi-member constituency**

Each multi-member constituency elects two or more representatives to represent them in the legislature. A specified number of positions or seats are allocated to each constituency. At the elections, each voter is allowed to vote for as many candidates as there are seats to be filled by his constituency. It is used for elections into local government councils in the USA, Canada, Great Britain and the Turkish National Assembly.

### **Merits of multi-member constituency**

- 1 It could be used to cater for large areas with scattered population.
- 2 It can be used to group sections of the population to elect multiple representatives.
- 3 Political parties can use it to build up seats in the parliament.
- 4 It reduces electoral expenses and the number of personnel.

### **Demerits of multi-member constituency**

- 1 It can be used to cheat small communities.
- 2 It can equally be used to the disadvantage of opposition parties.
- 3 It allows for the election of unpopular candidates.

## **Election**

Election is a process of choosing people into various offices through voting. In a country, elections are guided by constitutional provisions.

### **Functions of election**

- 1 An election gives elected representatives the legitimate right to rule.
- 2 It is an avenue for removing a non-performing government from office.
- 3 It ensures control and accountability of those who have been elected.
- 4 The people have the opportunity to express their choice of candidate.
- 5 It fosters the growth of democracy.
- 6 It enhances citizenship education through which the electorate become more politically aware of their rights, duties and obligations as citizens.
- 7 It promotes competition among the political parties and candidates.

### **Types of election**

There are direct election and indirect election.

### **Direct election**

This is a process by which the electorate of a country vote directly in an election for candidates of their choice who will represent them in the executive or legislative arm of government.

### **Merits of direct election**

- 1 Direct election is more democratic.
- 2 The rights of the electors are expressed in voting for the right candidate of their choice.
- 3 It reflects one man, one vote.
- 4 It makes voters know more of their representatives.

### **Demerits of direct election**

- 1 Direct election does not give voters the opportunity to critically scrutinise the candidates before voting.
- 2 Many voters involved in direct election are illiterates and so can be easily manipulated.
- 3 It encourages violence as a result of the number of people involved.
- 4 Those who cannot read or write usually vote blindly because they cannot identify party symbols and names.

### **Indirect election**

This is a system whereby the legislators or local government units elect their leaders indirectly through the Electoral College. They vote on behalf of the citizens.

### **Merits of indirect election**

- 1 Indirect election gives citizens of a country equality of votes.

- 2 It is cheap to operate because it involves fewer number of people.
- 3 It improves the quality of lawmakers because competent voters participate in the final selection process.
- 4 It reduces electoral fraud since the final electors are very enlightened.
- 5 It reduces disorderliness and political violence.

### **Demerits of indirect election**

- 1 Indirection election is undemocratic in the sense that it deprives eligible voters of the right to select their leaders directly.
- 2 Indirect election can lead to bribery and corruption because the fewer number of voters may be easily influenced to vote for a particular candidate.
- 3 It may lead to the formation of unpopular governments, since the majority of the citizens are deprived of the opportunity of participating in the final selection process.

Other types of elections are as follows:

### **By-election**

Where there is death or resignation of an elected candidate, or some other unforeseen incidents, there will be a filling of the vacancy so created. The process of replacement of the candidate is called a by-election.

### **Primary election**

The convention of party members or voters to elect delegates that will represent the party in general elections is called a primary election.

### **General election**

The general election is an election involving the general populace of a given country to elect their representatives into the legislative, the executive and other levels of government throughout the country.

### **The electoral college system**

This is regarded as an indirect election. It is the system of voting in which elected assembly members make the final choice of leaders during an election.

### **Merit of the electoral college system**

- 1 The system is not expensive and saves the country the time and energy of conducting general elections.
- 2 It reduces the chances of electoral malpractices.
- 3 The voters have knowledge of the contestants before voting.

### **Demerits of the electoral college system**

- 1 It is undemocratic as many voters are deprived of the opportunity of choosing their leaders.
- 2 The electorate could be easily influenced by gifts before voting.
- 3 It prevents direct participation of the citizens.
- 4 The attainment of true representation is discouraged.

### **Referendum**

This is a type of election in which an important political matter, like a proposed law on constitutional amendment or some important government policy, is referred to the electorate for final approval. The electorate are required to express their wishes with either 'Yes' or 'No' for amendment of the policy.

## **Free and fair elections**

An election is regarded as free and fair when it is conducted without incidents of rigging and electoral fraud.

The following are among the conditions necessary for a free and fair election:

- 1 Security
- 2 Electoral commission
- 3 Registration of voters
- 4 Electoral officials
- 5 Secret voting
- 6 Judiciary
- 7 Delimitation of constituencies
- 8 Campaign
- 9 Election tribunal/courts

### **Security**

The security in place must be adequate to cover electoral officials, voters, as well as the materials needed for the elections.

### **Electoral commission**

There is the need to have an independent electoral commission capable of handling all elections without external influence.

### **Registration of voters**

Voters should be duly registered and issued voters' cards. Also there is the need for a periodic revision of voters' register.

### **Electoral officials**

There is the need for the proper training of the people employed as electoral officials; impartiality should be their watchword in the official discharge of their assignment.

### **Secret voting**

Voting at elections should be secret. Secret voting has a universal acknowledgement more than public voting.

## **Judiciary**

The judiciary should be independent and impartial; it should work without fear or favour.

## **Delimitation of constituencies**

There should be proper delimitation of constituencies to pave the way for effective administration of elections.

## **Campaign**

All the registered political parties should be given a free hand to carry out their campaign programmes without any hindrance.

## **Election tribunal/courts**

Individuals or parties not satisfied with the outcome of the election result are free to go to court and contest it.

## **Electoral commission**

The electoral commission is an executive body charged with the organisation and conduct of elections. The commission has a chairman appointed by the government. It has undergone as many changes as there have been elections in Nigeria. It was called Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) in the first republic and in 1995, it was changed to National Electoral Commission of Nigeria NECON, but now it is called Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

## **Functions of the electoral commission in the electoral process**

Here are some of the functions of the electoral commission in the electoral process.

- 1 Conduct of election
- 2 Registration of voters
- 3 Division of the country into constituencies

- 4 Deciding on the type of voting
- 5 Provision of electoral materials
- 6 Registration of political parties
- 7 Display of voters' register
- 8 Revision of voters' list
- 9 Recruitment and training of electoral officials
- 10 Provision of polling booths
- 11 Enlightenment campaign
- 12 Counting and announcing of election results
- 13 Provision of security
- 14 Disbursement of grants to political parties (where applicable)

### ***Conduct of election***

It is involved in the conduct, organisation and administration of elections in the country.

### ***Registration of voters***

The electoral commission is responsible for the registration of eligible voters for any election.

### ***Division of the country into constituencies***

It is the duty of the electoral commission to divide the country into constituencies.

### ***Deciding on the type of voting***

The electoral commission decides the type of voting system to be adopted.

### ***Provision of electoral materials***

It provides ballot boxes, ink, papers and other needed election materials.

### ***Registration of political parties***

It has the power to screen and register political parties for elections.

### ***Display of voters' register***

It displays the voters' register after registration.

### ***Revision of voters' list***

This is also one of the functions of the commission. It revises and updates the voters' register regularly.

### ***Recruitment and training of electoral officials***

The commission is also mandated to recruit and train electoral officials for elections.

### ***Provision of polling booths***

This is done in all the constituencies before the commencement of elections.

### ***Enlightenment campaign***

It is the function of the commission to educate and enlighten the people on the importance and processes of elections.

### ***Counting and announcing of election results***

The commission does the counting of votes after the election and also announces the final result.

### ***Provision of security***

It works hand in hand with security operatives in making sure that enough security is provided during elections.

### ***Disbursement of grants to political parties***

The commission is responsible for disbursing any federal government grants to all registered political parties.

### ***Problems of the electoral commission in Nigeria***

The problems associated with the electoral commission in Nigeria are listed as follows:

- 1 Recruitment of officials
- 2 Political interference

- 3 Questionable independence of the commission
- 4 Shortage of honest, trustworthy and reliable officials
- 5 Inadequate remuneration
- 6 Insecurity of tenure
- 7 Merit
- 8 Funding of the commission
- 9 Dismissal of officials

### ***Recruitment of officials***

Recruitment of officials making up the commission ought to be through election. Appointment by the executive arm of government may engender bias and thus hinder equity and justice to all concerned.

### ***Political interference***

This can affect the efficiency of the commission, if there is political interference in the affairs of the commission.

### ***Independence of the commission***

If the commission is not independent of the other arms of government for example the executive and the legislature, it may hinder the performance and success of the commission.

### ***Shortage of honest trustworthy and reliable officials***

If men and women who possess positive qualities are not appointed to the commission, the integrity and success of the commission will be difficult to achieve.

### ***Inadequate remuneration***

The remuneration of the officials must be adequate, constant and paid from the consolidated fund.

### ***Insecurity of tenure***

Lack of security of tenure can also affect the success of the commission.

### ***Merit***

Officials of the commission should be appointed on merit, but when this is not so, the success of the commission could be compromised.

### ***Funding of the commission***

Funding of the commission should be from a consolidated fund and not from the executive arm of government. If not, the integrity and independence of the commission may be called to question and its effectiveness delayed by bureaucratic red-tape.

### ***Dismissal of the officials***

There are likely to be hindrances if the executive arm of government is involved in the dismissal of the officials of the commission.

## **Factors militating against the conduct of free and fair elections in Nigeria**

The following factors are militating against the conduct of free and fair elections in Nigeria:

- 1 Ethnictiy
- 2 Unenlightened electorate
- 3 Government interference
- 4 Mass poverty
- 5 Inadequate security
- 6 Inadequate funding
- 7 External influences
- 8 Importation of electoral materials

### ***Ethnicity***

Most countries in Africa, and Nigeria in particular, are made up of many ethnic

groups which remain suspicious and hostile to one another. Each group wants to be in power because it does not believe that its interests will be catered for by another group. Under this atmosphere of mutual distrust and hostility, the struggle for political power becomes a do-or-die affair between the groups.

### ***Unenlightened electorate***

A large majority of the voting population in Nigeria are illiterate and this makes the electorate fall into the rigging plans and deceit of desperate politicians who are hell-bent on capturing power.

### ***Government interference***

Most times the government appoints into the electoral commission, individuals who are easily manipulated to rig elections in favour of the parties and candidates of its choice.

### ***Mass poverty***

The poverty level in Nigeria is very high and it affects the voting behaviour of the electorate. Most voters are poor and hungry and this pushes them into accepting bribe and other inducements from candidates.

### ***Inadequate security***

Inadequate security for the electoral officials and the registered voters may scare the people away from the polling stations, as a result of intimidation from political party thugs.

### ***Inadequate funding***

This creates problems of providing adequate facilities at elections; and so, many eligible voters may be disenfranchised.

### ***External influences***

It is sometimes believed that electoral malpractices are engineered by other countries who wish to see a particular political party in power.

### ***Importation of electoral materials***

Most of the electoral materials and equipment are imported and they may sometimes not arrive in the country early enough for the elections.

## **Revision questions**

### **Essay questions**

- 1 What is electoral system?
- 2 Why is election necessary in a democratic state?
- 3 Highlight the conditions necessary for a free and fair election.
- 4 Highlight three merits and three demerits of the simple majority system of voting.
- 5
  - a) What are the functions of the electoral commission in the electoral process?
  - b) What problems are likely to hinder the success of the electoral commission in Nigeria?
- 6 What are the conditions necessary for free and fair elections?

### **Multiple-choice questions**

- 1 The \_\_\_\_\_ can be defined as the procedure by which citizens of a democratic society choose their leaders.
  - A political process
  - B electoral process
  - C system process
  - D choosing process
- 2 The process of choosing leaders is called
  - A political right.

- B modern process.  
C an election.  
D INEC's responsibility.
- 3 Citizens exercise their right to choose those to represent their interests and opinions either in the legislature or in other government positions by  
A direct voting.  
B indirect voting.  
C total voting.  
D non-exemptive voting.
- 4 Citizens who are qualified under the law to vote in an election or who exercise their franchise in order to elect their representatives are called  
A franchise.  
B citizens.  
C candidates.  
D the electorate.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ may be defined as the right of qualified adult citizens of a given society to vote and be voted for in an election.  
A Balloting  
B Suffrage  
C Constitutionalism  
D Election protocol
- 6 The two main types of franchise or suffrage are  
A quantifiable and unquantifiable franchise.  
B maximum and minimum franchise.  
C restricted and universal franchise.  
D developing and developed franchise.
- 7 In \_\_\_\_\_ franchise, all qualified adults are allowed to vote or to be voted for.  
A restricted  
B universal  
C quantifiable
- D maximum  
8 A system in which the candidate with the highest number of votes cast is declared the winner, no matter the proportion of votes cast during an election, is known as the  
A winning majority system.  
B simple majority system.  
C proportional majority system.  
D two-thirds majority system.
- 9 The \_\_\_\_\_ system requires that for a candidate to be declared the winner of an election, the candidate must have scored more than 50% of the votes cast, or more than half of the total votes cast.  
A proportional majority  
B simple majority  
C absolute majority  
D candidate's majority
- 10 A system of election where the voter will rate the candidates by numbering them in order of his preference is called  
A alternative voting system.  
B pure voting system.  
C exemplary voting system.  
D acute voting system.
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ is a process adopted in electing representatives in multi-member constituencies and is used to secure representation in the legislature.  
A Accurate representation  
B Proportional representation  
C Communal representation  
D Basic representation
- 12 In what year did the secret ballot voting come into existence?  
A 1586  
B 1685  
C 1856  
D 1865

- 13 An electoral district divided for the purposes of representation of the interest and opinions of people of the area in the parliament is known as an
- A electoral distribution.
  - B electoral representation.
  - C electoral equity.
  - D electoral constituency.
- 14 A system whereby the legislators or local government units elect their leaders indirectly through the Electoral College is known as
- A electoral election.
  - B indirect election.
  - C direct election.
  - D secret election.
- 15 The convention of party members or voters to elect delegates that will represent the party in general elections is called a
- A general election.
  - B by-election.
  - C primary election.
  - D secondary election.
- 16 A/An \_\_\_\_\_ is a type of election in which an important political matter, like a proposed law on constitutional amendment or some important government policy, is referred to the electorate for final approval.
- A electoral system
  - B referendum
  - C by-election
  - D convention
- 17 An executive body charged with the organisation and conduct of elections is known as the
- A executive commission.
  - B conduct commission.
  - C electoral commission.
  - D organisational commission.

# Chapter 2

## Public opinion

### Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 explain the term public opinion.
- 2 list the agents involved in the formation of public opinion.
- 3 indicate ways of measuring public opinion.
- 4 examine the importance or functions of public opinion.

### Meaning of public opinion

Public opinion may ordinarily be described as the views of the members of the public. This will, however, not fit into the conceptual framework in which we will discuss it here. In political discussion, 'public opinion' is better defined as the aggregate of opinions held and expressed by groups of individuals at a particular period and on a particular issue of public concern or interest.

Public opinion can also be defined as the belief, values and attitudes which are commonly held and expressed by the majority of the people on a given public issue. Public opinions are expressed in reaction to specific government decisions or policies actually taken or proposed. They are thus meant to guide governments in their dealings with the public.

### Formation of public opinion

Some of the agents for the formation of public opinion are:

- 1 Backgrounds of individuals
- 2 Mass media

- 3 Pressure groups
- 4 Peer groups
- 5 Local and community leaders
- 6 Religious leaders
- 7 Opinion leaders

### Backgrounds of individuals

The backgrounds of individuals, such as age, education, occupation and family, determine their formation of opinion on an issue. For example, while the young people are generally associated with radical views, the elderly could take a moderate or purely conservative stand on the same or similar issue.

### Mass media

Some opinion makers may be initially sympathetic to a cause or an issue, but as soon as they read an editorial or a feature in a local newspaper, they form an opinion either in line with or against the opinion of the newspaper. This shows the extent to which newspapers, radio, television, magazines and books could influence the formation of opinion by members of the public. Some political parties establish newspapers to propagate their ideas and influence the electorate.

### Pressure groups

Pressure groups employ various methods to 'mirror and manufacture' the views of the public. The activities within these groups influence the opinion of the individual, and the aggregate of such opinions in the group is often geared towards exerting pressure on

decision makers.

Pressure groups, in fighting for their interests, normally influence the opinions of others through their propaganda machinery. This may be through the effective use of news media, handbills, rallies and organised tours during which members of the public are educated about the issue at stake.

### **Peer groups**

The peer group or age group is one of the important agents in the formation of opinions. As a child continues his growth process, he interacts with a number of playmates who are of the same age-range. The views and feelings of each child, in his/her interaction with others, affect and influence the opinions and attitudes of other children in the group.

### **Local and community leaders**

Younger members of the communities look up to their elders or local rulers like emirs, obas and chiefs to form opinions about specific issues. Once the elders or traditional rulers have expressed their opinions on certain issues, the other members of the community usually hold a similar opinion.

### **Religious leaders**

People respect their religious leaders. As a result, a people tend to accept or reject issues that affect them based on the views and opinions of their religious leaders.

### **Opinion leaders**

In every community, there are opinion leaders who may be in or out of government. The opinions of these people are regarded as very important and can shape the opinions of many people. Opinion leaders are also called the elite.

## **Measurement of public opinion**

Measurement of public opinion is the estimation of the totality of the members of the public holding particular opinions on a specific issue—either for, against or ambivalent. It is to find out the types of people holding what opinion and to the extent such opinion influences other people.

Various techniques and methods are used in opinion measurement, depending on the type or class of people, their locations and their consciousness and awareness. Such techniques and methods include the following:

- 1 Political interviews/opinion polls
- 2 Public demonstrations
- 3 Elections
- 4 Referendum
- 5 Quota sample

### **Public interviews/opinion polls**

Public opinions on certain issues can be ascertained by interviewing people at random in crowded streets. This may be done by radio, newspaper and or television organisations or by other groups responsible for measuring such opinions. This method is also called accidental sampling.

### **Public demonstrations**

The turnout at public demonstrations on specific issues, for example, on the removal of petroleum subsidy by the Federal Government and the subsequent nationwide protests that followed in January 2012, could be used as a measure of the intensity of public opinion on such issues. This is peculiar to societies where people are allowed to freely declare and discuss their views on public issues.

### **Elections**

Where elections regularly take place at periodic intervals, they could be used as the yardstick to measure public opinion on personalities aspiring to leadership positions, or on their policies.

### **Referendum**

Issues may also be presented to the public to vote on in a referendum. The outcome of such a referendum can be taken as a measure of public opinion on such issues.

### **Quota sample**

This is also called representative sample because its aim to select the 'representative' of the population. A certain percentage of those to be interviewed must be of a certain age, sex, political group, education and social status. With this background, a few hundreds may be used to represent thousands or millions of a population.

## **Importance of public opinion**

- 1 It is used to check the excesses of the holders of power. In the British constitution, public opinion is stronger and more enlightened than the law.
- 2 Public opinion is a safeguard against misrule. Generally speaking, supporters of democracy and of liberal institutions praise public opinion as the voice of the enlightened middle class. It is also an agent of progress.
- 3 Public opinion can be said to constitute an effective way of strengthening or weakening societal institutions or practices.
- 4 Governments are sensitive to public opinions. As a result, good governments are always sensitive to public opinion.

- 5 It directs the government into knowing what the people think about its policies.
- 6 Public opinion makes government alive to its responsibilities.
- 7 It serves as a medium through which public views are passed to the government.
- 8 In an election period, public opinion helps the government to ascertain its popularity.
- 9 Public opinion can be used by workers as a weapon (especially through strike actions, demonstrations and riots) against employers.
- 10 It acts as a means of citizens' contribution to the decision making process.

## **Revision questions**

### **Essay questions**

- 1 Briefly explain what you understand by public opinion.
- 2 Discuss three ways by which public opinion can be measured.
- 3 List and discuss six agents involved in public opinion.
- 4 What are the merits of public opinion?

### **Multiple-choice questions**

- 1 The aggregate of opinions held and expressed by groups of individuals at a particular period and on a particular issue of public concern or interest is called
  - A interest opinion.
  - B public opinion.
  - C periodic opinion.
  - D aggregate opinion.

- 2 Beliefs, values and attitudes which are commonly held and expressed by the majority of people on a given public issue is known as
- A beliefs, values and attitudes.
  - B public issues.
  - C commonly held positions.
  - D public opinion.
- 3 Which one of the following does not help an individual in the formation of opinion on an issue?
- A Occupation
  - B Education
  - C Formation
  - D Family background
- 4 Another name for opinion leaders is
- A important leaders.
  - B elite.
  - C outspoken leaders.
  - D opinion manufacturers.
- 5 Pressure groups fighting for their interests normally influence the opinions of others through
- A propaganda machinery.
  - B street machinery.
  - C noise making machinery.
  - D individual machinery.

### Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 explain the meaning of mass media.
- 2 discuss the role of mass media in the day-to-day running of government.
- 3 state the impact of mass media in Nigerian politics.

### Origin and meaning of mass media

The history of mass media can be traced back to the days when drama series were performed in various ancient cultures. That was the first time when a form of media was 'broadcast' to a wider audience. The first dated printed book known is *Diamond Sutia* printed in China in 868 AD, although it is clear that books were printed earlier. The movable clay type was invented in 1041 in China. However, due to the slow spread of literacy in China, and the relatively high cost of paper there, the earliest printed mass medium was invented in Europe.

Thus, the mass media are a diversity media technologies that are intended to reach a large audience by mass communication. The technology through which this communication takes place varies. Broadcast media such as radio, recorded music, film and television transmit information electronically. Print media use physical objects such as a newspaper, book, pamphlet or comics, to distribute information. Outdoor media is a form of

mass media that comprises billboards, signs or placards placed inside or outside commercial buildings, sports stadiums, shops and buses. Other outdoor media include flying billboards (signs in tow of airplanes) and skywriting. Public writing and event organising can also be considered as forms of mass media. The digital media comprises both the Internet and mobile mass communication. Internet media provides many mass media services such as e-mail, websites, blogs and Internet-based radio and television. Many mass media outlets have a presence on the web, by such things as having television that link to a website or code in print or outdoor media to direct a mobile user to a website. In this way, they can utilise the easy accessibility that the Internet has, and the outreach that the Internet affords, as information can easily be broadcast to different regions of the world simultaneously and at reduced cost.

### Roles of mass media in government

The role of the mass media is so important that no government can afford to ignore it. In fact, the mass media is considered as the fourth estate of the realm in most democratic states. Their role cuts across the entire social, cultural, economic and political spheres of the state. Here are some of them.

- 1 Information technology, an aspect of the mass media, plays the role of advocacy, both for business and social concerns. This includes advertising,

- marketing, propaganda, public relations and political communication.
- 2 Through entertainment such as drama, music and sports, the mass media has witnessed a lot of collaboration
- 3 The mass media also provides public service announcements and emergency alerts which government can use to communicate with the public.
- B radio broadcasting commenced.
- C dramas were performed in various ancient cultures.
- D newspapers began printing in black and white.
- 2 The first dated printed book named the *Diamond Sutia* was printed in
- A China.
- B United States of America.
- C Germany.
- D United Kingdom.
- 3 It was in year \_\_\_\_\_ that the first book was printed.
- A 500 AD
- B 868 AD
- C 1500 AD
- D 1868 AD
- 4 The form of mass media that comprises billboards, signs or placards placed inside and outside commercial buildings, sports stadiums, shops and buses is known as
- A indoor media.
- B outdoor media.
- C commercial media.
- D open-arena media.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ provides many mass media services such as e-mail, websites, blogs and Internet-based radio and television.
- A Blogs media
- B Radio media
- C Internet media
- D CNN media

- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ comprises both Internet and mobile mass communication.
- A Home media
- B Analog media
- C Modem media
- D Digital media
- 7 The mass media is considered as the

## Revision questions

### Essay questions

- 1 Define mass media.
- 2 Differentiate between broadcast media and outdoor media.
- 3 Discuss four roles performed by the mass media in your country.

### Multiple-choice questions

- 1 The history of mass media can be traced back to the days when
- A television came into existence.

\_\_\_\_\_ estate of the realm in most democratic state.

- A fourth
- B first
- C fifth
- D lone

8 The mass media serves as a \_\_\_\_\_ on the activities of those in positions of authority.

- A distraction
- B watchdog
- C guide
- D connection

## Chapter 4

### Civil service

#### Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 explain the meaning of civil service.
- 2 discuss the characteristics of the civil service.
- 3 list the functions of the civil service.
- 4 identify and explain the functions of the various classes in the civil service.
- 5 discuss the relationships between the classes.
- 6 discuss how to prevent corruption in the civil service.
- 7 explain how civil servants are recruited, disciplined and promoted.
- 8 describe the agency that performs those functions.
- 9 discuss the relationship between the top civil servants and politicians.

#### Meaning of public administration

Broadly speaking, public administration is the art and science of managing governmental affairs. It connotes the means, arrangements and processes by which the policies, programmes, purposes and goals of government are fulfilled. For our objective in this chapter, we shall focus on public administration at the centre and, in particular, on the body of officials who are concerned with the organisation and functioning of administration of government

in a state, that is, the civil service.

#### Meaning of civil service

The civil service is the machinery made up of the personnel of the various ministries who advise government and execute its policies.

The civil service is a section of the executive arm of government that is concerned with the practical administration and implementation of government decisions and policies. That is, it is the body that translates the policies of government into action and brings the government into daily contact with the citizens. It is made up of different categories of workers known as civil servants who are paid directly from the government purse.

#### Characteristics of the civil service

The following are the characteristics of the civil service.

##### **Permanence**

The civil service is a permanent government institution. It does not change with the government that established it. The workers enjoy job security.

##### **Political neutrality**

The civil service and its workers are supposed to be politically neutral. Civil servants are not expected to participate in partisan politics unless they resign their appointment from the civil service.

### **Anonymity**

The notion of anonymity in the civil service implies that civil servants are to be seen, not heard. That is, they should not grant press interviews unless they have been authorised by the political head of their ministry who is the minister. This is because the minister takes the blame or praise for the actions or inactions of the civil servants.

### **Impartiality**

It is expected that civil servants would serve any government that comes to power without fear or favour. They should not allow their political interests to becloud their faithfulness to the civil service and the government in power.

### **Expertise and merit/Professionalism**

Civil servants are expected to be experts in the functions they perform. They are therefore supposed to have a good measure of expert knowledge. To sustain this, recruitment into the civil service should be based on merit, not favouritism.

### **Bureaucracy/Red-tapism**

In the civil service, there are rules and regulations known as Public Service Rules (PSR), and Financial Regulations of the Civil Service. The two are strictly followed.

### **Hierarchy**

By this concept is meant that the position of command or authority in the civil service is structured into levels of importance from the highest authority to the lowest. It is the systematic organisation of offices and personnel of various grades within a ministry or department in a superior–subordinate relationship.

### **Functions of the civil service**

The following are some of the functions of the civil service:

- 1 Policy formulation
- 2 Quasi-legislative functions
- 3 Assisting political heads to answer parliamentary questions
- 4 Gathering necessary information
- 5 Policy execution
- 6 Record keeping
- 7 Intermediary role
- 8 Enlightenment and education of the public
- 9 Giving relevant directives

#### ***Policy formulation***

Ministers and commissioners rely largely on the experience and wisdom of senior civil servants, that is, the permanent secretaries, directors, deputy directors and assistant directors, for policy formulation to achieve the goals and objectives of government.

#### ***Quasi-legislative functions***

The civil service performs quasi-legislative or sub-legislative functions. This is done through what is known as *delegated legislation* by which powers are granted to it by the legislature. With this, civil servants are empowered to draw up rules, orders and regulations to fill in the details of new policies.

#### ***Assisting political heads to answer parliamentary questions***

The civil service, especially the administrative and professional classes, are responsible for finding answers to parliamentary questions and briefing the minister accordingly.

### **Gathering necessary information**

The civil service gathers and supplies useful information necessary for policy formation.

### **Policy execution**

The civil service is seen as part of the executive arm of government. It is responsible for the implementation of programmes and policies of the government.

### **Record keeping**

The civil service, with its personnel, is responsible for keeping the documents and records of government activities.

### **Intermediary role**

The civil service plays the role of an intermediary between the government and the public in the dissemination of information.

### **Enlightenment and education of the public**

The civil service, through the civil servants, plays an important role in the enlightenment and education of the public on the policies of government.

### **Giving relevant directives**

The civil service is the administrative machine of any form of government. It gives relevant directives which put government decisions into effect.

## **Structure and organisation of the civil service in Nigeria**

There were five classes in the civil service before President Olusegun Obasanjo phased out the fifth class known as the auxiliary or manipulative or messengerial class. The others are administrative, professional, executive and clerical classes. The class to which an officer belongs depends on a number of factors including educational

qualifications, technical competence and experience.

### **Administrative class**

This is the highest policy-making class. It organises and coordinates the activities of the ministry. This class is responsible for collating and disseminating reports from other classes on which the political head depends for the day-to-day running of the ministry. It is the class that formulates policies. Officers in this class include the permanent secretary, directors, deputy directors and assistant directors.

### **Professional class**

This class is made up of people with specialised training and skill. They have professional qualifications to do some specialised or technical duties within the system. They include lawyers in legal divisions like the Ministry of Justice, teachers in the Ministry of Education, doctors in the Ministry of Health, architects in the Ministry of Works, and many other professionals. They give advice on their technical or specialised areas both at the formative and implementation stages of government programmes and policies.

### **Executive class**

This class is the managerial group of the civil service. It is concerned mostly with the administrative work of the civil service. Executive officers manage, direct and supervise all government work programmes. Because of their position in the centre of the organisational system, executive officers carry instructions and orders downwards to the clerical class and information upwards to the policy-makers. In this class are executive, senior executive and higher executive officers.

### **Clerical class**

This is the rank-and-file of the civil service. It is made up of the largest number of workers. They are responsible for the keeping of records, movement of files, payment of claims, preparation of vouchers, etc. They include typists, clerks, and craftsmen who help all other classes of the service in the performance of their duties.

### **Auxiliary or manipulative or messengerial class**

This is the class that requires no skill in the performance of its functions. Members are therefore unskilled. They include cleaners and gardeners. They help to keep the office tidy or to carry files from one office to another. Some of the cadres in this class have been abolished in the civil service reform under the presidency of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (1999–2007).

## **Honesty in the civil service**

Honesty refers to the value of doing or saying things without fear or favour. Dishonesty is the opposite of honesty, a social vice which occurs when rules are bent to favour oneself, group or friend. Dishonesty is typically exemplified in things like cheating, falsification of records, presentation of fake documents, impersonation and fraud.

### **Attributes of honesty**

Some of the attributes of honesty are:

- 1 Openness
- 2 Sincerity
- 3 Transparency
- 4 Self-discipline
- 5 Hard work or self-reliance
- 6 Dedication to duty

### **Openness**

This is when one acts in a manner that is clear to all. It is the quality of putting or laying all the cards on the table for everyone to see; when one does not have a skeleton in one's cupboard.

### **Sincerity**

This is the quality of saying or doing things as you really feel or think, with a good intention.

### **Transparency**

This is when a thing is done without a hidden agenda, and without an ulterior motive.

### **Self-discipline**

This is the ability of an individual to obey rules and regulations without being forced or compelled to, no matter how difficult.

### **Hard work or self-reliance**

For an individual to achieve his aims, he has to be hardworking. There is no alternative to hard work.

### **Dedication to duty**

One has to be dedicated to work in order to be self-reliant. For one to be dedicated to his duty, one must be punctual, regular and competent at his work.

### **Importance of honesty**

- 1 Honesty promotes transparency and accountability.
- 2 It promotes self-reliance in individuals.
- 3 It leads to reliability in individuals and society.
- 4 It makes people become respected, and it promotes confidence.
- 5 Honesty brings about peace, unity and

- development in society.
- 6 It brings to the society good relationships.
  - 7 Honesty eliminates traits of negative behaviour and attitudes in society.
  - 8 It promotes communalism in society.

## Integrity in the civil service

Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. It is the ability to do what is right at all times. People have respect and high regard for somebody who has integrity in society. Integrity may also mean the act of speaking the truth even in the face of threat to life.

### Attributes of integrity

The underlisted are some of the characteristics of integrity.

- 1 Probit
- 2 Honesty
- 3 Truthfulness
- 4 Incorruptibility
- 5 Principled personality
- 6 Contentment

### Probit

This is the quality of being honest, financially accountable, transparent and upright.

### Honesty

This means sincerity, transparency, openness, dedication to duty, reliability, hard work, self-discipline and fairness.

### Truthfulness

This is the quality of telling the truth even under duress or threat to life.

### Incorruptibility

A person of integrity can neither be corrupt nor be corrupted.

### Principled personality

A person of integrity cannot be easily influenced against his moral values.

### Contentment

When one is contented, one is satisfied with whatever one has. A contented person is not greedy.

### Importance of integrity

- 1 Integrity encourages good character formation in society.
- 2 It causes a nation to be developed.
- 3 It eliminates corruption.
- 4 It is a source of inspiration to members of society.
- 5 It makes people have confidence in the individual and in the civil service or other institutions of government.
- 6 It makes people hardworking, dedicated and committed to their duties.
- 7 It makes people honest in whatever they do and wherever they are.

### Criticisms/Problems of the civil service

The civil service is faced with a number of challenges and criticisms. These criticisms are based on a number of grounds such as red-tapism (excessive bureaucracy), poor attitude to work, corruption, nepotism, remoteness and insensitivity to public needs, and a bloated size which leads to inefficiency and a waste of resources.

The problems and criticisms which the civil service is faced with include the following:

- 1 Over devotion to precedents
- 2 Red-tapism
- 3 Over-establishment
- 4 Lack of initiative
- 5 Rude and hostile attitude
- 6 Lack of transparency in appointment

- 7 Tribalism
- 8 Poor remuneration

### ***Over-devotion to precedents***

The civil service tends to make reference to similar activities in the past before taking a decision, even when such decisions were wrong.

### ***Red-tapism***

There is always a delay in taking decisions because of excessive bureaucracy that government decisions and actions have to undergo.

### ***Over-establishment***

The civil service is over-burdened with too many staff.

### ***Lack of initiative***

Civil servants always wait for orders before they can take action. They must always be directed.

### ***Rude and hostile attitude***

Civil servants are sometimes rude and hostile to the public they deal with.

### ***Lack of transparency in appointment***

Government does not give the civil service the free hand to run its affairs. Sometimes, square pegs in the name of politicians are put in round holes in the civil service.

### ***Tribalism***

Tribalism has tended to become the criterion to determine who to employ and who to remove in the civil service.

### ***Poor remuneration***

Civil servants do not often earn attractive salaries and incentives to motivate them to

put in their best in their work.

### ***Control of the civil service***

The civil service and civil servants can be controlled in the following ways:

- 1 Parliamentary control
- 2 Executive/Ministerial control
- 3 Civil service commission control
- 4 Judicial control
- 5 Public control
- 6 Press control
- 7 Public Complaints Commission control
- 8 Administrative tribunals

### ***Parliamentary control***

The legislature controls the civil service in many ways. The legislature can invite ministers or the Head of Service to the floor of the House to explain the activities of their respective ministries or departments. The legislature has power over the appropriations of the civil service. It has the power to create or abolish government agencies; it also has the power to increase or cut down their expenses.

### ***Executive/Ministerial control***

The executive (president) has direct political and administrative control over the civil service. The executive coordinates the activities of government ministries, appoints the ministers and permanent secretaries, and assigns duties to them and the senior civil servants. The minister gives directives to his subordinates to ensure that government programmes and policies are adequately implemented.

### ***Civil Service Commission control***

The civil service commission is an independent body created essentially to recruit, appoint, promote, transfer and

discipline civil servants. As a measure of control, the commission can demote, repost or transfer and dismiss any civil servant who is involved in misconduct.

### **Judicial control**

The civil service is part of the executive arm of government. The actions, activities and services of the civil service can sometimes be in conflict or go against some provisions of the constitution of the country. When this happens, the law court has power to declare such actions, activities and services of the civil service null, void and unconstitutional.

### **Public control**

The public, through its criticisms of civil servants and their performance, have indirect control over the civil service.

### **Press control**

The press, through investigative journalism, can expose erring civil servants, and that serves as effective control of the civil service.

### **Public Complaints Commission (Ombudsman) control**

The Public Complaints Commission is a body that listens to and investigates complaints forwarded against a civil servant who fails to perform his duties according to the laid-down rules and regulations. It is an institution for seeking administrative redress. Where the civil service as a body or the civil servants have over-stepped their areas of jurisdiction, an aggrieved party can employ the services of the Public Complaints Commission for redress to right the wrong committed by the defaulter.

### **Administrative tribunals**

Administrative tribunals may be set up to

investigate alleged cases of mismanagement within a ministry. This may be a deliberate action of the executive to maintain its credibility or respond to the opinions of the public or pressure from pressure groups.

## **Personnel administration in the civil service**

### **Civil Service Commission**

The Civil Service Commission is an independent body whose primary function is to recruit personnel into the civil service, centrally. Members of the Commission are appointed by the President or the Governor, as the case may be. The members of the Commission can only be removed from office if they are found guilty of misconduct or have demonstrated inability to carry out their duties. In order to maintain its independence, the Commission is protected from political influence and, therefore, does not take orders relating to its duties from any political party or the government.

### **Functions of the Civil Service Commission**

- 1 The Civil Service Commission recruits officers for different ministries, departments and agencies of government after due consultation with government and other appropriate authorities.
- 2 The Commission recommends the guidelines to be followed in matters relating to promotion of staff in the civil service from one grade level to another.
- 3 The Commission has the responsibility of transferring civil servants from one ministry to another.
- 4 The Commission, or through committees set up by it, ensures that disciplinary

- measures in the civil service are adhered to, and imposes adequate sanctions, where necessary, on erring civil servants.
- 5 The Commission, in consultation with the appropriate authorities of government, maps out the terms and conditions of service, salaries and allowances of the public servants.
- 6 It is the duty of the Civil Service Commission to put in place a scheme of service which gives the details of the required qualifications and experience needed for appointment and promotion, and the experience and qualification required for conversion and upgrading.
- 2 were voted into office, as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The future of book publishing in Nigeria is considerably bleak, given the spate of uncurbed book piracy in respect of books produced at all the learning levels in Nigeria. As a concerned stakeholder, examine the activities of book piracy in Nigeria, and proffer solutions to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice on the steps to take to curb this menace.
- 3 Write a concise essay, identifying the labours of Nigeria's past heroes, and what to do to ensure that their labours are not in vain.

## Relationship between the civil service and the political executives

The minister is the political head of a ministry. The directorate cadre and the permanent secretary are at the top of the civil service. The minister relies on the senior civil servants for policy formulation. The senior civil servants, that is, the administrative and the professional classes, assist the political head to prepare answers to some knotty questions and issues during 'question time' in parliament. For a minister to accomplish the objective of this ministry, he has to create a congenial work environment for the civil servants in his ministry, especially the senior civil servants.

## Multiple-choice questions

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ is the art and science of managing governmental affairs.
- A Private administration  
B Public administration  
C Civilian administration  
D Military administration
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ is the machinery made up of the personnel of the various ministries which advise government and execute its policies.
- A Personnel machinery  
B Policies and ministries execution  
C Corporate service  
D The civil service
- 3 The section of the executive arm of government that is concerned with the practical administration and implementation of government decisions and policies is known as
- A civil administration section.  
B civil servanthood.  
C civil service.  
D core civil administration.

## Revision questions

### Essay questions

- 1 Unbridled corruption is the bane of our country. Explain the steps you would take to eradicate or reduce this problem to the barest minimum, if you

- 4 Which one of the following is *not* a required characteristic of the civil service?  
A Partiality  
B Permanence  
C Anonymity  
D Political neutrality
- 5 The systematic organisation of offices and personnel of various grades within a ministry or department in a superior-subordinate relationship is known as  
A red-tapism.  
B hierarchy.  
C professionalism.  
D political neutrality.
- 6 Which of the following statements is true?  
A Civil servants are to be heard, not seen.  
B Civil service are to be heard and seen.  
C Civil servants are to be seen, not heard.  
D Civil servants are to maintain a deaf and dumb stance.
- 7 How many classes were in the civil service before ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo phased out one of them?  
A 5  
B 4  
C 6  
D 9
- 8 The class phased out is called the  
A professional class.  
B administrative class.  
C executive class.  
D auxiliary class.
- 9 Which of the civil service classes is responsible for collating and disseminating reports from other classes, on which the political head depends for the day-to-day running of the ministry?  
A The administrative class  
B The professional class  
C The executive class  
D The messengerial class
- 10 The civil service class saddled with the task of keeping of records, movement of files, payment of claims and preparation of vouchers, is known as \_\_\_\_\_  
A the auxiliary class.  
B the executive class.  
C the clerical class.  
D the administrative class.
- 11 Which one of the following does not require skill in the performance of its functions?  
A The manipulative class  
B The clerical class  
C The administrative class  
D The executive class
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_ is *not* an attribute of honesty.  
A Transparency  
B Hard work  
C Dedication to duty  
D Indiscipline
- 13 One of the following is *not* an attribute of integrity.  
A Compatibility  
B Probity  
C Honesty  
D Truthfulness
- 14 The civil service and civil servants can be controlled in all *but one* of the following ways:  
A Executive/Ministerial control  
B Private control  
C Parliamentary control

- D Civil Service Commission control
- 15 One of the following is *not* true as far as the relationship between the civil service and the political executive is concerned.
- A The directorate cadre and the permanent secretary are at the top of the civil service.
  - B The minister is the political head of a ministry.
  - C The administrative and the professional classes assist the political head to prepare answers to knotty questions and issues during 'question time' in parliament.
  - D The minister does not rely on senior civil servants for policy formulation.

### Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 discuss the meaning of public corporations.
- 2 discuss the structure and organisation of public corporations.
- 3 identify the problems of public corporations and suggest ways of solving them.
- 4 explain commercialisation, privatisation and deregulation of public corporations.

### Reasons for establishing public corporations

- 1 Public corporations are established to produce goods and services which, if left to private entrepreneurs, may result in exploitation in terms of cost and efficiency.
- 2 Public corporations are meant to reduce the service responsibilities of government departments. If left to the ministries, it may result in the extension of responsibilities and reduced efficiency and lack of, or, reduced productivity.
- 3 Public corporations are established to derive the advantages of division of labour and specialisation. By providing separate functionaries or functional authorities dealing with a particular activity, there would be a more efficient and effective means of organising an economic activity. It will enhance recruitment of expert knowledge for such activities.
- 4 Public corporations are set up by government because the huge amount of capital involved in running such enterprises may not be affordable by individuals, for example gas and electricity.
- 5 Government may use some public corporations as instruments for rapid economic development of the country. Examples are Ajaokuta Steel Mills, and electric power industries in the country.
- 6 The establishment and management of some corporations under the direct

### Meaning of public corporation

Public corporations are government-owned organisations, enterprises and agencies established by law which is an Act of parliament for providing a monopoly of certain social and economic services for the benefit of the people. They are economic enterprises in their own right, meant to provide certain utilities or services which, if left to private individuals, may not be efficiently managed at an average service cost.

Examples of public corporations are Water Corporation, Nigerian Railway Corporation and Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.

- control of the government is for the purpose of national security and economic survival. The state cannot sit down and watch or leave the provision of such essential services in the hands of private individuals and foreigners.
- 7 Public corporations provide employment opportunities for the teeming population.
  - 8 Public corporations can be set up by government to discourage or prevent the concentration of the nation's wealth, or the means of production, in the hands of a few.
  - 9 They are sometimes set up in order to prevent unscrupulous private businessmen from exploiting the people. If private enterprises are allowed to render the services provided by public corporations, this may lead to a duplication of services. In order to avoid unnecessary duplication, public corporations are established by government.
  - 6 Some public corporations are set up to undertake some strategic functions for security reasons, e.g. currency minting and printing, and arms production corporations.

## Attributes or characteristics of public corporations

- 1 Public corporations are owned by the government and funded with taxpayers' money.
- 2 Public corporations enjoy monopoly. They do not compete with other organisations in the provision of essential services.
- 3 Profit-making is not the primary objective of public corporations but the rendering of essential social services to the public.
- 4 Public corporations are government enterprises set up by an act of parliament.
- 5 Public corporations need huge amounts of money to set them up. They are capital intensive.
- 6 They are corporate bodies or legal persons, which status provides them with legal identity like a limited liability company with a life of its own. They can own property, can sue and be sued.
- 7 The employees of public corporations are not civil servants and are, therefore, not controlled by the Civil Service Commission.
- 8 The board is responsible for the day-to-day management of a public corporation.
- 9 Public corporations are independently financed and they enjoy a high degree of financial independence.
- 10 Public corporations are not subject to direct parliamentary financial scrutiny.

## Organisational structure of public corporations

- 1 The minister is the overall political head of the public corporation. He has the power to give policy guidelines to the board of the corporation.
- 2 At the top of the administration is the chairman who is appointed by the government.
- 3 There is a board of directors or governing board that is made up of directors appointed by the government. The board formulates policies for the corporation.
- 4 The overall administrative head, called general manager or managing director, the equivalent of permanent secretary in the civil service, assists the board in the day-to-day administration and execution of the corporation's policies. The management is composed of key senior officials who assist the managing director or general manager in the administration of the corporation.

- 6 Overstaffing
- 7 Proliferation of public corporations
- 8 Red-tapism
- 9 Corruption and embezzlement of public funds

### **Political interference**

Public corporations are owned by government and, often government and important government officials make them do things that may not be in the overall interest of the corporations. On the basis of politics, they can force the corporation to employ persons that are not qualified for the job or embark on projects that are of no real value to the corporation and to the people.

### **Poor attitude to work**

Many workers in public corporations see their work as 'government work'. Government work, they unfortunately believe, requires neither seriousness nor commitment. The result is that workers do not do their work at all or do it poorly and the corporations consequently cannot effectively discharge the duties for which they were set up.

### **Political instability**

Instability in the political system occurs when the government of a state changes too frequently and unexpectedly. Every new government wants to appoint its own representatives to the boards of government corporations. These constant changes in the policy-making body of the corporation lead to inconsistent policies.

### **Poor management**

Poor management is closely related to political instability and political interference.

Members of the board who make policies for the corporation are political appointees who may not have had any exposure in the corporation's area of operations. Again, the government can make its corporations employ management staff that are not properly qualified. These two factors can result in poor management.

### ***Over-protection by the government***

Some government corporations are like over-indulged or pampered children who cannot do anything for themselves. Most of them depend on government for everything including the payment of staff salaries and the maintenance or replacement of equipment, even though they were established to provide services to the public and to make profits (Alex Gboyega, 1995:58).

### ***Overstaffing***

Many public corporations are over-staffed. Many staff are on the payroll of public corporations without contributing meaningfully to the growth of these corporations. Many of the staff are idle and not efficient.

### ***Proliferation of public corporation***

There are too many public corporations in existence with many of them performing the same or similar functions.

### ***Red-tapism***

Red-tapism or excessive bureaucracy, as in the civil service, is also affecting public corporations. Red-tapism is the excessive use of formalities or over-devotion to precedent.

### ***Corruption and embezzlement of public funds***

This is a serious problem facing public corporations in Nigeria. This has rendered most public corporations unable to meet their running costs.

## **Solutions to the problems facing public corporations**

- 1 The monopoly which public corporations are enjoying should be broken to give room for competition.
- 2 The working conditions of the staff of public corporations should be looked into and improved.
- 3 Public corporations should be allowed to employ professional and technical staff on merit ad without political interference.
- 4 Government should endeavour to maintain political stability because the incessant change of boards of directors has a negative impact on the performance of public corporations.
- 5 Government should minimise frequent political interference in the activities of public corporations as this, most often, derails the realisation of the aims and objectives of these public corporations.
- 6 Favouritism, nepotism and tribalism have characterised the appointment of general managers and members of the boards of directors. This has led to the enthronement of mediocrity, inefficiency and poor management. Meritocracy, professionalism and experience, irrespective of geopolitical affiliation, should be the criteria for appointment.
- 7 Political intimidation and victimisation of public corporations' officials should be curbed.

- 8 Red-tapism needs to be eliminated in public corporations.
  - 8 Public corporations act under the statute that established them and they must act in consonance with the powers conferred on them by that statute. The civil service/ministry, on the other hand, does not; its existence depends on the government.
- Organisational structures of public corporations and the civil service compared**
- 1 In a public corporation, there is a chairman who has the greatest power among the governing council/board of directors, while a minister is the political head of each ministry.
  - 2 The board of directors sees to the day-to-day running of the public corporation, while a permanent secretary is the head of administration of each ministry in the civil service.
  - 3 The managing director/general manager or director-general sees to the day-to-day activities of the public corporation, while a professional class composed of specialists like lawyers, medical doctors and teachers, and part of the administrative class run the civil service.
  - 4 Public corporations are organised to make profits while the civil service is organised to serve the public without the profit motive.
  - 5 Public corporations provide social services and amenities for the public in general, while the civil service helps to implement government policies and keep the administration going.
  - 6 Public corporations are relatively autonomous while the civil service/ministry is directly controlled by the minister/commissioner.
  - 7 In public corporations, all appointments are made by the board of directors, while in the civil service the Civil Service Commission makes all grade levels 07 to 10 appointment.
  - 9 Decision making in public corporations is decentralised. This enables action to be taken rapidly and more effectively, while decision making in the civil service is highly centralised. Every action has a routine which often leads to delays.
  - 10 Public corporations have management and non-management classes, while there are administrative, executive and clerical classes in the civil service.
  - 11 In public corporations, promotion, transfer, discipline and removal are the responsibilities of the board of directors in consultation with the chairman, while in the civil service, promotion, transfer, discipline and removal are carried out by the Civil Service Commission whose action is final on any civil servant.

### **Control of public corporations**

Public corporations can be controlled in the following ways:

- 1 Legal control
- 2 Executive/Ministerial control
- 3 Parliamentary control
- 4 Judicial control
- 5 Public opinion
- 6 Consumers' control

#### ***Legal control***

A public corporation is established by law which is an Act of parliament. It is also a corporate body which is subject to legal restrictions.

### **Executive/Ministerial control**

The government established the public corporations. One would, therefore, expect the government to exercise some control. This is where executive or ministerial control comes in. The chairmen and members of the boards of directors are appointed and can be removed by the government that appoints them.

### **Parliamentary control**

Parliament exercises some controls on public corporations. As we have pointed out earlier, public corporations are normally established by law passed by the parliament, which can amend such laws with a view to increasing or reducing the scope or functions of the body. Parliament, during debates, motion or during question time, may invite the minister responsible for any corporation for questioning on the day-to-day activities of the corporation.

### **Judicial control**

Like all other institutions of the state and the agencies of government, the courts have the power to declare the law establishing a public corporation null and void if not made in accordance with the constitution. The actions of public corporations could be declared as *ultra vires* and adequate compensation ordered to be paid where it has infringed on the rights and liberties of the citizens.

### **Public opinion**

A public corporation will also respect the opinions of members of the public they are meant to serve. An adverse public opinion will not be in the interest of any public institution.

### **Consumers' control**

The people who consume the products of the public corporations could pass comments on the pages of newspapers and on the electronic media for the corporation to adjust to standard products and services.

## **Commercialisation and privatisation of public corporations**

### **Commercialisation**

Commercialisation is the process of running government-owned companies or enterprises for a profit rather than depend only on government subventions or grants. It involves a change in the objectives of public corporations from being mere social service providers to profit-making corporations or enterprises.

Commercialisation stipulates that government-owned companies which receive subventions or grants from the government are to become self-funding in their operations. However, it must be observed that with commercialisation, government has not withdrawn ownership of the corporations but only grants them the autonomy to generate funds and break even. Examples of commercialised government-owned companies in Nigeria are Nigerian Postal Service and Telecommunications (NIPOST) and Power Holdings Company of Nigeria (PHCN).

### **Reasons for commercialisation**

- 1 Public corporations are commercialised purposely to enable them to break even rather than to continue to operate at a loss.
- 2 Commercialisation is aimed at improving and maintaining the welfare of personnel

- of the government companies and at maintaining their machines to attain maximum productivity.
- 3 Commercialisation is introduced for increased and improved services both in quantity and quality.
  - 4 It is aimed at reducing or eliminating wastage and at reducing unnecessary spending on the part of government.
  - 5 Public corporations are commercialised to enable them to pay off their accumulated debts.

### **Advantages of commercialisation**

- 1 Commercialisation discourages or reduces dependence of public corporations on their relevant ministries.
- 2 It makes the public corporation to recover its production costs and make some profit.
- 3 The payment of tax to government has made public corporations become a source of revenue generation for the government.
- 4 Commercialisation has led to the revival of some dying public corporations.
- 5 Commercialisation encourages investment opportunities.
- 6 It gives the consumers the opportunity to make a choice.
- 7 Commercialisation encourages the adoption of modern business management practices.
- 8 Commercialisation brings about efficient production and distribution of goods and services.

### **Disadvantages of commercialisation**

- 1 Commercialisation brings about capitalism and its evils.
- 2 Commercialisation may lead to unemployment, as a commercialised business, in its profit drive, may cut

down its work force or suspend new employment.

- 3 The withdrawal of government subventions in public corporations will reduce their capital base which can make their goods and services less competitive.
- 4 Commercialisation may lead to an increase in the cost of production which will automatically make the prices of goods and services go up or too expensive.
- 5 The motive of commercialisation is the profitability of an enterprise. This may lead to total neglect of the welfare of the citizens.
- 6 Commercialisation of public corporations may bring about wage freezing and other controls on wage negotiation.

### **Privatisation**

Privatisation is the sale of public corporations and enterprises to private companies and individuals. When privatisation takes place, government transfers its ownership, control and management of the business organisations through sale, to private organisations or individuals.

### **Reasons for privatisation**

- 1 Privatisation brings about improved productivity and efficiency in the privatised enterprises.
- 2 It is carried out so as to improve the welfare and conditions of service of the staff of privatised corporations.
- 3 It eliminates unnecessary spending of taxpayers money which could be spent wisely on social infrastructures.
- 4 Privatisation of government companies is carried out in order to generate considerable revenue to government

purse.

- 5 It reduces or eradicates mismanagement, corruption and embezzlement of government funds.
- 6 It addresses the problem of excessive bureaucratic control and intervention on the part of the government.
- 7 Privatisation reduces the problem of outdated equipment. New investors will inject more funds to replace obsolete equipment.

### **Advantages of privatisation**

- 1 The government generates a lot of revenue from the sale of shares in the privatised companies.
- 2 There is an improvement in operational efficiency of privatised enterprises.
- 3 Privatisation encourages the injection of new ideas into management as new shareholders with proven records are brought onto the boards of directors.
- 4 Privatised corporations are more competitive in nature and they can charge competitive rates for their goods and services.
- 5 Foreign investors will be interested in investing in an economy which is free from too much government interference.
- 6 It increases economies of large-scale production as more funds are made available to ensure efficiency in production. This will lead to mass production.
- 7 The privatisation policy helps to set the right motive and ginger the management to make profits.

### **Disadvantages of privatisation**

- 1 The revenue accruing to the privatised companies will go to private investors,

instead of government coffers for social development.

- 2 Shares will be concentrated in the hands of a few people. Most of the shares of these privatised companies are purchased by rich and influential people to the detriment of the poor masses.
- 3 The security of the country may be in danger if strategic companies are sold to private investors.
- 4 Privatisation tends to enrich those that are already rich; thus making the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.
- 5 Privatisation may lead to massive jobs loss, as most privatised companies reduce the number of employees and bring in new hands.
- 6 The government may not be able to exercise control over key sectors of the economy.

## **Revision questions**

### **Essay questions**

- 1 Suggest three solutions to the problems of public corporation.
- 2 Define privatisation.
- 3 What are the merits of commercialisation?
- 4 Discuss three demerits of privatisation.

### **Multiple-choice questions**

- 1 All but one of the following is *not* true about public corporations.
  - A They are established by an Act of parliament.
  - B They are government-owned organisations, enterprises and agencies.
  - C They provide a monopoly of certain social and economic services for the benefit of the people.

- D They are not economic enterprises.
- 2 Which one of the following is *not* a reason for the establishment of public corporations?
- A Public corporations are established to produce goods and services without the profit motive.
  - B Public corporations are established to derive the advantages of division of labour and specialisation.
  - C Public corporations are set up in order to encourage unscrupulous private businessmen to exploit the people.
  - D Public corporations are set up for the purpose of national security and economic survival.
- 3 One of the following is *not* an attribute of public corporations. Identify it.
- A Public corporations are owned by the government and funded with taxpayers' money.
  - B Public corporations are not capital intensive.
  - C Public corporations enjoy a monopoly.
  - D Public corporations are set up by an Act of parliament.
- 4 One of the following is *not* a problem facing public corporations.
- A Political interference
  - B Red-tapism
  - C Poor management
  - D Understaffing
- 5 Pick the odd one out of the following control mechanisms of public corporations.
- 6 All *but* one of the following are true about commercialisation.
- A Commercialisation is the process of running government-owned companies for a profit.
  - B Commercialisation is done to make public companies less dependent only on government subventions or grants.
  - C Commercialisation means that government-owned companies which receive subventions or grants from government are not expected to become self-funding in their operations.
  - D Commercialisation involves a change in the objectives of public corporations from being mere social service providers to profit-making corporations or enterprises.
- 7 One of the following is *not* an advantage of commercialisation.
- A Commercialisation has precipitated the death of public corporations.
  - B Commercialisation makes public corporations recover their production costs.
  - C Commercialisation encourages investment opportunities.
  - D Commercialisation brings about efficient production and distribution of goods and services.
- 8 Everything *but* one of the following is true about privatisation.
- A Privatisation involves the sale

- of public corporations and enterprises to private companies and private individuals.
- B Privatisation involves government transferring its ownership, control and management of business organisations through sale to private individuals.
  - C Privatisation certainly jeopardises the welfare and conditions of service of the staff of privatised corporations.
  - D Privatisation brings about improved productivity and efficiency in the privatised enterprises.

### Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 explain the meaning and list the various types of local government.
- 2 give reasons for the creation of local government.
- 3 list functions performed by local government.
- 4 discuss the evolution of local government in Nigeria.
- 5 describe the structure of local government.
- 6 explain how local governments are financed.
- 7 explain the relationship between the local government authorities and the state/federal governments.
- 8 explain the roles of traditional rulers in local government administration
- 9 discuss the problems and reforms of local government.

### Local government administration

Local government refers to the government at the grassroots level of administration aimed at meeting peculiar needs of the people. In other words, local government can be defined as that tier of government closest to the people. It is vested or charged with certain powers to exercise control over the affairs of people in its domain.

### Reasons for the creation of local governments

A number of reasons are responsible for the creation of local governments. Some of these are listed below.

- 1 Rural development is one of the major reasons for the creation of local government. Development of the grassroots has been a major concern of responsive and responsible governments. It was appropriate therefore that creation of local government would bring about the needed developmental changes to the people in the rural areas. This is because political participation and development had eluded people at the grassroots for a long time.
- 2 Local governments were created to enable effective and efficient service delivery to the people at the grassroots level.
- 3 The creation of local governments has been essentially regarded as the path to national integration, administration, and development in Nigeria's socio-cultural and political contexts.
- 4 With the multiplicity of cultures, diversity of languages and differentiated needs in terms of ethnicity, the creation of local governments has helped in fostering national consciousness.
- 5 This third tier of government, that is, the local government, was created in order to ensure uniformity of development programmes at the grassroots level all over the country.
- 6 The concept of local government

involves a philosophical commitment to democratic participation in the governing process at the grassroots level. This involves legal and administrative decentralisation of authority, power and personnel by a higher level of government to the community.

### **Functions of local governments**

The local government is the third tier of administrative structure in Nigeria. There are 774 local government areas in Nigeria, all of which carry out various functions which are spelt out in the 1999 Constitution, and they are as follows:

- 1 The local government helps in making recommendations to the state commission on economic planning, or any similar body on economic development of the state.
- 2 The local government performs the functions of rate collection, tax and market revenue.
- 3 It also issues radio and television licences.
- 4 It helps in the establishment and maintenance of cemeteries, burial grounds and homes for the destitute or infirm.
- 5 It helps in the licensing of bicycles, and other mechanically propelled trucks, canoes, wheelbarrows, etc.
- 6 Local governments are responsible for the maintenance, establishment and regulation of motor parks, markets and public conveniences.
- 7 It helps in the process of house numbering, naming of roads and streets.
- 8 It helps in the registration of births, deaths and marriages.
- 9 It helps in the provision and maintenance of health services.

- 10 It helps in making by-laws that help people in the locality.
- 11 It helps in the development of agriculture and natural resources, other than the exploitation of minerals in the local areas.
- 12 It works hand in hand with the state and federal governments for the provision of social amenities such as schools, hospitals and clinics to the people at the grassroots level.

### **Systems of local government**

Some of the systems of local government are the

- 1 French system,
- 2 the British system, and
- 3 the Nigerian system.

#### ***The French system***

The French system of local government administration is a single tier system. In this system, local governments lack independence but are closely linked to the central government. Although they have elected officials, the mayor, who is an elected member, takes orders from the prefect who represents the central government at the local level. In the French system, there is no distinction between services provided by the central government and those provided by the local government.

#### ***The British system***

Unlike the French system, the British system of local government enjoys greater autonomy and is democratic in nature. In this system, the local governments are not tied to the apron strings of the central government. The British system is a multi-tier system, which means that there is more than one local government in existence, each

of them rendering or performing different services to meet the needs of the people. In other words, the British system of local government is more responsive, viable and service oriented. The councils are made up of elected councillors and have power to elect their chairman. The various councils in the British system include the borough, county, municipal borough, rural and urban district.

### **The Nigerian system**

The Nigerian system lacked uniformity until 1976, when the military regime of Olusegun Obasanjo introduced new local government reforms that brought about the single-tier system of local government. Before that time, different local government systems had developed in different parts of the country, under the control of different political leaders.

The local government system today is democratic in nature as there are a crop of elected officials ranging from the chairman, vice chairman and councillors who are charged with the responsibility of running the affairs of the council on a daily basis. They also enjoy some level of autonomy as the influence of the traditional rulers who in the past held sway at the local level has been reduced to the barest. In fact, the local government has come to stay as the third tier of administration, a status radically different from what it used to be before 1976.

### **Evolution of local government in Nigeria**

Local government is one of man's oldest institutions. The earliest form of local government existed in the form of clan and village meetings. In fact, democracy itself developed and originated along the lines

of local governance initiative in the ancient Greek city states. In other parts of the world, local governance was developed along the people's culture and expectations.

Prior to colonisation, there was in existence in most African enclaves, local administrative machinery founded upon traditional institutions. In the area known as Nigeria today, the existing tribes that make up the geographical areas already had one form of local administration or another. In the northern part of the country, the Hausa/Fulani practised a highly centralised form of government with the emir at the head as both the political and religious leader. The emir delegated his power to the districts heads (the *mogajis*) to oversee the districts that made up the emirates.

In the western part of the country, the *oba* firmly held power over towns. The power was delegated to the *baales* who administered a town or village and paid tributes (royalties) to the *oba* at specified time of the year.

The Igbo of the eastern part of Nigeria, however, were republican and egalitarian in nature. That notwithstanding, there was in existence the *ohaneze*—an assembly of titled men who sat in the village square to take decisions on behalf of the people. Some parts of the east still have village heads and *igwes* who administer the villages with the advice of the councils of elders.

The present local government system in Nigeria started with the 1976 local government reforms which aimed at restructuring the local government in conformity with modern society, and at best to make Nigeria's local administration an ideal in Africa. The reform has passed through various stages of development in terms of scope of operation, functions and

general administration. These are some of the aims of the reform.

- 1 The desire to extend the principle of federalism to its logical conclusion, by bringing the government to the grassroots level.
- 2 Uniformity of local government administration in all the government councils of the federation of Nigeria.

One would observe that the second phase of the local government reforms was the election of the first councils of Nigeria and the granting of autonomy to each of these local government councils in 1988. Thus the local government, which used to be an appendage of the defunct Ministry of Local Government, has now become the entrenched third tier of government in Nigeria.

## Local government structure/organisation

The local government is structured into three main bodies—the policy-making body, the executive body and the departments.

- 1 The policy-making body is composed of:
  - a) the executive chairman
  - b) the vice-chairman
  - c) supervisory councillors
  - d) councillors
- 2 The executive body is composed of:
  - a) The secretary
  - b) Heads of departments
  - c) Subordinate staff
- 3 The departments in the local government council are as follows:
  - a) General administration headed by the deputy secretary.
  - b) Treasury department headed by the treasurer.
  - c) Works department headed by the

- d) civil engineer/technical officer.
- e) Health Department headed by the principal health superintendent.
- f) The maternity division of the health department headed by the senior midwifery sister.
- f) The dispensary division of the health department headed by the higher pharmacy officer.
- g) The newly introduced farm division to be headed by the farm manager.

### Sources of local government finance

Finance is the livewire of any organisation. The local government administration needs money to carry out the various developmental programmes that are aimed at improving the socioeconomic condition of the grassroots dwellers. The sources of finance of local governments include the following:

- 1 Rates
- 2 Government grants
- 3 Loans

#### Rates

These are fees and charges for certain services.

#### Government grants

The grants from the government are divided into two, namely general grant and specific grants.

#### Loans

There is no gainsaying the fact that local governments in Nigeria depend largely on external funding to survive, hence the persisted calls on the federal government and relevant stakeholders to increase the funding of local governments in Nigeria.

## **Relationship between local government/state and federal governments**

As the third tier of government, local governments maintain a robust relationship with both the federal and state governments. This relationship is in the areas of finance, administration, legislature as well as auditing. In other words, local governments relate with the federal and state governments in a number of ways. These include:

- 1 Federal and state governments provide grants to local governments.
- 2 Appointment to key positions requires the approval of state governments.
- 3 All by-laws must be submitted and approved by the state government.
- 4 The budgets of local governments must be submitted to their state government for approval.
- 5 The state government has power to audit the accounts of local governments.

## **Role of traditional rulers in local government**

In order to preserve the traditional position of our traditional rulers, and in compliance with the 1976 local government reforms, a traditional council is established for each local government area or a group of local government areas over which the traditional ruler has suzerainty.

A traditional council consists of traditional office holders, the chairman of the local government, one or two traditional representatives of each local council as may be considered appropriate, and any other person(s) who may be required, in order to make the traditional council broadly representative of the major facets of life in the entire area.

## **Functions of the traditional council**

The traditional council has the following functions:

- 1 The traditional council advises the local government or a group of local governments on matters referred to it by the elected council.
- 2 It discusses common problems and makes suggestions to the local government.
- 3 It makes representations or expresses opinions to government, on matters that may not strictly be the responsibility of the local government, provided the matters are of concern to the area as a whole.
- 4 It determines or advises the traditional ruler on all matters including the conferment of traditional titles and appointments.
- 5 It advises on and determines customary laws and practices on all matters referred to it, including those related to land.

## **Local government reforms of 1976**

The main thrust of the 1976 local government reforms include the following:

- 1 The establishment of a multipurpose single-tier local government for the whole country.
- 2 The establishment of democratically elected local government councils in which about 75 per cent of the members are elected.
- 3 The exclusion of traditional rulers and chiefs from membership of local government councils and the subsequent reduction in their powers.
- 4 The federal government became directly involved in the administration of local governments by providing

- policy guidelines to be implemented at the local level.
- 5 The reform also introduced Local Government Service Boards or Commissions throughout the country.
  - 6 The local government became the third tier of government and was granted limited autonomy over certain subjects on which it could act without directives from the federal or state governments.
  - 7 The local governments were given take-off grants to enable them to provide the needed infrastructures.
  - 8 The reform introduced a full-time chairman as the chief executive of the local government, with supervisory councillors as heads of departments.
  - 9 The reform also created statutory functions for local governments. For instance, they were expected to maintain dispensaries and maternity homes, and pay the salaries of primary school teachers.
  - 10 Traditional councils or emirate councils were established, whose primary responsibility was to maintain peace, law and order within their domain. To be precise, the role of traditional rulers became purely advisory as far as local governments were concerned.

### **Problems of local government**

The following are some of the problems of local government:

- 1 Lack of continuity by succeeding governments
- 2 Financial constraints
- 3 Corruption and mismanagement
- 4 Lack of autonomy
- 5 Lack of qualified and experienced staff
- 6 Conflicts between traditional rulers and elected chairmen and councillors

- 7 Lack of refresher courses

### ***Lack of continuity by succeeding governments***

This is one of the major problems facing local governments in the country. The failure or unwillingness on the part of a succeeding government to complete projects or programmes embarked upon by the previous government amounts to economic and mental waste. It is retrogressive and retards development.

### ***Financial constraints***

As much as the local governments may have viable programmes for execution, financial constraint/inadequacy makes executing these projects difficult. Local government revenue is by far lower than what is required to make meaningful grassroots development possible. The federal government should, therefore, consider the upward review of the statutory allocation to this tier of government so that projects for execution in local governments can be more purposeful and achievable.

### ***Corruption and mismanagement***

There tends to be high-level corruption and mismanagement of funds at the local government level in Nigeria. At times, it is not inadequate funding that is the problem but outright stealing, embezzlement and misappropriation of available funds.

### ***Lack of autonomy***

The much acclaimed limited autonomy of the local governments as envisioned by the 1976 local government reform is a farce. A situation whereby an elected chairman of a local government can be removed from office by an elected governor, on a flimsy excuse, and without recourse to the due

process of the law, makes a mockery of the autonomy of the local councils.

### **Lack of qualified and experienced staff**

Local governments do not usually have sufficient professional manpower required to run the government at the local level. In order to make for progress, there is the need to employ competent and qualified hands for the execution of local government projects.

### **Conflicts between traditional rulers and elected chairmen and councillors**

There is deep-seated animosity, acrimony and mistrust between some powerful traditional rulers and their local government officials. Where this exists and it is not resolved harmoniously, it may slow down the pace of development in the affected local government area.

### **Lack of refresher courses**

Refresher programmes and courses are hardly arranged for local government personnel. Opportunities for constant training courses, workshops and seminars should be created for existing local government staff so that they can update or obtain skills and knowledge necessary for modern local government administration.

### **Control of local government**

A number of controls exist and are being exercised by both the federal and state governments to make the local governments live up to their expectations. These include administrative, financial, political, judicial, and legislative controls.

### **Administrative control**

This is a situation whereby the federal government or the state government sends officials to local governments for inspection of projects and programmes for which money has been allocated and released. The reports from such visitations help the government to know if the fund has been judiciously utilised or not.

### **Financial control**

Local governments are expected to present their annual budgets to the state government for approval before they can embark on any expenditure. Besides, there is also periodic inspection of accounts of local governments by auditors sent either by the federal or state government.

### **Political control**

Political control is exercised through the ministry of local government or any other relevant agency or body that may be empowered to do so. There is a measure of collaboration between the officials at federal and state levels and those of local government councils.

### **Judicial/Legislative control**

This has to do with the formulation and interpretation of laws. Local governments are expected to submit their by-laws for legislative scrutiny and approval before they can be implemented, and where a particular by-law offends the constitution, the judiciary will act as necessary.

## **Measures to improve local government administration**

The following are some of the measures for improving local government administration:

- 1 Highly qualified staff should be employed.
- 2 There is the need for increased funding of the local government by the federal government.
- 3 Funds for project execution and other requirements should be released timely, and with less bureaucratic hassles.
- 4 There is also the need for greater autonomy so that decision-making and project implementation can be faster.
- 5 Local governments should embark on aggressive internal revenue drives. They should shun the lethargy that is associated with always waiting for statutory allocations.
- 6 Local governments should demonstrate more patriotism, integrity, transparency and honesty.
- 7 There should be an adequate and more functional mechanism for monitoring and control of the activities and projects at the local government councils.
- 8 Adequate and timely remuneration of local government staff coupled with regular hands-on training will attract competent and qualified professionals to this level of administration.

## **Revision question**

### **Essay questions**

- 1 Define local government.
- 2 Outline five reasons for creating local governments.
- 3 Discuss the functions performed by the local government in your area.

- 4 Discuss the 1976 local government reforms.
- 5 What are the major problems confronting local governments in the country?
- 6 Discuss the areas of control of local government you know.

## **Multiple-choice questions**

- 1 The tier of government closest to the people is the
  - A state government.
  - B local government.
  - C federal government.
  - D bilateral government.
- 2 The local government was *not* created for one of the following reasons:
  - A Discouragement of uniformity of development programmes at the grassroots level all over the country.
  - B Rural development.
  - C Effective and efficient service delivery to the people at the grassroots level.
  - D Enhancement of political participation at the grassroots level.
- 3 Which one of the following is *not* a function of local governments?
  - A They help in the provision of and maintenance of health services.
  - B They help in the development of agriculture and natural resources.
  - C They are not responsible for the establishment, maintenance and regulation of motor parks, markets and public conveniences.
  - D They work closely with the state and federal governments for the

- provision of social amenities at the grassroots level.
- 4 The British system operates a \_\_\_\_\_ of local government.
- A single-tier system
  - B mono-tier system
  - C multi-tier system
  - D people-tier system
- 5 The French system of local government administration is a
- A central-tier system.
  - B single-tier system.
  - C people-tier system.
  - D multi-tier system.
- 6 The Obasanjo regime introduced new local government reforms that brought about the single-tier system of local government in
- A 1975.
  - B 1984.
  - C 2008.
  - D 1976.
- 7 Which one out of the following does *not* belong to the structure of the policy-making body of the local government?
- A The executive chairman
  - B The vice chairman
  - C House of representatives
  - D Supervisory councillors
- 8 The General Administration Department in a local government is headed by a
- A sole administrator.
  - B deputy secretary.
  - C secretary.
  - D principal secretary.
- 9 One of the following is *not* part of the executive body of a local government. Which one is it?
- A The secretary
  - B Heads of departments
- C Subordinate staff
- D Interested stakeholders
- 10 Local government finance is derived from all *but* one of the following:
- A Loans
  - B Special gifts
  - C Government grants
  - D Fees and charges for certain services
- 11 One of the following is *not* true about the problems of local governments in Nigeria.
- A Lack of continuity by succeeding governments
  - B Financial constraints
  - C Corruption and mismanagement
  - D Abundant autonomy
- 12 The local government is controlled through all *but* one of the following ways:
- A Administrative/Political control
  - B Surreptitious control
  - C Financial control
  - D Judicial/Legislative control

## Chapter 7

### Pre-colonial administration in Nigeria

#### Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 describe the systems of government of the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba in pre-colonial days.
- 2 discuss their structure of government.
- 3 explain the roles of the components of their respective structures.
- 4 compare the different pre-colonial administrations.

#### Systems of government in pre-colonial days

Pre-colonial traditional systems of government are the systems of political administration that existed ever before the coming of the Europeans.

In West African traditional societies, there were no written constitutions. The maintenance of law and order depended on customs and conventions. But political competition, as well as secular and religious sanctions prevented chiefs and leaders in traditional societies from wielding tyrannical power.

While none of the pre-colonial traditional systems of government was totalitarian in the modern sense, they varied from the highly centralised absolute monarchies of the Hausa-Fulani to the decentralised democracies of the Igbo.

#### Hausa-Fulani political system

##### Historical background

The Hausa-Fulani political system came into existence early in the 19th century following the 1804 Jihad led by Uthman Dan Fodio. The defeat of the Hausa in a holy war (Jihad) by the Fulani led to the abolition of the Hausa kingdoms and the inauguration of the Sokoto Caliphate with an outstanding centralised political administration. Uthman Dan Fodio, the leader of the Fulani group, introduced a new system of appointing rulers described as *emirs* to rule the Caliphate. Sokoto and Gwandu were made the two headquarters of all the emirates. Sokoto was the headquarters of the eastern zone while Gwandu was the headquarters of the western zone.

##### Administrative structure of the Hausa-Fulani political system

To make administration easier, the Sultan of Sokoto and the Emir of Gwandu appointed emirs to handle the territories under their respective controls. They appointed the emirs either from among Uthman Dan Fodio's descendants or selected people from the local communities. The lower emirs had power to administer their territories according to their local needs; they were closely guided by Islamic principles and were subject to the authorities of the Sultan of Sokoto and the Emir of Gwandu.

Under the control of the lower emirs were a set of local administrative units called districts, each headed by a district head called *hakimi*. The *hakimi* was appointed by the lower emirs either from his family or from the members of the districts. The *hakimi* collected taxes, and implemented law and order and the teaching of Islam.

The emir who was the chief executive at the emirate level exercised much power over the people. He performed both the executive and legislative functions of government. These functions were performed with the assistance of some advisors drawn mainly from a council of ministers. Ministerial responsibilities were assigned to people based on trust, hard work and expertise.

The members of the council of ministers included the following:

- 1 The Waziri – He acted as the prime minister and head of all the officials. All administrative matters of the emirate were coordinated by him. He was a member of the panel of kingmakers.
- 2 The Sarkin Fada – He was the chief palace officer. He supervised those who worked within the palace including the emir's praise singers.
- 3 The Maaji/Magaji – He was in charge of the treasury (minister of finance). He was in charge of safekeeping the emir's revenue.
- 4 The Madawaki – He was the commander of the army. His responsibility was to lead the military forces in the defence of the emirate against attacks.
- 5 The Galadima – He was in charge of the capital territory. When the emir was out of the capital, he acted for him until he returned. On the other hand, he was the deputy emir.
- 6 Dogari – He was the head of the police

force.

- 7 Sarkin Ruwa – He was the officer in charge of fishing.
- 8 Sarkin Pawa – He was the head of all butchers.

## **Functions and powers of Hausa-Fulani institutions in pre-colonial era**

### ***Legislative functions/power***

Islamic laws were the supreme laws in the emirate. The emirs had the power of making laws on issues which were not connected with Islamic laws.

### ***Executive functions/power***

The emir had absolute powers and he was authoritarian. Even though he had an advisory council, it was not mandatory to accept their advice; that is, he could ignore or accept their advice.

### ***Judicial functions***

The judicial administration was based on the tenets of *Sharia*. The judicial administration was carried out by *Alkali* judges. Criminal and land cases were usually referred to the emirs because *Sharia* laws dealt mainly with civil cases. Minor cases were sometimes forwarded to the village heads to be settled by them.

## **Features of Hausa-Fulani political system**

The following are the features of the Hausa-Fulani political system:

- 1 The size of the political system was large.
- 2 The political authority of the state was highly centralised. The political authority was vested in the emir who exercised it absolutely.
- 3 There was a well-organised and strong standing army which defended the

emirate from attacks.

- 4 The emirate had a system of direct taxation which provided revenue for the provision of public services. There was a well-developed system of tax assessment and collection.
- 5 The Sharia and Alkali were important features of the judiciary. The Sharia is a body of Muslim laws which governed rigidly the administration of the emirate.
- 6 The emirate system was a highly centralised one, with the emirs having nearly all the powers.

political institutions included:

- 1 The family
- 2 Council of elders or village council
- 3 Village assembly
- 4 The age-grade
- 5 Ozo title holders
- 6 Existence of shrines
- 7 Leadership succession
- 8 The executive
- 9 The legislature
- 10 The judiciary

### **The family**

The family was the basic unit of social organisation and administration among the Igbo in their traditional political system. A family could be small or large enough to form a village or a clan. The head of the family carried out the following functions:

- a) He settled minor disputes within the family.
- b) He performed rituals, customary rites and made sacrifices.
- c) He represented the family at village meetings.

The family head had the *Ofo* title. All the family heads put together constituted the council of elders or village council.

### **Council-of-elders or village council**

The council-of-elders was composed of the family heads. The council was usually headed by the most senior among them called *Okpara*. He had the right to preside over the council of elders' meetings where matters affecting the people were discussed and decisions taken for execution.

### **Village assembly**

The village assembly was made up of the adult male citizens of the village. The body had power to discuss matters affecting the

## **Pre-colonial administration in Igboland**

In the Hausa-Fulani Emirate was a highly centralised system of government based upon very powerful chiefs who exercised authority and influence over vast territories. This was not the case with the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria. The Igbo had no kings or kingdoms with influence and power that were comparable to those of the emirs of the Hausa-Fulani or the *obas* of the Yoruba, but they were remarkable for their egalitarian ways. The system of government in pre-colonial Igboland remains one of the best examples of participatory democracy in modern times.

The political system was a fragmented one with many institutions in place and political authority was shared among them. The political system could be described as 'acephalous', that is, absence of centralised government.

## **Structure of Igbo political system**

As we have just seen, the traditional political structure in Igboland was a fragmented one with many institutions sharing political power at various levels or units. These

village and to invite or summon the council-of-elders on matters that were of benefit or interest to the village. There was freedom of expression in their meetings and decisions were jointly taken. The assembly served as a check against the excesses of the council-of-elders. This was a demonstration of the democratic principle of the Igbo pre-colonial system of government.

### ***The age-grade***

The age-grade was composed of the young men that belonged to the same age bracket and they performed the following functions:

- a) They took part in the administration of the village.
- b) They performed public duties such as the clearing of paths, and construction of roads and markets.
- c) They served as the army which defended the village.
- d) They implemented the policies formulated by the council-of-elders.
- e) The age-grade checked the abuse of office by the village head and council-of-elders.
- f) The age-grade performed ceremonial and cultural functions in their village.

### ***Ozo title holders***

There were many secret cults and societies in the system. Membership of these cults and societies was based on some stringent conditions. Membership of ozo was restricted to wealthy and influential men in the society. The roles of ozo title holders included giving advice to the council-of-elders and settling of family disputes; they were also involved in settling inter-village disputes.

### ***Existence of shrines***

Shrines were provided and were seen as having religious and political significance in providing bonds of unity, peace and order and common ties.

### ***Leadership succession***

Succession to leadership positions was not hereditary in the traditional Igbo political arrangement.

### ***The executive***

The affairs of the village were discussed from time to time by family heads who constituted the council-of-elders. Every adult who was a member had the opportunity to contribute.

### ***The legislature***

The villagers made laws themselves and even the age-grades could enact laws which the elders would accept.

### ***The judiciary***

There was absence of formal courts like the Alkali courts in the Hausa-Fulani Emirate system, yet there existed mechanisms for the administration of justice in the Igbo traditional political system. The underlisted institutions carried out the administration of justice.

- a) Family heads settled minor disputes within their families.
- b) The council-of-elders settled serious cases between families.
- c) The village assembly also settled serious cases in the village.
- d) The priests of the gods were empowered to handle serious offences like murder and theft cases.

In summary, the traditional Igbo political system was more of a republican system where decisions were taken by consensus.

There were different political institutions that played different but vital functions in the system, and powers were distributed to them.

The Igbo system of administration during the pre-colonial era was gerontocratic (government by the elderly) in nature but not in essence.

## Pre-colonial political system in Yorubaland

The pre-colonial political system in Yorubaland was based on the old Oyo Kingdom. In the system, the *Alaafin* was the political head of the kingdom. He was the supreme head and his ascension to the throne was hereditary; he was usually chosen by the *Oyomesi*, the kingmakers.

The administration of the kingdom was under the control of the *Alaafin* but ably assisted by the *Bashorun*, *Oyomesi*, the *Ogboni* cult, *Aremo* and others.

### Structure of administration

The underlisted institutions played very important roles in the traditional political system in the kingdom.

- 1   *Aremo*
- 2   Legislative (functions)
- 3   Executive (functions)
- 4   The army
- 5   Judicial (functions)
- 6   The *Ogboni* cult
- 7   Religious (functions)

#### ***Aremo***

He was the eldest son of the incumbent *Alaafin*. He could not succeed his father at his death; he could only work to assist the *Alaafin*, his father, in the administration of the kingdom. The *Aremo* reigned with his father but was not to succeed him.

### ***Legislative functions***

The legislative body was made up of the council-of-chiefs, that is, the *Oyomesi*. The chiefs met outside the *Oba's* palace to take decisions which were sent to the *Oba* for assent through a slave.

The *Alaafin* who was very powerful was advised by a seven-member council-of-chiefs called the *Oyomesi*. *Oyomesi* also served as a check on the *Alaafin*. The *Oyomesi* was responsible for formulating policies pertaining to the kingdom.

The *Oyomesi* was headed by the *Bashorun* who was the highest titled chief. If an *Alaafin* did not rule well, the *Oyomesi* could order him to commit suicide by sending him a covered white calabash containing parrot eggs.

### ***Executive functions***

The *Alaafin* was regarded as the first among equals (*primus inter pares*). The most important or senior chiefs gathered at the *Alaafin's* palace to discuss political, economic and social problems and their likely solutions. They decided on the conduct of wars, control and use of land and the kingdom's relationship with other kingdoms.

### ***The army***

*Aare Ona Kakanfo* was the head of the army. Oyo Kingdom had for long maintained a strong standing army and was involved in different wars. It was claimed that if the army suffered any defeat, the *Kakanfo* should go on exile or commit suicide.

### ***Judicial functions***

The council-of-chiefs exercised judicial functions or powers on serious cases such as murder, land and chieftaincy disputes.

Judicial functions were performed by both the Oba and his senior chiefs, and cases like murder, treason, witchcraft, sorcery, arson and burglary which carried the death penalty were tried at the Alaafin's court.

The *Baale* and his chiefs settled minor cases in the villages but serious cases were referred to the Alaafin and his senior chiefs.

The judicial decisions of the Oba were performed by the age-grade (*elegbe*). They acted as the police, arresting accused persons and bringing cases of breach of laws to the Oba.

The council-of-chiefs could award death sentences or fines, imprisonment or banishment, but the Oba must approve or pardon or recommend that the offender be ostracised. The verdicts of this court were not generally challenged, especially when they were reached by a majority decision.

### ***The Ogboni cult***

This was a secret cult dedicated to maintaining the cultural values of the Yoruba people and to maintain good government among them. It was composed of the most respected leaders of the Yoruba society of the time—religious and political leaders, traditionalists and enlightened men. The activities of both the Alaafin and the Oyomesi were checked by the Ogboni cult.

### ***Religious functions***

Apart from the legislative, executive and judicial functions, in Yoruba tradition, the people observed all the traditional rites and ceremonies of their kingdom. There were chief priests of all traditional religions which included *Olokun* (the god of the sea), and *Sango* (the god of thunder). The Oba who was regarded as the father of all traditional

religious sects and seen as next-in-command to the gods.

### **Checks and balances in the system**

The threat of deposition, the influence of relatives, the control of the army, public opinion and the influence of age groups acted as checks and balances between the Oba and his chiefs in running the affairs of the town. In the case of the old Oyo Kingdom, the Oyomesi checked the excesses of the Alaafin. The Ogboni cult was to mediate between the Alaafin and the Oyomesi.

The chiefs sitting in council made decisions that the Oba would ratify. If the Oba and his chiefs disagreed on an issue, there was little the Oba could do to coerce the chiefs. The Oba did not have the power to invite the army to stop a mass insurrection against his rule, but with the cooperation of the chiefs, he could mobilise forces and pull down a minor rebellion within the kingdom.

The Oba could not depose a chief unless he could be proved guilty of a serious offence or crime against the town as a whole. Thus, the Oba could not easily rid himself of a chief who merely displeased him.

The chiefs had far greater powers to coerce their Oba, although it was often difficult to get a unanimous action. They could boycott the palace and govern the town with the Oba, relying on their popularity and influence in the town to ensure obedience to their orders.

### **Functions and powers of Yoruba traditional institutions in pre-colonial era**

- 1 The Oba and his council of chiefs were the supreme rulers of their communities.
- 2 They were in control of the maintenance

- of law and order.
- 3 They made laws, rules and regulations.
  - 4 They performed religious functions as high priests of all religious sects.
  - 5 The lesser chiefs paid homage to them and were seen as second only to the gods.
  - 6 They were involved in raising and spending money.
  - 7 Traditional rulers served as the political symbol of unity and power.
  - 8 They ensured the defence of their communities.
  - 9 They performed rituals and other ceremonies in their communities.
  - 10 Some of the traditional rulers acted as the final court of appeal in their towns and villages.
  - 11 They worked for the progress and development of their villages.
  - 12 The traditional rulers honoured their deserving citizens with traditional chieftaincy titles.
- the same or similar functions while the Hausa-Fulani did not have this institution.
- 4 The council-of-ministers (council of officials) in the Hausa-Fulani system was merely advisory in nature, while the Yoruba and the Igbo systems had councils of chiefs that had executive, legislative and judicial functions to perform.
  - 5 There was in existence an organised tax system in the Hausa-Fulani Emirate. There was no organised tax system in Yorubaland. In lieu of taxation, the less important villages were to pay tributes to important towns in the form of farm produce. (The payment was usually through the less important chiefs to the obas of supreme villages.)
  - 6 The traditional political system in the Yoruba kingdom was based on checks and balances, the Hausa-Fulani Emirate did not have checks and balances. The Igbo pre-colonial system had some elements of checks and balances too. The priests, diviners and age-grades were in existence to check the excesses of other political institutions.

## Comparison of the Yoruba traditional political system, the Hausa-Fulani system and the Igbo political system

- 1 The Yoruba traditional political system was semi-centralised, the Hausa-Fulani's was highly centralised while the Igbo political system was fragmented in nature with some elements of democratic republicanism.
- 2 The judicial system of the Yoruba was based on customs and traditions of the people, the Hausa-Fulani based theirs on the Sharia law while the Igbo's was also on customs and traditions of the people.
- 3 There were age-grades in the Yoruba and Igbo political systems which performed

## Revision questions

### Essay questions

- 1 Describe the systems of government of the Hausa-Fulani in the pre-colonial era.
- 2 Outline the structure of Yoruba pre-colonial government.
- 3 Discuss the roles of the components of the Igbo government.
- 4 Outline the differences between the pre-colonial governments of the

- 5 Hausa-Fulani and the Igbo.
- 5 Show the similarities between the Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani pre-colonial governments.
- 5 One of the following is *not* true about the structure of the Igbo political system. Identify it.
- The traditional political structure was not fragmented such that political power could not be shared at all.
  - The traditional political structure was fragmented.
  - Many institutions shared political power at various levels or units.
  - The political structure in Igboland remains one of the best examples of participatory democracy in modern times.
- 6 The family head in the structure of the Igbo political system had the \_\_\_\_\_ title.
- Ozo
  - Olo
  - Ofo
  - Okpara
- 7 People in the age-grade group performed all *but* one of the following functions.
- They took part in the administration of the village.
  - They performed public duties such as clearing of paths and construction of roads and markets.
  - They formulated policies which they also implemented.
  - They served as the army which defended the village.
- 8 The pre-colonial political system in Yorubaland was based on the old
- Ile-Ife kingdom.

- B Oyo kingdom.
  - C Abeokuta kingdom.
  - D Ibadan kingdom.
- 9 The army commanders of the pre-colonial political system in Yorubaland was called
- A Aare-Ona-Kakanfo.
  - B Oyomesi.
  - C Olokun.
  - D Alaafin.
- 10 The seven-member council-of-chiefs saddled with curtailing the Alaafin's excesses, and formulating policies pertaining to the kingdom were known as the
- A Alaafin.
  - B Ooni.
  - C Oyomesi.
  - D Basorun.

### Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 explain the principles and structure of British colonial administration in Nigeria.
- 2 discuss the impact of the colonial administration in Nigeria and West Africa.
- 3 explain the advantages and disadvantages of colonial rule.
- 4 compare the British and French colonial policies of administration in West Africa.

### Colonial administration in West Africa

Colonialism is the practice whereby a powerful nation extends political control over a weaker nation. Britain's colonial interest in Nigeria began in 1847 when she took over Nigeria's administration in the following manner:

First was the exploration, followed by trading activities and the coming of the missionaries, all ending in imperialist control, that is:

Explorers → traders → missionaries → imperialists

The scramble for and partition of Africa by European countries led to the Berlin Conference of 1884/85 at which the African continent was divided up among interested colonialist European nations. Many African nations came under British or French domination. Each of the

benefiting colonialists established a system of administration for their colonies.

### Reasons for the introduction of colonialism into West Africa

These are some of the reasons for the introduction of colonialism in West Africa.

- 1 The search for raw materials
- 2 Trade expansion
- 3 Imposition of culture and religion
- 4 Protection of European missionaries

#### ***The search for raw materials***

European countries in the 17th century underwent industrial revolution. This made them search for raw materials in other parts of the world to meet the growing needs of their industries. Examples of such raw materials are rubber, gold, ivory, cocoa, palm oil and groundnut.

#### ***Trade expansion***

The search for new markets to sell their manufactured products informed the coming of European countries to Nigeria, Ghana, and other West African countries.

#### ***Imposition of culture and religion***

The Europeans brought along with them their culture and religion which they imposed on their colonies under the pretext of civilising our people.

#### ***Protection of European missionaries***

Colonialism was introduced in some areas to protect European missionaries.

## **British colonial administration in Nigeria**

In 1900 Britain started direct colonial administration in Lagos and Calabar, reasoning that the people had been able to understand the British ways of living. The two colonies of Lagos and Calabar were governed directly through British officials who were accountable to the Colonial Secretary in London.

### **The indirect rule policy**

Indirect rule is a political system of administration whereby the government dealt with the people through agents or other intermediaries.

When Lord Frederick Lugard was appointed the British High Commissioner to the Northern Protectorate in 1900, he was not given specific instructions on how to govern. He faced two immediate problems which were lack of funds and inadequate personnel. He decided to make use of the indirect system that was used in India and, later, in Uganda. Lord Lugard who had experienced the application of the policy in these countries believed it would work in Nigeria. So he appointed traditional rulers to act as intermediaries between him and the people. This means that the British governed the people through their own chiefs.

### **Reasons for the introduction of indirect rule**

There are reasons for the introduction of the indirect rule system in Nigeria. Some of these are:

- 1 Shortage of personnel
- 2 Economical nature of the system
- 3 Success of the system in other countries
- 4 Limited knowledge of the local environment

- 5 The vast geographical nature of Nigeria
- 6 The importance of emirs and obas

### **Shortage of personnel**

The British lacked enough British officials ready to serve as colonial administrators in West Africa.

### **Economical nature of the system**

The system was cheap; it was cheaper for the colonial masters to maintain the traditional rulers than to pay a large number of British officials whose salaries were high when compared to salaries or allowances of the traditional rulers who were not paid. The colonial masters were not interested in getting involved in an administration that would cost them too much money.

### **Success of the system in other countries**

A similar policy had been practised successfully in India and Uganda.

### **Limited knowledge of the local environment**

The British had very little knowledge of the local environment. This made them believe that making use of the local people for the administration would be the best for them.

### **The vast geographical nature of Nigeria**

This was also another reason for the introduction of the indirect rule policy in the country.

### **The importance of the emirs and obas**

The system was also introduced because the colonial masters perceived that the West Africans had respect for the traditional rulers and their customs. Thus, the colonial masters realised that they would be in a better position to communicate with the people through their traditional rulers. It was

the only system that could preserve African customs and traditions.

### **Features of indirect rule**

- 1 Indirect rule made use of the existing traditional political system.
- 2 The system adopted a centralised system of administration.
- 3 Traditional rulers were recognised and used as links between the British officials and the people.
- 4 The system recognised the customs and traditions of the people.
- 5 The British officials did not rule the people directly but through their traditional rulers.
- 6 It was not expensive to operate as the traditional rulers were not paid salaries and allowances.

### **Factors that informed the success of indirect rule in northern Nigeria**

The following are some of the factors that informed the huge success of indirect rule in northern Nigeria:

- 1 Existence of a developed and efficient system of administration
- 2 Influence of Islamic religion
- 3 Organised tax collection system
- 4 Low level of formal education
- 5 Undemocratic nature of the political system

### **Existence of a developed and efficient system of administration**

Before the introduction of indirect rule in northern Nigeria, they had a highly developed and efficient system of administration headed by the emirs with the Sultan of Sokoto as the supreme head. The political structure in place was ideal for indirect rule.

### **Influence of Islamic religion**

The emirs were both political and religious heads and were regarded as representatives of Allah on earth. This made the people obey them without complaints.

### **Organised tax collection system**

One other reason for the success of the system in the northern part of Nigeria was because cattle tax was already in existence, which formed the basic machinery needed for administration of taxation. When taxation was introduced, it did not cause any confusion.

### **Low level of formal education**

A good number of the people in the northern part of Nigeria were illiterate, and this made them not to understand the defects and negative impact of the policy.

### **Undemocratic nature of the political system**

The political system was undemocratic, as the emirs had absolute powers and were dictators. The people obeyed all laws made by the emirs.

### **Factors that informed the partial success of indirect rule in western Nigeria**

These are factors that informed the partial success of indirect rule in western Nigeria:

- 1 Influence of Christianity
- 2 Decentralised political system
- 3 Principles of checks and balances
- 4 Influence of formal education
- 5 Absence of organised tax collection system

### **Influence of Christianity**

With the coming of the missionaries, many people embraced Christianity and saw

the traditional rulers as pagans or idol worshippers and decided not to associate and identify with the laws made by them. This eroded the obedience of the people to their traditional rulers.

### **Decentralised political system**

The political system did not give absolute powers to any organ of government, but powers were shared. As a result of this, the oba did not have absolute powers to make and enforce laws.

### **Principles of checks and balances**

In the Yoruba political system, all the organs of government checked the activities of others. The obas were checked by the chiefs-in-council, especially the Oyomesi, in the case of the Oyo Empire. This therefore made it difficult for the implementation of the indirect rule policy.

### **Influence of formal education**

Many people in the West had acquired formal education and so they understood the defects of the indirect rule policy. Also, the educated elite that were not part of the government led the criticism of the policy; they advised the people against accepting the policy.

### **Absence of organised tax collection system**

The people of western Nigeria were not used to the payment of taxes. When it was introduced, the people did not accept it.

### **Factors that led to the failure of indirect rule system in eastern Nigeria**

The indirect rule system failed in eastern Nigeria because of the following factors:

- 1 Appointment of warrant chiefs

- 2 Decentralised administration practice
- 3 Lack of defined system of taxation
- 4 Non-involvement of the educated elite
- 5 High level of literacy
- 6 Religion
- 7 Small unit system
- 8 Non-submissiveness of the people

### **Appointment of warrant chiefs**

The *Obi* institution was not properly defined in eastern Nigeria and the British officials had to appoint chiefs, otherwise known as warrant chiefs, without consulting the people. These chiefs were high-handed and not acceptable to the people. Most of their activities were outrageous and that was one of the causes of the Aba Women's Riot of 1929.

### **Decentralised administration practice**

The Igbo political system was based on decentralisation of administration which could not accommodate the indirect rule system. Indirect rule succeeded mostly in a centralised administration as in the North.

### **Lack of defined system of taxation**

The system of tax payment and collection was not properly defined in eastern Nigeria as compared to the system that was practised in the Hausa-Fulani emirates. These inadequacies made the execution of some projects by the British impossible in Igboland.

### **Non-involvement of the educated elite**

The educated elite were not included in the administration. Instead, the British preferred the illiterate as warrant chiefs, and this sparked off protests and a rejection of the system by the elite in the region.

### **High level of literacy**

The educated citizens in the East were able to question the essence or relevance of an alien system that had no moral justification.

### **Religion**

Christianity was the dominant religion in eastern Nigeria. The region had a Western democratic orientation, which helped in bringing down the indirect rule system.

### **Small unit systems**

The units in the Igbo political system were too small compared to other system, e.g. the Hausa-Fulani emirate system. Hence, indirect rule did not fit in.

### **Non-submissiveness of the people**

The failure of the people to submit to the rulers was because the rulers were imposed on them. The Igbo political system was egalitarian and highly decentralised; the people detested the authoritarian system as practised elsewhere, especially in the North.

### **Merits of indirect rule**

- 1 The system was cheap to operate.
- 2 The system preserved the good aspects of the indigenous African institutions, traditions and culture.
- 3 It brought government closer to the people through their traditional rulers.
- 4 The colonies witnessed rapid socio-economic development.

### **Demerits of indirect rule**

- 1 The native authority which provided the framework for the operation of the system of indirect rule functioned under severe limitations.
- 2 Taxes were levied by the British authority.
- 3 All policies were formulated by the

British officials and carried out by the African chiefs.

- 4 The system led to the development of hostilities and disunity which resulted in class consciousness. Traditional authorities maintained their positions at the expense of the educated Africans who were knowledgeable and wanted to contribute to the progress of their society.
- 5 Powers were concentrated only in a few hands at the expense of the masses of the people.

### **French colonial administration in West Africa**

France adopted a confederal system of government to administer her colonies in West Africa, with a loose federal system. The headquarters of the French colonial government in West Africa was established in Dakar, Senegal, with a governor-general while other French colonies had governors who were accountable to the governor-general at the centre. France divided her colonies into *cercles* and *cantons*. Each cercle was controlled by an administrative officer known as *Le Commandant du Cercle* while each canton was administered by a commander.

France adopted two administrative policies which were the policies of assimilation and association.

### **Policy of assimilation**

After the French revolution, which had its focus on liberty, equality and freedom of all peoples, coupled with the fact that France saw its ways of living as the best and did not see its territories in Africa as areas of exploitation but an extension of France, the policy of assimilation was established to

substitute the culture, language, religion, law, mode of dressing of the people of their colonies with those of the French. Assimilation was one of the ideological bases of French colonial policy in West Africa. In contrast with British indirect rule, the French taught their subjects that, by adopting French language and culture, they could become French. In theory, the policy of assimilation afforded all the rights of French citizens. In other words, natives of French colonies in West Africa were considered French citizens as long as the culture and customs were adopted.

In this policy, African culture and tradition were relegated and were to be replaced by the French culture. Anything pertaining to African culture was regarded as inferior to that of the French.

#### **Features of the policy of assimilation**

- 1 The method of administration was direct rule.
- 2 The policy was meant to unify the French by putting all the French colonies together under one umbrella called the French Federation, with headquarters in Dakar, Senegal, under a governor-general from Paris.
- 3 The policy believed in the superiority of French civilisation over that of the Africans.
- 4 It accorded Africans French citizenship.
- 5 The educated elite were recognised, not minding whether they acquired the French culture and education or not.
- 6 The colonies were governed according to laws made in Paris.
- 7 The people of the colonies were divided into citizens and subjects. Those regarded as citizens were those that acquired French education and culture

and those living in the four *communes* of Dakar, St Louis, Rufisque and Gorée Senegal. Subjects were the people who did not acquire French education and culture.

- 8 The policy reduced the power and influence of traditional rulers throughout the colonies. Those chiefs who were opposed to assimilation were dethroned and replaced with more cooperative ones.

#### **Factors responsible for the failure of the policy of assimilation**

- 1 There were cultural differences between the French and the Africans. The French did not put the culture of their West African counterparts into consideration before introducing the policy of assimilation.
- 2 The policy was highly discriminatory, especially in the practice of dual citizenship and taxation.
- 3 One of the factors for the failure of the system was the reduction in the power of the traditional chiefs.
- 4 The system was a financial burden on French citizens who therefore criticised it severely.
- 5 The French intellectuals and merchants were opposed to the policy that would create equality between the French men and the Africans.
- 6 The success of the indirect rule system in Nigeria motivated the need for a change of the French policy to make the system flexible.
- 7 The Second World War and its outcome and effects compelled the French to abandon the policy.
- 8 There was also the rise to power of President Charles De Gaulle and his

- determination to replace assimilation with association.
- 9 Indigenisation policy and its implementation of forced labour and jail without trial, were visited on the subjects which made assimilation very unpopular and objectionable.

### **Policy of association**

The policy of association replaced the policy of assimilation, when it was realised that the policy of assimilation was no longer effective. Rather than integrate Africans into French culture, the policy of association stipulated that Africans should be made to embrace French culture gradually.

The policy of association was also an administrative policy like the policy of assimilation. The policy granted French citizenship rights to African and African culture was placed side by side with the French culture. This policy corrected the defects of assimilation by promoting cultural equality.

The policy of association was also defective because it placed restriction on political movement and association and disallowed any criticism or protest against the French government through the *indigenisation policy*.

The indigenisation policy which placed restrictions on political movement was abolished in 1946.

### **Reasons for the introduction of the policy of association**

- 1 The level of nationalist activities in West Africa increased after the Second World War.
- 2 President Charles De Gaulle came to power and was determined that his administration should replace assimilation with association. That was in 1945, just after the Second World War.
- 3 The costly nature of the assimilation policy was roundly criticised by the French themselves.
- 4 The educated elite that benefited from the system also later criticised it.

### **Features/Characteristics of the policy of association**

- 1 The policy of association recognised the authority of traditional rulers, and allowed natives in the administration of the local areas.
- 2 It created local national assemblies for the people of the various colonies to discuss their affairs.
- 3 The policy recognised the cultural diversity of the people.
- 4 Africans were no longer regarded as French citizens, but as inferior people who were subjected to dehumanising experiences such as forced labour.
- 5 It decentralised the political structure, and allowed each local territory to develop at its own pace.

## Comparison of the British and French colonial policies of administration

<b>British colonial system of indirect rule</b>	<b>French colonial policy of assimilation</b>
1 The system practised indirect rule and retained the cultures and customs of the people.	The system was direct.
2 It recognised and made use of traditional rulers.	Traditional rulers were not used in the administration.
3 People's native laws and customs were applied in the administration.	This system did not accommodate the laws and customs of the people.
4 It was not a costly system of administration.	The system was expensive.
5 The traditional institution was respected and used in the system.	The traditional institution was not respected and was not used in the administration.
6 African culture, native laws, religion, language, etc were not relegated but allowed to stay. That is, British culture was not imposed on African culture.	The people's culture, native laws, religion, language, etc. were seen as inferior and not respected. That is, French culture was imposed on African culture.
7 Indirect rule was seen as a tool of development, especially of the traditional political institutions.	Assimilation was not a tool of development of the traditional political institutions.
8 British civilisation was not seen as superior to that of the Africans.	French civilisation was seen as superior to that of the Africans.

## Revision questions

### Essay questions

- 1 What is indirect rule?
- 2 Give an account of the introduction of indirect rule in Nigeria and its failure in some parts of the country. (SSCE 1988)
- 3 Why did the French abandon the policy of assimilation? (SSCE 2011)
- 4 What were the features of the French colonial administration in West Africa?
- 5 Compare the features of the British system of indirect rule with those of French policy of assimilation. (SSCE 1993)

### Multiple-choice questions

- 1 The practice whereby a powerful nation extends political control over a weaker nation is called
    - A domination.
    - B colonialism.
    - C exploitation.
    - D civilisation.
  - 2 The scramble for and partition of Africa by European countries led to the Berlin Conference of
    - A 1884/1885.
    - B 1846/1847.
    - C 1704/1705.
    - D 1900/1901.
  - 3 Britain started direct colonial administration in Lagos and Calabar in
    - A 1950.
    - B 1800.
    - C 1905.
    - D 1900.
  - 4 Lord Frederick Lugard was appointed the British High Commissioner to the Northern Protectorate in
    - A 1900.
    - B 1914.
    - C 1925.
    - D 1825.
- 5 Which one of the following was *not* the reason for the introduction of indirect rule in Nigeria?
- A Limited knowledge of local environment  
B The vast geographical nature of Nigeria  
C Passionate love for the citizens of Nigeria  
D The economical nature of the system
- 6 Identify which one of the following was *not* the reason for the success of indirect rule in the North.
- A Highly developed and efficient system of administration  
B Influence of Islamic religion  
C Organised tax collection system  
D High level of formal education
- 7 Identify which one of the following was *not* the reason for the partial success of indirect rule in the West.
- A Centralised political system  
B Influence of Christianity  
C Principles of checks and balances  
D Influence of formal education
- 8 One of the following did *not* account for the failure of indirect rule in Igboland.
- A Appointment of warrant chiefs  
B Decentralised administration practice  
C Properly defined system of taxation  
D Non-inclusion of the educated elite
- 9 France adopted a \_\_\_\_\_

system of government to administer her colonies with a loose federal system.

- A bilateral
  - B confederal
  - C federal
  - D parliamentary
- 10 France adopted two administrative policies which were policies of
- A culture and tradition.
  - B legal rights and privileges.
  - C assimilation and association.
  - D equality and freedom.

## Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 explain the meaning of nationalism.
- 2 discuss the factors that led to the rise and growth of nationalism in Nigeria.
- 3 discuss the effects of nationalism on Nigeria.
- 4 mention some key nationalist leaders in Nigeria and their contribution to nationalism.

## Meaning of nationalism

Nationalism can be defined as an act of political consciousness primarily concerned with achieving independence for the different countries from their foreign rulers.

Put differently, nationalism can be viewed as a conscious effort among people living together and sharing a common heritage in their state, to wrest power from the colonial rulers. In other words, nationalism is a way of thinking that says every ethnic group of humans should be free to rule itself.

Nationalists think that the best way to make this happen is for every ethnic group to have its own nation or society; that they can rule themselves without being controlled or oppressed by anybody else.

## Factors that led to rise and growth of nationalism in Nigeria

The following factors led to the rise and growth of nationalism in Nigeria:

- 1 Loss of British prestige in the Second

World War

- 2 The Atlantic Charter
- 3 Activities of West African students abroad
- 4 African personalities who studied abroad
- 5 Role of the opposition political party in Britain
- 6 Activities of ex-servicemen
- 7 Economic prosperity during World War II
- 8 Increase in number of newspapers
- 9 Growth of higher education
- 10 Emergence of political parties
- 11 Government control of the economy

## ***Loss of British prestige in the Second World War***

The outcome of the Second World War was not favourable to the British forces as they suffered defeat at the hands of Japanese forces, a non-European power, in 1941. The defeat had psychological effects on the colonial territories who were determined to fight for freedom.

## ***The Atlantic Charter***

The publication and signing of the Atlantic Charter when the United States of America joined the Second World War was a booster to colonial nationalists everywhere. The Atlantic Charter called for accelerated programmes to end colonialism and grant self-rule to all colonised territories.

## ***Activities of West African students overseas***

The activities of West African students

overseas, especially in America and Britain, helped to increase the tempo of agitation for freedom. A lot of them travelled to Britain and America immediately after the war and joined others who were there before them in concerted efforts to intensify the struggle for speedy political reform towards political independence.

### **African personalities who studied abroad**

Important African personalities who studied abroad such as Jomo Kenyatta, Davies, Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Casely Hayford, and a host of others, back at home, helped to give focus and direction to the struggle to wrest power from the colonialists.

### **Role of opposition political party in Britain**

The opposition political party in Britain, the Labour Party and its close associate, the Fabian Colonial Bureau condemned colonialism. The party mounted pressure within and outside parliament for the application of the spirit of the Atlantic Charter to the colonies.

### **Activities of ex-servicemen**

The ex-servicemen who fought in the Burma War and the Second World War encouraged and supported the nationalists in their agitation against imperialism. In the war, they were able to see that the white men were not superior or invincible at the war front compared to the Africans.

### **Economic prosperity during World War II**

The Second World War created a boom in the production of raw materials. West African products were in great demand. However, the firms that were exporting the raw materials were mostly foreign firms. The

indigenous merchants were used only as middlemen. Africans were aggrieved at the trade monopoly, and that served as a rallying point for fostering the spirit of nationalism.

### **Increase in the number of newspapers**

There was an increase in the number of indigenous press such as *Lagos Standard* (1903), the *Nigeria Chronicle* (1908), *Lagos Weekend* and *West African Pilot* and *Comet* of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe.

### **Growth of higher education**

The establishment of Yaba College of Technology, Lagos, Nigeria and Achimota College, in Ghana, helped to produce potential leaders who assisted and coordinated the struggle against colonialism.

### **Emergence of political parties**

The emergence of political parties such as NNDP, NCN, AG and NPC also assisted in the articulation of views and mobilisation of people for the struggle against colonialism.

### **Government control of the economy**

The discrimination in granting of licences to only foreign firms to export products from West Africa was also resented by the nationalists who were not happy at the development; hence they vowed to continue the agitation and struggle for independence.

## **Effects of nationalism in Nigeria**

- 1 The establishment of higher colleges such as the University College, Ibadan and Yaba College of Technology Lagos, was a major achievement of nationalism in Nigeria.
- 2 The activities of the nationalists led to a series of political reforms which, in turn, led to a series of constitutional

- conferences and the ultimate attainment of independence.
- 3 The emergence of political parties, such as the NCNC, NPC and AG to spearhead the struggle for political independence was another major effect of nationalism. The struggle culminated in the attainment of equal opportunities for Africans both in the civil service and in business.
  - 4 The struggle for freedom led to the review of certain obnoxious colonial policies that were anti-people or anti-Nigerians.
  - 5 Nationalism led to the emergence of militant trade unions that pressed and demanded for improved conditions of service for their members. These trade unions later found themselves in working alliance with the nationalist movements in the country.

## Key nationalist leaders and their contributions to nationalism



### Nnamdi Azikiwe

Dr Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe (16 November 1904 – 11 May 1996) popularly known as 'Zik, was a pioneering figure in modern Nigerian nationalism. He became the first indigenous President of Nigeria after the nation secured her independence from the United Kingdom on 1 October 1960, occupying the presidency throughout Nigeria's First Republic. Born in Zungeru, Northern Nigeria, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe attended various institutions both in Nigeria and abroad. He finally obtained a master's degree in 1933 from the University of Pennsylvania, USA.

He taught at Lincoln University, and in November 1934, he became the editor of *African Morning Post*, a daily newspaper in Accra, Ghana. As an editor, he promoted a pro-African nationalist agenda. As a result of publishing an article on 15 May 1936 written by I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, entitled 'Has the African a God?' was brought to trial on charges of sedition. Although he was found guilty of the charges and sentenced to six months in prison, he was acquitted on appeal. He returned to Lagos, Nigeria in 1937 and founded the *West African Pilot*, which he used as a vehicle to foster Nigerian nationalism.

Azikiwe became active in the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), the first genuinely nationalist organisation in Nigeria. In 1914, however, he backed Samuel Akinsanya to be the NYM candidate for a vacant seat in the legislative council, but the executive selected Ernest Ikoli. Dr Azikiwe resigned from NYM amid accusations of discrimination against Ijebu members, taking all Igbo and most Ijebu members of the party with him.

After a successful journalism career, Azikiwe entered into politics, co-founding

the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) with Herbert Macaulay in 1944. He became the secretary general of NCNC in 1946, and became an elected member of the Legislative Council of Nigeria the following year. In 1951, he became the leader of the opposition to the government of Obafemi Awolowo in Western Region's House of Assembly. In 1952, he moved to the Eastern Region and was elected to the position of Chief Minister, and in 1954, he became the Premier of Eastern Region. On 6 November 1960, he became the Governor General and, on the same day, became the first Nigerian named to the Privy Council of the United Kingdom. With the granting of a republic status to Nigeria in 1963, Dr Azikiwe became the first President of Nigeria, while Abubakar Tafawa Balewa became the Prime Minister.

Azikiwe and Balewa were removed from power in the military coup of 15 January 1966. During the Biafra War (1967–1970) of secession, Azikiwe became a spokesman for the Biafra Republic and adviser to its leader Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. After the war, he became the Chancellor of the University of Lagos (1972–1976). He joined the Nigerian People's Party in 1978, making unsuccessful bids for the presidency in 1979 and again in 1983. He left politics involuntarily after the military coup in 1983. He died on 11 May 1996 at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, in Enugu, after a protracted illness.

### Ahmadu Bello



Sir Ahmadu Bello (12 June 1910 – 15 January 1966) was a Nigerian politician and the first Premier of the Northern Region of Nigeria from 1954–1966. He was the Sardauna of Sokoto and one of the prominent leaders in Northern Nigeria alongside Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, both of whom were prominent in negotiations about the region's place in the post-independence Nigeria. As leader of the Northern People's Congress, he dominated Nigerian politics throughout the first republic.

Sir Ahmadu Bello was born in Rabbah, Sokoto State. His father was a district head and heir to the Sokoto Caliphate. His great-grandfather was Sultan Bello, the founder of Sokoto and son of the revered Sheik Usman Dan Fodio. He had his education within and outside Nigeria. In 1934, he was made the district head of Rabbah. Four years later, he was promoted and sent to Gusau to become a divisional head. He travelled to England in 1948 to study local government

administration. After returning from England, he was nominated to the province of Sokoto in the Northern Region House of Assembly. As a member of the assembly, he was a notable voice for northern interests and embraced a style of consultation and consensus with major representatives of the Northern emirates: Kano, Borno and Sokoto.

In the first elections held in Northern Nigeria in 1952, Sir Ahmadu Bello won a seat in the Northern House of Assembly and became a member of the regional executive council as the minister of works. Bello was successively minister of works, local government and community development in the Northern Region. In 1954 independence elections, Bello led the Northern People's Congress (NPC) to win a plurality of the parliamentary seats. Bello's NPC forged an alliance with Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's NCNC (National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons) to form Nigeria's first indigenous federal government which led to independence from Britain. In forming the 1960 independence federal government of Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello as president of the NPC, chose to remain Premier of Northern Nigeria and devolved the position of Prime Minister of the federation to the deputy president of the NPC, Alhaji Abubarkar Tafawa Balewa.

Bello's greatest legacy is perhaps the modernisation and unification of the diverse elements that made up Northern Nigeria. He was assassinated on 15 January 1966 in a coup which toppled Nigeria's post-independence government, while still serving as the Premier of Northern Nigeria.

## Obafemi Awolowo



Chief Jeremiah Obafemi Awolowo, (6 March 1909 – 9 May 1987), commonly known as Awo was one of Nigeria's founding fathers. A native of Ikene in Ogun State, he started his career as a nationalist in the Nigerian Youth Movement. He contributed to much of the progressive social legislation that has made Nigeria a modern nation. He was an active journalist and trade unionist.

After earning a bachelor of commerce degree in Nigeria from a London university through correspondence, he went to the United Kingdom where he earned a law degree as an external student. While in the UK, he founded the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a pan-Yoruba cultural society, which set the stage for the formation of the Action Group, a liberal and nationalist political party. As leader of the group, he represented Western Region in all the constitutional conferences intended to advance Nigeria on the path to independence.

He was the first leader of government business and Minister of Local Government

and Finance, and the first Premier of the Western Region under Nigeria's parliamentary system from 1952 to 1959. He was also the official leader of the opposition in the federal parliament (1959–1963). In 1949, Awolowo founded the *Nigerian Tribune*, the oldest surviving private newspaper in Nigeria, which he used to spread nationalist consciousness among Nigerians.

Awolowo was Nigeria's foremost federalist. In his *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (1947) the first systematic federalist manifesto by a Nigerian politician, he advocated federalism as the only basis for equitable national integration and in the constitution, which was introduced in the 1954 Lyttleton Constitution, following mainly the model proposed by the Western region delegation led by him.

As premier, he proved to be, and was viewed as, a man of vision and dynamic administration. Controversially and at considerable expense, he introduced free primary education for all in Western Region. He established the first television service in Africa in 1959, and the Oduduwa group, all of which were financed from the highly lucrative cocoa industry which was the mainstay of the regional economy. A constitutional crisis in the Western Region between supporters of Chief Awolowo and his erstwhile friend, deputy and premier of Western Region, Chief Akintola led to a declaration of a state of emergency in the Western Region, resulting in a widespread breakdown of law and order.

Excluded from the national government, Awolowo and his party faced an increasingly precarious position. Akintola's followers, angered at their exclusion from power, formed the Nigerian National Democratic

Party (NNDP) under Akintola's leadership. Having previously suspended the elected Western Regional Assembly, the federal government then reconstituted the body after new elections which brought Akintola's NNDP into power.

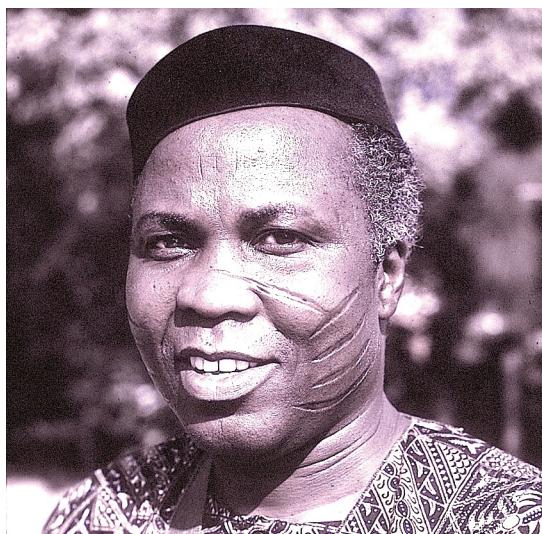
Shortly afterwards, Awolowo and several of his disciples were arrested, charged, convicted and jailed for conspiring with some Ghanaian authorities under Kwame Nkrumah to overthrow the federal government. The remnants of Action Group formed an alliance with the largely Igbo, and south-eastern NCNC to contest the national election of 1965. Amid accusations from the NCNC–AG camp, the NPC –NNDP won the election; the AG supporters reacted with violent riots in some parts of Western Region.

Awolowo was later freed and pardoned by the Yakubu Gowon military administration. He was much later appointed the Federal Commissioner of Finance and Vice President of the Federal Executive Council by Yakubu Gowon military administration. Although, Awolowo failed to win the 1979 and 1983 presidential elections of the Second Republic, he polled the second highest number of votes, and his policy of free education in the states controlled by his party, the Unity Party of Nigeria endeared him to many.

Awolowo is remembered for his remarkable integrity, ardent nationalism, virile opposition and dogged federalist convictions. His party, Action Group, was the first to move the motion for Nigeria's independence in the federal parliament and he obtained internal self-government for the Western Region in 1957. He is credited with coining the name 'naira' for the Nigerian standard monetary unit and his actions

helped Nigeria to finance the civil war and preserve the federation without borrowing. He built the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan, the first of its kind in Africa, erected the first skyscraper in Africa: the Cocoa House (still the tallest building in Ibadan). Awolowo died peacefully at his Ikenne home, in the Efunyela Hall (so named after his mother), on 9 May 1987, at the age of 78.

### Samuel Akintola



Samuel Ladoke Akintola (6 July 1910 – 15 January 1966) was politician, lawyer, aristocrat and orator who was born in Ogbomoso, southwestern Nigeria. He was one of the founding fathers of modern Nigeria. He also served as the *Oloye Aare Ona Kakanfo XIII* of Yorubaland. After his return from the United Kingdom in 1949, he teamed up with other educated Nigerians from the Western Region to form the Action Group (AG) under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. As the deputy to Chief Awolowo, he did not serve in the Western Regional government headed by the Premier,

Awolowo, but was the Action Group's parliamentary leader/leader of opposition in the House of Representatives of Nigeria.

In preparation for Nigeria's independence, scheduled for 1960, the Action Group party took a decision that affected the career of Akintola, the party and Nigeria when in late 1959 it asked Akintola to swap political positions with Awolowo by becoming the Premier of the Western Region while the latter (who was also the national leader of the AG) became the party leader in the Federal Parliament. Consequent upon the result of the 1959 election to parliament, the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) from the Northern Region became the country's leading political party with 134 seats out of the 312 seats in the parliament. A second political party based in the Eastern Region of Nigeria obtained 89 seats in the same election. In the Western Region, the AG elected 73 members to the parliament. The NPC and NCNC went into political alliance to form the first government of the newly independent country while the AG, rather than joining the government, became the opposition party.

Decisions over the strategic alliances by the AG led to disagreement between Akintola and Awolowo. The former disagreed with the latter's decision not to join the coalition government. Akintola was of the opinion that the Yoruba people of southwest were losing their preeminent position in business, education and administration in Nigeria to the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria simply because the Igbo-controlled NCNC had joined government, and the AG had not. In May 1962, with the Western Region house of assembly set to remove him after the party had earlier passed a vote of no confidence on him, a party meeting crisis erupted on

the floor of the house. The AG party broke into two factions leading to several crises in the Western Region House of Assembly. That led to the declaration of a state of emergency in the Western Region and Chief Dr M. Majekodunmi, the Federal Minister of Health was appointed the Administrator of the region. After a prolonged legal battle, Akintola was restored to power as the Premier in 1963.

In the general election of 1965, Akintola won his position as the premier, not as a member of the AG, but as the leader of a newly formed party called the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), which was in alliance with the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the ruling party. Akintola was assassinated in Ibadan, the capital of Western Region, on the day of Nigeria's first military coup of 15 January 1966, which terminated the First Republic.

Akintola was a dignified orator, and was responsible for the founding of the University of Ife (later renamed Obafemi Awolowo University) in 1962 while still a Premier in Western Region.

## H. O. Davies



Oloye Hezekiah Oladipo Davies (15 April 1905 – 22 November 1989) was another leading Nigerian nationalist, lawyer, journalist, trade unionist, thoughtful leader, international statesman and politician, during the nation's movement towards independence in 1960 and immediately afterwards. Davies was a founding member of the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) in 1934 along with others like Kofo Abayomi, Ernest Ikoli and Samuel Akinsanya. He later became the secretary general of the movement. The Lagos Youth Movement was one of the earliest political associations to encourage active participation by Nigerians in the political, social and economic development of the country. After he returned from studies abroad along with Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Davies spearheaded the efforts that led to renaming of the Lagos Youth Movement the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM). Davies left the LYM in 1957 and founded his own party, the Nigeria People's Congress. He later joined the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons after negotiation for a formidable alliance with Nnamdi Azikiwe was unsuccessful.

Davies was a federal minister of state in the ministry of industries from 1963 to 1966 during the Nigerian First Republic. Davies led a Nigerian delegation to the Economic Council at the United Nations in 1964, and was instrumental to the promotion of French-Nigerian relations. In 1937, Davies became the manager of a leading daily newspaper, the *Daily Service*, and in 1960 he was the founding chairman and managing director of the then Nigerian National Press Printers of the Nigerian *Morning Post* and *Sunday Post*.

## **Anthony Enahoro**



Chief Anthony Enahoro (22 July 1923 – 15 December 2010) was Nigeria's foremost anti-colonial and pre-democracy activist. Chief Enahoro has had a long and distinguished career in the press, politics, civil service and the pre-democracy movement. Educated at the Government School, Uromi, Government School, Owo and King's College, Lagos, Chief Enahoro became the editor of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's newspaper, the *Southern Nigerian Defender*, in 1949 at the age of 21, thus becoming Nigeria's youngest editor ever. And in 1953, Chief Anthony Enahoro became the first to move the motion for Nigeria's independence. He has been regarded by academics and many Nigerians as the 'father of the Nigerian state'. However, the motion was rejected by the parliament, and the Northern members of parliament staged a walkout as a consequence of the attempt. The actual successful movement of

the motion for independence did not take place until 1958.

As a student then at the famous King's College, Chief Enahoro had plugged into the Nigerian turbulent liberation struggle against colonial rule in the early 1940s, leading to student revolts at the college in Lagos where he was a student leader. He was twice jailed for sedition by the colonial government, for an article mocking a former governor, and then for a speech allegedly inciting Nigerian troops serving in the British army.

During the crisis that followed the 1966 coup, Chief Enahoro became the leader of the then Mid-west delegation to the ad hoc constitutional conference in Lagos. He later became Federal Commissioner for Information and Labour in General Yakubu Gowon's administration. He was a member of the National Party of Nigeria between 1978–1983.

Chief Enahoro was the chairman of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), a pro-democracy group.

### **Revision questions**

#### **Essay questions**

- 1    a) What is nationalism?  
     b) Outline three factors that led to the rise and growth of nationalism in Nigeria.
- 2    Discuss four effects of nationalism on Nigeria.
- 3    Name three key nationalist leaders in Nigeria and their contributions to nationalism.

#### **Multiple-choice questions**

- 1    Which one of the following statements is *not* true about nationalism?  
     A    Every ethnic group does not

- |    |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|
|    | have the right to own its nation or society.  | 5 | _____ became the first Premier of the Northern Nigerian Region from 1954-1966.  |
| B  | Nationalism is an act of political consciousness primarily concerned with achieving independence for the different countries from the foreign rulers. |   | A Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa   |
| C  | Nationalism is a conscious effort of a group of people sharing a common heritage to wrest power from the colonial rulers.                             | 6 | B Sir Ahmadu Bello  |
| D  | Nationalism is a way of thinking that says every ethnic group should be free to rule itself.  |   | C Sheik Usman Dan Fodio   |
| 2  | One of the following newspapers did <i>not</i> contribute to the growth of nationalism in Nigeria. Identify it.                                       | 7 | D Alhaji Shehu Shagari  |
|    | A <i>Lagos Standard</i>   |   | _____ became the first Premier of the Western Region under Nigeria's parliamentary system from 1952-1959.                             |
|    | B <i>Nigeria Chronicle</i>  |   | A Herbert Macaulay  |
|    | C <i>West African Pilot</i>   |   | B Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola  |
|    | D <i>Daily Times</i>  |   | C Chief Adekunle Ajasin   |
| 3  | Which one of the following political parties did <i>not</i> participate in the struggle for freedom against colonialism in Nigeria?                   | 8 | D Chief Obafemi Awolowo   |
|    | A NNDP/NCN  |   | _____ moved the motion for Nigeria's independence in 1953.  |
|    | B APC   |   | A Chief Hezekiah Oladipo Davies   |
|    | C NPC   |   | B Chief Anthony Enahoro   |
|    | D AG  |   | C Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola  |
| 4  | _____ became the first indigenous President of Nigeria after Nigeria secured its independence from the United Kingdom on 1st October 1960.            | 9 | D Chief Obafemi Awolowo   |
|    | A Chief Obafemi Awolowo   |   | The Nigerian Council was established in _____ as the first legislative council, after the amalgamation, to make laws for the country. |
|    | B Alhaji Tafawa Balewa  |   | A 1814  |
|    | C Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe   |   | B 1914  |
|    | D Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi   |   | C 1911  |
|    |   |   | D 1900  |
| 10 |   |   | The Nigerian Council was established by   |
|    |   |   | A Caseley Hayford.  |
|    |   |   | B Flora Shaw.   |
|    |   |   | C Sir Lord Lugard.  |
|    |   |   | D Sir Lord Henshaw  |
|    |   |   | Lagos was founded by the _____ in 1861.   |
|    |   |   | A British   |
|    |   |   | B American  |
|    |   |   | C Germans   |

- D Portuguese
- 11 The British government merged the Colony of Lagos with the Southern Protectorate (Southern Nigeria) in
- A 1914.
  - B 1900.
  - C 1886.
  - D 1906.
- 12 The Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated with the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in
- A 1960.
  - B 1911.
  - C 1914.
  - D 1969.
- 13 The first Governor-general of Nigeria was
- A Sir Fredrick Lord Lugard.
  - B Sir Ahmadu Bello.
  - C Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe.
  - D Major General Yakubu Gowon.

## Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 mention Nigeria's pre-independence constitutions and their features.
- 2 outline the independence and post-independence constitutions and their main features.
- 3 identify the common features in all the constitutions.

## Pre-independence constitutions and their main features

### Historical background

Nigeria has been described, among other things, by many people as not a nation but just a geographical expression. This is because what we call Nigeria today is made up of many ethnic groups with each occupying a geographical area with different historical backgrounds, cultures and religions. What came up to be Nigeria started with the founding of Lagos by the British in 1861. They settled in the crown colony of Lagos and spread their occupation to the hinterlands of what later became known as Nigeria. At the conference of 1884/85 called the Berlin Conference, the coastal areas where Britain had major influence were proclaimed the Oil Rivers Protectorate. This laid the foundation for colonialism.

On 1 July 1886, Britain granted a charter

to a British company known as Goldie which later changed its name to the Royal Niger Company, to trade as well as to govern the Oil Rivers Protectorate.

On 1 January 1900 the Northern and Southern protectorates were constituted respectively. The two protectorates were joined together in 1898 and was named 'Nigeria' by Flora Shaw, former correspondent of *The Times* who later became Lord Lugard's wife. Despite this, Nigeria was still divided into three separate and independent administrations: Southern Protectorate, Northern Protectorate and the Lagos Crown Colony. Lord Lugard was appointed the first High Commissioner of the Northern Protectorate. The British government on 1 May 1906 merged the Colony of Lagos with the Southern Protectorate and called it Southern Nigeria with Lagos as its headquarters. Another landmark development came up on 1 January 1914, when the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated with the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Nigeria became the name of the new country with Lord Frederick Lugard made the first Governor-general.

### The Nigerian Council

The Nigerian Council was established in 1914 as the first legislative council after the amalgamation to make laws for the country. It was established by Lord Lugard and was made up of 36 members. There were 23 official members who were all Europeans,

and 13 unofficial members seven of whom were British and represented the banking sector. The remaining six were Nigerians. This Council was otherwise regarded as Lugard's Council and it was remarkable because it was the first in Nigeria, even though it acted as an advisory body.

## National Congress of British West Africa

The National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) came into being in 1917. It was formed by a group of intellectuals from the British West African countries—Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria, Gambia and Sierra Leone. It was dominated by members from the Gold Coast. The Congress was under the leadership of Caseley Hayford, a lawyer from Accra, the headquarters of the organisation. There were branches in each of the four British West African countries. The main objective of the Congress was to unite nationalists from these countries in their demand for independence.

In 1920, the members held a meeting of the congress in Accra, Ghana. At the meeting were 40 Ghanaians, six Nigerians, three Sierra Leoneans and one Gambian. It resolved to send a powerful delegation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London to present the following demands:

- 1 The creation of a legislative council in each British West African territory with half of the council members being Africans.
- 2 That West African chiefs be subject to their people in terms of appointment and removal.
- 3 That the judiciary be independent of the colonial administration.
- 4 That a university be established in West Africa.

Lord Milner snubbed the delegates and

accused them of being self-seekers who did not understand situations and were only inordinately ambitious.

## The activities of the National Congress of British West African

- 1 The Congress tried to unite the four British West African colonies of Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia by holding meetings.
- 2 The Congress under the leadership of J. E. Caseley Hayford, a Gold Coast lawyer, mobilised the educated elite in the four British colonies.
- 3 As we have seen, at a meeting held in Accra in 1920, the Congress sent a delegation to London to present certain demands.
- 4 The Congress identified shortcomings, objectionable practices and policies of the colonial administration in British West African colonies.
- 5 The Congress introduced radical approach to nationalist activities in British West Africa. For example, they held international meetings, sent petitions to the colonial government and demanded the elective principle.
- 6 The Congress enlightened the people of West Africa through its meetings and publications.

## Effects of NCBWA

- 1 It made it possible for the elective principle to be introduced in the West African colonies—Nigeria in 1922, Sierra Leone in 1924, and the Gold Coast in 1925.
- 2 It led to the establishment of higher educational institutions—Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, Yaba College in Nigeria, and Achimota College in Ghana.

- 3 It made possible the election of Africans to the legislative council.
- 4 The activities of NCBWA unified the nationalists in British West Africa towards fighting a common cause.
- 5 The introduction of the elective principle in some British West African countries was followed by the springing up of political parties; for example, NNDP in Nigeria and NCSL in Sierra Leone.
- 6 The awareness created by the NCBWA led to the development of newspapers. Examples are the *Daily News* of 1925 in Nigeria and the *Morning Star* of the Gold Coast.
- 7 It brought about policy changes, for example, the abolition of the Nigerian Council.

However, the Congress did not get the cooperation of West African traditional rulers who considered the body as a rival group that intended to usurp their powers.

Again, the colonial governors used divide-and-rule tactics on the members of the Congress, which eventually led to its demise.

## Clifford Constitution of 1922

In spite of all the criticisms of the NCBWA, Sir Hugh Clifford in 1922 abolished the Nigerian Council and introduced a constitution that embraced the election of Nigerians to the Council as well as some other democratic principles. This remarkable action could be termed his response to the 1920 NCBWA demand for elective principles in West Africa.

Hugh Clifford became the Governor-general of Nigeria in 1914. He was the Nigerian Governor-general who opposed the demands of the NCBWA in 1920. But

in 1921, he prepared his constitutional proposal which was approved by the British imperial parliament in London in 1922, a constitution which was named after him. The constitution had administered Lagos as part of the Southern Province.

### Features of the Clifford Constitution

- 1 There was a legislative council. It was composed of 46 members of which 27 were British, including the Governor-general. Of the remaining 19 unofficial members, nine were Europeans, representing the banking industry and ten were Nigerians. Of the ten Nigerians, four were elected and six were nominated, three from Lagos and one from Calabar. The Council was responsible for the making of laws and approval of the budget, and it also advised the Governor-general.
- 2 The Executive Council was the major organ of the colonial government which comprised only white men. This council was responsible for the formulation of policies and for preparation of budgets. Members were appointed by the Governor-general.
- 3 The Governor-general was the supreme head of the colony with absolute powers. He appointed members of both councils and made laws by 'proclamation' in the North and by 'certification' in the South.
- 4 The elective principle was the outstanding feature of the constitution which introduced election to Nigeria's political history with elections conducted in 1923. The voting qualifications included:
  - a) Male suffrage
  - b) An annual income of 100 pounds
  - c) 12 months residential permit order

in Lagos and Calabar. As a result of this, four seats were allocated to Nigeria, three for Lagos, and one for Calabar. The NNDP won the seats.

- 5 Except on finance, the Northern Province was left out in the new legislative council.

#### **Merits of the Clifford Constitution**

- 1 The constitution laid the foundation for party politics in Nigeria through the formation of the NNDP in 1922.
- 2 It promoted greater political consciousness and participation of Nigerians in colonial governance.
- 3 There was the introduction of elections to Nigerian political history for the first time.
- 4 Voting rights were given to the people of Lagos and Calabar.
- 5 The constitution abolished the Nigerian Council which was non-elective and ineffective.
- 6 It is to date the longest lasting constitution in Nigeria.
- 7 It encouraged the establishment of newspapers such as the *Lagos Daily News* and the *West African Pilot*.

#### **Demerits of the Clifford Constitution**

- 1 The Governor-general still had absolute powers, as he made laws for the North through a proclamation.
- 2 The constitution did not unite southern and northern Nigeria as there were no northern representatives.
- 3 It allowed the legislative council to be dominated by Europeans.
- 4 The voting qualification was harsh, as many Nigerians were disenfranchised.
- 5 There was no Nigerian in the executive

council; the country was limited to only non-official membership of the council.

#### **Arthur Richards Constitution of 1946**

The Richards Constitution of 1946 came into existence as a result of the disadvantages in the Clifford Constitution of 1922 which was criticised heavily by the nationalists.

Bernard Bourdillon became Governor-general and split Nigeria into three provinces in 1939—Northern Province (from the old Northern Protectorate), as well as the Eastern and Western provinces (from the old Southern Protectorate).

Arthur Richards, otherwise known as Lord Milverton, succeeded Bourdillon as Governor-general in 1943. His constitutional proposal in 1945 was approved by the British imperial parliament in December 1946. It was to last for nine years.

#### **Features of the Richards Constitution**

- 1 The legislative council had 45 members out of which were 17 official members who were British, including the Governor-general; the remaining 28 unofficial members were Nigerians. Out of the 28, nine came from the North, six from the West, and five from the East. Four were elected while four were nominated to represent banking, commerce and mining industries.
- 2 The executive council was the major organ of the colonial government with two Nigerians; one was appointed in 1943 and the other in 1949.
- 3 Regionalism was the major feature of the Richards Constitution in which Nigeria was divided into three regions, namely Western, Eastern, and Northern regions with their headquarters located

respectively in Ibadan, Enugu and Kaduna.

- 4 In the regional assemblies, the North had a bicameral assembly, with the existence of the House of Chiefs and the House of Assembly while the East and the West had unicameral houses. These regions did not have powers to make laws.

### **Merits of the Richards Constitution**

- 1 The constitution promoted unity between southern and northern Nigeria.
- 2 The constitution increased Nigerian representation on the legislative council.
- 3 It provided a link between the native administration and the central legislative council through the regional assemblies.
- 4 It brought the North and South, for the first time, into one legislative council.
- 5 It provided for an unofficial majority in the legislative council.
- 6 The constitution served as a stimulant for the development of nationalist activities.
- 7 It introduced a bicameral legislature in northern Nigeria.
- 8 It laid the foundation for the establishment of federalism in Nigeria.
- 9 Franchise qualification was reduced from one hundred pounds to fifty pounds annual income and from twenty-four months to twelve months residency.
- 10 The constitution provided for one Nigerian member in the executive council.

### **Demerits of the Richards Constitution**

- 1 Nigerians were not consulted before it was drafted.
- 2 The Governor-general still had absolute powers.
- 3 The regional assemblies did not have

powers to make laws, as they were mere advisory bodies to the Governor-general.

- 4 The elective principle was still limited to Lagos and Calabar, without even considering the regional headquarters.
- 5 The constitution made nonsense of the unofficial majority in the parliament.
- 6 The educated elite were not included in the government, as most of the appointed members were traditional rulers who were not educated.

### **John Macpherson Constitution of 1951**

John Macpherson became the Governor-general in 1948. He conducted the Ibadan Constitutional Conference of 1950.

Macpherson told members of the Nigerian legislative council in a meeting that his aim was to introduce constitutional reforms and to Nigerianise the civil service, if it were the wish of the people. Consultations were made at various levels and the draft of the new constitution was approved by regional assemblies and the central legislative council before it was finally submitted to the Governor-general who then got the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The constitution became effective in 1951 and was named after the Governor-general.

### **Features of the Macpherson Constitution**

- 1 House of Representatives became the name of the central legislative council in 1951, with 148 members spread as follows: six ex-officio members who were British, six nominated members to represent the inadequately represented localities, 136 Nigerians out of which 68 were elected indirectly from the North, 34 from the West, and 34 from the east.
- 2 The executive council was renamed

- the council-of-ministers with the Governor-general as the president and 12 Nigerians as ministers—four from each region. The ministers did not have full executive powers as they were mere heads of their departments. There was collective responsibility.
- 3 There were also regional assemblies. By 1951, Northern and Western regions had bicameral legislatures with the existence of the House of Chiefs and the House Assembly, while the Eastern Region was still unicameral, with the existence of the House of Assembly only. These regions were empowered to make laws which must be subject to the approval of the House of Representatives.
  - 4 The regional Executive Council was the executive organ at the regional level headed by the Lieutenant-governor, five official members and nine ministers. The ministers were appointed by the Lt-Governor on the advice of members of the House of Assembly which was the organ for the formulation and implementation of government policies.

### **Merits of the Macpherson Constitution**

- 1 The constitution introduced a quasi-federal structure in Nigeria, because the regional assemblies now had powers to make laws in some specified areas.
- 2 There was bicameralism in the Northern and Western regions.
- 3 Nigerians were consulted, and participated in the making of the constitution for the first time in the political history of the country.
- 4 The regions were given powers to make laws subject to the approval of the House of Representatives.
- 5 Nigerians were in the majority in the executive council for the first time—12

Nigerian ministers as against 7 British. However, the Nigerians did not have autonomous powers.

- 6 Members of the House of Representatives were elected indirectly for the first time in Nigeria, as 136 of them were chosen from the regional assemblies.

### **Demerits of the Macpherson Constitution**

- 1 The constitution concentrated too much power in the central legislature with the regional houses' decisions largely subject to the approval of the central legislature or the governor.
- 2 The central governor also had too much power, for the governor could act without or against the advice of the executive council.
- 3 There was the formation of political parties on ethnic basis, which increased ethnic rivalry in Nigeria.
- 4 There was no position of speaker created for the House of Representatives.
- 5 There was no regional autonomy.
- 6 The ministers were not given full ministerial responsibility as heads of their departments.

### **Reasons for the breakdown of the Macpherson Constitution**

These are some of the reasons for the collapse of the Macpherson Constitution:

- 1 The Eastern Regional crisis of 1953, which arose from the NCNC's non-election of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe to the House of Representatives contributed greatly to the weakening of the constitution.
- 2 The resignation of the Action Group ministers from the Council-of-Ministers rendered the council non-functional.
- 3 The motion of self-government moved by Chief Anthony Enahoro, an AG

member, in 1953 that Nigeria should be independent in 1956 was countered by Sir Ahmadu Bello, an NPC member. This brought about conflict between southern and northern Nigeria.

- 4 The Kano riots of 1953 between citizens of southern and northern Nigeria also contributed to the collapse of the constitution.

### **London Constitutional Conference of 1953**

The London Constitutional Conference took place on 21 May 1953 in London under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State, Sir Oliver Lyttleton. The conference was attended by a 19-man delegation—six from each region and one from the Southern Cameroon.

The following decisions were reached at the conference:

- 1 Nigeria should adopt a full federal system of government with division of powers, and with the central government having exclusive and concurrent powers, with the component units exercising residual powers.
- 2 Lagos should be separated from Western Region and be made a new Federal Capital Territory (FCT).
- 3 The Office of the Governor should be addressed as Governor-general and the Office of the Lieutenant-governor, to be addressed as Governor.
- 4 Southern Cameroon should be given a separate regional government.
- 5 Self-government should be granted to each region which desired it in 1956.

### **Oliver Lyttleton Constitution of 1954**

The Kano riots led to the final breakdown of the Macpherson Constitution. On 21 May 1953, Oliver Lyttleton, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, announced in the House of Commons that Her Majesty's government had decided to redraw the Nigerian constitution, to grant greater regional autonomy and to remove the powers of intervention from the centre. He invited Nigerian leaders for the review of the constitution. There was a delegation to London made up of 19 men: six representatives from each region and one from Southern Cameroon.

The following were the terms of reference:

- 1 To raise and discuss the defects of the 1951 Macpherson Constitution.
- 2 To make changes required to remedy the defects.
- 3 To take steps to put these changes into effect.
- 4 To discuss the question of self-government in 1956.

### **Features of the Lyttleton Constitution**

- 1 The constitution could be said to be the first federal constitution of Nigeria because it adopted the federal system of government.
- 2 There was the Council-of-Ministers which comprised the Governor-general as the president, three ex-officio members and ten Nigerian ministers out of which three came from each region and one from Southern Cameroon. The council was responsible for policy formulation and implementation.
- 3 In the regional assemblies, the North and the West had bicameral legislatures while the East had a unicameral legislature.

- The regions had full autonomy, as they could make laws on matters in the residual list without reference to the House of Representatives. That gave the component regions autonomy and self-reliance.
- 4 Each regional executive council was the executive organ at the regional level controlled by the premier and no longer the governor. The first premier of Eastern Region was Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe; Chief Obafemi Awolowo was for the Western Region, while Sir Ahmadu Bello was for the Northern Region.
  - 5 The judiciary was regionalised.
  - 6 He could still veto and certify bills.
  - 7 There were different electoral systems for the regions. The Western and Eastern regions allowed for universal adult suffrage but the North adopted male-adult suffrage.
  - 8 This constitution made provision for a unicameral legislature at the centre (House of Representatives) and a bicameral legislature in the regions.
  - 9 The public and civil services were regionalised. That introduction made the regional public services stronger than the federal public service.

### **Merits of the Lyttleton Constitution**

- 1 There was provision for the position of speaker for the first time.
- 2 There was appointment of emirs, obas and chiefs as heads of regions.
- 3 The constitution introduced direct election into Nigeria.
- 4 Nigeria had a full federal structure.
- 5 There was regional autonomy

### **Demerits of the Lyttleton Constitution**

- 1 There was no uniform system of administration, as the North and the West had a bicameral legislature each while the East had a unicameral legislature.
- 2 The post of Prime Minister was not created at the centre.
- 3 The central legislature was not given the upper chamber.
- 4 Some of the official members in the regional and federal executive councils were retained by this constitution.
- 5 The Lyttleton Constitution still gave veto powers to the Governor-general even when such powers were undemocratic.

### **London Constitutional Conference of 1957**

This conference took place between 23 May and 26 June 1957 and was chaired by the Secretary of State, Sir Allan Lennox Boyd. The conference made the following resolutions:

- 1 That Eastern and Western regions should be granted self-government in 1957.
- 2 The office of Prime Minister should be created at the centre.
- 3 The police were to remain under the exclusive control of the federal government.
- 4 A commission of inquiry was to be set up to investigate the problems of the minorities. Sir Henry Willincks Commission was thus set up in 1957, which looked into the problems of the minorities and recommended constitutional recognition and protection for the minority groups.
- 5 A revenue sharing formula was to

- be proposed by the Jeremy Raisman Commission. The commission proposed the principle of derivation.
- 6 An electoral commission was to be appointed to conduct elections.
  - 7 Southern Cameroun was to be given a separate regional government.

## **London Constitutional Conference of 1958**

The following resolutions were taken at the conference:

- 1 The Northern Region should have self-government by 1959.
- 2 Fundamental Human Rights should be entrenched in the Nigerian Constitution.
- 3 Nigeria should be granted independence on 1 October 1960.

## **The Independence Constitution of 1960**

The Independence Constitution was the product of the London Constitutional Conferences of 1957 and 1958. The constitution gave an independent status to Nigeria but upheld the Queen of England as Nigeria's Head of State who was to be represented by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe as governor-general.

James Robertson became the last colonial Governor-general who handed over to the first and last indigenous Nigerian Governor-general, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe.

### **Features of the Independence Constitution**

- 1 The constitution introduced parliamentary democracy, a monarchical system and a federal structure.
- 2 The constitution made provision for the use of emergency powers for the first time.
- 3 There was the entrenchment of

fundamental human rights for the first time.

- 4 There was bicameralism at the centre with the House of Senate having 46 members and the House of Representatives, 320 members. The first Senate President was Nnamdi Azikiwe (1959-1960), and Nwafor Orizu (1960-1966) was the second Senate President. The speaker of the House of representatives was Jaja Nwachukwu.
- 5 The constitution empowered the Nigerian government to conduct diplomatic or external relations.
- 6 The Eastern regional legislature became bicameral.
- 7 There was collective responsibility of the cabinet members, and the Prime Minister appointed ministers only from his party.
- 8 There was a coalition government between the NPC and the NCNC as a result of their inability to win an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly.
- 9 The Prime Minister was appointed by the Governor-general.
- 10 There was the creation of Mid-western Region from Western Region on 12 August 1963, which made Nigeria a federation of four regions.
- 11 There was the establishment of FEDECO chaired by Mr Eyo Esuq (1959-1966).
- 12 The Privy Council of England was the highest appeal court in Nigeria.

## **1963 Republican Constitution**

The 1963 Republican constitution was the product of the all-party conference of 1963. The constitution granted full republican status to Nigeria, as the Queen of England ceased to be Nigeria's Head of State with

the election of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe by the National Assembly as the President of Nigeria.

### **Features of the 1963 Republican Constitution**

- 1 There was a parliamentary system and a federal structure.
- 2 There was also bicameralism at the centre, with the House of Senate having 56 members—12 from each region and eight from Lagos.
- 3 There was the entrenchment of fundamental human rights, collective responsibility of the cabinet ministers and official recognition of opposition parties.
- 4 The constitution made provision for ways of acquiring Nigerian citizenship, that is, through birth, marriage, and naturalisation.
- 5 This constitution gave Nigeria full republican status, with the Supreme Court of Nigeria becoming the highest appeal court.

Towards the end of the First Republic, there were federal elections of 1964 where the political parties in Nigeria constituted two major alliances: the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) was formed by a coalition of NCNC, AG, UMBC, and NEPU; while the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) was formed by NPC, UPP and NNDP.

### **1979 Second Republic Constitution**

As part of the regime of Murtala/Obasanjo's plans to hand over power to a civilian government in 1979, a constitution drafting committee (CDC) comprising 49 members, headed by Chief Rotimi Williams, was set up in 1978. This committee submitted its report to the Constituent Assembly comprising 230 members headed by Justice Udo Udoma

who scrutinised the draft constitution and submitted it to the Supreme Military Council (SMC) for approval.

After the ban on politics was lifted in 1978, there was the establishment of FEDECO chaired by Ani Richard who registered the Unity Party of Nigeria, UPN, with Chief Obafemi Awolowo as the chairman and leader; National Party of Nigeria, NPN, with Adisa Akinloye as chairman; Nigeria Peoples Party, NPP, under the leadership of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe; Great Nigeria Peoples Party, GNPP, led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, and Peoples Congress Party, PRP, under Malam Aminu Kano.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the NPN won the presidential election in 1979 with a win in seven states; UPN won in five states, NPP won in three states, GNPP won in two states, and PRP won in two states.

In the 1983 elections organised by FEDECO under Justice Ovie-Whiskey, Nigeria Advance Party, NAP, under Dr Tunji Braithwaite, was added to the list of political parties. It did not win a majority vote in any state.

### **Features of 1979 Constitution**

- 1 There was presidential democracy and a federal structure.
- 2 There was bicameralism at the centre with the Senate of 95 members (headed by Dr Joseph Wayas)—five from each of the nineteen states. The House of Representatives had 450 members headed by Chief Edwin Umezeoke as the Speaker. Each state was controlled by an executive governor with a unicameral legislature.
- 3 There was provision for fundamental human rights.
- 4 The constitution recognised the

following:

- a) A code of conduct which accepted the declaration of assets by public office holders to ensure probity and accountability in governance
  - b) The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) as the electoral umpire.
  - c) A Public Complaints Commission, the Ombudsman to investigate injustices, harassments and arbitrary dismissals of civil servants and to help seek redress in the law court.
  - d) A Judicial Service Commission which was responsible for appointment, promotion, discipline and transfer of judicial office holders.
  - e) A National Population Commission, National Boundary Commission, Federal Civil Service Commission, and a Federal Character Commission.
- 5 The constitution, for the first time, adopted the federal principle to ensure equitable representation of all the sections of Nigeria in federal institutions.
- 6 There was the adoption of the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy.

### **1989 Third Republican Constitution**

As part of General Ibrahim Babangida's transition plans to hand over power to a democratically elected civilian government, a political bureau, otherwise called the 17 wise-men committee, comprising 17 members and headed by Professor J. C. Cookey was set up to interview Nigerians and collate reports on how to formulate a new constitution. The committee submitted its report to another body called

the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) comprising 46 members headed by Justice Buba Ardo. The CRC drafted the new constitution and submitted it to the Constituent Assembly (CA) headed by Justice Anthony Aniagolu. The 452-member CA debated and scrutinised the draft proposal before it was submitted to the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) for approval. The AFRC was the highest policy-making body and legislative organ in Babangida's regime.

### **Features of the 1989 Constitution**

- 1 There was the establishment of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), chaired by Professor Humphrey Nwosu who registered two political parties, namely the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention, NRC. General Babangida annulled the 12 June 1993 election between the SDP and the NRC, thereby aborting Nigeria's Third Republic.
- 2 The constitution adopted presidential democracy.
- 3 There was bicameralism at the centre, with the House of Senate having 91 members—3 members from each of the thirty states, and one from Abuja. The Senate was headed by Dr Iyorchia Ayu who was later impeached and replaced by Ebute Ameh, while the House of Representatives had 453 members headed by Chief Anikwe Agunwa as Speaker.
- 4 There was provision for fundamental human rights and fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy.
- 5 There was the establishment of National Electoral Commission (NEC) headed by Professor Humphrey Nwosu with the

- registration of two political parties.
- 6 The constitution established and recognised the following commissions:
- National Economic Council.
  - Mass Mobilisation for Social Justice, Economic Recovery and Self-reliance (MAMSER) which was headed by Professor Jerry Gana.
  - Centre for Democratic Studies to train political leaders. The CDS was headed by Professor Omo Omoruyi.
  - Nigerian Directorate of Employment (NDE).
  - Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI).
  - Option A4 was adopted for voting at the elections.

## The 1999 Republican Constitution

As part of General Sani Abacha's transition programme of returning Nigeria to democratic governance, two constitutional committees were set up—Nigerian Constitutional Conference Commission (NCCC), headed by Justice Karibi Whyte, and Constitutional Conference Committee (NCC) headed by Justice Saidu Kawu. These two committees prepared the 1995 Constitution which was approved by the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) which was the highest policy-making body and legislative organ during Abacha's regime.

The National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) was established as the electoral body. It was chaired by Chief Dagogo Jack. NECON registered five political parties, namely the United Nigerian Congress Party (UNCN), National Consensus, Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), and the National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), all

of which presented Abacha as a consensus candidate, and as a result, the parties were described as the 'five fingers of a leper' by one politician.

General Abdulsalam Abubakar, who succeeded General Abacha on the death of the latter, established the Constitutional Debating Committee (CDC) headed by Justice Nikky Tobi who reviewed the 1995 'Abacha Constitution'. The product of that debate was approved by the PRC and promulgated as the 1999 Constitution. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was thereafter established in 1998, and chaired by Justice Ephraim Akpata who died in office and was replaced by Chief Abel Guobadia. Three political parties—Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alliance for Democracy (AD) and All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP) were registered to contest the 1999 elections. Chief Olu Falae of the ANPP contested for president against Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP.

### Features of the 1999 constitution

- The constitution introduced presidential democracy.
- There was bicameralism at the centre with the Senate having 109 members—three from each of the 36 states and one from Abuja. Evans Enwerem was the first President of the Senate in the Third Republic. He was later impeached and replaced by Chuba Okadigbo, who was in turn impeached and replaced by Anyim Pius Anyim. The House of Representatives had 360 members based on the population and size of each state. The House was headed by Salisu Buhari who was impeached and replaced by Ghali Umar Na'aba.
- The president was elected through

	a general election for four years in the first instance but re-electable for another four, but he must not be less than 40 years. The following are the years of eligibility for candidates who aspire for public offices: Senate – 35 years, Governors – 35 years, House of Representatives – 30 years, State Houses of Assembly – 30 years, ministers – 30 years and others – 25 years.	significant to Nigeria. (WASSCE Junes 2012)
4	Ministers were appointed by the President subject to the approval of the Senate.	Outline three merits and three demerits of the Lyttleton Constitution. (WASSCE June 2008)
5	The Chief Justice was appointed by the President based on the recommendation of the National Judicial Council (NJC). The appointment, promotion and transfer of judicial officers are done by Judicial Service Commission.	Highlight the features of the Independence Constitution of 1960. (SSCE June 2004)
6	Chairman and members of the election tribunal were approved by the President of the Court of Appeal.	Describe the main features of the 1954 Lyttleton Constitution.
7	The constitution created the following commissions:	Distinguish between the 1963 Republican Constitution and the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (June 2000 WASSCE)
	a) Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) b) Economic and Financial Crimes Commission c) National Population Commission d) National Boundaries Commission e) Federal Character Commission	Highlight four features of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (SSCE June 2011)

## Revision questions

### Essay questions

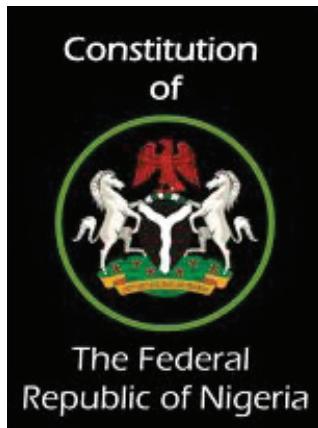
- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | a) Describe the composition of the Executive Council of the 1922 Clifford Constitution.<br><br>b) Identify any five ways in which the Clifford Constitution was | 4 | The Sir Hugh Clifford Constitution came into existence in<br><br>A 1944.<br>B 1922.<br>C 1805.<br>D 1960. |
|   |   | 2 | Hugh Clifford became the governor-general of Nigeria in<br><br>A 1822.<br>B 1920.<br>C 1916.<br>D 1922.   |
|   |   | 3 | The Arthur Richards Constitution came into existence in<br><br>A 1964.<br>B 1946.<br>C 1928.<br>D 1960.   |
|   |   | 4 | The John Macpherson Constitution came into being in<br><br>A 1948.<br>B 1961.<br>C 1825.                  |

- D 1951.
- 5 The first London Constitutional Conference took place in  
A 1953.  
B 1960.  
C 1984.  
D 2005.
- 6 The Oliver Lyttleton Constitution came into existence in  
A 1955.  
B 1954.  
C 1964.  
D 1905.
- 7 The Independence Constitution came into being in  
A 1948.  
B 1969.  
C 1960.  
D 1999.
- 8 The Nigerian Constitution of 1963 was referred to as the  
A Parliamentary Constitution.  
B Republican Constitution.  
C Democratic Constitution.  
D Post-Independence Constitution.
- 9 The Second Republic Constitution came into existence in  
A 1984.  
B 1979.  
C 1960.  
D 2008.

## Performance objectives

By the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- 1 highlight the origin and features of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution.
- 2 discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the 1999 Constitution.
- 3 discuss the process of constitutional review in the 1999 Constitution.
- 4 describe the process of lawmaking by State and National Assemblies.



## Origin of the 1999 Constitution

There is no way we will talk about the origin of the 1999 Constitution without making reference or discussing the various parts of the constitution of Nigeria. Retrospectively, the various constitutional developments in Nigeria can be grouped into pre- and post- independence Nigeria. Nigeria's first constitutions were enacted by orders in council during the colonial era when the country was administered as a crown colony.

The constitutions enacted during this period were those of 1913 (which came into effect on January 1, 1914), 1922, 1946, 1957 which is the Macpherson Constitution, and the 1954 Lyttleton Constitution. There is also what we call the Independence Constitution which includes the 1960 Nigerian Constitution which is Nigeria's first constitution as a sovereign state, but was enacted by the British order in council, by Queen Elizabeth II. The 1963 Republican Constitution is the first home grown, and second constitution of Nigeria as an independent state. It is the same constitution that established Nigeria as a federal republic and it came into force on 1 October 1963 during Nigeria's third anniversary as an independent state. The constitution remained in force until the military coup of 15 January 1966 which brought to an abrupt end the democratically elected government of the First Republic. However, there was another attempt at constitutional and democratic government in 1979 when General Olusegun Obasanjo handed over to a democratically elected government to usher in the Second Republic. Alhaji Shehu Shagari was elected president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and he remained in office until 31 January 1983 when his regime came to an end. The other constitutions, namely the constitutions of 1989 and 1995, could be regarded as mere mental constructs of their creators, General Ibrahim Babangida and General Sani Abacha respectively. They neither led to democratic emancipation nor transfer of

power; they were a mere tantalising mirage that led to derailment, disaster and death.

At the demise of Abacha, General Abdulsalam Abubakar became the new head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the federation. He promised to make his stay very brief and to also hand over power to democratically elected leaders to run the affairs of the country. He quickly rolled out his transition time-table. With less than three months in office, the Abdusalam government gave Nigerians a new constitution called the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, conducted elections into all elective offices and by 25 May 1999, he handed over power to a new set of leaders headed by Olusegun Aremu Okikiola Matthew Obasanjo, as the elected president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, thus ushering in the Fourth Republic. It is interesting to say that since 29 May 1999 when democratic rule was restored to Nigeria, we have successfully conducted three different elections, with each producing results.

The 1999 Nigerian Constitution was adopted in its original form in Abuja on 29 May 1999 at the dawn of the Fourth Republic.

### Key actors that helped in the formation of the constitution

- 1 Inauguration of the Constitutional Debate Coordination Committee made up of the Nigerians from different walks of life.
  - 2 Submission of memoranda by Nigerians at home and abroad.
  - 3 Submission of memoranda by civil society groups.
  - 4 Oral presentation at public hearings and
- 5 Paper presentations at seminars, workshops and conferences by international organisations.
  - 6 Submission of memoranda by NGOs and governmental organisation.

debate centres.

At the end of the exercise, the committee reported back to government, and its report showed that the general consensus of Nigerians was the desire to retain the provisions of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with some amendments.

### Features of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution

- 1 The Constitution states that the constitution is supreme and its provisions have a binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- 2 The Constitution makes room for who governs. It states that the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall not be governed, nor shall anybody, persons or group take control of the government or any part thereof, except in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.
- 3 The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a homemade constitution. This implies that the constitution was formulated by Nigerians and it does not have the influence of outsiders, unlike those of the 1914, 1922, 1946, 1957 and 1954 which were given to us by the colonial masters.
- 4 The Constitution is said to be the supreme law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It therefore follows that no any other law should prevail over it and that other laws shall, to the extent of their inconsistency, be void.

- 5 The Constitution makes provision for the federal character principle; and this seeks to ensure that appointments to public service institutions fairly reflect the linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural or geographical diversity of the country.

## Strengths and weaknesses of the 1999 Constitution

### Strengths

- 1 The Constitution provides for the election of an executive president. Once elected, the president is above the party and can no longer control him.
- 2 The Constitution provides for a distinct separation of powers between the three organs or arms of government in order to enhance effective performance of each of the organ.
- 3 The Supreme Court has power to check the excesses of any organ and thus prevent them from becoming highhanded and dictatorial.
- 4 The Constitution provides for a fixed term of office for both the President and Governors to prevent a situation where an incumbent will want to perpetuate himself in office.
- 5 The ministers are directly responsible to the President as they all owe their tenure to him.
- 6 The supremacy of the Constitution is not contestable; hence all authorities and persons must respect and obey the Constitution.
- 7 The Constitution provided for a long list of fundamental human rights.
- 8 The Constitution allows the President the freedom to choose people outside his party to be among his cabinet ministers.

### Weaknesses

- 1 There are fears arising from the possible misuse of the impeachment clause to victimise a sitting governor or a political opponent, as in the case of Balarabe Musa, Second Republic governor of Kaduna State.
- 2 The cost of running the administration is high and very expensive. This is may be as a result of too many functions being duplicated.
- 3 There is also the problem of implementation of the federal character principle in the public service of the federation. It is instructive to note that it is difficult to reflect every section of the country in the appointment of people into service.
- 4 Because of the existence of separation of powers, the implementation or execution of projects may be delayed if the legislature refuses to approve the budget of the government on time.
- 5 Concentration of too much power in the hands of the President may portend danger for the system. It should be stated here that the President is both the head of government and head of state.
- 6 Where the ruling party failed to have control of the legislative arm, it could lead to serious problems.

## Process of lawmaking

Lawmaking (i.e. enactment) is the main preoccupation of any legislature. It is important, therefore, to know how the legislature enacts laws either at the state level or national level. Thus, any enactment in the making is regarded as a bill; as long as it is within the parliament. Two types of bills exist, namely:

- a) Public bills

b) Private bills

Public bills are bills that include finance or money bills, and non-money bills brought by the executive arm of government to parliament. A bill is called public bill if its passage will affect the generality of the people in the state.

A private member bill is the other main type of bills. This type of bill deals with limited and special interests such as local government, companies, special institutions and private organisations. For any bills to become law, such bills must pass through the various stages as outline below.

a) **First reading:** This is the stage where the bill is introduced to members of the house after due notification to members.

The bill is printed in leaflets and given to all members to take home to study and report back to the house. At this stage also, no opposition is registered against the bill. The title of the bill must be read out to members.

b) **Second reading:** On the day of the second reading, debate or discussion is allowed to take place on the bill. The legislators discuss the general principles of the bill, and once there is no problem, the bill is referred to the committee charged with such a bill.

c) **Committee stage:** The committee stage is an important stage. At this stage, an amendment can be proposed, and members of the committee will deliberate on and discuss its general principles.

d) **Report stage:** At this stage, the committee's report stating the suggestions of the committee to improve the bill is presented and any member may move for amendments.

e) **Third reading:** This stage allows only

verbal amendment to be made and a thorough examination done on the bill to improve on the actual drafting of the bill.

f) **Upper house:** If the country operates a bicameral legislature then the bill will have to pass through the same process at the upper house or Senate; and if at the Senate level, an amendment is proposed, it may necessitate a joint committee made up of the two houses to discuss it.

g) **Assent:** At this stage, the bill is forwarded to the President for presidential assent, after which the bill becomes a law.

The same process and procedure is also used to make law at the state level.

## Revision questions

### Essay questions

- 1 Discuss the basic features of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- 2 Discuss the strengths of the 1999 Constitution.
- 3 Discuss the various stages involved in making a bill become law by the National Assembly.
- 4 Outline the weaknesses of the 1999 Constitution.

### Multiple-choice questions

- 1 The first constitution in Nigeria was enacted in  
A 1963.  
B 1913.  
C 1954.  
D 1966.
- 2 The first military coup in Nigeria took place on  
A 20 June 1960.

- B 1 October 1963.
  - C 15 January 1966.
  - D 31 January 1983.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ became the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the federation after the demise of General Sani Abacha.
- A General Abdulsalam Abubakar
  - B General Ibrahim Babangida
  - C General Olusegun Obasanjo
  - D Chief Ernest Shonekan
- 4 The Fourth Republic in Nigeria commenced on
- A 5 June 1991.
  - B 10 August 2011.
  - C 1 October 2008.
  - D 29 May 1999.
- 5 Lawmaking (enactment) is the main preoccupation of the
- A judiciary.
  - B legislature.
  - C executive.
  - D constitution.
- 6 A bill is called public bill if
- A it is done in public.
  - B it is advertised in newspapers.
  - C it will affect the generality of the people in the state.
  - D it is to be read publicly.

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