

# CHAPTER 7 CONSOLIDATION OF COLONIAL RULE IN AFRICA

## Objectives

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

- account for the advent of Europeans in West Africa.
- deliberate on how colonization in West Africa was consolidated.
- identify factors which made colonization to thrive in West Africa.
- explain how the colonial economy affected the West African people.

## Introduction

From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the volume of relationship between Europe and the New World (America) increased, the European trade interest in commodity trade and slavery deepened. In order to take full control of the resources which the European powers badly needed to run their industries, having emerged industrially, they contemplated colonizing Africa. By colonial method, they assumed political control of the area, acquired the military mandate and then determined the economic system. Having infiltrated the traditional base of Africa, they proceeded to consolidate their colonial rule and infliction.

### 7.1 Western Education, Culture and the Emergence of African Elite

Although Europeans had contacts with Africa as early as 60BC, passing through the Mediterranean Egypt in North Africa, such contacts were mainly exploratory. In this manner, Euthyminus, Polyblus and Eudoseus of Greek origin scaled through the coast of West Africa, such as the East Coast of Africa between 400BC and 200BC. He reached as far as the Gambia river, which they described as full of crocodiles, Southern and Western coasts sailing through the “pillars of Hercules”. This was otherwise called the straits of Gibraltar that linked the Mediterranean sea. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD, Prince Henry the navigator led his Portuguese team of explorers to West Africa. This exploration was not intended to be commercial or colonial but to explore the then little known areas of the Atlantic sea. Europe mainly traded with Asia through the Black and Mediterranean seas as Africa was out of their trading picture.

Owing to the interest of Spanish, Portuguese, English and French governments in exploratory voyages to discover better and less stressful routes to Asian States in order to avoid the Turkish hostilities, they discovered Africa. The Portuguese and the French were the first to make remarkable and planned explorations in the West African coasts. This according to history, began from 1364AD and spanned through the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The major aims of the Portuguese in exploring Africa were motivated by commercial interests aimed at controlling the West African Trans-Saharan which was

trade in gold, slaves, ivory and spices in order to compete with the Arabian and Italian merchants. They also had the religious intention to extend the Christian faith and see a way to contain the North African Islamic moves across Africa. Prince Henry the Navigator had also intended to colonize Africa and Asia in order to give Portugal an edge over other European states. By 1471, Portugal controlled the gold trade from Sierra Leone to Ghana, which they named “El-mina” (The mine), which the British later renamed “Gold Coast”. Elmina became the centre of Portuguese trade in West Africa. Between 1472 and 1473, Fernando Po, a Portuguese captain, discovered the Bights of Benin and Biafra. It was from the Island of Fernando Po that Ruy De Sequeira entered Lagos (Lago di Kumaro).

By 1486, the Portuguese visited Benin and negotiated a trade relation which led to the Oba of Benin allowing his son and some of his council chiefs to embrace the Christian faith, although this never lasted.

Between 1500 and 1570, the French who displaced the Portuguese, had established a strong presence in the coast of Guinea down to the Gambian river. By 1530, the British, through captain William Hawkins, explored the coast of Guinea. By 1553, British merchants had arrived Gold coast and by 1568, they had penetrated Sierra Leone in search of slave trade business. It was the Dutch who in 1517 established a trading company between Europe and Africa popularly called the Dutch West India Company backed up by the Dutch government. Following this example, the English formed their own trading companies. Notably, was only the “Royal African Company” formed in 1672 which survived mainly on slave merchandise. Shortly after, the French formed their own company. Through competition and hostility, the French and English merchants edged out the Dutch.

Beginning from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Britain and France dominated the West African trade. Britain having emerged as European power, blazed the trail and dictated trade and commerce in West Africa. Holland, Spain and Portugal were completely edged out. The Trans-Saharan and Atlantic slave trade called the “Great Triangle” trade was dominated and controlled by Britain. The British exchanged Negro slaves for sugar and tobacco from the West Indies and the New World (America). About 70,000 slaves were transported to America through the Atlantic annually in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The slave trade was abolished through the persuasions of the Catholics, Quakers, Wesleyans and Anglicans, and by the influence of the French Revolution which upheld personal liberty and equality of all men. Britain, France and Germany that had firm grips of African merchandise in the slave business resorted to raw materials and farm produce to lubricate their new industrial outfits. In a way, the abolition of the slave trade in West Africa gave rise to the growth of legitimate trade.

Since legitimate trade in farm produce and commodities reduced fear and hostility or even mutual suspicion which characterized the slave trade era, the European merchants and their agents ventured into the hinterlands of West Africa. It was from here that they interacted with the local people and studied the economic potentials. Mindful of the enormous resources inherent in West Africa, which needed to sustain the growing economy of their home states, the British and French governments from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century organized and executed the conquest of the African

societies in order to be in full charge of the human and material resources. The British government established consulates and formed cartels that coordinated diplomatic and trading activities in African territories. By 1900, having conquered the empires, kingdoms and societies of Africa, they formerly took charge of the political and economic control of the African states. This forceful domination, backed up with military action, started the march to formal colonization.

In British-controlled areas, like Nigeria, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, etc, two administrative methods of direct and indirect rule were applied. In the crown colonies, the British crown through its appointed officials administered the areas directly. The people were subject to British laws and social system whereas in the hinterland and the protectorates, the indirect rule system was adopted. The traditional rulers were used to administer the area following British supervision and dictates. The colonial structure enabled Britain the exclusive right to exploit the natural resources in the African soil.

In the French-controlled domains, the experience was different. The French at first adopted the ‘policy of Assimilation’ in which they directly administered the French colonies and while exploiting the resources, plunged back part of its gains to develop the colonies with the hope that they would become annexed to France to form a big “French empire”. They integrated the traditional rulers and neglected the elite who they felt had lost touch with their people. This policy engendered conflicts between the traditional rulers and the French colonial authority on one side and the African elite on the other side.

Aware of the fact that mere force could not sustain their colonial impetus since it required huge financing, sustained militarization and large number of expatriate personnel, coupled with the growth of Pan-Africanism and nationalist movement in Africa and across the globe, the colonial powers resorted to systematically replace the African tradition, customs, culture and personality with their own norms and culture in order to make extinct the African consciousness in the minds of the people. In order to embark on this long term but far reaching ideal, religion, education and the production of African elites with European mentality were considered among others. These strategies were employed to consolidate the colonial rule in Africa, making the people docile, confused and cooperators of their own subjugation.

### **Ways and Means of Colonial Consolidation in Africa**

**i. Establishment of Western Education:** At first, the acceptance of the missionaries into the colonized states by the colonial home government was targeted at using Christianity to change the fetish culture and primitive life style associated with the traditional African societies. The first set of missionaries in West Africa settled in Sierra Leone in 1787. In 1842, the Methodist missionary, Thomas Birch Freeman arrived Badagry in Lagos and later settled in Abeokuta. The Anglican, Catholic and Baptist missionaries arrived Abeokuta from where they carried their missionary activities to the hinterland across Southern Nigeria. Rev Father Pierre Bouche of the Roman Catholic

Mission, opened its first school in 1868 in Lagos. Earlier, Mr and Mrs De Grafe of the Methodist mission had opened up a school in Badagry named “Nursery of the Infant Church” in 1844. The school started with fifty pupils of Sierra Leonian migrants and a few children of the local converts. This became the first school in Nigeria. With time, the Qua Ibo church and the rest scrambled for missionary out posts in Abeokuta, Eket, Uyo, Calabar, Owerri and the Cameroons. They evangelized and at the same time opened up schools. The primary aim was to convert the heathens or the benighted Africans to Christianity through education. The knowledge of the Bible, ability to recite catechisms, sing hymns and communicate orally and in writing were seen as essential attributes of a good Christian. Training and education were conducted through English language and African culture and religion were treated by the missionaries as lacking in ethics and principle of conduct.

As the converts gradually imbibed the Christian way of life, they become exposed to reading, writing and fluency in communication and, the colonial government appreciated the efforts of the missionaries. They contemplated using the missionaries to have the Africans explore and cultivate the Niger waterways for bumper agricultural harvest to have their minds turn away from the abolished and less profitable slave trade. The missionaries were asked to take the plough and the hoe into the land to make agriculture flourish. They were to mix evangelism with business and commerce. It was expected that if the Christian teachers, missionaries and artisans became agents of commerce and farm produce, there would be more crops and produce to export to Europe in return for finished products.

Based on this idea of harnessing both the surplus human and materials resources in Africa, the British Government saw the need to financially support the educational policies and efforts of the missionary churches through approval of financial grants, offer of security to the missionaries and harmonization of education policies. In 1882, the British government intervened in educational development in the entire West Africa. It promulgated its first colonial education ordinance which created a general board of education in West Africa. It equally looked into grants-in-aids of buildings, teachers’ salaries, teachers’ certification, inspectorate division among others. By 1925, a more coordinate government interest towards stabilizing Western education in Nigeria emerged. This was through the Phelps-states report on Education in Africa which forced the colonial government to demonstrate interest in African education.

The curriculum reforms in the educational system in Africa hinged on the extensive as conceived by the missionaries, yielded the desired dividends. Western education engraved in Western culture, ethics and morals were embraced by the people. Modern ways of life, modern science and technology, global communications were all embraced. Christian norms were preferred to the traditional fetish practices. Above all, acquisition of literacy and modern economic skills which made the people useful for colonial economic purposes was achieved. As the people understood the colonial officials and were employed as; clerks, cooks, messengers, school teachers, church catechists and miners and processors of produce, the people remained loyal, more amenable to colonial domination and inclined towards Western culture and economic system.

**ii. Emergence of the African Elites:** In order to consolidate their grip, the colonial powers meticulously stratified their African domain. Through the educational programmes extended to the few privileged Africans who emerged later as the elite class, they polarized Africans. The elite at first placed themselves above the fetish and unorthodox African system. They fought their African background being the colonial agents of Europeanization. They were alienated from their people as they helped the Whiteman destroy their cultural pride and heritage. This was unacceptable to the traditional rulers who felt despised, disempowered and relegated. They instigated protest nationalist movements against the colonial masters who usurped their powers and made them surrogates.

In Nigeria, where the indirect rule recognised the natural rulers equipping them with alien autocratic power above the traditional demands, the elite who repudiated such imposition reacted. In order to protect their new found powers, the traditional rulers aligned with the colonial powers.

In conflict with the elites, who saw the traditional rulers as uneducated and more stooges at the mercy of the colonialists whose aim was to exploit the economy. The emirs and warrant chiefs, who accepted the offer, did so under duress and fears of being supplanted by the superior colonial force. As pay back, the elite helped the colonial authorities to destroy the cultural base which was the only way to take over leadership: by helping the expatriates to destroy customs and traditional stronghold of the natural rulers.

In the French-speaking colonies, the assimilation policy was adopted up to 1918. The French education was meant to assimilate the inhabitants of their colonies into the French culture and civilization, which they felt was the richest and the best in the world, and they felt that they could help the world by passing over their rich culture to the colonized peoples. The assimilation policy made French colonies an integral part of France and the educated Negroes were accorded French citizenship by granting them legal equality with Frenchmen. To demonstrate this, they granted automatic citizenship to the inhabitants of the four communes of Senegal namely, Dakar, Sain Louis, Rufisque and Goree, giving them direct representation in the French Parliament in Paris.

Where they made use of the traditional rulers, they created them as French officials on salary placement. They were made mouth-piece of their communes or districts and assisted in tax collection, recruiting of soldiers and labourers and in the settlement of local disputes. They could be dismissed or replaced by the French authorities. At death, they could be replaced by a loyalist or a French authority, the implication of this towards the extinction of the African culture and personality drew the ire of African elites educated at Ecole Normale William – Pouty in Dakar, Senegal who fought the policy of Assimilation together with the compradoral traditional chiefs.

The French colonial government accorded French privileges to the African intellectuals or elites who they hoped would become deputies and mayors in local administration and hoped they would fill up subordinate positions in law, teaching and commerce. They were exempted from paying tax, forced labour and military obligations. However, they were very few of such that between 1918 and 1945, only about 2,000 students graduated from the Ecole Normale William – Porty Federal Government Secondary School in Dakar. These also were equally unhappy with the comprising

posture of the traditional rulers and protested against the French authoritarian system against the colonized Africans. They demanded for a repeal of all French obnoxious laws. against the people. They also demanded for constitutional reforms in which they would be included as representatives of the people. They berated the French government of flagrantly disregarding the culture of the African, which remained the basis of their uniqueness. This resulted in the introduction of the “Policy of Association” which like the British “Indirect rule” recognized the African traditions, political institution, religions, customs and culture. The people were granted more autonomy in the running of their local affairs.

Despite the nationalist moves of the elite against the colonial policies, they were used as samples of Western culture and modernism. The elites through their education became “marginal men” who could not generally uphold their traditions. They became models of Westernism and attracted the interest of people to acquire Western education to the detriment of their culture.

**iii. Adoption of a Lingua Franca:** Education in Africa was implemented using the “mother tongues” or home languages of the colonizers. The two dominant powers being Great Britain and France. The initial 3Rs i.e. Reading, Writing and Arithmetic which characterized early Western education was conducted via English language or the French language. Missionaries who brought education in Africa conducted their worship and teaching in their native languages and Latin. Although, they helped in developing the orthography of local dialects, this was after their languages English or French had become the “Lingua Franca” and meant only to translate the Bible to the benefits of those who could not cope with Lingua Franca.

The colonial administrators or officials were able to take proper charge of the colonies when the local people were able to speak and write in the language of the colonialists. The euphoria of speaking in whiteman’s language made the natives more subservient to whiteman’s authority. The native people who were able to communicate in the language of the colonial master acquired enhanced status; became an employee of the whiteman and with it became rich and commanded influence. The whiteman was even protected as he was seen to be a source of military, social, religious, political and economic security. By this contact and ability, some natives gained scholarships at home and abroad and later became leaders and icons of political freedom. Lingua Franca was a factor which sustained not only the colonial rule but also the neocolonial domination of Africa.

**iv. Introduction of European Religion:** The Christian religion and faith played up sympathy on colonial administration. Having invited and supported the activities of the missionaries, the colonial officials gave them legitimacy. The Christian religion, being regarded as an extension of the political domination, of the people assisted in direct and indirect ways of exploiting the people economically. They worked on the psychology of the people in accepting white traditions, religion and science as superior to the black customs and magic. They associated God and all good things and conducts with the white while branding Satan, evil and evil vices as ‘black’ Africans, by their teaching, were made

to see themselves and the continent as vicious, ignorant, backward and ungodly. They were relegated into the “world’s second class citizens” and made to carry on “inferiority complex”.

This Western ideology of the whiteman’s supremacy and racial divide cowed down the Africans coupled with their advancement in military and industrial technology. The myth of the whiteman’s supremacy, as presented by the white Christian missionaries, disarmed the common Africans into accepting the colonial impositions of the whitemen. Christian religion was therefore presented as superior to the African Traditional Religions (ATR) which had no scriptures, no missionaries or evangelizers to back it up; no cathedrals to accommodate numerous worshippers; no saints in heaven to give assurance for peace transition and the priestly heirarches with their distinguishing and colourful robes and ephods. The African culture and religions were totally stigmatized.

**v. The Promotion of European Culture:** By their policies such as the education ordinance of 1882, policy of association, policy of assimilation, invitation of Christian missionaries and the introduction of their economic system, the colonial overlords intended to change the culture and institutions of Africans. In their place, they promoted European culture and technology through a western oriented education and religion; they imposed their modes of dressing, eating habits and foods, artistic appreciation, clubbing, leisure and sporting activities, social and political habits on the African people. These closed the gaps of racial and cultural differences and at the same time weakened the morale of Africans fight for freedom.

**vi. Display of Western Architectural and Technological Development:** To the admiration of Africans, the colonial powers constructed asphalted roads, fabricated bridges, constructed well-designed and painted houses with corrugated sheets and asbestos and established factories which mechanically turned out finished products using available produce and resources. The colonial masters introduced the telecommunication systems using the landline phones, telegrams, couriers (mail system) and the radio and its cassettes. The bicycles, motorcycles, cars and even the tramps and ships, the plants, sophisticated military guns and hardwares, agro-allied products and even spectacular fabric materials used by the whitemen baffled the native people. By their superior technology, the colonial officials were allowed to live in secluded areas, i.e. the Government Reserved Areas (GRA), with conducive physical environment, amenities and facilities. These “whitemen quarters” became the nucleus of most urban centres in Africa. The awful technology gave them unwritten license to lord it over the Africans politically and economically.

## **7.2 Social Influences**

The consolidation of colonialism in Africa was a function of some social factors. As it were, no system or element thrives on an inclement or a hostile environment. Although, the African colonial experience occurred through a stage-by-stage occupation of the land by means of military conquest and leadership imposition, the Africans relapsed and resigned to fate at the operation of full scale colonization. When in the medieval period, the Muslims occupied Spain; within a decade the Spaniards fought back and recaptured both their culture and their lands from the Muslim occupiers. In

Africa, that was not to be. The colonialists were allowed to dominate the continent for almost a century. Certain social influences were responsible for the non-repraisal position taken by the African peoples.

These factors include:

- i. **Ethnic Divide Among Africans:** The colonialists met ethnic groups who were majorly involved in internecine skirmishes fighting wars of maneuver and imperial conquests. The colonialists taking opportunity of the seeming lack of unity amongst Africans conquered them through military expedition. While they were unified under the colonial rule, their inter-ethnic overtures impeded the formation of any common opposition against the colonial rule. This experience has remained even till the present time and has been the bane of political turbulence in most neocolonial African states.
- ii. **Primitive Economy:** By the time of European occupation of African land, most African societies were still at the primitive stage of development. Consequently, they appeared backward in areas of education, technological breakthroughs, modern science, modern communication systems, insurance, banking, marketing and industrialization. They were not well armed to challenge the European imperialists who were more prepared, armed and more advanced than the colonized Africans.
- iii. **Differences in Culture, Language and Tradition:** As a result of existent disparities in language, culture and tradition, the needed cohesion to resist colonialism was minimal and in most cases non-existent. Most of the “colonial states” or colonies were the artificial creations of the colonizing powers fused together to serve their economic purpose, unmindful of the differences existing among the conquered and amalgamate states. With differing social and cultural backgrounds, it became easier for the colonial powers to subdue them using the divide-and-rule system through instigating one over and above the other.
- iv. **Colonial Social Environment:** Mere acceptance of the colonial dominance or rule created an enabling environment for it to thrive. The custom of most African states is to accommodate strangers and offer them friendly treaties. The colonialists proved them wrong by using the amiable hands of friendship offered to them by some traditional rulers to subjugate them. In some cases, where traditional rulers formed “Resistance Nationalism”, the colonial powers retreated only to reclaim the area when the traditional rulers had been conquered and or had been deposed. Again, most states that organized “Protest Nationalism” attained independence earlier than those that compromised. Accepting colonialism consolidated its spread and stronghold.

The colonial powers subsisted because most local people appointed warrant chiefs and emirs lent support to their armies. Local people were recruited and trained as colonial soldiers used to oppress and exploit their own people. On this, the traditional rulers compromised. As a result of their selfish interests, they never repudiated or protested against the colonial military demands and the use of their subjects to execute colonial projects. Rather than rise against an



alien dominating them, most people including traditional rulers and self-seeking African elite retired, in fear of colonial military actions against them. Out of fears they accepted the colonial capitalist system meant to impoverish the people and prolong their subjugation.

### **7.3 The Colonial Economy and the Underdevelopment of Africa**

#### **Nature of Colonial Economy in Africa**

As at the time Europe colonized Africa, their economy was still emerging. Africa had left the band system where the productive forces were very underdeveloped; primitive and communal system where gathering of raw materials with sophisticated instruments of labour was experienced. Notably, Africa had entered into the slave stage and the feudal stage. Slave societies had the consciousness of social class – that of the slaves and the slave owners. It was a stage where property and commodities were given in exchange for raw materials or slaves. The slave owners employed the slaves to produce the products or commodities to feed the market forces. There was internal domination and exploitation by a social class against the other in order to maintain the economy of the traditional society. The slave societies had an organized system. There were institutions of force to suppress uprisings in government, the creation of system of law and the ideological system insisting on social satisfaction.

On the other hand, some states had achieved the feudal stage or mode of production where there were serfs who were higher than the slaves. Serfs paid tribute to their lords, the owners of the land where they worked and lived, in return for protection by the land owners. There was also class distinction between the owners of the land, serfs that tilled them and the slaves. The African feudal states were mainly agrarian societies which depended on the exploitation of human labour. The serfs did the production, paid tributes to the landlords who became richer while the serfs remained poorer.

The advent of the colonizers brought with them a stringent state of capitalism. The colonial capitalist society brought about the introduction of the western capitalist economy on the agrarian traditional societies of Africa. This colonial or capitalist economy and system placed emphasis on:

- (a) commodities as against the feudal and slave societies;
- (b) exchange or surplus value in order to make maximum profits, which was aided by an increased and improved technology as against the value in the feudal and agrarian system;
- (c) material things as against social relations which the communalist and socialist states emphasized on;
- (d) workers worked with instruments they didn't own as against the slave and feudal societies where slaves and serfs worked with their own tools. This was called the "separation of the workers from the means of production". Owing to this separation, there is alienation of work.

The colonial powers having destroyed the pre-existing state structure and the economic system of the colonized states, consolidated their conquest by subjugating the people and consequently organizing production, distribution and marketing of goods and labour to suit their interests and the

over-developed home states. They introduced the “commoditization” process in Africa. This implied the production of material goods above the use value which necessitated inter-state or international exchange. By this very act, the Africans were made to engage in mass production of goods which the colonizers appropriated for their international exchange. By this means, the wealth of the metropole, that is, the core states (colonizers), result from the poverty of the third world states. It is the general belief of political historians that the colonization of the African states helped to transfer the surplus resources of the underdeveloped countries. This intrusion and capitalist extraction stunted the growth and development of Africa while advancing the growth and economy of the metropole or core states. Over production of manufactured goods of the capacity of their local consumption, caused by the industrialization and expansion of Europe, made them to colonize African states in order to find raw materials to sustain their industries and to find a market for their stock piled manufactured goods.

The colonial powers depended much on Africa to produce their much needed raw materials. These raw materials, found in large quantities, ranged from the forests and vegetation peculiar to African soil. For example, the African wildlife and over-abundance of diversified mineral deposits such as columbite, crude oil, gold, magnesium, iron ore, coal, uranium, etc. They also had the advantage of cheap labour provided by the colonized people. From the start of colonialism, the colonizers patterned the economy of the colonized states as a “feeder, agrarian economy” to their “industrialized, technological economy”. African states were forced into monocultural economy. Some were made to concentrate on farm produce, forestry materials or mining, excavation and exploration of mineral deposits while others were prepared as agents of haulage, transportation and exportation of these raw produce to the metropole.

Raw materials demand and production introduced the European marketing and banking systems into Africa. To harmonize exchange measures, colonial currencies were promulgated as the acceptable medium of exchange and legal tender. This measure facilitated the marketing system. Values of commodities were measured by the price tags and the scaling machines produced by the colonial merchants and supported by the multi-national companies. Prices of the raw materials produced in Africa were very low as against the prices of finished products from the metropole or advanced countries. Market forces were determined by their demands of our raw materials and labour. The labour market was not left out. Wages and salaries which were determined and fixed by the colonial powers and foreign firms were based on their own categorizations of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labour. Some were paid wages based on the discretions of their foreign overloads while a lot more were made to face “forced labour”.

One of the strategies of the colonial powers and their business conglomerates was to ensure, through subtle means, that the Africans abandoned their local food, mode of dressing, housing needs and worship in pursuit of taste for foreign commodities, life style and conducts. The introduction of “white collar jobs” produced African civil servants whose life style completely depended on the European made goods and rejection of the traditional lifestyle. The consolidation of the Christian faith promoted the print industry and an provided expanded market for Christian literature, scriptures and

support for the clergy and the sacramentals. In all spheres of life, the colonialists expanded the European markets at their dictates and created the room for unequal exchange which had persisted.

Through a banking system, the multi-national conglomerates adopted a faceless transaction. The banks were established to further squeeze out profits from the savings and economic efforts of Africans who transacted business with them. Banks became a means of capital flight as banks aided the quick transfer of deposits to foreign bank accounts. The lending policies of the banks were detrimental to the African businessmen who were required to provide collaterals far above their borrowings and at a high interest rate which eventually left them at a deficit with no profit. The banking sector was established to facilitate the activities of foreign cartels and to sustain the structural underdevelopment of African states. It aided the capitalist penetration of Africa where African resources were carted away and chances were created for the colonial powers to sell their stockpiled goods. At the same time, it encouraged the African elite and dominant class to use their surpluses in luxury rather than in mechanized industrialization. Colonial banks merely aided the economic interests and business transactions of the core states.

On the side of transportation and telecommunication, the colonial governments were decisive, social amenities; infrastructure and facilities were provided only for white settlers or where it could enable them generate more profits. Roads, railways, seaports, airports and loading bays were constructed for easy exportation of raw materials and importation of finished goods. These facilities were concentrated on areas that facilitated these exchanges. As a result of the fact that the government was not for the people, the living standard of the masses was completely neglected since colonialism thrived on the impoverishment of the colonized. In this way, colonialism and its accompanying capitalist exploitation promoted development in some states and under development in others.

### Effects of the Colonial Economy

The colonial economy had some side effects on the African populace and societies. Some of these include:

- i. **Subordination of African Traders:** Owing to the change in the social, political and economic systems which favoured the colonial settlers, African traders were outclassed and prevailed upon by the emergent European forms and merchants. The laws and rules guiding social and business interactions were made in favour of the white traders. Most affluent men in the pre-colonial era lost out as they were unable to match the demands of the new economic system. The new business and affluent class that emerged were mere agents of European capitalist penetration. They could not advance beyond the limits set for them by foreign business cartels. They traded on the commodities demanded by the European trading firms and at the quantity and prices fixed by the firms. With this, the Africans played second fiddle and were unable to assert their grievances.
- ii. **Emergence of Urban Centres:** The flourishing businesses or trades with the Europeans yielded some dividends. The move from slave trade to commodity trade provided an enabling environment for white settlers and the colonial government to establish social institutions of colonial

domination for a smooth operation. Such provided institutions included; administrative offices, courts, schools, hospitals and housing units for both the colonial officials and foreign business agents and few privileged Africans. These judicial units, trading and commercial areas and administrative centres including the residential sports of the whitemen gradually emerged over time as urban centres. These urban centres were far better than the precolonial cities of Timbuktu, Ghana Kanem-Bornu, Kano, Tripoli, Songhai, Oyo and Bini kingdoms. The emergent of urban centres flourished with modern facilities and amenities and with the flowery of Western life.

**iii. Acquisition of Modern Skills:** Traditional or pre-colonial states flourished alongside rudimentary skills like leather works, pottery, blacksmithing, carving, hunting, weaving, fishing and farming. Colonial domination by Europe brought with it some other skills which were needed to run the new economic order. The colonial government introduced a new method of trading and commerce which incorporated the banking system, a new legal system and court administration, a new administrative and political system. It also introduced a new techniques in house construction, farming, military expedition, policing, communication, road and transport systems with the introduction of vehicles and other mechanical devices. Above all, the introduction of education as the acquisition centre for literacy, vocational training, science and technology equipped the colonial Africans with modern skills to face the New World Order. The colonial governments could not regulate or stop the transfer of modern skills and education to the indigenes because the natives were also needed to contribute to the creation and production of the resources which the colonialists exploited to maximize their development.

**vi. Dependency Syndrome:** The colonial arrangement of the world economy between the industrialized, advanced and metropolitan states with the colonized and periphery states initiated the system of dependency which has characterized the colonized states. As the colonial powers were agrarian and they specialized in the production of raw materials for the metropole, they developed the tendency of depending on the industrialized countries for manufactured goods and technical products. They lacked the capacity to industrialize and turn their raw materials into finished products.

## Summary

- At the onset of colonial rule, the colonial powers with the mandate to exploit the colonized states for the development of their home states or metropolises, institutionalized Western systems and imperialist patterns to enable them consolidate and have firm grips of the African economic base.
- Their method was imperialism which was practised through colonization. Through this, the colonized states were sapped and completely exploited.
- To perfect this, the colonial administration had certain tools to facilitate their operation which were western education that produced African elites, imposition of their languages and the enforcement and promotion of European culture and way of life.

## Objective Questions

1. The first Portuguese explorers to Africa were led by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Eudoseus
  - B. Polybius
  - C. Euthyminus
  - D. Prince Henry the Navigator
2. The main objectives which informed the exploration of Africa by Europe was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Christianization of Africa
  - B. commercial interest
  - C. exploratory motives
  - D. the gold in Elmina
3. The Portuguese visit to the Oba of Benin took place in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. 1364
  - B. 1486
  - C. 1471
  - D. 1473
4. The “great triangle” was basically dominated by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Great Britain
  - B. Holland
  - C. Spain
  - D. Portugal
5. France thought of realizing their desired “French empire” in Africa by means of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. indigenant law
  - B. paternalism
  - C. assimilation policy
  - D. policy of association
6. While the Methodist established the first school in Nigeria in 1844 in Badagry Lagos, the Catholic Church established its first school in Lagos in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. 1842
  - B. 1787
  - C. 1864
  - D. 1868
7. The first educational policy articulated by colonial Britain in its territory of West Africa was made in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. 1882

- B. 1925
  - C. 1887
  - D. 1903
8. The emergence of African elite facilitated \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. colonial oppression
  - B. protest nationalism
  - C. restoration of African culture
  - D. trade and commerce
9. One of the tactics adopted by the foreign powers to consolidate their colonial rule in Africa was the use of \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. warrant chiefs
  - B. taxation system
  - C. divide and rule
  - D. direct rule
10. One of the banes of underdevelopment in Africa is the practice of \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. African traditional religions
  - B. monocultural economy
  - C. concentration on agriculture
  - D. adopting European life style

### Essay Questions

1. What effort did Portugal make to open up Africa to the rest of the world?
2. What are the ways and means by which foreign powers consolidated their colonial grip on Africa?
3. Compare the British colonial method with that of the French in the West African states.
4. What do you consider to be the social factors which helped the colonial grip on African soil?
- 5a. What was the nature of the colonial economy in Africa?
  - b. What effects has this economy on neocolonial African states?