# HISTORY

# FOR JSS 2 FIRST TERM 2024/2025 SESSION

**NOTE: YOU ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE WRITTEN AT LEAST THE FIRST 3 TOPICS IN YOUR NOTE BEFORE RESUMPTION.**

**THE SCHEME OF WORK FOR TERM**

1. Meaning Of Non Centralized State
2. Pre-colonial Old Calabar Kingdom
3. Pre-colonial Tiv Kingdom
4. Pre-colonial Idoma People
5. Pre-colonial Ebira Kingdom
6. Pre-colonial Igbo Kingdom Early History
7. Pre-colonial Urhobo People
8. Pre-colonial Ijaw Kingdom
9. Pre-colonial Oron People
10. Political System of Pre-colonial Ibibio Kingdom

**CENTRALISED STATES IN PRE-COLONIAL NIGERIA MEANING OF NON CENTRALISED STATE**

A non –centralized state is the one in which political power is distributed among various

Units of government, power is not concentrated at the center. In this form of government, small governing bodies exist to share power in governance. It is also known as decentralized state. The Igbo and Tiv society was a typical example of non -centralized state during the pre-colonial era.

Non-centralized state is one which requires multiple parties to make their own independent decisions. There is no single authority that makes decisions on behalf of all parties.

In pre-colonial Nigeria, several non-centralized states existed, having different social, political, and economic systems different from the centralized kingdoms and empires. These non-centralized societies were organized into clans, tribes, or villages with leadership structures that were more communal. Some notable examples include but are not limited to the following :

**The Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria:** The Igbo society is one of the most prominent and typical examples of a non-centralized state. Igbo communities were organized into autonomous villages and towns, each governed by a council of elders or a group of titled men. Decision-making was typically collective, and there was no centralized authority.

**The Tiv of Central Nigeria:** The Tiv people had a segmentary lineage system with no centralized authority. Their society was organized around kinship and clan relationships, with leadership roles typically held by the heads of extended families and clans.

**The Ibibio and Efik of the Cross River region:** Similar to the Igbo, the Ibibio and Efik communities operated on a village-based system. Leadership was provided by village councils and secret societies, such as the Ekpe society among the Efik, which played significant roles in governance and social control.

**The Ijaw of the Niger Delta**: The Ijaw people also lived in non-centralized communities. Their political organization was based on clans and kinship groups, with leadership provided by councils of elders and heads of families.

**The Idoma of Central Nigeria:** The Idoma people were organized into clans and villages with leadership structures that included councils of elders and chiefs. Each village was largely autonomous, and governance was achieved through consensus among elders.

These societies contrasted with the more centralized states like the Oyo Empire, the Benin Kingdom, and the Sokoto Caliphate, which had hierarchical political structures and centralized authorities.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-CENTRALISED STATES

1. Separation of power: Power is shared among the units of government. It is not concentrated on a particular unit.
2. It is a stateless system of government.
3. There is absence of autocratic rule.
4. It is republican in nature.
5. Absence of taxation system
6. This system makes use of direct democracy when it comes to decision making.
7. Non-centralized states usually have smaller territories.

ADVANTAGES OF NON-CENTRALISED STATES

1. It prevents the misuse of power.
2. It encourages everyone to participate in government.
3. It brings government to the people.
4. It gives people at the grass root a sense of belonging.
5. It trains people at the grass root for future leadership role.

DISADVANTTAGES OF NON-CENTRALISED STATES

1. It increases the cost of governance.
2. Corrupt politicians at the grass root may mismanage funds.
3. It may bring about tribalism and ethnicity.
4. It may retard the growth of areas with immature and inexperienced political leaders.
5. The entire community may become weak politically.

EXAMPLES OF NON-CENTRALISED STATES IN NIGERIA

1. Tiv
2. Idoma
3. Ebira
4. Igbo
5. Urhobo
6. Ijaw
7. Oron
8. Ibibio
9. Calabar

**PRE-COLONIAL OLD CALABAR KINGDOM**

Pre-colonial Old Calabar, located in present-day southeastern Nigeria, was an important center for trade, politics, and culture. Known historically as Akwa Akpa, Old Calabar was established by the Efik people.

The pre-colonial Calabar was located at the southern part of Nigeria and Western part of Cameroon. History has it that the Efik tribe settled at their location as far back in the 14th century A.D. They migrated from Palestine and first settled at Ikpaene before arriving to the rest of their location as a rest of their present locations as a result the roman conquest in 63B.C.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The pre-colonial calabar structure is strong and organized under three major parts.

Esien- Clan

Ufok- House

Iman-Family

The old Calabar people house system is based on patriarchal decent (bearing the name of the father).

The pre-colonial calabar people emphasize on seniority. Younger people are taught to respect their seniors in all aspects both in public and private.

Old calabar was once the seat of government of the Niger Coast protectorate. The Efik language was the first language to be in print dated back to 1862. The first photographic studio in West Africa was established in Calabar in 1876. Willy Eyo Honesty was the first in West Africa to compile a dictionary of an African language in 1812. The first medical college and Nigerian school pharmacy. The first church wedding in Nigeria took place in Greek Town Presbyterian church in April 15 1850.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The old Calabar had three major kingdoms, called “ Ekoi,Efut, and Efik”. The “ Obong” is the highest traditional authority in Calabar. The Ekpe secret society exists as a very important institution. The Ekpe secret society was the executive authority in the old calabar. Membership of the Ekpe secret society is open to every rich freeborn Efik. Membership of the Ekpe secret society involved initiated elders and male citizens. Wealth and social status determined membership grade in the Ekpe society. The Ekpe secret society held political, social, and economic authority in calabar. One of the achievements of the Ekpe secret society is preventing crisis and establishing peace and stability in the community.

The political authority of the Ekpe and the Obong was weakened by the British, after the declaration of the area as a protectorate in 1885.

**Key aspects of Pre-colonial Old Calabar**

**Trade**: Old Calabar was a major trading hub, especially in the transatlantic slave trade during the 17th and 18th centuries. It was strategically positioned along the Cross River, facilitating trade with European merchants. Goods traded included slaves, ivory, and palm oil.

**Politics and Governance:** The Efik people had a well-organized political system. The town was governed by a council of chiefs, known as the Ekpe society, which played a crucial role in maintaining law and order. The Ekpe society also had religious and judicial functions, enforcing rules through a complex system of symbols and rituals.

**Culture and Society:** The Efik people of Old Calabar had a rich cultural heritage, with traditions in art, music, and dance. They were also known for their elaborate masquerades and festivals, which were integral to their social and religious life.

**Contact with Europeans:** From the 15th century onwards, European traders, including the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, established contact with Old Calabar. This interaction significantly influenced the local economy and politics, especially with the rise of the slave trade.

Religion: Traditional Efik religion was polytheistic, with a belief in a supreme god, Abassi, and a host of other deities and spirits. Religious practices were intertwined with the social and political structure, with the Ekpe society playing a central role in religious rites.

Pre-colonial Old Calabar’s significance lies in its strategic position, vibrant culture, and its role in regional and transatlantic trade networks.

**PRE-COLONIAL TIV KINGDOM**

Pre-colonial Tiv society was thus marked by its agrarian economy, decentralized political structure, rich cultural traditions, and strong emphasis on kinship and community. Their adaptable and resilient social organization allowed them to thrive in the dynamic and sometimes challenging environment of central Nigeria.

The Tiv people are one of the largest minority ethnic groups in Nigeria having nearly six million individuals. They can be found at the middle belt region of Nigeria in Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa, and Plateau states. They can also be found in cross river and Adamawa state, as well as the African country of Cameroon. The Tiv tribe shares border with the Idoma people on the (North east) and the Igede people on the (south east). The soil of the Tiv land is most fertile for the cultivation of yam, millet, cassava, beans seed and soya beans as a result of a good amount of rainfall. Benue state is known as the major producer of soya beans in Nigeria.

THE ORIGIN OF TIV KINGDOM

According to history, The Tiv tribe is believed to have their ancestral home among the Bantu speaking people of the present day Democratic republic of Congo, having moved through many places from the central Africa through savannah land in West Africa, they eventually came to Benue valley 1750 AD. The ancestor of the Tiv people was a man named Tiv. He had two sons called “Ichongo and Ipusu”. All Tivs were descendants of either of the two sons of the man, Tiv. The Tiv and the Bantu speaking people share similarities in .vocabulary, physique, dance style and musical instruments. The Tiv people migrated as a result of the early discovery of copper and iron which were used to produce agricultural tools and weapons which resulted in an increase in the production of food, improved living condition, and an increase in population.

SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANISATION IN THE TIV KINGDOM

The social organization of the Tiv is founded in patriarchal descent (kinship through the male). All Tiv consider themselves descendants of Ichongo and Ipusu. They are further divided into major groups and smaller groups. The smallest group is called “Ipaven” . Members of the Ipaven tend to live together in a community called “Tar”.

A typical Tiv compound is made up of the head of the compound (orya), his wives and children, his younger brothers and their wives and children. The Tiv compounds sometimes include distant relatives, in-laws, or extended family. The compound is oval in shape, having a large central space for group activities such as dancing, meetings or funerals. A compound is named after the head of the compound and when he dies, the oldest person in the compound becomes the next Orya.

The Tiv like the Igbo was a stateless society without strong centralized administrative and judicial systems. They did not have a central authority based on the political system. The Tor Tiv remains the highest traditional authority among the Tiv people. The Tiv people are well known for their cultural values, bush meat and their unique swange dance.

Pre-colonial Tiv society, located in present-day central Nigeria, was characterized by a unique social structure, agricultural economy, and rich cultural traditions. The Tiv people, known for their distinctive language and cultural practices, were primarily agrarian and lived in small, autonomous communities.

**Key aspects of pre-colonial Tiv society**

**Political Organization:** Tiv society was highly decentralized. There was no central authority or king. Instead, governance was based on kinship and clan affiliations. The Tiv people were organized into extended families known as “tar,” which were grouped into larger units called “ityar” (plural: “ityarev”). Each tar was led by the eldest male, who acted as the head and representative in clan affairs. Decision-making was collective, involving councils of elders and family heads who deliberated on community matters. This decentralized system emphasized communal consensus and collective responsibility.

**Economy**: The Tiv economy was predominantly agrarian. They were skilled farmers, cultivating crops such as yams, millet, sorghum, and cassava. Agriculture was the mainstay of their economy, with yams holding particular cultural significance. The Tiv also engaged in hunting, fishing, and animal husbandry, including the rearing of goats, sheep, and chickens. Trade played a role in their economy, as they exchanged surplus agricultural produce with neighboring communities for goods like salt, cloth, and tools.

**Social Structure:** Tiv society was organized around extended families and kinship groups. The family unit was central to social organization, providing support and ensuring the transmission of cultural values and traditions. Lineage and clan affiliations were crucial for social identity and cohesion. Age-grade systems, grouping individuals of similar ages for communal activities, work, and social functions, were important. These systems fostered a strong sense of community and mutual responsibility.

**Religion:** Traditional Tiv religion was polytheistic and animistic, centered on the worship of a supreme god known as Aondo, along with various other deities, spirits, and ancestors. The Tiv believed in the existence of spirits in natural objects and practiced rituals and ceremonies to honor these spiritual beings. Religious practices included sacrifices, offerings, and festivals to seek blessings and protection. Priests and diviners played vital roles in conducting religious rites and providing guidance based on spiritual insights.

**Culture and Arts:** The Tiv had a rich cultural heritage expressed through their music, dance, art, and festivals. They were known for their vibrant dance forms, such as the Swange dance, which featured rhythmic movements and drumming. Tiv art included intricate designs in pottery, weaving, and beadwork. Storytelling, proverbs, and songs were important for passing down history, values, and cultural knowledge. Masquerades and festivals were integral to their cultural life, often involving elaborate costumes and masks representing deities and ancestral spirits.

**Conflict and Warfare:** The Tiv people had a history of inter-clan conflicts and warfare, often related to disputes over land and resources. They developed a reputation as skilled warriors and had strategies and practices for defending their territories. Despite internal conflicts, Tiv society maintained a strong sense of unity through shared cultural practices and kinship ties.

**PRE-COLONAL IDOMA PEOPLE**

Pre-colonial Idoma society was thus marked by its agrarian economy, decentralized political structures, rich cultural traditions, and a strong emphasis on community and kinship. The Idoma people’s adaptability and resourcefulness allowed them to thrive in the dynamic environment of central Nigeria, maintaining their cultural identity and social relations amidst changing circumstances.

The Idomas are one of the ethnic groups that majorly reside at the lower western part of Benue state, Nigeria. River, Enugu and Nasarawa states in Nigeria. The Idoma language is classified into the Akweya sub-group of the Idomoid languages of volta-Niger family, which include Alago, Etulo and Yala languages of Benue, Nasarawa and Northern Cross river states.

The origin of the Idoma people can be traced to Akpa capital of Kwararafa confederacy. According to history, the Idoma people migrated from Apa along with Igala, Ebira and other people. The migration was as a result of wars and insecurity in the kingdom. They eventually established themselves in their present location at about the 18th century.

The origin of the Idoma people revolve around a man called Iduah. He was regarded as the father of Idoma, and the Idoma language developed from him. He had seven children called AMANAWOOGENO, OLINAOGWU, IDUM, AGABI, EJE, EBEIBI, EDEH, and ODE. All these children of Iduah established different parts of Idoma land.

The idomas are known to be warriors and hunters of class, but peace-loving and hospitable. The greater part of the Idoma land remained largely unknown to the western world (foreigners) until the 1920s, leaving much of their colorful tradition intact. The population of the Idoma tribe is estimated to be about 4 million. The Idoma people have a traditional ruler called “Oche’Idoma” who is the head of the Idoma Area Traditional Council, while each community has its own traditional chiefs such as the “Ad’Ogbadibo”. The palace of the Oche’Idoma is located at Otukpo in Benue state.

Agricultural activities such as the cultivation of yam, guinea corn, millet, groundnut, and melon are popularly known to be carried out by the Idomas. They also engage in local crafts, hunting and trade as major economic activities. The success of a traditional Idoma man is measured by the size of his farm and his yam and grain barn.

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF IDOMA PEOPLE

FAMILY UNIT (OLE); This was the smallest unit in Idoma political structure. The head of the family unit was called “Adole”. His major duty was to settle dispute among the family members.

OJILA; This was the highest organ of government and the final authority in the Idoma political system. It was the general body of all adult men in Idea land, but the elders often dominate discussions and decision making.

OCHE (THE KING); He acted as both the king and religious leader of the community, chosen democratically through the Ocilla. Different lineages would present candidates and one out of all the candidates presented would become king.

The Oche was the highest officer in Idea land, regarded as the mediator between the people and their ancestors. The position of the king rotated among specific number of lineages to prevent monopoly of power by a particular lineage. The Oche was the custodian of the law of the land, he ensured the laws were enforced and obeyed.

AGE GROUP; The Idea land also had age group as important part of its political structure.

Pre-colonial Idoma society, located in the present-day Benue State of central Nigeria, was known for its organized social structures, rich cultural heritage, and dynamic economy. The Idoma people had distinct customs and traditions that shaped their social and political life.

**Key aspects of pre-colonial Idoma society**

**Political Organization:** The Idoma society was organized into a decentralized system of governance based on clans and kinship groups. Each clan, known as an “Idu,” was autonomous and governed by a council of elders. These elders were typically the heads of extended families and were respected for their wisdom and experience. Leadership roles, such as the “Och’Idoma” (the paramount chief of the Idoma people), were hereditary and played significant roles in unifying various clans and ensuring cohesion. The Och’Idoma was often a symbolic leader who presided over major ceremonies and arbitrated disputes between clans.

**Economy:** The Idoma economy was primarily agrarian, with farming being the mainstay. They cultivated crops such as yams, cassava, millet, and maize. The fertile land of the region supported diverse agricultural activities. In addition to farming, the Idoma people engaged in hunting, fishing, and animal husbandry, including the rearing of goats, sheep, and poultry. Trade was also crucial to their economy, with the Idoma engaging in the exchange of goods like agricultural produce, livestock, and locally made crafts with neighboring communities and traders.

**Social Structure:** Idoma society was organized around extended families and kinship groups, which were central to social identity and support. The extended family system provided a framework for social organization, ensuring mutual assistance and the transmission of cultural values and traditions. Age-grade systems, grouping individuals of similar ages for communal activities, labor, and social functions, were significant. These systems promoted community solidarity, mutual support, and a sense of responsibility among members.

**Religion:** Traditional Idoma religion was polytheistic and animistic, with a belief in a supreme deity known as “Owoicho” and various lesser gods, spirits, and ancestors. The Idoma people believed in the existence of spirits in natural objects and places, and their religious practices included rituals, sacrifices, and ceremonies to honor these spiritual beings. Priests and diviners played crucial roles in conducting religious rites, offering sacrifices, and providing spiritual guidance. Ancestor worship was also an important aspect of their religious practice, with ancestors considered protectors and intermediaries between the living and the spiritual world.

**Culture and Arts**: The Idoma people had a rich cultural heritage expressed through music, dance, art, and festivals. They were known for their vibrant dance forms and musical traditions, which featured drumming, singing, and elaborate costumes. Festivals and ceremonies were integral to their cultural life, often involving community-wide participation and celebrating agricultural cycles, religious events, and social milestones. The Idoma were skilled in various forms of art, including weaving, pottery, and metalwork. Their artistic expressions often depicted cultural motifs and were used in both daily life and ceremonial contexts.

**Trade and Interaction:** The Idoma engaged in trade with neighboring ethnic groups, such as the Tiv, Igala, and Hausa. They traded goods like agricultural produce, livestock, and locally made crafts. Their strategic location facilitated interactions with various trading networks, allowing them to access goods and ideas from other regions. This trade not only supported their economy but also enabled cultural exchanges with neighboring communities.

**PRE-COLONIAL EBIRA KINGDOM**

Pre-colonial Ebira society was thus marked by its agrarian economy, decentralized political structures, rich cultural traditions, and a strong emphasis on community and kinship. The Ebira people’s adaptability and resourcefulness allowed them to thrive in the dynamic environment of central Nigeria, maintaining their cultural identity and social cohesion amidst changing circumstances**.**

According to oral tradition, the origin of Ebira can be traced to WUKARI, which was part of the Kwararafa confederation in 1680AD. The Ebira migrated from Wukari as a result of chieftaincy dispute. They were with the Igala people for about 300 years before they parted ways. The father of the Ebira Tao is Itaazi, who had five sons and a daughter. He led the Ebira Tao to the present Ebira land. The five sons later spread and founded the various districts in Ebira land.

The Ebira people are mostly found in Kogi, Nasarawa, and Edo states as well as the Federal Capital Territory in present day Nigeria. There are different Ebira sub-groups known as Ebira Tao, Ebira koto, Ebira Etuno, and Ebira Opanda.

The Ebira people are believed to be of Jukun origin (Jukun of Wukari in present day Taraba state). The people hated the central administrative authority of the Jukuns in the Wukari area of Kwararafa kingdom, and as a result migrated under the leadership of the leader known as Itaazi.

SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF EBIRA KINGDOM

The pre-colonial Ebira community practiced a non-centralized system of government before the advent of colonial rule. They had no central administrative structure. The Ebira community was divided into clans (segmentary). There existed five principal clans among others, namely OKENGWE, EIKA, OKEHI, ADAVI, and IHIMA. These clans are headed respectively by priests known as OHINDASE, ADEIKA, OHIOMAHI, ASEMA and OBONBANYI.

The OHINOYI is the highest traditional political authority in the Ebira land. The Ebira people celebrate three major festivals which are ECHANE, ECHORI, and EBE.

The clan head (OTARU) used to be conferred on the oldest male within the clan. He had little political influence. He presided over meetings; however, he made judgment based on the consensus opinion of the elders in the clan. He also performed religious and disciplinary duties which were limited to his family. The clan head also had the responsibility of keeping the income from the clan such as produce from palm oil, and locust bean trees. The leg of whatever animal that was killed during hunting was given to him, which he in turn, shared with the kindred head. All the clan heads were under the control of the chief priest, elders and influential individuals.

Pre-colonial Ebira society, located in what is now central Nigeria, particularly in Kogi State, was known for its distinct cultural practices, robust agrarian economy, and decentralized political organization. The Ebira people, also known as Egbira, are part of the larger Niger-Congo ethnolinguistic group.

**Key aspects of pre-colonial Ebira society**

**Political Organization**: Ebira society was characterized by a decentralized political structure. Each village or clan was autonomous and governed by a council of elders. These councils comprised respected men and women who made decisions through consensus. Leadership roles were typically based on age and wisdom rather than hereditary titles. There were no centralized kings or overarching political authorities, which allowed for a highly participatory form of governance.

**Economy:** The economy of the Ebira people was primarily agrarian. They cultivated crops such as yams, cassava, maize, and millet. The fertile land of their region supported diverse agricultural activities. In addition to farming, the Ebira people engaged in hunting, fishing, and animal husbandry, including rearing goats, sheep, and poultry. Trade was also an important part of their economy; they exchanged agricultural produce, livestock, and locally made crafts with neighboring communities and traders from other regions.

**Social Structure:** The Ebira society was organized around extended families and kinship groups. The family unit was the cornerstone of social organization, providing social identity, support, and continuity of cultural practices. Age-grade systems, grouping individuals of similar ages for communal activities, labor, and social functions, were significant. These systems promoted community solidarity, mutual support, and a sense of responsibility among members.

**Religion**: Traditional Ebira religion was polytheistic and animistic, with a belief in a supreme deity and various lesser gods, spirits, and ancestors. The Ebira people believed in the existence of spirits in natural objects and places, and their religious practices included rituals, sacrifices, and ceremonies to honor these spiritual beings. Priests and diviners played crucial roles in conducting religious rites, offering sacrifices, and providing spiritual guidance.

**Culture and Arts:** The Ebira people had a rich cultural heritage expressed through music, dance, art, and festivals. They were known for their vibrant dance forms and musical traditions, which featured drumming, singing, and elaborate costumes. Festivals and ceremonies were integral to their cultural life, often involving community-wide participation and celebrating agricultural cycles, religious events, and social milestones. The Ebira were skilled in various forms of art, including weaving, pottery, and metalwork, with these crafts playing important roles in both daily life and ceremonial contexts.

**Trade and Interaction:** The Ebira engaged in trade with neighboring ethnic groups, such as the Yoruba, Igala, and Nupe. They traded goods like agricultural produce, livestock, and locally made crafts. Their strategic location facilitated interactions with various trading networks, allowing them to access goods and ideas from other regions. This trade not only supported their economy but also enabled cultural exchanges with neighboring communities.

**PRE-COLONIAL IGBO KINGDOM EARLY HISTORY**

Pre-colonial Igbo society, located in present-day southeastern Nigeria, was a complex and decentralized system characterized by rich cultural traditions, robust trade networks, and intricate political structures. The Igbo people were organized into autonomous villages and communities, each with its own distinct customs and governance systems.

Even though not much was known of the Igbo speaking people before the advent of the Europeans into the west coast of Africa, history has it that the Igbos migrated to their present location hundreds of years ago. It has been suggested that they migrated with the Ibibio, but soon became the dominant tribe in the eastern Nigeria because of their industrious nature. They overshadowed the Ibibio and others that arrived later. The Igbos are close neighbors to the Ibibio’s who migrated with them to their present location, along with the Ijaws and the Itsekiri of the Niger Delta.  
Nri in Anambra state is regarded as the ancestral home of the Igbos. The Igbos can be found in the south eastern part of present day Nigeria. They generally had no kings. This is why the Igbo society is regarded as stateless. Power was divided among the members of the village.

The Igbos operated a democratic system of government. The highest democratic institution in the society was the town assembly. The largest political group was the village.

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE IGBO KINGDOM

One thing that distinguished the Igbo people in the pre-colonial era was their pattern of settlement. While states and empires had people living in large and urban communities, the Igbo people lived in villages.

The Igbos had a decentralized system of government. There existed many institutions in the pre-colonial Igbo society. These institutions were charged with the responsibility of judicial, legislative and executive functions. These institutions include the following;

The town assembly (Oha-na-Eze)

The council of elders

The Ofor title holders

The family

The Ozor title holders

The age-grade

The umuada (first daughters)

The goddess (Ala) represented by the chief priest.

The family group: this is the basic unit of every political institution. Each family group is headed by the Okpara. He controls the family and settles disputes. He also preforms ceremonial functions on behalf of the family.

The Village council: this is also referred to as council of elders. It consists of all the family heads in the village. Each village existed as a sovereign entity. Each family head (Okpara) is given an Ofor title. They have the responsibility of discussing matters that affect the life of the citizens, maintain law and order in the society as well as settling disputes between groups of families.

The Ozor title holders: this was regarded as the highest title of honour given to the specific individuals in pre-colonial Igbo society. It was necessary that one was prestigious, popular and wealthy to become an Ozor title holder. This position was not hereditary. They were highly influential, settled disputes and gave valuable advice to the Okparas.

Age grade: this is a group of young men of the same age range.

The Ala: this is popularly known as the goddess of the land. The Ala judges cases of murder, homicide and other cases. There exists Ala’s priest who interprets the pronouncement of the Ala.

The Igbo-Ukwu culture and arts, traditional dressing and marriage practice reflect the rich culture of the Igbo people.

**Key aspects of pre-colonial Igbo society**

**Political Organization**: Unlike many centralized African kingdoms, the Igbo people practiced a highly decentralized form of governance. Each village or group of villages, known as a clan, was autonomous and governed by a council of elders, which included respected men and women known for their wisdom and experience. Decisions were made collectively, often through a consensus-building process. The council of elders was supported by various age-grade societies and secret societies, such as the Okonko and Ekpe, which played crucial roles in maintaining social order and implementing community decisions.

**Economy**: The Igbo economy was primarily agrarian, with yam being the staple crop. They also cultivated other crops such as cassava, maize, cocoyam, and palm produce. The Igbo were skilled craftsmen and traders, known for their ironworks, pottery, weaving, and carving. They engaged in extensive trade, both locally and with neighboring regions, trading goods like palm oil, palm kernels, and other agricultural products. The Aro Confederacy, a network of merchant clans, played a significant role in long-distance trade and the spread of the Igbo influence.

**Social Structure**: Igbo society was organized around extended families and lineage groups. Kinship and lineage played central roles in social identity and obligations. The family unit was the primary unit of social organization, with the eldest male (the family head) holding significant authority. Age-grade systems grouped individuals of similar ages together for social, economic, and political activities, fostering a strong sense of community and mutual responsibility.

**Religion**: Traditional Igbo religion was polytheistic and animistic, involving the worship of a supreme god, Chukwu or Chineke, as well as a host of lesser deities and ancestral spirits. The Igbo believed in the existence of spirits in natural objects and practiced various rituals and ceremonies to honor these spiritual beings. Priests and diviners played essential roles in mediating between the people and the spiritual world, performing rituals, offering sacrifices, and providing guidance based on spiritual insights.

**Culture and Arts**: The Igbo had a rich cultural heritage expressed through their art, music, dance, and festivals. They were known for their elaborate masquerades, which featured intricate masks and costumes used in religious and social ceremonies. These masquerades often represented deities, spirits, and ancestral figures, playing a significant role in community rituals and celebrations. The Igbo also excelled in various forms of art, including sculpture, beadwork, and weaving.

**Trade and Interaction**: The Igbo engaged in extensive trade with neighboring ethnic groups, such as the Yoruba, Benin, and Ibibio. They traded goods like palm oil, salt, iron tools, and textiles. The Niger River and its tributaries facilitated these interactions, enabling the Igbo to connect with broader regional and trans-Saharan trade networks.

Pre-colonial Igbo society was thus marked by its decentralized political structures, agrarian economy, vibrant cultural practices, and strong emphasis on community and kinship. Their social and economic systems fostered a sense of autonomy and resilience, which played a crucial role in their interactions with neighboring societies and European traders.

**PRE-COLONIAL URHOBO PEOPLE**

Pre-colonial Urhobo society, located in what is now Delta State in southern Nigeria, was characterized by a rich cultural heritage, organized political structures, and a robust economy based on agriculture and trade. The Urhobo people are one of the major ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region.

The Urhobo speaking people are one of the ethnic groups in Niger Delta region in Nigeria. They have social and cultural affinity to the Edo people of Nigeria. They can be found in the present Delta state of Nigeria. Urhobo people are surrounded by many neighbors such as the Isoko (South east), Itsekiri\Ijaw (West), Edo (North) and Ukwuani (North east).

Urhobo people are found mainly in Ughelli Local Government, Delta state, also in Ethiope, Okpe and Sapele Local Government Areas. They are known for their unique version of pidgin English.

Their environment is covered with water bodies, green vegetation, trees and forest. Their major sources of income are fishing, salt mining, hunting, farming and oil palm and timber production.

POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF URHOBO PEOPLE

The Urhobo political system was based on age grade. The king in Urhobo land was called “Ovie”. This title was borrowed from Bini (Benin).

Like the Igbos, the political and social structures of the Urhobo were based on the structure of the village in which the compound was the smallest unit. For example, the father was the head of the compound, responsible for the maintenance of law and order as well as the promotion of the welfare of each family. The executive, religious and priestly function was carried out by the Ovie. Power was vested in the following groups:

The village group: this consists of people of common blood line. They are the largest and most organized political unit.

The council of elders: they were also known as “Ekpako”. The controlled the administrative affairs of the people, also responsible for making important decisions affecting the people.

Otota: this is the village spokesman. He is expected to be of good character and sound knowledge. He understood the people’s history and culture well. Otota in the pre-colonial Urhobo land are orators with great oratory skills.

Iletu: he was the commander of war. Most Iletu were brave and members of the council of elders.

The age grade: this consisted male of different ages, ranging from 12-15 years, 16-40 years, 41-45 years, and 46 years and above.

Titled positions like OKAKA, ADE, and OHONWONRE are gotten with payment of large sum of money, wealth and social status. Age, oratory skills and knowledge of the culture and tradition serve as criteria by which the status of an individual in the society is determined.

**Key aspects of pre-colonial Urhobo society**

**Political Organization:** The Urhobo people were organized into autonomous communities or kingdoms, each headed by a king or a chief. The governance system was highly decentralized, with each community having its own council of elders, who played significant roles in decision-making and conflict resolution. Leadership was often hereditary, with the eldest male usually becoming the head of the family or community.

**Economy**: The Urhobo economy was primarily agrarian. They cultivated crops such as yam, cassava, maize, and plantains. Fishing and hunting were also important economic activities, given their proximity to rivers and forests. The Urhobo people engaged in trade with neighboring ethnic groups and were known for their skills in blacksmithing, pottery, and weaving.

**Social Structure**: Urhobo society was organized along kinship lines, with extended families living together in large compounds. Lineage and clan affiliations were central to social identity and cohesion. Marriage and family life were important aspects of social organization, with polygamy being a common practice.

Religion: Traditional Urhobo religion was polytheistic, involving the worship of a supreme deity called Oghene, along with various other gods and spirits associated with natural elements and ancestors. Religious practices included rituals, festivals, and ceremonies to honor these deities and seek their blessings. Priests and priestesses played crucial roles in conducting religious rites and serving as intermediaries between the people and the spiritual world.

**Culture and Arts**: The Urhobo people have a rich cultural heritage expressed through their music, dance, art, and festivals. They are known for their intricate masks, sculptures, and carvings, which are used in religious and cultural ceremonies. Music and dance were integral parts of celebrations and rituals, often involving drumming, singing, and elaborate costumes.

**Trade and Interaction**: The Urhobo engaged in trade with neighboring ethnic groups, such as the Itsekiri, Isoko, and Ijaw. They traded goods like palm oil, fish, and agricultural produce. The Niger Delta’s waterways facilitated these interactions, allowing the Urhobo to connect with broader regional trade networks.

Pre-colonial Urhobo society was thus marked by its agrarian economy, decentralized political structures, rich cultural traditions, and a strong emphasis on kinship and community.

**PRE-COLONIAL IJAW KINGDOM**

Pre-colonial Ijaw society, located in the Niger Delta region of present-day Nigeria, was a vibrant and complex society characterized by its maritime culture, decentralized political organization, and rich traditions in trade, art, and religion. The Ijaw are one of the oldest ethnic groups in the region, with a history deeply connected to the waterways of the Niger Delta.

The Ijaw are found mostly in the forest regions of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers state within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Some are natives of Akwa-Ibom, Edo, and Ondo states in Nigeria. The Ijaws currently numbering about 15 million sit on Nigeria’s rich oil lands. They are one of the first of Nigeria’s people to have contacts with the westerners and were active in slave trade.

The Ijaw people earn a living by fishing, farming paddy rice, plantains, yams, cocoyam, bananas, and other vegetables as well as tropical fruits such as guava, mangoes, and pineapples. Smoke-dried fish, timber, palm oil and palm kernel were processed for export.

SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE IJAW PEOPLE

The Ijaw people practiced a system of administration known as the house system. This system involves people being grouped into households. The houses were recognized by their possession of canoes used in trade, and gathering slaves. Wealth formed the basis for establishing a “House”. Most slaves gathered wealth as a result of their diligence and hard work and they owned a House. When the founding owner of a “House” dies, a new leader is appointed by the votes of the male adults. The society was composed of families and village heads. The government was mainly in the hands of a group of elders while the house heads had power over their respective households.

The assembly of male adults is another major organ of government. The head of the lineage was the head of the assembly of male adults.

**Key aspects of pre-colonial Ijaw society**

**Political Organization**: Ijaw society was highly decentralized, with each village or group of villages operating as an autonomous unit. Leadership within these communities was typically vested in a council of elders, which included heads of extended families and other respected figures. Decisions were made collectively, and there was no central authority governing all Ijaw people. The village heads or kings (known as Amanyanabo) played important roles in maintaining order and representing their communities.

**Economy:** The Ijaw economy was heavily reliant on fishing, given its proximity to rivers, creeks, and the Atlantic Ocean. They were skilled fishermen and boat builders. The Ijaw also engaged in farming, cultivating crops such as yam, cassava, plantains, and palm produce. Trade was a significant aspect of their economy; they were involved in the exchange of goods like fish, salt, palm oil, and other local products with neighboring communities and distant markets.

**Social Structure**: Ijaw society was organized around extended families and kinship groups. These kinship units were essential for social identity and support. The age-grade system was an important social institution, grouping individuals of similar ages for communal activities, work, and social functions. This system fostered a strong sense of community and mutual responsibility.

**Religion**: Traditional Ijaw religion was polytheistic and animistic, centered on the worship of a supreme deity known as Woyingi or Egbesu, alongside various other gods, spirits, and ancestors. Water spirits, known as Owuamapu, were particularly significant due to the Ijaw’s close relationship with their aquatic environment. Religious practices included rituals, sacrifices, and ceremonies to honor these spiritual beings, seek their blessings, and ensure community well-being. Priests and priestesses played crucial roles in conducting religious rites and serving as intermediaries between the people and the spiritual world.

**Culture and Arts:** The Ijaw had a rich cultural heritage, with music, dance, and festivals playing integral roles in their society. They were known for their masquerades and elaborate costumes used in religious and social ceremonies. Ijaw art, particularly wood carving and sculpture, was highly developed and often depicted spiritual and ancestral figures. Oral traditions, including storytelling, proverbs, and songs, were important for passing down history, values, and cultural knowledge.

**Trade and Interaction:** The Ijaw were active participants in regional trade networks, exchanging goods with neighboring ethnic groups such as the Yoruba, Igbo, and Itsekiri. The Niger Delta’s intricate network of waterways facilitated these interactions, enabling the Ijaw to connect with broader trade routes, including the transatlantic trade. European traders, particularly the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, established contact with the Ijaw for the exchange of goods, including slaves, palm oil, and other commodities.

Pre-colonial Ijaw society was thus marked by its maritime economy, decentralized political organization, rich cultural traditions, and a strong connection to its natural environment. The Ijaw people’s adaptability and resourcefulness allowed them to thrive in the challenging and dynamic landscape of the Niger Delta.

**PRE-COLONIAL ORON PEOPLE**

Pre-colonial Oron society was thus marked by its maritime economy, decentralized political structures, rich cultural practices, and strong emphasis on community and kinship. The Oron people’s adaptability and resourcefulness allowed them to thrive in the dynamic environment of the Niger Delta region.

The Oron people are found in Akwa Ibom state. They are also known as the “Oro Nation”. Natives of this area speak the dialect also known as Oron. Most Oron people speak and understand the Efik language fluently. The Oron also have some dialectical similarities with the Ibibio and Annang people. Therefore, their communication in Ibibio and Annang language is very proficient. The language of the Oron people originated from them and was not borrowed from the Bantus, Cameroon, or Palestine. History has it that there existed a warrior named ABANG, so powerful with much muscle. He was the chief wrestler known as MBOK. The wrestling known as MBOK was originated by Abang the warrior from Africa which was displayed by the African slaves after a day’s job. They did this to the admiration of the guards who watched over them at work. It later spread and developed as wrestling around the world today.

Abang, the warrior gallantly fought against the slave masters who were in the area for slave trade. He was eventually overpowered and captured with few of his group and were taken to the present day Israel of what was then Egypt. This is perhaps the reason why the only two nations with places called Oron are isreal and Nigeria. The Oron like the other tribes such as the Efik and the Ibibio used the Ekpe secret society as their political authority.

Pre-colonial Oron society, located in present-day southeastern Nigeria, was a culturally rich and well-organized community known for its maritime activities, trade, and intricate social structures. The Oron people, a subgroup of the larger Ibibio ethnic group, had distinct traditions and social practices.

**Key aspects of pre-colonial Oron society**

**Political Organization:** Oron society was organized into autonomous villages and clans, each with its own leadership structures. These communities were governed by councils of elders, which included heads of extended families and other influential figures. Decisions were made collectively, often through a consensus process. Leadership roles were typically hereditary, with the eldest male serving as the family head and representing the family in the council of elders. Secret societies, such as the Ekpo society, played significant roles in governance, law enforcement, and religious activities.

**Economy:** The Oron economy was diverse, with a strong emphasis on fishing, given their proximity to the coast and rivers. They were skilled fishermen and boat builders, engaging in both subsistence and commercial fishing. Agriculture was also important, with crops like yam, cassava, maize, and plantains being cultivated. Trade was a significant aspect of the Oron economy, as they exchanged fish, salt, palm oil, and other local products with neighboring communities and distant traders. Their coastal location facilitated trade with European merchants during the era of the transatlantic trade.

**Social Structure:** Oron society was organized around extended families and kinship groups, which were central to social identity and support. The extended family system ensured that individuals had a strong sense of belonging and mutual responsibility. Age-grade systems, which grouped individuals of similar ages for communal activities, work, and social functions, were important social institutions. These systems fostered community solidarity and cooperation.

**Religion**: Traditional Oron religion was polytheistic and animistic, involving the worship of a supreme deity along with various other gods, spirits, and ancestors. Water spirits were particularly significant due to the Oron’s close relationship with their aquatic environment. Religious practices included rituals, sacrifices, and ceremonies to honor these spiritual beings and seek their blessings. Priests and priestesses played crucial roles in conducting religious rites and serving as intermediaries between the people and the spiritual world. Secret societies like Ekpe and Ekpo also had religious functions, enforcing moral codes and conducting initiation rites.

**Culture and Arts:** The Oron had a rich cultural heritage, with music, dance, and festivals playing integral roles in their society. They were known for their elaborate masquerades, featuring intricate masks and costumes used in religious and social ceremonies. These masquerades often represented deities, spirits, and ancestral figures. The Oron were skilled in various forms of art, including wood carving, sculpture, and pottery. Oral traditions, such as storytelling, proverbs, and songs, were important for passing down history, values, and cultural knowledge.

**Trade and Interaction**: The Oron engaged in extensive trade with neighboring ethnic groups such as the Efik, Ibibio, and Igbo. They traded goods like fish, salt, palm oil, and agricultural produce. Their coastal location and access to waterways facilitated interactions with European traders, especially during the period of the transatlantic slave trade. This interaction influenced the local economy and introduced new goods and ideas to the Oron people.

**PRE-COLONIAL IBIBIO KINGDOM**

Pre-colonial Ibibio society was thus marked by its agrarian economy, decentralized political structures, rich cultural practices, and strong emphasis on community and kinship. The Ibibio people’s adaptability and resourcefulness allowed them to thrive in the dynamic environment of the Niger Delta region.

The Ibibio people are located at the southern part of Nigeria. The Ibibio people are mainly found in Akwa Ibom as well as Annang, Eket, and Oron community. The Ibibio tribe hold political control over Akwa Ibom state as a result of their population, though government is shared with the Annang, Eket, and Oron.

POLITICAL SYSTEM OF PRE-COLONIAL IBIBIO KINGDOM

The Ibibio society is a stateless society. That is they have no king. The Ibibio society consists of communities, made up of large families, having blood relations. Each family is ruled by their religious head known as the Obong Ikpaisong. He ruled with the Head of the families and traditional court. The decision or orders of the traditional Council or the Obong Ikpaisong were enforced by the members of the Ekpo society. They acted as the military and the police of the community.

The Ibibio traditional religion was based on the belief in Abasi Eyong(God of heaven) and Abasi Isong(God of the earth). The coming of the Christian missionaries led to the establishment of the first church Qua Iboe church, the Methodist, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian churches. Mary Slessor stopped the killing of twins which has been the practice among the Ibibio people.

The Ibibio society had societies for men and women. EKONG and EKPE was a group, made for all Ibibio male adult, as they were eligible to members of the Ekpe society.

EBRE and IBAN ISONG. This society was meant for women. The primary aim of this society is to ensure peace and orderliness in the society. The Ekpe was the most significant institution that performs legislative, executive and judicial functions.

Pre-colonial Ibibio society, located in the southeastern part of present-day Nigeria, was a well-organized and culturally rich community. The Ibibio people are one of the oldest ethnic groups in Nigeria, known for their distinct language, traditions, and social structures.

**Key aspects of pre-colonial Ibibio society**

**Political Organization**: Ibibio society was organized into various autonomous villages and clans. Each village was governed by a council of elders, which included heads of extended families and other respected individuals. Decisions were made collectively, often through a consensus process. Leadership was typically hereditary, with the eldest male serving as the head of the family and representing the family in the council of elders. There were also secret societies, such as the Ekpo society, which played important roles in governance, law enforcement, and religious activities.

**Economy:** The Ibibio economy was primarily agrarian. They cultivated crops such as yam, cassava, cocoyam, maize, and plantains. The fertile land of the region supported diverse agricultural activities. The Ibibio were also involved in fishing, hunting, and animal husbandry. Trade was a significant aspect of their economy; they exchanged goods like palm oil, palm kernels, fish, and other agricultural products with neighboring communities and distant traders. The proximity to the coast facilitated trade with European merchants, especially in the era of the transatlantic trade.

**Social Structure**: Ibibio society was organized around extended families and kinship groups. These groups were crucial for social identity and support. The extended family system ensured that individuals had a strong sense of belonging and mutual responsibility. Age-grade systems, grouping individuals of similar ages for communal activities, work, and social functions, were an important social institution. This system fostered community solidarity and cooperation.

**Religion:** Traditional Ibibio religion was polytheistic and animistic. They believed in a supreme deity known as Abasi, along with a host of other gods, spirits, and ancestors. The Ibibio also believed in the existence of spirits in natural objects and places. Religious practices included rituals, sacrifices, and ceremonies to honor these spiritual beings and seek their blessings. Priests and priestesses played crucial roles in conducting religious rites and serving as intermediaries between the people and the spiritual world. Secret societies like the Ekpo and Ekpe societies also had religious functions, enforcing moral codes and conducting initiation rites.

**Culture and Arts:** The Ibibio had a rich cultural heritage, expressed through their art, music, dance, and festivals. They were known for their elaborate masquerades, featuring intricate masks and costumes used in religious and social ceremonies. These masquerades often represented deities, spirits, and ancestral figures. The Ibibio were skilled in various forms of art, including wood carving, sculpture, and pottery. Oral traditions, such as storytelling, proverbs, and songs, were important for passing down history, values, and cultural knowledge.

**Trade and Interaction**: The Ibibio engaged in extensive trade with neighboring ethnic groups such as the Efik, Igbo, and Annang. They traded goods like palm oil, fish, salt, and agricultural produce. The region’s rivers and proximity to the coast facilitated interactions with European traders, especially during the period of the transatlantic slave trade. This interaction influenced the local economy and introduced new goods and ideas to the Ibibio people.