

WEEK FIVE (5)

TOPIC : NON-CENTRALIZED STATE – IGBO SOCIETY

ORIGIN OF IGBO PEOPLE

There are several school of thoughts (or oral tradition) on the origin of Igbo people. Why some people believe that Igbo people are some of the last race of Israel who settled in North Africa around 2,000 BC and later migrated to their current location in Nigeria, others believe that Igbo ethnic group originated from Awka-Nri and Orlu (Isuama) area from where they spread to other parts of Igbo land. It is believed that Igbo people first settled and lived in the 'core Igbo centre' area earlier mentioned (ie. Orlu and Awka-Nri area) from 2500 BC and it was from Orlu and Awka Nri that's the first migrated northward to Nsukka area and then southward to Ikwerre, Asa, Ndoki and Uratta area. Also from Orlu area, people migrated to the east and South Eastern area like Arochukwu, Umuahia, Edda, Ohafia and Ngwa. It is also believed that evil people are of negro race who came from the southern fringes of the Sahara in the North West of ancient town of Timbuktu (Mali) and Khartoum (Sudan). This group concluded that Igbo people travelled down to their present location from Sudan.

SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE IGBO SOCIETY

Igbo society in general operate a village republican system while some other Igbo communities operate a monarchical system. Even though a typical Igbo society was stateless society where power was not centralised, some people communities who lived in a river area like Onitsha, Agbor, Asaba, and Oguta because of their nearness and interaction with centralised States like Igala Kingdom and Benin Kingdom developed the culture of establishing their own Igbo kingdoms with kings called Obi or Igwe. Most of Igbo society however operate a republican system where people ruled themselves through the village assembly and village group.

1. **THE FAMILY** : in the family, the oldest or husbands are still head of the family , especially the first son called Okpara or opara. The okpara represented the family during kingdom meetings . he holds the symbol of authority (ofa)
2. **LINEAGE ASSEMBLY** : this group was made up of unique ancestral nuclear family, bounded by blood.
3. **VILLIAGE ASSEMBLY**: this was the highest unit plan which consist of a number of villages that claimed a common ancestor bounded by blood. The village assembly consist of male members from each family.
4. **SECRETE SOCIETY** : they assist the lineage assembly and village assembly in executing certain decisions within the community. They were the law making body (traditional judiciary) of the political organization.
5. **AGE GRADE**: The system of government recognized the institution of the age group social life, each age group was responsible for certain duties as stipulated by law, for example, the senior age group looked after the maintenance of peace and order as well as providing army commander off external aggressions. The junior age-group took care of the sanitation related matters, while the most junior age group catered for other issues not mentioned above,

THE ECONOMY OF IGBO SOCIETY.

1. **Agriculture** : the Igbo's practised extensive agriculture both in large and small scale. Their produce includes yam, garri, oil bean, cassava, cocoyam, locust bean, all kinds of vegetable .

2. **Wood carving** : this generated enough economy for the Igbo people . wood were used to carve doors, windows, stools, tables , frames etc.

3. **Trading** : both male and female took part in trade and sale of commodities. Both internal and long distance trade were carried out. They traded with Igala , idoma, rivers, cross over , delta etc.

4. **fishing**

5. **cloth weaving**

6. **hunting.**

ASSIGNMENT:

1. Explain the socio political structure of the Igbo people
2. Highlight four (4) economy of Igbo society.