***All Saints Secondary School Oyigbo, Rivers State.***

***History Department***

***JSS I***

***Week Ten***

***Topic - Major Centralized States in Pre-colonial Nigeria ( Niger Delta City States )***

***Niger Delta City States in Precolonial Nigeria***

Niger delta city states like Bonny , Opobo , new Calabar ( Kalabari) , old Calabar ( Calabar city), Brass ( Nembe) were involved in the trans - Atlantic slave trade in the pre colonial era .

The history of the Niger delta city states was basically that of trade, expansion and decline.

Inhabiting an area which can grow nothing apart from mangroves, they developed a trade with the people of the hinterland on salt and fish which the exchanged with agricultural products.

The slave trade era brought alot of political changes , as the Influex of new members in the society gave way to new institution known as " Canoe House".

Canoe house was a compact and well organized trading and fighting corporation capable of maintaining and manning a war canoe.

One could be born a member, or join voluntarily, but enslavement was the common means of recruitment.

A slave attached himself to the kitchen of a woman member who was like a mother to him. If he works hard, he can be elected as the head of his house.

The different houses elected the governing council of the state which elected the king.

The canoe house can also give birth to other ones, depending on how prosperous the canoe house was . The young ones attached themselves to the mother houses, and if any of them were impoverished, it could attach itself to a more prosperous one. Steps were taken to maintain the culture, because of large Influx of Igbo natives. Like the establishment of masquerade and secret society. These secret societies challenged those found outside at night, if they answer with a foreign accent, they were sold abroad or put to dead.

***Assignment***

1. Write notes on the Ekpe secret society of Calabar.