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**A Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State in Salient issues in government and Nigeria’s Politics.**

**Introduction**

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. The pre-colonial period is the period before the coming of the colonialists to Nigeria while the colonial period is the one in which the colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation and it is a product of a historical arrangement which arose out of European adventure in the colonisation of Africa.

**The scientific and Technological Development of Early Nigerian Societies**

**Major landmark in Early Nigerian History;** the information on this in the early Nigerian was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria. Some places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past included; Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife, and Benin. There are usually referred to as centres of ancient civilization.

**Traditional Politics Institutions in Pre colonial Nigeria**

In this part, the three major ethnic groups; Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa will be examined.

**The Yoruba pre-colonial system**

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. The ethnic group trace their origin to Oduduwa ancestral home of the Yoruba people. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to Ile-Ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to found other Yoruba kingdoms.

However, the political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. Each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Reach town has a king known as Oba who resides in the palace called ‘Aafin’. His paraphernalia of office included a beaded crown, a slippers, horse tail, and scepter. The Oba is both a spiritual and political head of the kingdom. The king also had other rulers of lesser ranks and status. The lesser rulers were in charge of the subordinate towns and wore crowns made of white beads known as ‘ sese ofun’. Another group of leaders were the Baale and Oloja, the Baales were the third rank of rulers and in charge of villages while the Oloja were the fourth rank of leaders and ruled over the farmlands. Each town were then divided into smaller units or wards for smooth administration and these wards were under ward heads known as ‘ijoye’ and they were sub-divided into compounds into compounds.

**The Igbo pre-colonial system**

From the ancient times, the igbo were best known for its acephalous or segmentary way of life because they had no centralized states. The igbo are group into five sub-cultures; i. the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria ii. The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria iii. The Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria iv. The Western Igbo v. The Northern Igbo

In the Igbo traditional society, there was no highly centralized authority but instead they had what could be called a diffusion of authority into different groups. They practiced direct democracy and decentralized system of government because they were no traditional rulers in form of Oba as in the case of Yoruba. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society. Each family was headed by an ‘Ofo’ title holder. Among the Ofo title holders, one of them was recognized as the most senior to others. He was known as the ‘Okpara’ who held the ‘Ozo’ title and presided over the council of elders meeting where issues affecting the lives of the people were discussed.

**The Hausa pre-colonial system**

The Hausa land is located in Nothern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 was made up of fourteen states and were two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven called ‘Hausa Bakwai’ states, that is Hausa legitimate states. The second group consist of the remaining seven states and were known as ‘Hausa banza’ states, that is Hausa illegitimates states. Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the fourteenth country, and by the fifteenth century it was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidated the religion in this area. The islam gave birth to many new political institutions such as the offices of the Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Dogari, Yari Sarki and Sarki Yau. They were some members of a council appointed by Uthman Dan Fodio and each held a title. They were; i. Sarkin Fada ii. Waziri iii. Galadima iv. Madawaki v. Magaji vi. Sarkin Dan Doka vii. Sarkin Ruwa viii. Sarkin Pawa ix. Yari. Furthermore, to make the local government efficient, and effective each emirates was divided into districts and an official known as ‘Hakimi’.