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19/law01/149
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Gst203

An historical analysis of the evolution of the Nigeria state (chapter 2)

The historical background of Nigeria government and politics involves the precolonial periods and colonial period in Nigeria. The precolonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria.

The Nigeria state is a colonial Colonial creation. Precolonial Nigeria comprise of different independent chiefdoms, state, kingdoms and empire. These, among others, include the Borno empire , the Hausa states, and the sokoto caliphate in the north. This ethics grouping all differs in there social, historical, social and cultural makeups .

Early man in Nigeria

The time when man started to exist in Nigeria remains unknown but there are archaeological evidences from different part of Nigeria which pointed that man has settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the

Pre colonial period 500,000-9000BC.

The achievement of early man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment. First he needed food. For this purpose he began his o hunt the animals and to gather fruits. But soon began to invent tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools. Archeologists called this tools the oldowan tools. He Began to make axes. These were tools which were oval and pointed in shape.

Information on the major land marks on early Nigeria history was made possible through excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past. Some of this places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past included: Nok, Igbo ukwu, Ife and Benin among others. They are referred all these centers as centers of ancient civilization.

Nok culture, the discovery of a terra-cotta head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as Wamba, katsina-Ala and Jema. The area where these terra-cotta figurines were found is called the Nok culture or civilization area. The Nok culture is believed to be a traditional civilization between the Stone Age and the Iron Age in Nigeria because of the presence of a combination of stone and iron objects.

Benin civilization, Benin was important for its art work. The crafts men of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass.

Ife civilization, Ife is important for terra-cotta and bronze heads. Objects such as stood and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz While animal and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails.

Igbo ukwu civilization, some bronze objects were discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo ukwu in 1939. This led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called **Thurstan Shaw**. Three sites included a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall. Many objects made of bronze were discovered in the various sites including the remains of decayed skeleton which have been suggested to be those of a king and five slaves who were buried with him. The sites excavation at Igbo ukwu have been dated to the middle of the 9th century A.D.

The historical background of precolonial system in the Yoruba land. The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba people trace their region to oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. These are different versions of the traditions of origin. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to ile-Ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to find other Yoruba kingdoms.

The oke oramfe is located in ile ife. It is believed to be the Centre from which the world was created. According to legend, there was a period when the world was covered by water. The almighty God then decided to send some of his messengers to the world which included obatala or orisa Nla or orisa alase and sixteen oye (immortals). They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth, and a cockerel. Somewhere on their way to the world, the leader, obatala, got drunk with palm wine. Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority from him and eventually led the party of the world. The oyo empire is a typical example of the pre colonial administration in Yoruba land. The first organ of government in oyo empire was the king known as Alaafin of oyo, then the ogoboni cult group and The army.

The precolonial system of the Igbo land;

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This because from the ancient times, they had no centralized states. The Igbos operated a kind of government without Kings. The Igbo are grouped into five sub cultures:

- The Igbo of eastern Nigeria
- The Igbo Of southern eastern Nigeria
- The Igbo of northern eastern Nigeria
- The western Igbo
- The northern Igbo

The Igbo traditional society had no centralized authority but instead they had what could be called a diffusion of authority into different groups. In other word, the Igbo practiced direct democracy and or a decentralized system of government because there were traditional rulers

In the form of oba as in the case of the Yoruba, and so no hereditary claims to the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo kingdom or empire. There was no highly centralized authority, some socio political institutions existed in each villiage to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions, such institutions included the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

Historical background of pre colonial political system in Hausa land;

Hausa land is located in the northern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 was made up of fourteen states, and they were of two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven states called "Hausa banza" states, that is Hausa illegitimate states.

Oral tradition attributed the origin of Hausa states to a man name **Bayajidda**, an Arab prince who travelled to the Sahel from baghdad. He killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of Daura, and he married a queen. The queen had six sons already, and she produced another son with bayajidda, and each of these sons ruled one of the seven kingdoms of the hausa city states, becoming the first kings.

The **sarki** was known as the head of any typical Hausa states. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well organized court. Sarkin kasar, the chief executive and judge of the state, but he was aided by a council of state. Islam was adopted and gave birth to many new political institutions such as offices of the galadima, madawaki, magaji, dogari, yari sarki and sarki yau. The islamisation of hausa land also inclined its judicial system. The sharia law started taking shape. Some new titles such as alkali and qadi's (judges) became commonplace in the administration of justice.

Colonial administration and indirect rule system in Nigeria historical background;

The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first European to land in Nigeria. The portuguese were the first European to arrive Nigeria through Benin kingdom. According to Hodgkin saw the arrival of the first Europeans in Benin, the Portuguese in 1472 in ewuare reign and alfonzo in 1484 in ozolua reign. The Atlantic slave trade was the trade carried on across the Atlantic Ocean between the Europeans and Africans. It became more important in the 15 century with the arrival of the Portuguese. Demand for slave could be traced to

The introduction of plantation system of agriculture in places like Brazil, Jamaica, and among others. By 1460, about 700-800 slaves were exported annually to Portugal from west Africa sources of slaves included condemned criminals, political prisoners, victims of kidnapping and relatives sold to redeem debts.

Before the year 1900, all the different centers conquered by the British were still under their original administration. But by 1900, the whole Nigeria was under the British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. However this was done without the consultation with Nigerians regarding their views as to whether they were in support of the amalgamation or not.

The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated northern and southern Nigeria. The principal reason for this is the same as that of May 1906. The northern protectorate was not as economically buoyant as the colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. That was why for the British imperial offices, since the southern trade was booming, amalgamation would allow the surpluses acquired in the south. Sir Lord Frederick Lugard is best known as the father of the "January 1914" amalgamation. Britain, therefore governed Nigeria by means of a system popularly referred to as "indirect rule". Indirect rule may be a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.