**Name: Okechukwu Lucy Chinenye.**

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**Question: In about 3-Page review Chapter Two, "An Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State" in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria's Politics, pages 15-32.**

**Answers:**

**An Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State.**

**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 colonialist to Nigeria while the colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation and it is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Prior to the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprise of different independent Chiefdoms, State, Kingdoms and Empires. These among others include, the Borno Empire, the Hausa states and the Sokoto Caliphate in the North, the Igbo segmentary societies in the East, Benin Kingdom and the Oyo Empire in the west and several ethnic identities in the Benue Valley. The country is bordered on the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, on the west by Benin, on the North by Niger and on the East by Cameroon. In its extreme northern corner, Lake Chad separates Nigeria from the country Chad. Nigeria stretches roughly 700miles from west to east and 650 miles from south to north, covering an area between 3°and 15° E longitude and between 4° and 14° N latitude.

**Early man and their achievements in Nigeria:** The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which pointed to the fact that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 5000,000-9000BC. The artefacts, mostly stone tools found by archaeologists further confirmed that Nigerians took part in the stone age civilization which can de dived into several periods: Early stone age, 3,000,000-35,000BC, Middle Stone Age, 35,000-15,000BC and Late Stone Age, 15,000-500BC. The excavation of a stone age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state has thrown more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria. In other for man to survive and cope with his environment he needed food, to get this food he needed to involve himself in some certain things. This is when the investment of tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools came in. They were called Oldowan-type tools by Archaeologists because they were identified in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanazia. Early man later advanced from early stone age to make hand axes then to heavy chopper. During one of the most active periods of technological efforts around 500BC and 200AD, people who lived in Nigeria made sculptures of which many were of human heads and figures. They were found in the village of Nok, were made of terracotta and they all possessed a distinctive artistic style.

**The Scientific and Technological Development of Early Nigeria Society:** The excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria lead to information on the major land marks in early Nigeria history. Some of the places where man lived are usually referred to as centers of ancient civilization. These ancient civilizations include; Nok, Benin, Ife and Igbo Ukwu civilization.

**Traditional Political Institutions in Pre-colonial Nigeria:**

**Three major ethnic groups in Nigerian political system of government are;**

* **Yoruba:**  **Historical Background Story and Political Structure**

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. Their origin can be traced to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people, there are diverse stories about the origin of the Yoruba people. There is the story that the Yoruba people migrated from the “East”, also from the North-East, that is from Mecca through Egypt and finally settled at Ile-Ife. There is also the Oke Oramfe version of the story where it’s said that the earth was full of water. God, Olodumare sent servants whom he gave some objects of which the world was created. The political structure of the Yoruba kingdoms was similar in nature. Each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town has a king known as the Oba who resides in the palace called “Aafin”. His paraphernalia of office included a beaded crown (Ade), a slipper (bata), horse tail (irukere) and scepter (Ase). The Oba was not only the spiritual and the political head of the kingdom, he was also the supreme authority in the kingdom and his words are laws are biding on everybody. Certain limitations were also placed on his powers, these limitations known as “eewo” were designed to curb the despotism and tyranny on the part of the king. Violation of “eewo” by a king could lead to his death. The Oyo empire a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in Yoruba land consisted of organs such as; the Alaafin Administration, the Ogboni Cult Administration and the Army.

* **Igbo:** **Historical Background Story and the Political Structure**

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This is because from the ancient times, they had no centralized states. Consequently, they operated a kind of government without kings. The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures: 1. The Igbo of the Eastern Nigeria 2. the Igbo of the South-Eastern Nigeria 3. the Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria 4. the Western Igbo 5. The Northern Igbo. One of the most popular versions of the migratory stories is the one that points to Israel. It is believed that there is a similarity between the cultures of Igbo and the Ancient Hebrew. Nri version is the only authentic version of the origin of the Igbo. In the Nri version, the ancestor of the Igbo, Eri, descended from the sky and sailed down the river Anambra. When he arrived at Aguleri, he met some autochthonous group of people who had no living memory of their own and settled with them. As their population increased, some groups migrated to other parts of Igboland to establish their own settlement. 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, that is they practiced direct democracy and/or a decentralized system of government. Although there was no highly centralized authority, some socio-political institution existed in each village to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions, such institutions included family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

* **Hausa**: **Historical Background Story and the Political Structure**

Hausa land is located in 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 Bakwai’ States (Hausa Legitimate States) and the second group of the remaining seven states were known as “Hausa Bakwai” States (Hausa Illegitimates State). The “Sarki” was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well-organized court. Sarkin Kasar, which means “ruler of the land”, was the full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa state. The Sarkin Kasar combined both political and religious functions. He was also the chief executive and judge of the state, but he was aided by a council of state. At the district level, the government was modelled after that at the national level. It is worthy of note that between 14th and 15th centuries, the socio-political organization of Hausa states took another shape. Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the fourteenth century 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 emir was an absolute monarch in his emirate, he was the political, administrative and spiritual leader. He administered his emirate in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic and Sharia law. Important title holders in the Emir’s cabinet included: Sarkin Fada, Waziri, Galaddima, Madawaki, Magaji, Sarkin Dan Doka, Sarkin Ruwa, Sarkin Pawa, and Yari.

**Colonial Administration and Indirect Rule System in Nigeria**

The Portuguese and not the British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria, were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria through Bini Kingdom. The Atlantic Slave Trade was the trade carried on across the Atlantic Ocean between the Europeans and Africans. The Trans-Atlantic slave was the unfortunate channel that first put the British in contact with Nigeria, the trade got to maturity in the 16th century but was later abolished in the early decade of the 19th century. After three centuries of shameful slave trade, came the so-called period of legitimate commerce. This was another golden opportunity for the Europeans to get more directly involved in the affairs of the African States. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century. Each of the European powers was given the opportunity to establish colonies where it had vested interest. The scramble for Africa by these European powers led to the partitioning of Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. Britain colonized Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia and Sierra-Leone.

**The Birth of Nigeria as a Geo-Political Entity.**

Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. But by 1900, the whole Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British Colonial Office. The first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria is the May 1906 amalgamation. The British government amalgamated Lagos colony and Protectorate with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the new colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. However, this was done without consultation with Nigerians regarding their views as to whether or not they supported the amalgamation. Tamuno (1980) observes that the primary aim of the 1960 amalgamation was purely economic, that is, “to use better financial position of the protectorate of southern Nigerian to cover the costs of administration and development in the financially weak colony and protectorate of Lagos, then saddled with the white elephant of a railway in need of extension since 1901. The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Sothern Nigeria. The principal reason for this is the same as that of May 1906. Sir Frederick Lugard (later became Lord) is best known as the father of the January 1914 amalgamation. Britain, therefore governed Nigeria by means of a system popularly known as “Indirect Rule” which is a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local rulers. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.