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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.

If one wants to talk about the historical background of Nigerian government and politics, one must start with the pre-colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. The precolonial period is the period before the coming of the colonialists to Nigeria while the colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established in Nigeria. Nigeria is a colonial creation. It is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Before Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. These include the Bornu 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. On the West, Nigeria is bordered by Benin, on the North, by Niger, and on the east, by Cameroon.

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 500,000—9000BC. The artefacts, mostly stone tools, found by archaeologists further confirmed that Nigerians also took part in the stone-age civilization. The stone age can be divided into several periods. These are: Early stone age 3,000,000—35,000BC; middle stone age 35,000—15,000BC and late stone age 15,000—500BC.

The man that first lived in Nigeria all does time ago, had to worked hard to survive in the environment. First, he needed food, so began to hunt the animals and gather fruits. Then he began to invent tools, archaeologists called the tools the Oldowan-type tools, because it was the first type of tool identified by the archaeologists in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzia. These tools were made during the early stone age, but they were later refined during the middle stone age and late stone age. After that they proceeded to invent another type of tool, which is a heavy chopper. This type was first seen in Sango Bay in Uganda, East Africa. One of the most active periods of technology in Nigeria was during the period between 500BC to 200AD. Some of the places where man lived in Nigeria in the past included: Nok (discovery of burnt clay), Igbo Ukwu (discovery of bronze objects and ornaments), Ife (bronze heads) and Benin (artwork).

**TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN PRE-COLONIAL NIGERIA.**

* **YORUBA LAND.**

The Yoruba’s are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria. Their origin can be traced to Oduduwa and Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home. The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms consist of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town has a king known as “Oba” whom has both spiritual and political head of the kingdom. His words are laws and biding on everybody. Another group of rulers were the Baale and the Oloja. The chiefs acted as advisers to the king. The old Oyo empire is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in Yoruba land. The Alaafin was the head of the empire. The members of Oyomesi were king makers as well. The Ogboni cult played a mediatory role in any conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin. The Are-Ona-Kankanfo was the army in the traditional Yoruba society. The army was credited with performing important functions which include stability and expansion of the empire.

* **IGBO LAND.**

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This is so because during the ancient times, they have no centralized states. The Igbo are grouped into five sub-culture: Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, Igbo of south- Eastern Nigeria, Igbo of north-eastern Nigeria, western Igbo and the northern Igbo. One of the most popular versions of the migratory stories of origin of the Igbo people is the one that points to Israel. In the Igbo traditional society, there was diffusion of authority into different groups. In other words, they practiced direct democracy. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society and each family was headed by an “Ofo”. Age grade was organized ona village basis. The secrets societies consisted of the diviner’s masquerades, “Ubinuknabi”, the: “Amadisha” and so on. They acted as intermediary between the living and the ancestors. The official religion practiced in pre-colonial Igbo land was the traditional religion.

* **HAUSA LAND.**

Hausa land is in Northern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 was made up of fourteen state and they were two distinct groups: “Hausa Bakwai” meaning legitimate states (Daura, Biram, Zaria, Katsina, Kano, Rano and Gobir.) “Hausa Banza” meaning illegitimates states (Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi, Yoruba). The Sarki was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. The Sarkin Kasar combined both political and religious functions. Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the 14th century and gave birth to new political institutions such as Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Dogari, Yari Sarki and Sarki Yau. The Emir was an absolute monarch, he was the political and spiritual leader. The judicial administration of Hausa-Fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called Sharia.

**COLONIAL ADMINISRATION AND INDIRECT RULE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.**

The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria. The Portuguese’s were the first Europeans to arrive in Nigeria through Bini kingdom. The Atlantic Slave Trade was the trade carried on across the Atlantic Ocean between the Europeans and Africans. After three centuries of shameful slave trade came the so-called legitimate commerce.

It was under the umbrella of such happenings that the British first formally annexed Nigerian territory. In 1861, they took Lagos as a colony. Britain colonized Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia and Sierra Leone in West Africa. As from 1898, the British government sought to establish and maintain a colonial state in Nigeria. To achieve this, several measures were to be taken, for example, removal of all visible opposition to the imposition of colonial rule, expansion and consolidation of British authority over the territory later known as Nigeria.

**THE BIRTH OF NIGERIA AS A GEO-POLITICAL ENTITY.**

Before Britain dominated parts of Nigeria in 1990, they were under their original administration. By 1990, the whole Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British colonial office. The first ever amalgamation of Britain in Nigeria was in May 1906. The second was in 1914. (Northern and Southern Nigeria). Sir Frederick Lugard is best known as the father of the “January 1914” amalgamation. Britain therefore governed Nigeria by the means of “Indirect Rule.” It is the means of ruling colonies through local traditional rulers.