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**QUESTION**

**IN ABOUT 3-PAGE REVIEW CHAPTER RWO, “AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE” IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS, PAGES 15-32.**

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 coming of the colonialists 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; a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, 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 to the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, which are on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. On the West, Nigeria is bordered by Benin. On the North by Niger and on the East by Cameroon. Lake chad separates Nigeria from the country of Chad.

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 Palaeolithic 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 Early man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment, he started searching for food at first and then he began to hunt the animals and gathered fruits later. Also started with the invention of tools. Archaeologists called the tools “the Oldowan-type” tools after being recognized first by the archaeologist in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanazia. These tools were made during the Early Stone Age, but they were later refined during the Middle Stone Age and Later Stone Age. There is evidence of advanced technology in various parts of Nigeria during the bronze and metal age. Indeed, one of the most active periods of technological efforts in Nigeria was during this period, around 500BC to 200AD. The site in which many figurines were found was the village of Nok where many discovery of a terracotta {burnt clay} were found. The area is now called Nok Culture or civilization area. The Benin civilization began because Benin was important for its artwork. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and cast objects in bronze and brass. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks too; one of which the ivory mask was used as a FESTAC symbol in 1977. The Ife Civilization began because Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Their objects such as stools and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz while the animal and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails. The Igbo Ukwu Civilization discovered some bronze objects and ornaments while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu which eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw in 1939. The three sites included a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall.

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

In this section, we only have three majority ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa-Fulani in the Nigeria traditional political system of government.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PRE- COLONIAL POLITICAL SYSTEM IN YORUBA

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led Yoruba to Ile-Ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to found other Yoruba Kingdoms. We also have the Oke Oramfe version of the origin of the Yoruba which is located in Ile-Ife. It is believed to be the centre from which the world was created. According to Akinjogbin and Ayandele (1980) who gave a full picture of what Oke Oramfe’s version is all about that 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 and they included Obatala or Orisa Nla or Orisa Alase {as the leader} and sixteen oye{immortals} who were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth, and a cockerel. The leader, Obatala, got drunk with palm wine. Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority from him and eventually led the party to the world. The site on which they landed is traditionally known as Oke Oramfe in Ile-Ife. On arrival at the site, Oduduwa set down the five pieces of iron and placed the lump of earth on them. The cockerel then spread the lump into earth with its throughout the earth. Consequently, the earth was formed and Oduduwa became the ruler. It was from Ile-Ife that he extended his authorities to other Yoruba towns and villages.

The political structures of the Yoruba Kingdoms were similar in nature, each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages, and farmlands. Each town has a king known as “Oba” who resides in the palace “Aafin.” His paraphernalia of office included a beaded crown {Ade}, and a pair of slippers{bata}, horse tail {irukere} and sceptre{Ase}. The Oba is both spiritual and political head of the kingdom, also the supreme authority in the kingdom and his words are laws and biding on everybody. The king had also other rulers of lesser rank and status. The lesser rulers were in charge of the subordinate towns and wore crowns made of white beads known as “sese ofun.” The Oyo Empire is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in Nigeria which is also known as the first organ of government and the administration headed by the king known as Alaafin of Oyo and who is also regarded as the “Lords of many lands” assisted in his administration by a retinue of officials made up priests, officials and eunuchs. Theoretically, the Alaafin is regarded as the fountain of authority and as the “companion of the gods” {Ekeji Orisa}. His powers were often limited by the Oyomesi; a council of seven members headed by the Bashorun. There is the Ogboni Cult’s administration too which was composed of free and prominent members of the society as well as the members of the Oyomesi. They played a mediatory role in any conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin. And lastly, we have the Army which was conferred with the coveted title of Are-Ona-Kankafo as the head which was made up of Cavalry and infantry and was credited with performing important functions which included stability of the empire, expansion, as well as keeping dissident territories in check.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PRE-COLONIAL POLITICAL SYSTEM IN IGBO LAND

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. The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures. The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of the South-Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of the North-Eastern Nigeria, the Western Igbo and the Northern Igbo. The Igbo society has always been known as acephalous as there were no equivalents of Oba, and Alaafin or of palaces over most parts of Igboland. Professor M.A Onwuejeogwu {2000} regards the Nri version as the only authentic version of origin in existence in the oral tradition of the Igbo and according to 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 increases, some of them started migrating to other parts of the Igboland to establish their own settlements.

The political structure of the Igbo society: In the Igbo traditional society, there was no highly centralized authority but instead what they had what could be called a diffusion of authority into different groups. They practiced a decentralized system of government because there were no traditional rulers in the form of Oba’s in the case of Yoruba and so no hereditary claims to be the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo kingdom nor empire. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society and each family was headed by an “Ofo” title holder. Here, households see themselves as belonging to one family, and thus having a common father. Among the “ofo” title holders, one of them was recognized as the most senior to others. He was known as “Okpara” who held the “Ozo” title and presided over the council of elders meeting where issues affecting the lives of the people were discussed. Age grade was organized on a village basis as an association of age grade that grew from childhood and took a common name to commemorate an event associated with the time of their birth. The age group was thus a society of companionship and protection. The Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in traditional Igbo society in which all the male adult members usually meet in this assembly to perform legislative functions in the open village square and all decisions taken during those meetings were absolute and final. The secret societies too are not excluded as they consist of the diviner’s masquerades, “Ubinuknabi” at Arochukwu, the “Amadisha” of Ozuzzu and so on. They acted as intermediary between the living and the ancestors. They performed rituals or offered sacrifices at different shrines intended to ward off evil and appease the gods and goddess whenever they were angry and thereby to atone for the sins of members of the community. The Igbo believe in re-incarnation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PRE-COLONIAL POLITICAL SYSTEM IN HAUSALAND.

Hausa land is located in the northern part of the country. Before 1804, the hausa land was located of fourteen states, and they were of two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven states called “Hausa Bakwai”states; the legitimate states which are Daura, Biram, Zaria, Kastina, Kano, Rano, and Gobir. The second group consist of the remaining seven states and were known as “Hausa Banza” states; the illegitimate states which are Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi and Yoruba. Oral tradition had it that an Arab prince named Bayajidda killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of Daura and he married the queen who already had six sons already and only had one son for Bayajidda making the seven sons who ruled each of the Hausa city-states. The political structure of the pre-colonial Hausa land started with the “Sarki” meaning the head of any typical Hausa state and also “Sarkin Kasar” which means “ruler of the land” who worked with a retinue of officials in a well-organized court.

The Emirate system brought about Islam which was introduced to Hausa land in the 14th and the 15th century, it was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio of 1804 furthered strengthened the religion which led to the conquest of the existing old Hausa kingdom and introduced a centralized political system of government. Also there was a new system of selecting and appointing the rulers as Emirs. The Emir was an absolute monarch in his emirate and administered his emirate in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic and Sharia law and was assisted by a group of district/village heads and the officials which includes the Sarkin Fada, Waziri, Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Sarki Dan Doka, Sarkin Ruwa, Sarkin Pawa, Yari and also the Hakimi appointed by the Emir to reside at his headquarters and administer the district on behalf of the Emir. The judicial administration of Hausa- Fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called Sharia which was established throughout the emirate.

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION AND INDIRECT RULE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

HISTORY: The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria. The Portugese 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. Demand for slaves could be traced to the introduction of plantation system of agriculture in places like Brazil, Jamaica, and Haiti among others. The Trans- Atlantic slave trade was the unfortunate channel that first put British in contact with Nigeria and which got into maturity in the16th century. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century.

The birth of Nigeria as a geo-political entity all began in 1900 when the whole Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British Colonial Office. The May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British Nigeria. British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate of the Southern Nigeria to form a new colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation was that of 1941 in January when the British amalgamated the Northern and Southern Nigeria. The principle reason for this is the same as that of May 1906. Sir Frederick Lugard who later became the Lord is best known as the father of “January 1914” amalgamation. Britain therefore governed Nigeria by means of a system popularly known as “Indirect Rule” which means the system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers.