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MATRIC NO:19/SMS02/009

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATE

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves 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 the country Nigeria. The Nigeria state is a colonial creation. Prior to the emergence of the Nigerian state, 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. These ethnic groupings significantly differ in their historical, social and cultural make-ups. 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- 900,000 BC. The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment. He invented tools and these tools were used for many purposes by man. There is evidence of more 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.

Major Landmark in Early Nigerian History

Information on the major land marks the early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past. They are usually referred to as centers of ancient civilization. They include;

- **Nok Culture/Civilization:** The discovery of a terracotta (burnt clay) head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 promoted more discoveries in other places such as Wamba, Kastina-Ala and Jema. The Area where these terracotta figurines were found is called the Nok culture or civilization area.
- **Benin Civilization:** Benin was important for its art work. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and casts objects in bronze and brass,
- **Ife Civilization:** Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects such as stools 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 and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This is eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw.

Traditional Political Institutions in Pre- Colonial Nigeria

The three majority ethnic groups are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa- Fulani in Nigeria traditional political system of government. The Yoruba's are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba people trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of Yoruba kingdom. Ile-ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. Each town had king called 'Oba'. The organs of government in Oyo empire were; Alaafin of Oyo, The Ogboni Cult's Administration, The Army.

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- culture which are:

- The Igbo Eastern Nigeria
- The Igbo South-Eastern Nigeria
- The Igbo of North- Eastern Nigeria
- The Western Igbo and
- The Northern Igbo

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 consists of seven states 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 illegitimate states. The Hausa 'bakwai' states are DAURA, BIRAM, ZARIA, KASTINA KANO, RANO AND GOBIR while the Hausa 'banza' states are NUPE, GWARI, YAURI, BAUCHI, ZAMFARA, KEBBI, YORUBA. There are also important title holders in the Emir's cabinet included:

- Sarkin Fada
- Waziri
- Galadima
- Madawaki
- Magaji
- Sarkin Dan Doka
- Sarkin Ruwa
- Sarkin Pawa
- Yari

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 May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of

the British Nigeria. British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of the Southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamate Northern and Southern Nigeria. The principle reason for this is the same as that of May 1906. The Northern protectorate was not economically buoyant as the colony and protectorate of the 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.