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NURSING

CHAPTER TWO

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. 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 colonialists to Nigeria while the colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established in Nigeria.

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 and several ethnic identifies in the Benue valley. These ethnic groupings significantly differ in their historical, social and cultural make-ups.

Early Man in Nigeria

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 3,000,000-35,00BC; Middle stone age, 35,000- 15,000BC and Late stone age, 15,000-500BC.

The Achievements of Early Man

Early man in Nigeria advanced from the early stone age. He began to make hand axes. Then proceeded to invent another type of tool, which is a heavy chopper. There is evidence of more advanced technology in various parts of Nigeria during bronze and metal age.

The Scientific and Technological Development of Early Nigerian Societies

The major landmarks in early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past. Some of the places where man lived are: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife, and Benin among others.

Nok culture/civilization: The Nok culture is believed to be a transitional 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: The bronze casting was introduced into benin by an Ife artist.

Ife civilization: Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. An example is Opa oranmiyan in Ile Ife.

Historical Background of Pre-colonial Political system in Yoruba Land

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. Ile Ife is regarded as the ancestral home and Oduuwa, the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. The Oke oramfe is located in Ile ife. It is believed to be the centre from which the world was created.

Political Structure of the Pre-colonial Yoruba Land

The political structures of the Yorubas kingdoms were similar in nature. Each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farm lands.

The Oyo Empire: 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.

* The Alaafin Administration: The Alaafin was the head of the empire, and was resident in the capital. He was regarded as ‘Lord of many lords’. It was regarded as the ‘Companion of the gods’ because of it fountain of authority.
* The Ogboni Cult’s Administration: The Ogboni cult had a very vital position in Yoruba society. It played a mediatory role in any conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin.
* The Army: The Head of this traditional Yoruba society is converted the title of Are-Ona-Kankanfo.

Historical Background of Pre-colonial System in Igbo Land

The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures;

1. The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria
2. The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria
3. The Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria
4. The Western Igbo
5. The Northern Igbo

Political Structure of the Pre-colonial of Igbo Land

In the Igbo traditional society, they practiced direct democracy. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society. Each family was headed by an Ofo title holder. Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in traditional Igbo society. The meetings were held in the open village square. The secret societies consisted of the diviners masquerade, ‘Ubinuknabi’ at Arochukwu, the ‘Amadisha’ of Ozuzzu, and so on. They all played significant roles in the Igbo traditional society. They act as intermediary between the living and the ancestors.

Historical Background of Pre-colonial Political System in Hausa Land

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, that is, Hausa legitimate states. The second group consist of the remaining seven states and were known as ‘Hausa banza’ states, that is Hausa illegitimates states. The Hausa ‘bakwai’ states are Daura, Biram, Zaria, Katsina, Kano, Rano, and Gobir while the Hausa ‘Banza’ states are Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi, Yoruba.

Political Structure of the Pre-colonial Hausa Land

The ‘Sarki’ was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. Sarkin kasar, which means “ruler of the land”, was the full title given to any effective head of Hausa state.

The Birth of Nigeria as a Geo-political Entity

British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the May 1906 amalgamation of southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation was that of 1914, The British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria.