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CHAPTER 2: 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 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 the country 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.

The man who lived in Nigeria during the early years worked hard to cope with his environment. First, he needed food. For the purpose he began to hunt the animals and to gather fruits. But he soon began to invent tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools. Archeologists called the tools the Oldowan-type tools. This is because this type of tool was first identified by the archeologists in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanazia.

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which pointed to the facts that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 500-9000BC. Major landmark in early Nigerian history are;

1. Nok culture/civilization (the discovery of a terracotta (burnt clay) head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as Wambe, Kastina-Ala and Jema).
2. Benin civilization (Important for its art-work. The craftsmen of Benin carved in woods and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass).
3. Ife civilization (important because of its terracotta and bronze heads e.g Opa Oranmiyan in Ile-Ife).
4. Igbo UkwuCilvilization.

The yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. Oduduwa was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Each town consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages, and farmlands. Each town has a king known as “oba who resides in the palace called “Aafin”. The Oyo empire consists of the; Alafin administration, Ogboni cult’s administration, Army.

The Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 was made up of fourteen states, and they were of two distinct groups; Hausa Bakwai and Hausa Banza.

The important title holders in the Emir’s cabinet includes; sarkinfada, waziri, galadima, madawaki, magaji, sarkindandoka, sarkinruwa, sarkinpawa, yari.

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures;Theigbo of eastern Nigeria, south-eastern Nigeria, north-eastern Nigeria, western and northern igbo.

The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria through Bini Kingdom. Sir Frederick Lugard is best known as the father of the “January 1914” amalgamation. Britain governed Nigeria by means of a system popularly referred to as “indirect rule”.Indirect rule may be is a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers.