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**QUESTION:** In about 3-page, review chapter two “A Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State” in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics, pages 15-32.

**CHAPTER TWO.**

The historical background of Nigeria and its government involves the pre-colonial era and the colonial era in Nigeria. The pre-colonial era is the period before the colonialists’ arrival while the colonial era is the period when colonial administration was established in Nigeria. Nigeria as a country was born from colonialism. Before the emergence of Nigeria as a state, it comprised of different chiefdoms, kingdoms and empires. These include: the Borno Empire, the Hausa States and the Sokoto Caliphate. It is unknown when man began to live in Nigeria. The Stone Age is divided into three: Early Stone Age, Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age.

Some of the places where man lived in the remote past in Nigeria include: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin. They are referred to as centres of ancient civilization. The discovery of terracotta by tin miners in Nok in 1936 led to other discoveries in other places such as: Wamba, Katsina-Ala and Jema. The Nok culture is believed to be a transitional civilization between the Stone Age and the Iron Age. This culture (Nok) existed between the 5th and 2nd century B.C. The Benin culture is known for its art-work. The Benin artists carve in wood and ivory. One of their ivory masks was used as a FESTAC symbol in 1977. The Ife culture is known for its bronze heads. Most of the bronze and terracotta heads were said to be life-size. Bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit in Igbo-Ukwu. This led to the excavation of three sites by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw. The sites include: a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall.

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. Their origin can be traced back to Oduduwa who founded the Yoruba kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. The political structure of the Yoruba kingdom were similar in nature. Each one consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages, and farmlands. Each town has a king known as Oba. The Oba is both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom. There are limitations placed on the Oba’s powers and these limitations are known as “eewo.” The limitations were designed to curb the despotism and tyranny of the king. If any king violates the “eewo”, it can lead to his death. There were also rulers of lesser rank and status. Those rulers were in charge of the subordinate towns, villages and farmlands.

The Igbos are known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. From ancient times, they had no centralized states. There are five sub-cultures in Igbo culture, namely;

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.

In Igboland, there is no equivalent of Oba or Alaafin. The acceptable version of the origin of the Igbos is the Nri version according to Professor M.A. Onwuejeogwu (2000). According to the political structure of the Igboland, they practiced decentralized system of government. There were socio-political institutions which existed in each village to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions. Such institutions include: family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

Hausa land was made up of fourteen states before 1804. The states were divided into two distinct groups: Hausa Bakwai, that is Hausa legitimate states and Hausa banza, that is Hausa illegitimate states. The Sarki was known as the head of any Hausa state. There was a title given to any efficient head of Hausa state which is “Sarkin Kasar.” Between the 14th and 15th centuries, Islam was adopted and this brought about new political institutions. The Sharia law also came into being. Sharia courts were established throughout the Emirates and each of the courts was headed by a Judge called Alkali.

The British who have been known to be involved in the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to come to Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to come to Nigeria through the Bini kingdom. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the channel that made the British to have contact with Nigeria. The struggle for African colonies among the Europeans led to the partitioning of Africa in the 19th century. Countries that were colonized by Britain include: Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia and Sierra Leone. The first amalgamation of the British in Nigeria took place in May 1906. The Lagos colony and protectorate was amalgamated with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation took place in 1914. This time, the Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated. Lord Frederick Lugard is known as the father of the 1914 amalgamation. Then, a system called *Indirect Rule* was the means by which the British ruled her colonies. This means that the British ruled indirectly through the local or traditional rulers.