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AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATE

The pre-colonial and colonial period in Nigeria involves the historical background of the government and politics of Nigeria; the pre-colonial period includes the period before the colonialist intervention in Nigeria, while the colonial era includes the era in which colonial administration was established in Nigeria. We are going to study Nigeria's Pre-colonial period.

To the south, pre-colonial Nigeria is bordered by the Brights of Benin and Biafra, which lie in the Atlantic Ocean on the Gulf of Guinea; to the west, Nigeria is bordered by Benin, to the north by Niger, and to the east by Cameroon. There are numerous autonomous chiefdoms, territories, kingdoms and empires in pre-colonial Nigeria; these include the Borno Empire, the Hausa States, and the Sokoto Caliphate in the North; the segmentary communities of the Igbo in the East; the Kingdom of Benin and the Oyo Empire in the West; and other ethnic identities in the Benue Valley.

EARLY MEN IN NIGERIA AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

Archaeological evidence from various parts of Nigeria suggests that since the Paleolithic era 500,000-9000BC, man has settled in the area now known as Nigeria. The discovery of the skeleton of the Stone Age at Iwo Eleru near Akure in the state of Ondo has shed further light on Nigeria's earliest occupation, the skeleton was dated 12,000 years ago, and this indicates that the nation has long been inhibited. The men who lived in Nigeria during those years tried very hard to deal with his jealousy. Archeologists called the instruments the OLDOWAN-TYPE TOOLS; from the early Stone Age, early man in Nigeria progressed and started to make hand axes, these instruments were oval and pointed in shape. In Jos, Plateau States, and in Iwo Eleru in Ondo state, small stone tools were found. Another type of tool, a heavy chopper that was more effective in cutting than current tools, was developed and invented by Early Man; one was found in the Upper Sokoto River in the state of Sokoto. During this time about 500BC to 200AD was one of the most successful periods of the technological efforts in Nigeria; during this period there were people living in Nigeria who created sculptures, some were human heads and figures, the figures were found in a village of Nok, these figures were made of terracotta and they had a distinctive artistic style. Similar results were rendered in Ile-ife, Esie, jebba, Igbo-Ukwu and Benin parts.

MAJOR LANDMARK IN EARLY NIGERIAN HISTORY

NOK CIVILLISATION: In 1936, miners discovered a terracotta head of a monkey in Nok, the area where these terracotta were found is known as the Nok culture or civilization area. Due to the combination of stone and iron artifacts, the Nok culture is believed to be a transitional society between the stone and iron ages in Nigeria. Between the 5th and the 2nd century BC, Nok culture existed.

BENIN CIVILISATION: The craftsmen of Benin carved timber and ivory and cast bronze and brass items. Wooden doors and ivory masks were cast, one of which was the ivory mask used in 1977 as the FESTAC sign.

IFE CIVILIZATION: Art historians claim that because of the similarities in the two specially beaded collar, wrist and ankles, Ife art originated from the Nok culture. They assumed that Benin had heard from Ife about bronze sculpture.

IGBO UKWU CIVILISATION: While digging a toilet pit in 1939, bronze artifacts and ornaments were found accidentally; this led to the discovery of three sites where more bronze objects were uncovered, including the remains of a decayed king and five slaves buried with him. The excavation at Igbo Ukwu was dated to the 9th century A.D., the middle period.

TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN PRE-COLONIAL NIGERIA

Nigeria is a very diverse country divided into three major ethnic groups: Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani, and the traditional political system of government in Nigeria is discussed in this section.

The YORUBAS are one of the main ethnic groups united by language in Nigeria. The people of the Yoruba claim that the founder of the Yoruba Kingdom is Oduduwa; Ile-ife is considered to be the ancestral home of the Yoruba people, from which Oduduwa expanded his authority to other towns and villages of the Yoruba. Obatala was the messenger God sent to the earth, according to the Oke Oramfe's version of the Yoruba, he immediately fell asleep in the course of his research and Oduduwa took over his responsibilities. Much of the Yoruba kingdom has similar political structures that consist of the villages and farmlands of the capital subordinate town. Every town has a 'OBA' king who lives in a palace called 'ALAFIN'; the Oba is both the kingdom's spiritual and political head. He has absolute authority and has certain rights, but certain restrictions are imposed on his powers, known as 'EEWO'. These restrictions are meant to avoid dictatorship and despotism. The Oyo Empire is a clear example of the Yoruba Kingdoms, which were pre-colonial. The king known as 'Alafin of Oyo,' who was the head of the empire and was also recognized as the Lord of Many Territories, was the first government organ. He was assisted and may have autocratic tendencies by priests, officials and eunuchs; as a result, his powers were often limited and governed by the Oyomesi; a council of seven members headed by Bashorun who acted as prime minister. When it appeared dictatorial or transgressed by law, the Oyomesi had the authority to remove the alaafin; they also had the authority to choose the successor. The Oyomesi members were also members of the Ogboni cult that played a mediating role between the Oyomosi and the Alaafin. Another well-organized government arm in the traditional Yoruba Society was the Army. The Are-Ona kankanfo, who was supposed to remain outside the capital, led it. The army was credited with performing important tasks, including the empire's stability, expansion, and the control of dissident territories.

On the other hand, from ancient times, THE IGBO PEOPLE had no centralized government. They ran a state without kings and are best known for their segmental and cephalous way of life. One of the most common versions of migration stories claims that the Igbo people have migrated to Israel, while another believes that from the beginning the Igbo have been in their present location. Authority was diffused into various communities in Igbo society, so there was a decentralized system of government. In the Igbo society, which is the smallest unit of society, each family was led by a 'OFO' holder of the title. Among the OFO title holders, the senior is known as the 'OKPARA' who also kept the 'OZO' title and chaired the meeting of the Council of Elders where issues were addressed affecting people's lives. Among the traditional Igbo people, age grade was also a very body of government and even till date. They were responsible for guarding villages, battling battlefields and even collecting fines from lawbreakers. Hence they were a championship and security society.

Nigeria's Hausa people are mostly located in Nigeria's northern region. The people are divided into two "legitimate states" of Hausa Bakwai and "illegitimate states" of Hausa Banza. The socio-political organisation of the Hausa states took another form between the 14th and 15th centuries; it was also during this time that Islam was adopted as the main religion of the Hausa people, which in turn instituted the judicial system and started the law of Sharia. Old leaders were replaced by Fulani Emirs after the adoption of Islam by the Hausa states, but the political organizations were not demolished but strengthened. The emir was an absolute ruler and only owed loyalty to Uthman Dan Fodio and his two representatives at Gwandu's Sokoto. The emir was aided in conducting functions by a committee of district/village heads, a body of councilors and advisors with whom consultation is performed on the effects of the emirates.

In addition, while there was a great deal of history before the British arrived in Nigeria, they were credited with the development of Nigeria. Nevertheless, they were not the first party of Europeans to enter Nigeria. The second half of the 15th century saw the arrival in Benin of the first Europeans, the Portuguese Ruy de sequeira, in 1472, according to Hodgkin. In addition, what took the Europeans to Africa in the first place was the hunt for slaves. In return for convicted criminals, political prisoners or victims of abduction, they exchanged these glib artifacts with Africans.

After the Berlin Conferences of 1884-1885, the scramble for Africa led to its division. By 1900, the office of the British Council was responsible for the whole of Nigeria. In essence, Nigeria was partitioned and fused like a piece of clothing. The British Government amalgamated the Lagos colony and protectorate of Nigeria during the 1906 amalgamation to form the southern Nigeria's new colony and protectorate in 1914, the northern and southern Nigeria were amalgamated, Sir Frederick Lugard is best known as the father of this amalgamation, so the British ruled Nigeria through a 'INDIRECT RULE' system.

Awareness of Nigeria's history reveals how over the years, her political systems have changed. This chapter helped to illustrate the country's indifference and how it has changed as a result of these events. If not for the detailed history provided in this chapter, the history of the country's major ethnic groups, their culture and traditions, and the history of their political systems would be ignored.