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WRITE A REVIEW ON CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORY OF NIGERIAN STATE

The historical background of Nigeria involves the pre-colonial and the colonial period in Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. Before the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. These include 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.

Geographical information

The country is bordered to the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, which are on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. On the west, Nigeria is bordered by Benin, on the north, by Niger, and on the east, by Cameroon. In its extreme north-eastern corner, Lake Chad separates Nigeria from the country of Chad. Nigeria stretches roughly 700 miles from west to east and 650 miles from south to north, covering an area between 3° and 15° E longitude and between 4° and 14° N latitude.

Early man in nigeria

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 Palaeolithic period 500,000- 9000BC. The artefacts, mostly stone tools, found by archaeologists confirm that Nigerians also took part in the stone-age civilisation. The Stone Age can be divided into several periods. These are: Early Stone Age 3,000,000- 35,000BC; Middle Stone Age, 35,000- 15,000BC and; Late Stone Age, 15,000-500BC.

The achievement of the early man

- a.The achievement of the early man include coping with his environment of get food
- b.Invention of certain tools- stone, metals (axes), Sculpture making, Terracota
- c.Excavation has also revealed where men first settled in Nigeria
- d.Some of the places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past included: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others
- e.These places are referred to as CENTRES OF ANCIENT CIVILISATION

Traditional Political Institutions in Pre-Colonial Nigeria

The Yorubas trace their origin to Oduduwa .Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yorubas.

Stories about origin of the Yoruba people are diverse:

1. There is the story of their migration from the East. This is the belief that the Yoruba people migrated from the North-East. So from Mecca, through Egypt leading to a final settlement in Ile-Ife. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the the Yoruba to Ile-ife.

2. There is the Oke Oramfe version: That the earth was full of water, and God, Olodumare, sent servants who were given some objects with which the world was created. They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth and a cockerel. On their way, Obatala got drunk with palmwine. Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority from him and eventually led the party to the world.

Political Structure of the Yoruba

The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. Each 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.” His paraphernalia of office included a beaded crown (Ade), a slippers (bata), horse tail (irukere) and sceptre Ase). The Oba is both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom.

Pre-Colonial Political System in Igbo Land

- The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life.
- The Igbos have no centralised state
- The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures:
 - The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria
 - The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria
 - The Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria
 - The Western Igbo and
 - The Northern Igbo

Origin of the Igbo

One of the most popular versions of the migratory stories of origin of the Igbo people is the one that points to Israel. This assumption is based on the so-called similarities between the cultures of the Igbo and the ancient Hebrew. Some Igbo scholars consider themselves as off-shoots of the lost tribes of the Hebrews who migrated southward.

The Nri Version

Nri version as the only authentic version of origin in existence in the oral tradition of the Igbo. According to Nri version, the ancestor of the Igbo, Eri, descended from the sky and sailed down the River Anambra. When he arrived at Aguleri, he met some autochthonous group of people who had no living memory of their own and settled with them. As their population increased, some groups migrated to other parts of Igboland to establish their own settlements

Political Structure of the Igbo

- There is no highly centralised authority
- What they have is a diffusion of authority into diverse groups
- Although, there was no highly centralised authority, some socio-political institutions existed in each village to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions, such institutions included the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

The Hausa People

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.

Origin of Hausa people

Oral tradition attributed the origin of the Hausa states to a man named Bayajidda, an Arab prince who travelled to the Sahel from Baghdad. He killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of Daura, and he married the queen. The queen had six sons already, and she produced another son with Bayajidda, and each of these sons ruled one of the seven Hausa city-states, becoming the first kings. The combined kingdoms of Hausa land were sometimes called the Daura, since Daura is the place where Bayajidda supposedly founded the Hausa people.

Political Structure

The “Sarki” was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well-organised court. Sarkin Kasar, which means “ruler of the land,” was the full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa State. The Sarkin Kasar combined both political and religious/spiritual functions. He was also the chief executive and judge of the State, but he was aided by a council of state. At the district level, the government was modelled after that at the national level. It is worthy of note that between 14th and 15th centuries, the socio-political organisation of Hausa States took another shape. For instance, Islam was adopted and this gave birth to many new political institutions such as the offices of the Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Dogari, Yari Sarki and Sarki Yau.

Islam among the Hausa People

Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the fourteenth century, and by the fifteenth century it was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidated the religion in this area.

Colonial Administration of Nigeria

- 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.
- Thus, The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the unfortunate channel that first put the British in contact with Nigeria.
- the trans-atlantic slave trade was abolished in the 19th century

The Partition of Africa

- The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century. Each of the European powers was given the opportunity to establish colonies where it had vested interest. The scramble for Africa, by these European powers led to the partitioning of Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884–85.

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

The Second Amalgamation

The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria.