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ASSIGNMENT

The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. Pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdom, states, kingdoms and empires. Nigeria has different ethnic groupings that significantly differ in their historical, social and cultural make-up. The country is bordered to the south by the Bights of Benin which are on the gulf of guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. On the west, it is bordered by Benin, on the north by Niger, on the east by Cameroon. In its north eastern corner, Lake Chad separates Nigeria from the country of chad.

Archeological evidences from different part of Nigeria points that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 50000-9000BC. Early man in Nigeria advanced from the Stone Age and began making hand axes. Another tool called Sagoan has been found in the upper Sokoto River in Sokoto state. One of the most active period of technological efforts in Nigeria was around 500BC-200AD where people sculpted. The figures were made of terracotta and they all possessed distinctive artistic style.

Information on the major land marks in the early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavations of the work done in remote places in Nigeria where man lived which include

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. Through carbon dating, not was found to have existed between the 5th-2nd century BC.

Benin civilization: it was important for its art work. Craftsmen from Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Art historians claim that bronze and brass was introduced to Benin by an Ife artist.

Ife civilization: Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Art historians believe that Ife art originated from the Nok culture because of the similarities between the two. They also believed that it from Ife that Benin probably learnt bronze sculpture.

Igbo Ukwu civilization: some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while building a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939which eventually led to the excavation of the three sites by archeologist Thurston Shaw. The three sites included the burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall. The excavated sites have been dated back to the middle of the 19th century.

There are three major ethnic groups in Nigeria:

Yoruba:

The Yoruba’s are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba people trace their origin to Oduduwa was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba’s. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba’s to Ile-Ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to find other Yoruba kingdoms. The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms consist of a capital town, two subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town has a king known as Oba who resides in the palace called ‘Alaafin’ who was both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom.

Igbo:

The igbo people are best known for their segmentary way of life. They have no centralized state. They are grouped into the Igbo of the eastern Nigeria, Igbo of the south-eastern Nigeria, Igbo of north-eastern Nigeria, western Igbo and northern Igbo. The Nri version of the origin of Igbo is the only authentic version of the origin of Igbo Ehre the ancestor of the Igbo Eri, descended from the sky and sailed down to 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 Igbo land to settle. There are no highly centralized authority but have a diffusion of authority into diverse groups. They had some socio-political institution for legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial function.

Hausa-Fulani:

Hausa land is located in the northern Nigeria. Hausa land before 1804was made up of fourteen states and they were of two distinct groups. The first groups consists of seven states called “Hausa bakwai” which consist of Daura, Biram, Zaria, Kano, Rano and Gobir while the second group consist of the remaining seven states called “Hausa banza” which included Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi. The Sarki known as the head of the typical Hausa state work with a retinue of officials in a well-organized court. Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the fourteenth century and by the fifteenth century was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The jihad of the Usman Dan Fodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidated the religion in this area. The jihad led to the conquest of the existing old Hausa kingdom, the overthrow of the political leadership by the Fulani and the establishment of the caliphate and Fulani emirates in northern Nigeria.

The British have often been credited with the creation of the Nigeria were not the first Europeans to the land in Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria though Bini kingdom. The trans- Atlantic slave trade was the channel that first put the British in contact with Nigeria. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century.

Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. By 1900, Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British colonial office. May 1906 was the first amalgamation of the British in Nigeria between the Lagos colony and the protectorate of the southern Nigeria. The primary aim of the 1906 amalgamation was purely economic. The second amalgamation was in January 1914 where the British government amalgamated northern and southern Nigeria. It was also purely economical