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**CHAPTER TWO (2)**

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATE

**Introduction**

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 the colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria.

**Early man in Nigeria**

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archeological evidences from different parts Nigeria which pointed to the fact that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the palaeolithic period 500000- 90000BC.

The achievements of early man

The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment. First he needed food. For this purpose he began to hunt for animals and gather fruits. But he soon began to invent tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools. Archaeologists called the tools the Oldowan- type tools.

**The scientific and technological development of early Nigeria societies**

Major Landmark in Early Nigerian History

Information on the major land marks in early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past. Some of the places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past included: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others.

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 Wamba, katsina- Ala and jema. 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.

Benin Civilization

Benin was important for its art- work. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Art historians claim that bronze casting was introduced into Benin by an Ife artist. They cast wood doors and ivory masks, one of which was the ivory mask used as FESTAC symbol in 1977.

Ife civilization

Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects such as stools and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz while animal and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails.

Igbo ukwu civilization

Some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw. The three sites included a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall.

**Traditional political institutions in pre- colonial Nigeria**

In this section, the three majority ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa- Fulani in Nigeria traditional political system of government shall be examined.

Historical background of pre- colonial political system in Yoruba Land

The Yoruba’s are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba people trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile- Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people.

The Oke Oramfe’s version of the origin of the Yoruba

Oke Oramife is located in Ile- Ife. It is believed to be the Centre from which the world was created. In their paper Yoruba land up to 1800, Akinjogbin and Ayandele (1980) gave a full picture of what Oke Oramfe’ s version is all about.

Political structure of the pre- colonial Yoruba Land

The political structures of the youroba kingdoms were similar in nature. Each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages, and farmlands.

The Oyo Empire

The government of the old Oyo Empire is a typical example of the pre- colonial administration in Yoruba land. The first organ of government in Oyo empire was the king known as Alaafin of Oyo.

1. The Alaffin Administration

Oyo Empire was very unique and exceptional in its system of government.

1. The Ogboni Cult’s Administration.

Apart from the Alaafin cabinet, members of the Oyomesi cult constituted another arm of government.

1. The army

The army was another form of government in traditional Yoruba society. It was very organized.

Historical Background of Pre- colonial political system in Igbo Land

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. 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
* The Northern Igbo

Histological Background of pre- colonial Political System in Hausa Land

Hausa Land is located in Northern Nigeria. Hausa Land, before 1804 were made of fourteen states, and they were of two distinct groups. The first group consists of seven states called “Hausa Bakwai” state, 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, Yoruba.