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AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA

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 colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. It is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonisation of Africa. Prior to the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. 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 further confirmed 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 excavation of a stone Age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state has thrown more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria. The skeleton was dated some 12,000 years ago, and this suggests that the country has been long inhabited THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY

NIGERIAN SOCIETIES Major Landmarks in Early Nigerian History Information on the major Landmarks in the 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. They are usually referred to as centres of ancient civilization. The history of these centres of ancient civilization presents us with the scientific and technological developments of early Nigerian societies; 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. The area where these terracotta figurines were found is called the Nok Culture or civilization area. 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 an 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 wooden 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. An example, us opa oranmiyan in ile-ife. Igbo Ukwu Civilization Some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at igbo Ukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw. These sites included a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall. TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN PRE-COLONIAL NIGERIA In this section, the three major ethnic groups; Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani in Nigeria traditional Political system of government shall be examined. YORUBA LAND The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group 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 Political structure of the Yoruba kingdom consists of a king(known as oba) who lives in the palace called Alafin. Another group of rulers were the Baale and the Oloja. The ward heads, Ijoye. Some bodies in various Yoruba towns were called different names such as Oyomesi, Ewarefa, etc. IGBO LAND The igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This is because from the ancient times, they had no centralized states. Consequently, they operated a kind of government without kings. Instead, they had a diffusion of authority into different groups. In other words they practiced direct democracy and a decentralized system of government because there were no trad rulers in the form of Oba as in the case of the Yoruba, and so no hereditary claims to the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo kingdom or empire. Every family in igbo land is headed by an ofo, their senior is called the

okpara who held the ozo tittle. HAUSA LAND 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 illegitimate states. The sarki was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. There are other Political institutions such as galadima, madawaki, magaji, dogari, yari sarki and sarki yau.