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ASSIGNMENT- CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL  
ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE  
NIGERIAN STATE.

The historical background of Nigeria involves the pre-colonial and colonial period in Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. Before the emergence of Nigerian state, the precolonial Nigeria comprised of states, kingdoms, chiefdoms and empires such as Benin kingdom, Hausa states, Sokoto Caliphate in the North and several ethnic identities in the Benue valley. But today, Nigeria is bordered by Niger on the north, Bights of Benin and Biafra on the south, which are on the gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean, the west by Benin and the east by Cameroon.

Around the extreme north east region Lake Chad separates Nigeria from the country Chad. Nigeria is on the longitude of 3 and 15 E and the latitude of 4 and 14 N. It also stretches from north to south at about 650 miles while for West to East about 700 miles. Excavation also showed places that man might have settled in first such places

are Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others. Such places are referred to as centers of civilization. The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidences that man must have settled in first which are listed above and such region that form Nigeria started since the Paleolithic period 500,000-9000BC.

Nigeria was involved in Stone Age as well based on the evidences found which can be divided into three (3) which are: early stone age- 3,000,000-35000BC, middle stone age- 35000-15000BC, and late stone age-15000-500BC.

Specific traditional political institutions in Pre-colonial Nigeria can be traced to the Yorubas, Igbos and Hausas.

The Yorubas regards Ile-Ife as their ancestral home, their origin can be traced to Oduduwa, and some versions of their history can be the story of their migration from the East. The Oba is both the political and spiritual leader of the Yorubas. His paraphernalia includes a beaded crown (Ade), a slippers (Bata), horse tail (irukere) and scepter (ASE).

The Igbos can be grouped into five (5) subcultures namely Eastern Nigeria, South

Eastern Nigeria, North- Eastern Nigeria, Western Igbo. They are known for an acephalous way of life. The Nri version of Igbo history can be regarded as the most authentic out of the versions. Though the Igbos possess no centralized 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 society.

The Hausas were once divided into 2 groups of 7 states each. The first group is known as Hausa Bakwai and it consisted of 7 legitimate states which are Daura, Biram, Kano, Kastina, Zaria, Rano and Gabir. The second group known as Hausa Banza consisted of Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara and Kebbi. There is a version of Hausa origin that is widely known and accepted which talks about how Bayajidda got married to Queen Daura after saving her people from there on. Sarkin Kasar meaning “ruler of the land” was given to any efficient ruler of the Hausa land. The reign of Sarkin Kasar brought about change to the Hausa land during 14th and 15th century such as addition of Islam which brought about new political institutions which are Galadima,

Madawaki, Magaji, Dogari, Yari, Sarki and Sarki Yau. At 15th century Islam was adopted as the religion of the ruling class.

The birth of Nigeria as a geo-political entity. Before 1900, all different parts of Nigeria conquered the British but 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 the Southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation was in 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated southern and northern Nigeria