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A SUMMARY OF AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATE.

The historical background of the Nigerian government and politics involves the pre- colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. The pre- colonial period and colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was formed in the Nigeria as a country. It is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms, and empires. We have the Borno empire, the Hausa states, and the Sokoto Caliphate in the north, the igbo sedimentary societies in the East, Benin kingdom and the oyo empire in the west and several ethnic identities in the Benue Valley. They differ in their historical, social and cultural make-up.

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 Nigeria since the paleolithic period 500,000-9000BC. The excavation of a stone Age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in indo 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 county has been long inhabited.

The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment. To provide for food he hunted animals and gathered fruits. He made Oldowan-type tools which are tools that are used for cutting and chopping. It was named that because it was first identified by the archaeologists in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. Then they began to make hand axes, they are oval and pointed in shape. Then they proceeded to invent another type of tool, which is a heavy chopper. It was more efficient in cutting than existing tools. The type was first seen at Santo bay on the west shores of lake Victoria in Uganda, East Africa. This is why it is called sagoan. One has been found in upper sokoto river in sokoto state. During this period there were people who lived in Nigeria who made sculptures. Many were of human heads and figures. The figures were made of terracotta and they all possessed a distinctive artistic style. Forms of ground stone axes and smaller stone tools, iron axes and tools were also found on the sites. Similar findings have been made in parts of Ile-Ife, Jebba, Esie, Igbo- Ukwu and Benin.

The history of these centres of ancient civilisation presents us with the scientific and technological developments of early Nigerian societies. We have the discovery of a terracotta head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 promoted more discoveries in other places. Then the Benin was

important for its art- work. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Then 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. 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.

The major ethnic groups: the yoruba, igbo and Hausa- Fulani in Nigeria traditional political system of government shall be examined. 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 structures of the yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. Each town has a king known as Oba. The Oyo empire is a typical example of the pre- colonial administration in Yorubaland. The first organ of government in Oyo empire was the king known as Alaafin of Oyo. Then the Oyomesi cult, the ogoni cult, and the army.

The igbos are best known for their segmentary way of life. This is because from the ancient times, they had no centralised states. They operated a kind of government without kings. The Igbos 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

One of the most popular versions of the migratory stories of origin of the Igbo people is the one that points to Isreal. Others believed that the igbo people had been in their present abode from the beginning. According to the Nri version, the ancestors 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.

The 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 was called "hausa bakwai" states, that is hausa legitimate states, they are Daura, Biram, Zaria, Kastina, Kano, Rano and Gobir. The second group consists of the remaining seven states and were known as "hausa banza" states, that is Hausa illegitimate states, they are Nupe, Gwari, Yari, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi, Yoruba.

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. 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 the religion in this area. The members of the council were project officers appointed by Uthman Dan Fodio and each held a title specifying the specific functions he performed. Important title holders in the Emir's cabinet included:

1. Sarkin Fada: the spokesman of the Emir and organiser of the palace workers
2. Waziri: the prime minister of the Emirate
3. Galadima: the administrator of the capital city.
4. Madawaki: the commander and head of the Emirate army
5. Magaji: government treasurer in charge of the government treasury
6. Sarkin Dan Doka: inspector General of police Force called Dan Doka.
7. Sarkin ruwa: minister in charge of water resources or the river fishing official
8. Sarkin pawa: head of chairman of butchers at the abattoir
9. Yari: chief superintendent of prisons in the Emirate.

The judicial administration of hausa- fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called sharia.