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**MATRICULATION NUMBER: 19/LAW01/258**

**COURSE CODE: GST 203**

**COURSE TITLE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

**DATE: 29/11/2020**

**ASSIGNMENT: IN ABOUT 3 PAGES, REVIEW CHAPTER TWO, “AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP” IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS, PAGES 15-32.**

**CHAPTER TWO: A HISTORICAL ANALYSISOF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE**

The pre-colonial period is the period before the colonialists came while the colonial period is the era the colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria. Nigeria is a colonial creation; a product of European colonialisation. Before the colonialisation, there already existed some independent kingdoms and empires which differ in their historical, social and cultural make-up. Nigeria is bordered by Bights of Benin and Biafra on the south, on the west by Benin, on the North by Niger and on the East by Cameroon. Nigeria stretches roughly 700 miles from the west to east and 650 miles from the south to north covering 30 and 150E longitude and between 40 and 140N latitude.

Archaeologists confirmed that Nigerians settled down since Palaeolithic period of 500,000-9000BC. Nigerians participated in the Stone Age which is classified into three: the Early Stone Age 3,000,000-35,000BC, Middle Stone Age 35,000-15,000BC and Late Stone Age 15,000 -500BC. Excavation of the Stone Age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure also shows that the country has been long inhabited. The Early men achieved a lot; they made tools for acquiring food which are called the Oldowan type tools because they were found by archaeologists in Gorge, Tanzania.

The major scientific land marks in early Nigerian history are in the very remote past of the Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others is generally referred to as the centres of ancient civilisation. The discovery of Nok happened in 1936 and promoted discoveries in other places like Kastina-Ala, Jema and Wamba. The place where they are found is called Nok culture. Through carbon dating it was found they existed between the 5th and the 2nd century. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast in bronze and brass. They cast wooden and ivory doors and one of which is the ivory mask used as FESTAC symbol in 1977. Ife is also important because of its terra cotta heads. It is believed that they originated from Nok because of the similarities between them. Bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This led to the excavation of the three sites by Thurstan Shaw. The three sites include a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall. The sites excavated dated to the middle of the 9th century A.D.

The Yorubas are the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are bound together by language. Ile-Ife is the ancestral home and Oduduwa is regarded as the founder. According to his book, *History of the Yoruba* (1950), the Yoruba originally came from the North-Eastern area of Africa. The Oke Oramfe is located in Ile-Ife and it is be the centre of the earth. In every Yoruba kingdom, there was a king known as the “Oba” who resides in the “Aafin” (palace). The Oba is the spiritual and political head. His limitations known as “eewo” prevents tyranny and if disobeyed can lead to his death. Lesser rulers wore “sese ofun”. The Baales were third rank rulers in charge of villages and the Oloja were fourth rank rulers ruling over farmlands. Ilu (town) was the basic political unit. Each town was divided into wards and sub-divided into compounds (agbo-ile) and each compound was a group of patrilineal related people known as “idile” headed by the most senior male. The civil chiefs (igbimo-ilu) were at the apex and they are headed by the king. In the Oyo Empire the king is known as Alaafin of Oyo. The Alaafin is regarded as “lord of many lands”. Sometimes, he has autocratic tendencies but his powers are limited and regulated by the Oyomesi headed by the Bashorun who acted as prime minister and they were the ones to select his successor. The Ogboni society counters power to the Oyomesi too. The army system is very organized and the head was Are-Ona Kankanfo.

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. The Igbo are divided into 5: the Igbo of eastern, the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria, the western Igbo and the Northern Igbo. The most popular version of Igbo origin is the one which claims that they have Israelee binding source. The Igbo land is the original home land and Professor M. A. Onwuejeogwu (2000) regards the Nri version as the only authentic version of origin of existence in the oral tradition of the Igbo. The political structure of the Igbo was highly decentralized as they practiced a decentralized system of government. They had no traditional ruler but some socio-political institutions existed in each village like the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies etc, to perform legislative, executive and judiciary functions. Each family was headed by an ‘Ofo’ title holder and among the Ofo title holders one of them, the most senior was recognized as the ‘Okpara’ who held the ‘Ozo’ title and presided over the council of elders meeting where issues affecting the lives of the people were discussed. Age grade was organised on a village basis and membership is from childhood and they took a common name to commemorate an event associated with the time of their birth. They organize themselves for work, war and government.

Oha-ne-eze was a firm of general assembly in traditional Igbo society where all male adult members met together to perform legislative functions. The elders formed the core of the village administration. They are highly respected. The secret societies consisted of the diviners’ masquerades, “Ubinukabi” at Arochukwu, the Amadisha of Ozuzzu and so on. The Igbo believe in re-incarnation and profanities are a very serious offence. Igbo were surrounded by mysticisms and superstition.

Hausa land is located in northern Nigeria. Before 1804, northern Nigeria was made up of 14 states. The first The Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria, before 1804 it was made up of 14 states grouped into two. The first group was made up of seven states called Hausa “Bakwai”or “legitimate” states which are Daura, Biram, Zaria, Katsina, Kano, Rano and Gobir while the Hausa “Banza” or illegitimate states are Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi, and Yoruba. The origin of the Hausa states has been attributed by oral tradition to a man named Bayajidda, an Arab prince who travelled to the Sahel from Baghdad. The combined kingdoms of Hausa land were sometimes called the Daura, it is the place where Bayajidda supposedly founded the Hausa people. The political structure was made up of the “Sarki”, the “Sarkin Kasar” Islam was introduced to Hausa Land in the 14th fourteenth century, and by the 15th century it was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The Jihad Uthman Dan Fodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidated the religion in this area. In every conquered state, the former Hausa ruler was replaced by a Fulani Emir then a centralised political system of government was introduced after the conquest.

The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria through the Bini Kingdom. Thus, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the unfortunate 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. Each of the European powers was given the opportunity to establish colonies where it had vested interest. The scramble for Africa, by these European powers led to the partitioning of Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, Britain colonized Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia and Sierra-Leone in West Africa. A number of measures were taken to establish and maintain a colonial state in Nigeria.

Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British 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 the Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria. The northern protectorate was not as economically buoyant as the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. Indirect rule is a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.

**REFERENCE(S)**

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