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**Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State**

The historical background of Nigerian government involves both the pre-colonial and the colonial era. The colonial period is period when the colonial masters came to Nigeria while the per-colonial period and the period before their coming. Before colonialization Nigeria consisted of independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires they are Hausa states, Borno Empire, Benin Kingdom, Oyo Empire and the Igbo society.

The time man stated to inhabit Nigeria is unknown but scientific evidence shows that as far back as 500,000-900,00BC Nigeria has been inhabited. The stone tools found by excavator’s shows that Nigerians were part of the Stone Age civilization. As the early man lived in his environment he needed food and so he started to hunt and invented tools with stone and as he advanced he started to make axes. These tools were found in St Acheul and are believed to have been made in the early Stone Age but modified in the middle and late stone ages.

Small stone tools believed to have been used in hunting have been found in Jos, Plateau and Ondo state. Another tool was then invented by the early man which was a more efficient tool for cutting. It originated in Uganda and is called Sangaon. 500 BC to 200AD was marked as the most active periods of technological effort in Nigeria and is when scalping was invented.

The major Landmarks in early Nigeria were discovered through excavation of the various places and some places discovered are Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin. The first thing discovered in Nok was a terracotta head of a monkey by miners in 1936. The places classified under Nok civilization are Wamba, Kastina, and Jema. It is believed to be a transitional civilization between the Stone Age and Iron Age. Benin civilization, the craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. It is believed that the bronze casting was introduced to them by the Benin people.

Ife civilization is important because of terracotta and bronze heads. Art historians believe that the Ife art originated from the Nok culture because of their similarities. The Ife art has a lot of life size sculptures of their rulers with natural hair and tribal marks as details. Igbo Ukwu civilization. The artifacts in this place were mistakenly discovered when digging a toilet pit in 1939. Three additional sites were excavated by Thurstan Shaw reveling a burial site, a pit and compound wall. Bronze objects were discovered there along with skeletons of dead bodies which was believed to be a king and 5 servants.

There are 3 major group ethnic groups in the pre-colonial traditional political institute in Nigeria. They are the Igbos, Yorubas, and Hausas. The Yorubas are regarded as one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria with their founding father being Oduduwa and their ancestral home ILE-IFE. There are different versions of their origin, one version by Johnson traces the origin to the east where they migrated from Egypt and settled in Ile-Ife where Oduduwa became their first leader. The Oke Oramfe version believes that Ile- Ife was the center from which everything was created. Here the world was covered in water and God then sent Obatala with 6 other people giving them 5 pieces of iron, a lump of earth and a cockerel. On the way Obatala got drunk and Oduduwa took his place and came down to the place known as Oke Oramfe where is set down the iron placed the earth with the chicken and it was spread about over the earth by the chicken.

The political structure of the Yoruba society was the same they all had a king known as the Oba that lived in the palace had a crown, Bata, irukere and others he was the political and spiritual head and his word was law. There were things put in place called ‘ewoo’ to checkmate his powers. There were subordinate rulers whose rank determined where they ruled over. One group was the Baale, the Oloja, and the rest the body of town heads were known as the Oyomesi or Ewarefa.

The Oyo Empire was headed by the Alaafin of Oyo. It was one of the empires that had checks and balances and this made the society stable. The Alaafin was assisted by retinue officials consisting of priests, officials and eunuchs. He was regarded as the companion of gods because he was the fountain of authority. His powers were regulated by the Oyomesi who selected new Alaafin and removed the old ones when they went against the law. The Ogoni cult administration was under this empire and they acted as mediators between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin. The arm was another integral part headed by the Are-Ona-Kankanfo. They kept dissident territories in check. There were provisional governments administered by the minor kings who had autonomy but were in alliance with the Alaafin who had representatives in the places.

The Igbo people have a segmentary way of life. They had no centralized states and did not have kings. There are 5 subgroups- the South-Eastern, Eastern, North-Eastern, West Igbo and North Igbo. Some Igbo scholars believe they are off shoots of the lost tribes of the Hebrews who migrated southward. The Nri version is the only authentic story of their origin where the ancestor descended from the sky and called down River Anambra and arrived at Aguleri and settled with some autochthonous group of people who migrated over parts of Igbo land as their population grew. They had socio political institutions in each state to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions. They were the family, council of elders, age graders and secret societies. The whole community made decisions on issues together because they believed they were a family. The family was the smallest group. The Age grade grew together from childhood and took a common name to commemorate the time of their birth. The people used the age grade system to organize themselves for work, they enforced discipline and served as guards of the land. The Oba-na-eze was a form of general assembly on the society where male members gathered to perform legislative functions. Recognition in the society was based on individual rather than family background. The secret societies was made up of diviner masquerades who acted as intermediaries between the living and the dead. The Igbos believe in reincarnation and have chief priests who perform sacrifices to appease the gods.

Historical background of pre-colonial Hausa land. The land is located in the Northern Nigeria. Hausa land was made up of 14 states grouped in to Hausa Bakawi and Hausa banza. Their history is traced to Bayajidda who killed a snake oppressing the people of Daura and so the Queen married him and they produced a son making her total children 7 who ruled the 7 Hausa city states. Islam was introduced to the region on a discernible scale in the 11th century. The Sarki is the head of a Hausa state in full Sarkin Kasar ‘ruler of the land’. Had political and religious functions and was the chief judge of the state as well. Between the 14tha and 15th century they became Islamized and their judicial system changed bringing in the Sharia law and officials like the Dogari, Galadinma and so on. Owning to the Jihad a centralized political system was introduced and the old leaders were overthrown and replaced by a Fulani Emir. The Emirs gave alligence to Usman and the Hausa land was divided into 2 confederations. The Sultan acted in advisory capacity and appointed Emirs over the emirates. The emir an absolute monarch and ruled according to the dictates of the Islamic and Sharia law. The emir was assisted by district heads in administering his functions. The Hakimi was appointed to help the Emir in the administration of districts. The judicial administration was based on Islamic Legal system called Sharia. The Sharia court was headed by the Alkali and the chief judge was the Grand Khadi.

The Portuguese unlike what people many believe were the first to come to Nigeria. The first Europeans came to Benin to become slaves this happened in the15th century. 800 slaves were exported annually and they included condemned criminals, political prisoners, victims of kidnap and relatives sold to redeem debts. The Trans-Atlantic trade was the channel that put the British in contact with Nigeria. The British than later annexed the Nigerian territory in 1861 and took Lagos as a colony. Africa was later partitioned in the Berlin Conference after the struggle between the European powers. The British to fully annex Nigeria had to remove all oppositions.

By 1900 all of Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British Colonial Office. The May 1906 amalgamation was the first amalgamation of British in Nigeria. The Amalgamation of the Lagos protectorate and Southern Nigeria was done without the consent of the people. The amalgamation was purely for a better financial position on their path in the administration of the Lagos Colony. The second amalgamation was in 1914, where they amalgamated the Northern and Southern Nigeria. The British ruled through indirect rule that means that they used the local traditions and rulers to rule. The defined the frame work of the policies and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.