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COURSE: GST 203/ GOVERMNEMT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTION. MATRIC NO. 19/MHS11/149.

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE REVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE.

The historical background of Nigeria involves the pre- colonial and the colonial era. The pre-colonial era is the period before colonialism and the colonial era is the period that the colonial administration was established. Before the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, state, kingdoms and empire which include; the Bornu Empire, the Hausa state, the Igbo segmentary societies in the east, Benin kingdom and the Oyo empire.

Nigeria is boarded to the south by bights of Benin and Biafra, to the west by Benin, to the North by Niger and the east by Cameroon. It covers an area within 30-150 E longitude and 40-140 N latitude.

Early man in Nigeria; by archaeological evidence, it is believed that man has settled in Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 500 000 – 9000BC. Nigerians took part in the stone - age civilization which can be divided into three and they include; the early stone age, the middle stone age and the late Stone Age. There was an excavation of a Stone Age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure. The skeleton can be dated back to 12 000 years ago. The men who lived in Nigeria during the early years work so hard to adapt with the environment, they made tools like hand axes and heavy chopper. During the bronze and metal age around 500BC – 200AD there were many people who made sculptures of human heads and figures.

Major landmark in early Nigeria history; there are many major landmarks in early Nigeria history and they include; the Nok, Igbo ukwu, Ife and Benin. The Nok culture was a discovery of a terracotta head of a monkey by tin miners in 1936. The Nok culture is believed to have existed between the 5th and 2nd century BC. The Benin civilization; in Benin, craftsmen carved in wood and ivory and casted in bronze and brass. The ivory mask crafted by the Benin was used as FESTAC symbol in 1997. The Ife’s are known for the terracotta and bronze heads. They carved figures and stools on hard stones called quartz and animals and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails.

The Igbo ukwu civilization; some bronze object and ornaments were accidentally discovered in 1939 at igbo ukwu while building a toilet pit which led to the excavation of three sites by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw. The three sites include a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall. The site excavated at Igbo ukwu have been dated back to the middle of the 9th century AD.

Historical background of pre-colonial system in Yoruba land: the Yoruba’s trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of Yoruba kingdom and regarded to Ile-ife as their ancestral home. According to Johnson in his book in 1950 he traced the origin of the Yoruba to the north-eastern of Africa, which he believed that the east is Mecca and from Egypt the Yoruba’s migrated and settled in Ile-ife.

The Oke Oramefe version of the Yoruba origin; according to this version it is believed that the world was covered with water and God sent some of his messengers and they include Obatala, Orisa Nla and sixteen immortals (Oye). They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth and a cockerel. Obatala got drunk on their way to the world and Oduduwa seized the materials and led the remaining people to the earth. On their arrival, Oduduwa set down the five pieces of iron and placed the earth on the iron then the cockerel spread the lump of earth with its feet throughout the earth.

Political structures of pre-colonial Yoruba: the Yoruba have similar political structures. It is headed by a king known as “Oba” who reside in the palace “Aafin”. His paraphernalia include a beaded crown ‘ade’, a slipper (Bata), horse tail (irukere) and scepter (ase). The Oba has many privileges but there are also limitations and the limitation is known as ‘eewo’. The Oba also have rulers with lesser rank and status, the lesser rulers wear white beads known as ‘Sese ofun’. The other group of rulers are the Baale and the Oloja, the Baales are the third rank of rulers and are in charge of the villages while the Oloja are the fourth rank of rulers and are in charge of the farmland.

The Oyo Empire; the old Oyo empire is an example of pre-colonial administrator in Yoruba land. There are different organs of the Oyo Empire; the Alaafin, the Ogboni cult and the Army. The Alaafin is the head of the empire and reside in the capital. He was regarded to as “Lord of many land” and his power is regulated by the Oyomesi (a council of seven members headed by the Bashorun). The Oyomesi has the power to select a new person after the demise of an Alaafin.

The Ogboni cult consist of members of the oyomesi cult it is a secret cult which plays a role in resolving conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin.

The Army: the head of the army is coveted with the title of Are-Ona-Kankafo. The army functions include; stability of the empire, expansion and keeping dissident territories in check.

Historical Background of Pre-colonial Political system in Igbo Land: the Igbos have various story of their origin, one being that they migrated from Israel towards the south and the other one being the Nri version.

Political structure of pre-colonial Igbo land; the Igbo political structure can be divided into Age grade, family, council of elders and secret societies. The family is the smallest political unit of Igbo tradition and it is headed by an ‘Ofo’ title holder. The age grade is a strongly organized group based on ages and gender in the community. The council of elders; the Oha-na-eze consist of male adult members who usually meet in the meetings to perform legislative functions. The secret societies consist of the diviner’s masquerades, the amadisha of ozuzzu etc. they act as the intermediary between the living and the ancestors.

Historical background of pre-colonial system in hausa land; the hausa land before 1804 was made up of 14 states which is divided into the “the hausa bakwai” the legitimate states and “the banza bakwai” the illegitimate state. The origin of hausa is traced to a man Bayajidda, a Baghdad prince who travelled to Daura and killed a snake that oppressed the people of Daura. He married the Queen and gave birth to a son, each of the queen sons and Bayajidda son ruled the seven legitimate state.

Political Structure of The Pre-colonial Hausa land: The “sarki” is known as the head of hausa state. The Sarkin Kasar is known as “ruler of the land. During the 14th and 15th century Islam was adopted in Hausa land and it gave birth to many political institutions such as Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Dogari, Yari Sarki and Sarki yau. The islamisation of Hausa land also influenced the judicial system and the use of sharia law was adopted.

Emirate system of government among the Hausa: After the Jihad led by Uthman Dan Fodio in 1804 there was an introduction of new system of selecting rulers described as Emirs. The sultan supervised the administration of the emirate system, he arbitrated in disputes within and between its emirates. The Emir is an absolute emirate, he controls economic activities within its emirate. Some of the Emir’s cabinet are; the sarkin Fada, the Waziri, Magaji, Sarkin Ruwa etc.

The Emirates was divided into two districts, the first is “Hakimi” appointed by the Emir to reside at the headquarters and the second “Alkali” who is the Judge of sharia court.

Colonial Administration and indirect rule system in Nigeria historical Background; the Portuguese were the first Europeans to land in Nigeria through Bini kingdom. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the channel that allowed for the encounter of the British and Nigeria. The trade got to its peak in the 16th century and was abolished in the 19th century by the British. In 1861 the British took Lagos as a colony and occupied larger amount of Nigerian territory in the late 19th Century. The scramble for Africa by the European power led to partitioning of Africa after the Berlin conference of 1884-85.

The birth of Nigeria as a Geo-political entity; the first amalgamation was on May 1906. The British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of the southern Nigeria to form new colony of Southern Nigeria but it was done without the consultation of Nigerians. In 1914, the British amalgamated Northern and Southern protectorate for the better financial position of the protectorate of southern Nigeria to cover the costs of administration and development in the financial weak colony protectorates of Lagos. Sir Fedrick Lugard governed Nigeria by means of a system known as “Indirect rule”.