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Historical analysis of the evolution of the Nigerian State

Nigeria has come a long way as a country. The historical background of Nigeria government and politics involves the pre-colonial and the colonial period in Nigeria. The Nigerian State is a colonial creation. The pre colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, state, kingdoms and empires. These, among others, include the Borno empire, the Hausa states, Sokoto caliphate, Benin kingdoms and the Oyo empire in the west. These ethnic groupings significantly differ in their historical, social and cultural make up.

Nigeria is bordered by Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but the archaeological evidence prove that man had settle in the region since the Palaeolithic period 500,000-900BC. The man who lived during these times had to cope with his environment. Tools had to be made for hunting animals and gathering fruits. These include; handyman axe, small stone, heavy chopper and so many others. Later, man took interest sculpting. Many were of human heads and figures. Each work had a distinctive artistic style. The findings were in the village of Nok, Igbo-ukwu, Benin e.tc

Nok, Igbo -ukwu, Ife and Benin among others are center of ancient civilization presents us with the scientific and technological developments of early Nigerian societies. For example; Benin was important for its artworks, Ife was important because of its terracotta and bronze head e.t.c.

Nigeria has three major ethnic groups; Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. The Yorubas believe that Oduduwa is the founder of the Yoruba kingdom and that Ile-Ife is their ancestral home. The Yorubas are a large ethnic groups united by the language. There are many version of the Yoruba origin that has been handed from generation to generation. An example is the Oke Oramfe version. The Yoruba kingdom is made up of capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmland. Each town had a king, who also has other rulers of lesser ranks and status. The pattern of administration was hierarchical. The Oyo empire is a perfect example of pre colonial administration in the Yoruba land. It consisted of the Alaafin, the Ogboni cult and the army.

The Igbos are known for their segmentary way of life. They operated a kind of government without kings. The most popular origin story of the Igbos is that of their migration from Israel. Since the Igbos didn't have a centralized authority, they practiced direct democracy. This means they had diffusion of authority in different groups. The Igbos had socio-political institution that helped to run the society. They include; the family, age grade, council of elders and secret societies. The family is smallest political unit in the Igbo society. The age grade is organized on the village basis. The council of elders was the general assembly of the traditional Igbo society. Lastly, the secret societies consisted of members who acted as an intermediary between the living and the ancestors.

The Hausa states are made up of fourteen states which are divided equally into Hausa Bawakai and Hausa Bansa. The origin of the Hausa is attributed to a man called Bayajidda who was an Arab prince that travelled from Sahel to Baghdad. Sarkin Kasar is the head of a typical Hausa state. He has both

spiritual and political functions. In the fourteen century, Islam was introduced to the Hausa state. The jihad of Usman Dan Fodio cemented religion in the region. These brought changes to the judiciary system through the introduction of the Sharia law. A new system of selecting and appointing Emir's was made due to the establishment of caliphate and Fulani emirates in the region. The Emir is the political, administration and spiritual leader of his emirates.

Nigeria had a lot of foreign visitors like Portugal before the coming Britain. The Atlantic slave trade happened on the Atlantic ocean between the European and Africans. It was the trans- Atlantic slave trade that put Britain in contact with Nigeria. The slave trade was later abolished and the "Gun-boat" policy was made. This allowed British to take Lagos as a colony. The struggle for colonies by European powers lead to the partitioning of Africa in the nineteenth century. After the Berlin conference of 1884-85, Britain colonized Nigeria.

Before the year 1900, different parts of Nigeria was still conquered by the British. In May 1906, the British amalgamated Lagos and it's protectorate with the protectorate of the southern Nigeria. This was done to fund Lagos and it's protectorate with the funds from the southern protectorate. The second amalgamation was in 1914, where the Northern and southern protectorate was amalgamated. This happened due to the abundance of funds in the south compared to the north. However, Britain governed Nigeria with a system called indirect rule , which means ruling the colonies through traditional rulers. Pre colonial Nigeria undergone so many challenges to make it the Nigeria of today.