

**NAME: Oluwadamilare Faith Oluwadarasimi**

**COLLEGE: Medicine and Health Sciences**

**DEPARTMENT: Human Nutrition and Dietetics**

**MATRIC NO: 19/mhs04/002**

**COURSE TITLE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTION**

**COURSE CODE: GST 203**

**ASSIGNMENT TITLE: Review Chapter 2**

### **Question**

**In about 3-Page review Chapter Two, "An Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State" in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria's Politics, pages 15-32.**

### **AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE**

The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. It involves the pre-colonial period which is the period before the coming of the colonialists to Nigeria and the colonial period in Nigeria which refers to the era that colonial administration was established in the country. The pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of several states, kingdoms, empires and independent chiefdom which includes the Borno Empire, the Hausa States, and the Sokoto Caliphate in the North; the Igbo segmentary 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-ups. The country is bordered to the South by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, on the West by Benin, on the North by Niger, on the East by Cameroon and by extreme northeastern corner, Lake Chad separates Nigeria from the country of Chad.

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but due to archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria it has been discovered that man had settled in Nigeria since the Palaeolithic period (500,000- 9000BC) and took part in the stone-age civilisation. The Stone Age can be divided into several periods which are: Early Stone Age, Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age. The man who lived in Nigeria during those years had to find a way of relating with his environment. He adapted to it and created various tools as each period went by. Some of the tools are Oldowan-type tools, hand axes, Small stone tools (believed to be used for hunting), a heavy chopper (more efficient in cutting than the existing tools). They also made

sculptures of which many were human heads and figures made of terracotta. These sculptures possessed a distinctive artistic style.

There are information on the major land marks in the early Nigerian history made possible through the excavation work done on places where they earlier lived in. These places were referred to as centres of ancient civilisation. These include the Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin. The history of these centres of ancient civilisation presents us with the scientific and technological developments of early Nigerian societies.

The Nigeria Traditional Political System of Government includes the three majority Ethnic group of Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa-Fulani. The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. 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. There are different versions of the traditions of origin. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to Ile-Ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to found other Yoruba kingdoms.

The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature and they consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages, and farmlands. Each town has a king known as "Oba" who resides in the palace called "Aafin." He is the spiritual and political head of the kingdom who has a supreme authority in the kingdom and his words are laws, and biding on everybody except certain limitations to his powers known as "eewo" which was designed to curb despotism and tyranny on the part of the King. Violation can lead to his death. The lesser rulers were in charge of the subordinate towns and wore crowns made of white beads known as "sese ofun." Another group of rulers were the Baales the third rank of rulers who were in charge of the villages leaders and the Oloja, the fourth rank leaders who ruled over the farmlands.

The town (ilu) was the basic political unit, while the subordinate towns were the bedrock on which the administration of the whole kingdom was based. Each town was divided into smaller units or wards (known as "ljoye" in turn sub-divided into compounds (agbo-ile) with compound heads, known as Baale.) to facilitate smooth administration. The chiefs acted as advisers to the king and served as the link between the king and members of the ward. The pattern of administration was hierarchical. At the lowest level were the compound heads (Baale). The government of the old 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 they also had the Ogboni Cult's Administration and the army.

Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life because from the ancient times, they had no centralised states. They operated a kind of government without kings. The Igbo 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 Israel. This assumption is based on the so-called similarities between the cultures of the Igbo and the ancient Hebrew.

In the Igbo traditional society, they practiced direct democracy and/or a decentralised system of government. They still perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions without a centralised authority. Such institutions included the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society and was headed by an "Ofo" title holder. The communities organised themselves through the age grade, for work, war and government and also guarded public morality. Seniority was of great social importance. Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in traditional Igbo society. All the male adult members met in this assembly to perform legislative functions. The elders formed the core of village administration. They were highly respected. The secret societies consisted of the diviners' masquerades, "Ubinuknabi" at Arochukwu, the "Amadisha" of Ozuzzu which played significant roles in the Igbo traditional society. They acted as intermediary between the living and the ancestors. The Igbo believe in re-incarnation.

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 consist of seven states called "Hausa Bakwai" states (Hausa legitimate states). The second group consist of the remaining seven states and were known as "Hausa banza" states (Hausa illegitimate states). The Hausa "bakwai" states are Daura, Biram, Zaria, Katsina, Kano, Rano, and Gobir while the Hausa "Banza" states are Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi, Yoruba. Oral tradition attributed the origin of the Hausa states to a man named Bayajidda. The combined kingdoms of Hausa land were sometimes called the Daura, since Daura is the place where Bayajidda supposedly founded the Hausa people.

The "Sarki" was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well-organised court. Sarkin Kasar, which means "ruler of the land," was the full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa State. He combined both political and religious/spiritual functions and was also the chief executive and judge of the State, although he was aided by a council of state. 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.

In conclusion, Nigeria has undergone so many periods which has formed and defined the way of life, values, culture, traditions of the members of the country.