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MATRIC NO: 19/LAW01/185.

COURSE CODE: GST203.

COURSE TITLE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

ASSIGNMENT: 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.

The chapter “An Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State” was written by Olayinka Olabimpe Ojo. This chapter gives the history of the Nigerian government, the precolonial and colonial period in Nigeria. This starts from the early man in the Stone age which is divided into the early, the middle and the late stone age and the achievements of the early man in these ages like invention of cutting and chopping tools in the early stone age. Tools like hand axe and heavy choppers were invented. Sculptures were also produced and they were first found in the village of Nok. There were also findings in Ile-Ife, Esie, Igbo-Ukwu and Benin.

There was also development of societies in the place man lived in Nigeria. These places were centre of ancient civilization. The Nok civilization deals with the discovery of terracotta in Nok in 1936. This prompted other discoveries in places such as Wamba and Jema. This civilization can be seen as transitional because it was in between the Stone age and the Iron age. Benin civilization involves the carving of wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Bronze casting was introduced to Benin by an Ife artist.

Terracotta and bronze heads symbolized the Ife civilization. Objects, animal and human figures. An example is the Opa-Oranmiyan in Ile-Ife. The Igbo Ukwu civilization started from the discovery of bronze objects and ornaments in a toilet at Igbo Ukwu which led to the excavation of three other by Thurstan Shaw, an archeologist.

The Pre-colonial political system of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria was examined. The Yoruba’s origin was traced to Oduduwa, the founder of the Yoruba Kingdom. Ile-Ife is known as their ancestral home. According to Johnson, the Yorubas came from Mecca and settled in Ile- Ife. According to a legend, God sent messengers to the world with materials to create the earth, Obatala the leader got drunk and Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority and completed the message. The site they landed on is known as Oke Oramfe.

The Yoruba kingdom were made up of the Oba’s who act as the spiritual and political head of the kingdom. The Oba had both privileges and limitations. There were also lesser rulers who were in charge of subordinate towns. The Baale was in charge of villages and the Oloja that ruled over the farmlands. In the smaller units the Baale was the ward head. The government of the old Oyo empire was the pre-colonial administration and it was headed by the Alaafin of Oyo. His powers were regulated by the Oyomesi, a council of seven members headed by the Bashorun. The Ogboni cult served as a mediator between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin. The army headed by the Are-Ona-Kankanfo performed the functions of stabilizing the empire, expansion and keeping dissident territory in check.

The Igbo system was acephalous and had no centralized states. It was be divided into five sub cultures which were the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria, Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria, Western Igbo and Northern Igbo. A story on Igbo’s origin traced it to Israel as one of the lost tribes of Hebrews who migrated southward. According to Nri version the origin is traced to Eri who descended from the sky, sailed down the River Anambra and settle with some people living there.

The Igbo traditional society was decentralized. The family was the smallest unit and was headed by an ‘Ofo’. The senior ofo was known as the Okpara. This society had an organized age grade system and they were made up of the youths who performed different functions. this society was democratic. It also had secret societies that consisted of diviners’ and masquerades and each had their role in the society. They acted intermediary between the living and the ancestors perform rituals at shrines. They practiced a traditional religion headed by the Chief Priest. They believed in reincarnation and superstitions.

Hausa located in the Northern Nigeria is made up of fourteen states, seven legitimate and seven illegitimate states. According to Oral tradition the origin of Hausa states is linked to a man named Bayajidda who killed a snake that oppressed the people of Daura and married the queen of Daura. Her seven sons headed the seven Hausa city states. The hausa people were found in Daura.The Hausa states may have been found by the Berber immigrants from the north of the Sahara or by people from East Africa. Islam was introduced to this region.

The typical Hausa state was headed by the Sarki who worked with a well-organized court with many officials. Sarkin Kasar was a title given to the head of state and he combined both political and religious functions. He was also the chief executive and judge of the state. The adoption of Islam brought about the introduction of new institutions like the Galadima, Mogaji and Madawaki. Sharia law also took shape and Alkali became part of the administration of justice. Islam was introduced into Hausa in the 14th century. The former rulers were replaced with emirs during the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio. The emir was an absolute monarch and he administered the Islamic and sharia law. His cabinet members were the Madawaki, Sarkin fada, Waziri, Mogaji, Yari, Galadima, Sarkin rukua and Sarkin ruwa.

The colonial background starts from background the arrival of the Portuguese in 1472. It also includes the Atlantic slave trade and how it was brought in through the Portuguese into Nigeria. It talks about how Lagos was annexed as a British colony. Nigeria was said to have been amalgamated twice but the most significant one being in1914 and this helped the British to practice the indirect rule in Nigeria. The indirect rule was through the traditional rulers.

This chapter gives facts about Nigeria majorly during the pre-colonial era and gives the reader a good insight on it.