

Name Bolaji Ishola

Department: Bus Admin

Matric No: 19/sms03/015

CHAPTER 2

A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF NIGERIAN STATE

The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. It is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. The historical background of the Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. The pre-colonial period is the period before the coming of the colonialists to Nigeria while the colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established in the country, Nigeria.

The Europeans in their struggle to steal our natural resources created Nigeria. Before the creation of the Nigerian state, colonial Nigeria consisted of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. Eg: the Hausa states, Borno empire, Sokoto caliphate, the Igbo segmentary, Benin kingdom etc. they all differ in their historical, social and cultural make-ups. Nigeria is an African country on the Gulf of Guinea, has many natural landmarks and wildlife reserves. It is a sovereign country in West Africa bordering Niger in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east, and Benin in the west. Its southern coast is on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. It stretches roughly 700 miles from west to east and 650 miles from south to north, covering an area between 3° and 15° E longitude and between 4° and 14° N latitude.

There are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which points to the fact that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the palaeolithic period 500000-9000BC. It was confirmed that Nigerians took part in the stone age; this is because of the stone tools and skeletons dated 12000 years at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state found by archaeologists.

People who lived in Nigeria during the stone age strived to survive. In order to provide food for himself, he hunted animals and gathered fruit. He used stones and pebbles to produce cutlery for himself. These tools were called "oldowan" type tools. They were first discovered in Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. After this, they proceeded to invent another type of tool called sangoan (it was first seen at Sango Bay on the west shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda, East Africa) which was more effective in cutting than the existing tools. It has been seen in upper Sokoto river in Sokoto state. The most active period in Nigeria was around 500BC – 200AD. During this period, sculptures of all kinds were made, most especially human heads of different sizes. They were found in the village of Nok.

MAJOR LANDMARKS IN EARLY NIGERIAN HISTORY

Excavation work was done in places believed to have been inhabited by man. Some of them include: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin. They are usually referred to as centers of ancient civilization.

Nok culture

The discovery of terracotta head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as Wamba, Afa and Jema. The Nok culture is believed to be the combination of the stone and iron age as tools made with both items were discovered. It existed between the 5th and 2nd century BC.

Benin civilization

Benin was prominent for its art work. The craftsmen carved with wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Historians claim that bronze casting was introduced in Benin by an Ife artiste. They made the ivory mask that was used as the Festac symbol in 1977.

Ife civilization

Terracotta and bronze heads were found in Ife. Objects such as stools and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz while animal and human figures were carved from granite. Eg: Opa Oranmiyan. It is believed that Ife art originated from Nok culture because of its similarities.

Igbo Ukwu civilization

While digging a pit toilet in Igbo Ukwu in 1919, bronze ornaments were discovered. This discovery led to an investigation led by Thurstan Staw who discovered three sites including a burial chamber which had skeletons that was believed to have been the remains of the king and his five slaves. It was stated that the sites excavated have been in existence since the middle of the 9th century.

Historical Background of Pre-Colonial Political System in Yoruba Land

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 is the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. There are different versions of traditions of origin.

According to Oke Oramfe's version of origin, there was a period when the world was covered by water. The Almighty God sent his messengers to the world and they included Obatala and sixteen Oye (immortals). They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth and a cockrel. Somewhere on their way, Obatala got drunk and Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority from him and led the party to the world. The site they landed on is traditionally known as Oke Oramfe in Ile-Ife. On arrival, Oduduwa set down the five pieces of iron and placed the lump of the earth on them. The cockrel then spread the lump of the earth with its feet throughout the earth. Consequently, the earth was formed and Oduduwa became the ruler. It was from Ile-Ife that he extended his authorities to other towns and villages.

Political Structure of the Pre-Colonial Yoruba Land

The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. Each town has a king known as "Oba" who resides in the palace called "Aafin". His paraphernalia of office included a beaded crown (Ade), a slippers (bata), horse tail (irukere) and scepter (Ase). The Oba is both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom and his words are laws and binding on everybody. Though, certain limitations were placed on his powers known as "eewo" designed to curb the despotism and tyranny on the part of the King. If a king violates any eewo, it could lead to death.

The King also had rulers of lesser rank and status who were in charge of subordinate towns. Another group of rulers were the Baale (in charge of villages) and Oloja (rules over farmlands).

The Oyo Empire

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. The systems of government under this administration includes; the Alaafin administration, the ogboni cult's administration and the army.

The precolonial system of the Igbo land

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This because from the ancient times, they had no centralized states. The Igbos operated a kind of government without Kings.

The Igbo are grouped into five sub cultures:

- i. The Igbo of eastern Nigeria
- ii. The Igbo of southern eastern Nigeria
- iii. The Igbo of northern eastern Nigeria
- iv. The western Igbo
- v. The northern Igbo

The Igbo traditional society had no centralized authority but instead they had what could be called a diffusion of authority into different groups. In other word, the Igbo practiced direct democracy and or a decentralized system of government because there were traditional rulers in the form of oba as in the case of the Yoruba, and so no hereditary claims to the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo kingdom or empire. There was no highly centralized authority, some socio-political institutions existed in each villiage to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions, such institutions included the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PRE-COLONIAL POLITICAL SYSTEM IN HAUSA LAND

Hausa is located in Northern Nigeria. Hausa land before 1804 was made up of 14 states, the first seven called "Hausa Bakwai" that is legitimate states and the second known as "Hausa Banza" that is illegitimate states.

Oral tradition has it that a man named Bayajidda, an Arab prince who travelled to Baghdad killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of Daura and he married the queen. The queen had six sons already and she produced another son with Bayajidda, and each of these sons ruled one of the seven Hausa city- states, becoming the first kings. The combined kingdoms were sometimes called Daura.

Political Structure of the Pre-Colonial Hausa Land

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

Important title holders in the Emir's cabinet included: Sarkin Fada (the spokesman and organizer of palace workers), Waziri (the prime minister of the emirate), Galadima (the administrator of the capital city), Madawaki (the commander and head of the emirate army), Magaji (government treasurer), Sarkin Dan Doka (inspector general of police force called doka), Sarkin Ruwa (minister-in-charge of water resources), Sarkin Pawa (head of chairman of butchers at the abattoirs) and Yari (chief superintendent of prisons in the Emirate).