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**GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

**REVIEW OF CHAPTER 2**

**AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATE**

The historical background of 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 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. Prior to the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. These, among others, include 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.

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which pointed to the fact that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the Pala eolithic period 500,000-9000BC.

**THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY NIGERIAN SOCIETIES.**

Some of the places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past included; Nok, Igbo, Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others.

In the Nok culture, the discovery of a terracotta (burnt clay) head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in the other places such as Wamba, Kastina- Ala and Jema. Nok culture is believed to be a transitional civilization between the Stone Age and Iron Age. It was discovered that the Nok culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century B.

In Benin civilization, Benin was important for its art-work. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and casts objects in bronze and brass. It was said that bronze casting was introduced into Benin by an Ife artist. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks, one of which was the ivory mask used as FESTAC symbol in 1977.

In Ife civilization, Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects such as stools and figures were craved on hard stone called quartz while animal and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails. An example is Opa Oranmiyan in Ile-Ife .

In Igbo Ukwu Civilization, some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw. The three sites included a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall.

***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 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.

The Oke Oramfe’s Version of the Origin of the Yoruba.

Oke Oramfe is located in Ile-Ife .It is believed to be the center from which the world was created. In their paper Yorubaland up to 1800, Akinjogbin and Ayandele (1980) gave a full picture of what Oke Oramfe’s version is all about. According to the him, there was a period when the whole world was covered by water. The Almighty God then decided to send some of his messengers to the world and they included Obatala or Orisa Nla or Orisa Alase[as the leader] and sixteen Oye[immortals]. They were given fives pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth, and a cockerel. Somewhere on their way to the world, the leader, Obatala, got drunk with palm wine. Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority from him and eventually led the party to the world. The site on which they landed is traditionally known as Oke Oramfe in Ile-Ife.

The government of the old 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. Oyo Empire was very unique and exceptional in its system of government. The Alaafin was head of the empire and was resident in the capital. He was regarded as ‘lord of many lands’.

Apart from the Alaafin cabinet, members of the Oyomesi cult constituted another arm of government. it was very powerful cult. It played a mediatory role in any conflict between the Oyomesi and Alaafin. It was a kind of counter power to the Oyomesi as well.

The army was another arm of government in traditional Yoruba society. It was made up of infantry and cavalry. The army was credited with performing important functions which included stability of the empire.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PRE-COLONIAL POLITICAL SYSTEM IN IGBO LAND.**

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This is because they had no centralized states. In the Igbo traditional society, there was no highly centralized authority but instead they had what could be called a diffusion of authority into different groups. They practice direct democracy and/or a decentralized system of government because there were no traditional rulers in the form of Oba as in the case of the Yoruba and so on hereditary claims to the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo kingdom or empire. The family was the smallest political unit traditional society. Each family was headed by an ‘Ofo’ title holder.

Age grade was organized on a village basis. The association or age grade grew from childhood and took a common name to commemorate an event associated with the time of their birth. Oha-na-eze was form of general assembly in traditional Igbo society. All male adult members usually met in this assembly to perform legislative functions. The secret societies consisted of the diviners’ masquerades, ’Ubinuknabi’ at Arochukwu the ‘Amadisha’ of Ozuzzu and so on. They all played significant roles in the Igbo traditional society. They act intermediary between the living and the ancestors.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDOF PRE-COLONIAL POLITICAL SYSTEM IN HAUSA LAND**

Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria .They made fourteen states, they were of two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven states called ‘Hausa Bakwai’ states, that is Hausa legitimate states. The second group consist of the remaining seven states and were known as ‘Hausa banza’ states, that is Hausa illegitimates states.

The members of this council were project officers appointed by Uthman Dan Fodio and each held a title specifying the specific functions he performed. (1) Sarkin Fada- The spokesmen of the Emir and organizer of palace workers, (2) Waziri- The Prime Minister of the Emirate, (3) Galadima- The administrator of the capital city; (4) Madawaki-The commander and Head of the Emirate Army; (5) Magaji-Government Treasurer in charge of the government treasury; (6) Sarkin Dan Doka- Inspector General of Police Force Called Dan Doka; (7) Sarkin Ruwa- Minister in charge of Water Resources or the river fishing official; (8) Sarkin Ruwa- Head of Chairman of Butchers at the Abattoirs; (9) Yari- Chief Superintendent of Prisons in the Emirate.

Oral traditional attributed the origin of the Hausa states to a man named Bayajidda, an Arab prince who travelled to the Sahel from Baghdad. He killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of Daura, and he married a queen. The Sarki was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. Islam was adopted and this gave birth to many new political institutions such as the offices of the Galadima, Madawaki, Dogari and so many others. Islam was introduced in Hausa land in fourteenth century and by the fifteen century it was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The Emir was an absolute monarch in his emirate, he was the political, administrative and spiritual leader. The judicial administration of Hausa Fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called Sharia. Sharia courts were established throughout the emirates and each was headed by a trained Sharia court judge called Alkali. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was unfortunate channel but first put the British in contact with Nigeria. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century. The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.