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CHPTER 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 is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of Europe adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Pre-colonial comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires which include; Borno Empire, Oyo Empire, Sokoto Caliphate and so on. They all differ in histories and culture.

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 Paleolithic period 500,000-9000BC. Stone tools found by archaeologists prove that Nigeria also took part in the stone age civilization.

The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment. When he needed food he hunted the animals and gather fruits; and later began to invent tools consisting of pebbles made into cutting tools. Archaeologists called the tools Oldowan-type tools; which is because this type of tool was first identified by the archaeologists in the Old Later on, because it was the first tools identified in the olduvai gorge in tanazia. Early man in Nigeria advanced from early stone to hand axes which were oval and pointed in shape, they also had cutting edge and were trimmed from both sides. These tools can be use for different purposes, similar tools which was made during the early stone age have been located at a site in St Acheul in northern Nigeria by an archeologist who work outside Nigeria. Small stone tools used for hunting was believed to have been located in Jos, plateau state and Ondo state. Early man then proceeds to invent a heavy chopper which is another type of tools, which is more efficient in cutting than another type of tools. It was first seen at Sango bay on the west shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda, east Africa, that is why it is called Sagoan, it has also been found in upper Sokoto river in Sokoto river.

More advanced technology in various part of Nigeria has been found during the bronze and mental age. One of the most active periods of technological efforts in Nigeria was around the 500BC to 200AD, during this period the people who lived in Nigeria made sculptures, some were human heads and figures they also varied in size from small to big size. These figures were found in village of Nok, they were made of terracotta and possesses a distinctive artistic style. Ground stone axes, smaller stone tools, iron axes and tools were also found on the sites, some were also found in ile-ife, jebba, Esie, igbo-ukwu and Benin. The major land mark in the early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria, these places include Nok, Igbo-ukwu, Ife and Benin, which is also refer to as centres of ancient civilization which present us with the scientific and technological development of early Nigerian societies. In the Nok culture the terracotta head of a monkey was discovered in 1936 leading to other discovering in other places. The Nok culture is said to be a transitional between the stone age and iron age in Nigeria because of the presence a combination of stone and iron objects. The use of carbon is said to have been discovered between the 5th and 2nd century.

In Benin culture, the craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Art historians claim that bronze casting was introduced by Ife artist to Benin, they casted wooden doors and ivory masks which was use as FESTAC symbol in 1977. In Ife culture tools and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz while animals and human figures were carved from granite and decorated in iron nails, some of the brome heads said to portraits some of the rulers-Ooni. Arts historian believe that Ife originated their art from the Nok culture because of its similarities, it was probably from Ife that Benin learnt bronze sculpture. In the Igbo culture bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally found while digging toilet a toilet pit in Igbo-ukwu in 1939, which led to the excavation of three sites by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw, these sites are a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall. The excavation is said to be dated to the middle of the 9th century.

The Yoruba being one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria trace their origin Oduduwa the founder of Yoruba kingdom. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader to lead Ile-Ife and sent his sons and grandsons to find other Yoruba kingdom. The Oke oramfe’s version of the origin of Yoruba believe that God sent some of his messengers to the world and sixteen Oye and were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth, and a cockerel which was taken from Obatala by Oduduwa and also set and ruled by Oduduwa who extended his authorities to other Yoruba towns and villages. The political structure of the Yoruba kingdom consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands, where each town has a king called Oba who is the supreme authority in the kingdom, his words are laws and biding on everyone. Each town can also be divided into smaller units or wards to facilitate smooth administration, and these wards were sub-divided into compounds where the head is known as Baale and lastly the Oyo empire which consists of the Alaafin administration, the Ogboni cult’s administration and the Army.

In the historical background of the Igbo, they are best known for their segmentary way of life because they had no centralized states and operated a kind of government without kings. The Igbo are sub-divided into five groups which are; the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria, the Western Igbo and the Northern Igbo. The Igbos despite the culture diversity among them share a common basic culture in their language with a cluster of dialect that are mutually intelligible, they also share a common political system based on the decentralization of powers and delegation of authorities exercise by Ofor. In the middle east version, some believe that the Igbo might be related to their present location from either north or middle east. The Igboland centered version, some believe that the Igbo people have been in their present location from creation. Professor M.A Onwuejeogwu regard the Nri version as the origin of Igbo which says that the ancestor Eri, descended from the sky and sailed down the river Anambra and met some people at Aguleri who has no living memory of their own and settled with them, as the population began to increase some people migrate ton establish their own settlements. The Israelite version says that the Igbo scholars considered themselves as off suits of the lost scribes of Hebrews who migrated southwards. Political structure of the Igbo land. In the Igbo land there is no centralized authority instead they practiced direct democracy or decentralized system. Each family in Igbo land is headed by Ofo and the most recognized senior is known as Okpara who held the `Ozo’ title and presided over the council of elders. The age grade was strongly organized among the northern and southern Igbo especially for work, war and government. They also set laws which is expected to be abided by all Igbos, they also believe in re-incarnation and their religious lives was surrounded by mysticisms and superstitions.

The historical background of the Hausa land. The Hausa is located in northern Nigeria, made of fourteen state and two distinct group where the first group Hausa Bakwai consist of seven state and the second one Hausa Banza. The origin started with Bayajidda, an Arab prince who traveled from Baghdad to Sahel. He killed a monstrous snake that oppress the people and married the queen who had seven sons and these sons were divided to rule different kingdoms, the combined kingdoms were called Daura. Islamic was not yet introduced in the 11th century which was refer to as the successive infiltration of newcomers into the Hausa land. Each state was headed by a Sarki, he performs both political and religious functions and is also the chief executive and judge of the state. The socio-political organization of the Hausa state took another shape between the 14th and 15th century. This is when the Islamic religion was adopted and also influenced its judicial system. Islamic was introduced to Hausa land in 14th century and accepted in the 15th century. The Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidated the religion in this area, this led to the overthrown of the political leadership by the Fulani and the Fulani emirates in northern Nigeria and the former Hausa ruler was replaced by a Fulani Emir which led to the division of the former Hausa kingdom into two confederations.

In order to make the local government efficient and effective the emirates were divided into districts and an official called Hakimi appointed by Emir was ask to act on his behalf, where each district was further divided into villages and the villages was also divided into wards for administration purposes. Hakimi appointed village head with no power to make law and they followed the Islamic legal system called sharia, headed by a trained sharia court judge called Alkali.

The Portuguese were the first European to land In Nigeria in the 15th century, they exported slaves from west Africa to Portugal. Trade slave got to maturity in the 16th century, in the early 19th century the British decided to abolish the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The British formally annexed Nigeria territory. In 1861, they took Lagos as a colony which happened through treaties that was signed with some Nigeria community leaders. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century. In 1898, British government sought to maintain and establish a colonial state in Nigeria.