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CHAPTER TWO – AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA

 Nigeria as a whole is a product of colonisation by the Europeans. In its historical back ground, there is the precolonial period and the colonial period. The precolonial period is the time before colonisation while, the colonial period is the colonization era in Nigeria. In the pre colonial era there were empires, chiefdoms, kingdoms and states.

 Man existed in Nigeria since 500,000-9000BC which is proved by findings of stone tools which also means Nigerians took part in ston3 age too. These early men worked hard in order to survive by making specific tools in order to perform a particular need or function(e.g. hunting and cutting tools). It is said that one of the most active technological periods was around 500BC-200AD. They made several sculptures which some of them are still in existence in our museum in this modern day. There were some places referred to as centres of civilization like Igbo Ukwu, Nok, Ife and Benin etc.

In the pre colonial era there was and still a traditional system of government on Nigeria. There are three major ethnic groups in Nigeria; Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. The Yoruba’s are one of the largest , where they grace their origin to Oduduwa. 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.Their creation has different versions, one of them is the Oke Oramfee version. Oke Oramfe is located in Ile-Ife. It is believed to be the centre 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. In the Yoruba land they have certain political structures which help to maintain order in their towns, villages and farmland. The ruler( spiritual and political)is commonly known as Oba. The King also had other rulers of lesser rank and status. Another group of rulers were the Baale and the Oloja, the Baales were the third rank of rulers and they were in charge of the villages. The Oloja were the fourth rank of leaders and they 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 to facilitate smooth administration.The Oyo empire is a typical example of precolonial administration in Yoruba land. The too empire had organs like the alaafin administration, the ogboni cult association and the army.

 In the Igbo land there are no centralised states,they are grouped on five subcultures;Igbo of eastern Nigeria, Igbo of South eastern Nigeria, Igbo of the North Eastern Nigeria, the western Igbo and the Northern Igbo. There are also various versions of the creation of Igbo land, one of them is the Israeli version and another the Bus version which Professor M.A Onwuejeogwu referred to as ‘authentic’. There are political structures which are decentralized and have no actual rulers unlike the Yorubas . These consists of the family, Age grade(village basis),Oha na eze and secret societies.

 The Hausa land is located in the Northern part of Nigeria. Before 1804 the Hausas had two distinct groups made up of 14 states. The first group is ‘Hausa Bakwai’meaning legitimate states and ‘Hausa banza’ meaning illegitimate states. Hausa also has a creation story about an Arab prince and a wicked queen. There is existent a political system too and the ruler in any typical Hausa state is called Sarki. Islam was introduced and the political system changed into the emirate system of government.

 The colonial administration of government and indirect system rule of government has it’s origin to be traced from the Europeans (British) but it is found to be the Portuguese that we’re the 1st Europeans to land in Nigeria, through Benin. As from 1898, the British government sought to establish and maintain a colonial state in Nigeria. To achieve this, a number of measures were to be taken, for example, removal of all visible opposition to the imposition of colonial rule, expansion and consolidation of British authority over territory.

Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. But by 1900, the whole Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British Colonial Office. The May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. There was a second amalgamation in the year 1914.

In conclusion, Nigeria has evolved over the years from the precolonial era where there was no civilization to the military era and then the colonization era . Nigerian ethnic groups and their political systems, Everything has changed over the years and over time.