**AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS**

**CHAPTER 2**

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves the precolonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. The precolonial period is the period before the coming of the colonialists to Nigeria while the colonial period refers to the era that the colonial administration was established in the country. The precolonial period consists of variousindependent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. Theseinclude the Borno Empire, the Hausa states and the Sokoto Caliphate in the North to mention a few. The Igbo segmentary societies in the East, Benin Kingdom and Oyo empire in the West and several other identities in the Benue valley. This ethnic groupings varies based on their historical, social and cultural make-ups.No one knows when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but they are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria. The evacuation of a stone age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo State has shown more light to the earliest occupation of Nigeria.

The man who lived in Nigeria during those early years worked hard to cope with his environment by finding basic necessities such as food shelter and clothing. Tools were made during the stone age but they were later refined during the middle age and late stone age. They were civilization in different places like Benin, Ife and Igbo ukwu.

The political system in the precolonial period of Nigeria were majorly the three ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa/Fulani.

**THE HAUSAS**

Before the Holy War of 1804, the territory now known as the Northern sector of Nigeria was ruled by the Hausas under fourteen independent kingdoms. The defeat of the Hausas in the Holy War by the Fulani under the able leadership of an eminent Muslim leader called Othman Dan Fodio led to the extinction of the Hausa Kingdom and the establishment of the Fulani Emirates. Each emirate was headed by an Emir. Sokoto and Gwandu were made the two headquarters for all the emirates.

The Emirs of the other emirates were appointed either directly by the Emirs of Sokoto and Gwandu or appointed by the local people subject to the ratification of either Emirs of Sokoto or Gwandu.

For administrative convenience, Othman Dan Fodio divided the Fulani Empire into two (2): the Eastern and the Western section. The Eastern section included: Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Bauchi, Gombe, and Yola with Sokoto as its capital. On the other hand, Ilorin, Kotangora and Argungu with Gwandu as the capital were included in the Western region.

Mohammed Bello, son of Othman Dan Fodio, was given the administration of the Eastern section with its capital at Sokoto while Abdullahi, Dan Fodio’s brother, took charge of the Western section with Gwandu as its headquarters. Othman Dan Fodio, who was installed the Sarkin Muslim (The Commander of the Faithful), retired from political life but stayed in Sokoto.

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE SYSTEM**

1. The Emirate: The Caliphate was divided into emirates and each was headed by an Emir. He had the responsibility of making laws, enforcing them and maintaining peace in the Emirate. He was expected to administer the emirates in accordance with provision of the Islamic and Sharia laws.

These were:

1. The Waziri

2. The Galadima

3. The Madaki

4. The Dogari

5. Maaji

6. Sarkin Ruwa

7. Sarkin Fada

8. Sarkin Pawa

The Emirate was divided into two:

The Eastern Empire which consisted of Bauchi Katsina, Kano, Yola, Zaria, and Gombe and was controlled from Sokoto by Othman Dan Fodio’s son.The Western empire which consisted of Ilorin, Argungu and Kotangora and was controlled from Gwandu by Othman Dan Fodio’s brother. Each emirate was divided into districts controlled by the Hakimi, who in turn, appointed village heads to collect taxes and maintain law and order.

**FEATURES OF THE SYSTEM**

1. The Emir ruled according to Islamic laws (Sharia).

2. The Emir controlled the economy through taxes.

3. The Emir maintained law and order by issuing local orders.

4. His advisers in the discharge of is duties included:

• Madaki (Commander of the army).

• Waziri (Head official or Prime Minister).

• Galadima (Administrator of the Emir’s palace).

• Hakimi (Official in charge of districts, collection of taxes, maintenance of law and order).

• Sarkin Fada (Head of palace officials).

• Sarkin Pawa (Official butcher head).

• Sarkin Ruwa (River fishing official).

• Maaji (Emir’s treasurer).

• Dogari (Chief of police).

• Alkalis (Interpreters of the Sharia law).

**THE IGBOS**

The Igbo political system may be seen as a strict and separated political system. Many constitutions were in place and political authority was shared among them. For example, the Ofo title holders Ozor title holders, age grades, etc all took in the process of power sharing.

There was no form of centralisation of power and authority in the Igbo political system as it was more of the people’s direct participation in their government.

**FEATURES OF THE SYSTEM**

1. No centralization of power

2. Democratic and republican

3. Citizens played a major role in decision making.

4. Highly segmented.

**STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION**

1. Kindred: A group of families called Umunna. Headed by the eldest who has the Ofo title.

2. Council of Elders: Members of the village council.

3. Ndichie :Titled men of integrity that settled disputes.

4. Age Grade: Perform executive functions.

5. Umuada: Married daughters of kindred. Played major roles in settling family disputes

6.Village: Largest unit of government. Village assembly was the supreme body.

**ROLE OF THE IGBO POLITICAL SYSTEM**

1. Executive Function: It was performed by the village assembly, council of elders, and age grade.

2. Legislative Function: Performed by the council of elders, Ndichie and high priest of deities (gods).

3. Judicial Function: Performed by the council of elders, priest of deities, and Ndichie.

**THE BIRTH OF NIGERIA AS A GEOPOLITICAL ENTITY**

Before 1900, various parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were under their administration. In the year 1906, the amalgamation was taken place after the consultation of Nigerians by the British. The Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of southern Nigeria were amalgamated to form the new colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. Tamuno (1980) observed that the 1906 amalgamation was purely economical. The amalgamation led to the production of the white elephant of a railway in need of extension since 1901. The second amalgamation was that of 1940 in January. The main aim of this amalgamation was the same with the first amalgamation of May 1906. The Northern protectorate was not as economically buoyant as the southern protectorate, so the British agreed to amalgamate both protectorates in an indirect rule.