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CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORICA ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

The historical background of the Nigerian government and politics involves the precolonial and 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 colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria.

The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. It is a product of historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Precolonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. Example: the Hausa states, Borno Empire etc. The country is bordered to the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, which area on the gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. On the west, Nigeria is boarded by Benin, on the north, by Niger, and on the east, by Cameroon.

Man had settled in the region known as Nigeria since the Palaeolithic period 500,000-9000BC as studied by archaeologists. The early man in Nigeria had to hunt animals and gather fruits. They used hand axes as cutting tools. They then proceeded to invent another type of tool called a heavy chopper. There was more advanced technology at the bronze and metal age. During this times, Nigerian advanced to making sculptures.. They made human heads and figures.

The Landmarks in early Nigerian history were made known through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past. Some of the places were: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife etc. They are referred to as centers of ancient civilization.

The places where Terracotta was found is called the Nok culture or civilization area. It was believed to be a transitional civilization between the Stone Age and Iron Age because of the presence of stone and iron objects. Benin was important for its artwork. They carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass.

Ife was important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects were carved on hard stone called quartz while animals and human figures were carved on granite decorated with iron nails. It was believed that ife art originated from Nok culture because of their similarities especially with beaded neck, wrist and ankles and they believed that Benin learnt bronze sculpture from Ife.  
Igbo Ukwu was discovered while digging a toilet pit in 1939. It led to Thrustan Shaw excavating three sites: a compound wall, burial chamber and a pit. There many bronze objects were discovered.  
  
There were three majority ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa.  
The Yorubas: They are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. Their founder is Oduduwa and Ile-Ife is said to be their ancestral home. The Yoruba's have different versions of their history. Oduduwa is the first leader and his sons and grandsons gave rise to the other yoruba kingdoms. The Oke Oramfe version says that the earth was filled with water and God sent his messengers to the world (Obatala and the 16 immortals). He have them five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth and a cockerel. On the way Obatala got drunk amd Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority from him and led. On arrival on site(Ile-ife) he released the chicken to spread the lump of earth round.  
In yorubaland, each town had a king called Oba who lives in Alafin. He is both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom. The king had other rulers of lesser rank. They were in charge of subordinate towns. The Baales were the third rank ruling over villages while the Olojas were the fourth rank ruling over farmlands. Towns were divided into wards headed by Ijoye and are later subdivided into compounds headed by Baale. In town affairs, the highest group headed by the kings was the group of council chiefs.  
The Oyo Empire  
This is an example of a pre colonial administration. It was headed by the Alaafin of Oyo state. He was regarded as the Lord of many lands. He is the fountain of authority and regarded as the companion of gods. His powers were regulated by the Oyomesi and it is a council headed by Bashorun who is a prime minister.  
The Ogboni cult is a powerful cult that serves as a mediatory role in any conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin. The Army were credited with performing functions like ensuring stability of the empire, expansion and keepimg other territories in check. They are subjects to the Alaafin.  
The Igbos: They are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. The most popular versions of Igbo migrations leads or points to Isreal. Igboland is their original homeland because they did not move from place to place. Nri version says that Eri descended from the sky and sailed to River Anambra where he stayed with some people that had no memory of their past. The Igbo people practiced democracy. They had no empire or kingdom but they had institutions like family, age grade systems and secret societies. Each family is headed by Ofo. Age grades were organized on village basis. It is done for work, war and government. Seniority is of great importance among them. They are created to guard public morality. The elders formed the core of village administrations. Secret societies consisted of diviners' masquerades. They stayed between the gap of the living and ancestors. They perform rituals and sacrifices to ward off evil. The official religion in igbo land was traditional religion. The religious life of Igbo were surrounded by superstitions and mysticism.  
The Hausas: It is located in the Northern part of Nigeria. They are made up of yeo groups. The Hausa Bakwai and the Hausa bakwai. The former is the legitimate hausa state while the latter are the illegitimate state. The origin of Hausa goes back to a man named Bayajidda, An Arab prince who killed a snake that oppress the people of Daura. He later married the queen and had a son with her. She had 6 sons before, so the 7 of them later became kings of Hausa kingdoms. The Sarki is the head of a typical Hausa state. Sarkin Kasar is the name given to every effective head of state. He is the chief executive and judge of the state.  
**Emirate System of Government among the Hausa People**  
Usman Dan Fodio led the conquest of overthrow political leadership by the Fulani on the old existing hausa kingdoms. Every hausa leader removed was replaced by the Fulani Emir. There was an introduction of leadership by selecting Emirs to rule the Caliphate. They owed allegiance to Dan Fodio. Emir was a monarch in his emirate. Each emirate was divided into distinct known as Hakimi. The judicial administration of Hausa-Fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called Sharia.  
  
Colonial administration and indirect rule systems in Nigeria.

The Portuguese were the first to enter Nigeria through the Bini Kingdom. The Atlantic slave trade was the trade carried on Atlantic Ocean between the Europeans and Africans. Demands for slaves were due to the introduction of plantation systems of agriculture in Brazil, Jamaica and Haiti. By 1460, about 700 slaves were exported annually to Portugal from West Africa. This was the reason the British people came in contact with Nigerians. The British dominated the trade until they decided to abolish in the 19th Century. They decided to begin legitimate commerce. They introduced the Gun-boat politics incase of African countries that wanted to attck them. They took Lagos as a colony in 1861 due to treaties signed by Nigerian leaders. The Europeans struggled for power of colonies which led to partitioning of Africa. It was then that Britian had full control of Nigeria.  
  
The Birth of Nigeria as a Geo-political Entity.  
By 1900, the entire Nigeria was under the British Colony. In 1906, the first ever British amalgamation occurred. The British government amalgamated the Lagos colony and the Southern protectorate without the consent of Nigeria. Tamuno is observed that the aim of the amalgamation was purely economic. The second amalgamation was the one of 1914 between the Northern and Southern Nigeria. The reason was the same at the one in 1906. The North was not as economically buoyant as the south. The amalgamation allowed for surplus to be acquired in the south. Britian governed Nigeria using Indirect rule. It was a way the British government ruled Nigeria through their local traditional rulers.