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An History Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian state " in salient issues in Government and Nigerian politics, page 15-32 (3 pages)

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial period before the colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria.

Prior to the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigerian comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. These, among others, include the Borno Empire, the Hausa states the Sokoto Caliphate in the North; the Igbo segementary societies in the East, Benin kingdom and the Oyo Empire in the West and several Ethnic identities in the Benue Valley. These ethnic groupings significantly differ in their historical, social and cultural make-ups. Nigeria stretches roughly 700 miles from south to north, covering an area between 3 degree and 15 degree E longitude and between 4 degree and 14 degree N latitude. The artefacts mostly stone can be divided into several period. These are: Early Stone Age 3,000,000-35,000BC; Middle stone Age, 35,000-15,000BC and; Late Stone Age, 15,000-500BC.

The Achievement of early man

The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with the environment. First, he needed food. For his purpose he began to hunt animals and to gather fruits. But he soon began to invest tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting Archaeologists called the tools the Oldowan-type tools. This is because this type of tools was first identified by the archaeologists in the Olduvai George

in Tanzania. Early man then proceeded to invest another type of tool, which is a heavy chopper. It was more efficient in cutting than existing tools. The type was first seen at Sango Bay on the west shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda, East Africa. This is why it is called the Sangoan. One has been found in the upper Sokoto River in Sokoto State. Indeed one of the most active periods of technological efforts in Nigeria was during this period, around 500BC to 200AD. The figures were made of terracotta and they all possessed a distinctive artistic style.

### Ife civilization

Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads, objects such as stools and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz decorated with Iron nails. An example is Opa Oranmiyan in Ile-Ife.

### Igbo Ukwu Civilization

Some bronze Object and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the execution of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurston Shaw. The sites excavated at Igbo Ukwu have been dated to the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

### Historical background of pre-colonial political system in Yoruba land

The Yoruba people trace their origin to Oduduwa ancestral home of the Yoruba people. There are different versions of Johnson traced the origin of the Yoruba to "East."

### The Oke Oramfe's version of the Origin of the Yoruba

Oke Oramfe is located in Ile-Ife. It is believed to be the Centre from which the world was created. 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).

### The Oyo Empire

The first organ of government in oyo emoire was the king known as

Alaafin of Oyo. Oyo was one of the rare empires that had in built checks and balances, and this contributed to its stability for centuries. The Alaafin was the head of the empire, and was resident in the capital. He was also regarded as "Lord of many lands." The Oyomesi also had the power to remove any Alaafin especially when he appeared dictatorial or transgressed the laws of the land. Usually the deposed Alaafin was expected to commit suicide.

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 from the ancient times, they had no centralized states.

The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures;

1. The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria
2. The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria
3. The Igbo of North-Eastern Nigerian
4. The western Igbo and
5. The Northern Igbo

Political Structure of the pre-colonial Igbo land

In Igbo traditional society there was no highly centralized authority but instead they had what could be called a diffusion of authority into different groups. In other word they practiced direct democracy and or a decentralized system of government because they were no traditional ruler in the form of Oba as the case of the Yoruba, and so no hereditary claims to the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo kingdom or empire.

The birth of Nigeria as a Geo-political Entity

The May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. Besides, Tamuno (1980) observes that the primary aim of the 1906 amalgamation was purely economic, that is, "to use the better financial position of the protectorate of Southern Nigerian to cover the costs of administration and development in the financially weak colony and protectorate of Lagos, then saddled with the white elephant of a railway in need of extension since 1901.