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A REVIEW ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THENEGERIA STATE.

The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. It is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of the European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Prior to the emergence of Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, Kingdoms and empires. Nigeria stretches roughly 700miles from west to east and 650 miles from south to north. The country is boarded by Bigths of Benin and Biafra, on the west by Benin, on the North by Niger and on the east by Cameroon. 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 colonialists to Nigeria while the colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria.

EARLY MAN AND HIS ACHIEVEMENTS

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria showed that man had settled in the country since the Paleolithic period 500,00- 9000 BC which confirmed that Nigeria took part in the stone age civilization. The early man worked hard to cope with his environment. He gathered fruits and hunted animals as source of food. He Invented chopping and cutting tools, he made axes and heavy chopper

MAJOR LANDMARK IN EARLY NIGERIAN HISTORY

They are usually referred to as centers of ancient civilization. Their history presents to us the scientific and technical developments of early Nigerian societies.

1. NOK CULTURE/ CIVILIZATION: Terracotta head of a monkey was discovered in Nok culture or civilization by tin miners in 1936 and other discoveries were made e.g. Wamba, Katsina-Ala and Jena. Nik culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century B.C.
2. BENIN CIVILISATION: Benin was important for its art- work. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks, one of which was the ivory mask used as FESTAC symbol in 1977.
3. IFE CIVILIZATION: Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects were carved on hard stone called quartz while animal and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails. An example is Opa Oranmiyan in ile- ife.
4. IGBO UKWU CIVILIZATION: Some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo ukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the evacuation of the three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw. The three sets include a burial chamber, a pit, and a compound wall.

Traditional Political Institutions in the pre colonial Nigeria

In this section the three majority ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo and hausa-fulani in Nigeria traditional political system shall be examined.

Historical background of pre colonial political system in Yoruba land

The Yoruba are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba people trace their origin from Oduduwa, who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. The Yorubas originally came from the north-eastern area of Africa. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to Ile Ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to find other Yoruba kingdoms.

The Oke Oramfe 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. According to a legend the world was covered by water, then the almighty God decided to send more of his messengers to the world and they include Obatala and sixteen Oye. They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth, and a cockerel. Somewhere on the way to the world the leader Obatala got drunk and Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority from him. On arrival on the site, Oduduwa set down the five pieces of iron and placed the lump of earth with its feet throughout the earth.

Political Structure of the pre-colonial Yoruba Land

The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms consist of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages, and farmlands. The oba is both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom. The oba enjoyed many privileges but certain limitations were placed on his powers. These limitations were known as *eewo* were designed to curb the despotism and tyranny on the part of the king. If the king should violate any *eewo* it could lead to his death.

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 centralised states. The Igbo are grouped into five sub cultures:

1. The Igbo of southern eastern Nigeria,
2. The Igbo of north eastern Nigeria,
3. The western Igbo,
4. The northern Igbo.

One of the most popular version of the migratory stories of origin of the Igbo people is the one that points to Israel. This assumption is based on the so called similarities between the cultures of the Igbo and the ancient Hebrew. Professor M. A. Onwuejeogwu regards the *nri* version as the only authentic version of origin in the existence in the oral tradition of Igbo. According to *nri* version, the

ancestors of the Igbo, *eri*, descended from the sky and sailed down the river Anambra. When he arrived at *aguler*, he met some autochthonous group of people who had no living memory of their own and settled with them. As their population increased, some groups migrated to the other parts of the Igbo land to establish their own settlement.

Political Structure of the pre-colonial Igbo land

In the Igbo traditional society, there was no highly centralised authority but instead they had what could be called diffusion of authority into different groups. In other words they practiced direct democracy and or a decentralised system of government because there were no traditional rulers. Although there was no highly centralised authority, some socio political institutions existed in each village to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions, such institutions included the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

Historical Background of the pre-colonial political system in Hausa

Hausa land is located in the northern Nigeria. The Hausa states may have been founded by Berber immigrants from north of the Sahara, or else by peoples coming from east Africa. There were two distinct groups. The first group consists of seven states called Hausa *bakwai* states that is Hausa legitimate states. The second group consists of the remaining seven states and were known as Hausa *banza* states that is Hausa illegitimate states.

Political structure of the pre colonial Hausa land

The Sarki was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. *Sarkin Karsa* which means ruler of the land was the full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa state. He combined both political and religious functions. The Islamisation of Hausa land also influenced its judicial system.

The birth of Nigeria as a geo political entity

Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. But by the 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. However, this was done without consultation with Nigerians regarding their views as to whether or not they supported the amalgamation.

The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated northern and southern Nigeria. That was why, for the British imperial offices since the southern trade was booming, amalgamation would allow the surpluses acquired in the south. Britain therefore, governed Nigeria by means of a system popularly known as indirect rule. Indirect rule is a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.