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**An Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State**

**The historical background of Nigeria 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 the colonialists to Nigeria while the colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria. The Nigeria state is colonial creation. Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires, These among others, include the Borno Empire, the Hausa State, and the Sokoto Caliphate in the North, the Igbo segmentary societies in the East, Benin Kingdom and Oyo Empire in the West and several ethic identities in Benue Valley. These ethnic groupings significantly differ in their historical, social and cultural make-ups.**

**Early Man in Nigeria, the exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are different evidence from different parts of Nigeria which pointed to the fact man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 500,000-9000BC. The achievement of the early man; man coped all those many year in Nigeria. First, he needed food. For the purpose he began to hunt the animals and go gather fruit, then began with the making of tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools. He also began to make hand axes. These were tools had a cutting edge and were trimmed from both sides.**

**The Scientific and Technological Development of Early Nigerian**

* **Major Landmark in Early Nigerian History: Nigerians history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in a very remote past. Some of the places where man lived in Nigeria includes: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others.**
* **Nok Culture/Civilisation: the discovery of terracotta (burnt clay) head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as Wamba, Kastina-Ala and Jema. The area where these terracotta figurines were found is called the Nok culture or civilisation area.**
* **Benin Civilisation : Benin was important for its art-work. The craftmen of Benin craved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass.**
* **Ife Civilisation: Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects such as stools and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz while human and animals figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails.**
* **Igbo Ukwu Civilization: some bronze and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw.**

**Historical Background of Pre-Colonial Political System in Yoruba Land**

**The Yoruba are one of the target ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba people trace their origin to Odududwa who was the founder of the Yoruba Kingdom. Ile-ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people.**

**The Oyo Empire**

**The government of the Oyo empire is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration on Yoruba land. The first organ of government in Oyo empire was the King know as Alaafin of Oyo.**

* **The Alaafin Administration: Oyo empire was very unique and exceptional in its system of government. The Alaafin was the head of the empire, and was resident in the capital.**
* **The Ogboni Cult’s Administration: Apart from the Alaafin cabinet, members of the Oyomesi cult constituted another arm of government. It was a very powerful cult, it was composed of free and prominent members of the society as well as member of the Oyomesi.**
* **The Army: The army was another arm of government in Yoruba society. It was very organized, its head was conferred with the coveted titile of Are-Ona-Kankanfo was expected to live outside the capital. The army was credited with performing important functions which included stability of the empire, expansion, as well as keeping dissident territories in check.**

**Historical Background of Pre-colonial Political System in Igbo Land**

**The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or a cephalous way of life. This is because from the ancient times, they had no centralized states. Consequently, they operated a kind of government without kings. The Igbo are groups into five sub-cultures:**

* **The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria.**
* **The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria.**
* **The Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria.**
* **The Western Igbo and**
* **The Northern Igbo.**

**Historical Background of Pre-colonial Political System in Hausa Land**

**Hausa Land is located in Northern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 was made up of fourteen states, and they were two distinct groups. The first group consists of seven states called “Hausa Bakwai” sates, that is, Hausa legitimate states. The second group consists of the remaining seven states and were known as “Hausa Banza”** , **that is Hausa illegitimates states. The Hausa ‘Bakwai’ states are DAURA, BIRAM, ZARIA, KASTINA KANO, RANO AND GOBIR while the Hausa ‘Banza’ states are NUPE, GWARI, YAURI, BAUCHI, ZAMFARA, KEBBI, and YORUBA.**

**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 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 Nigeria. British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of the Southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria.**

**The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamates Northern and Southern Nigeria. The principle reason for this is the same as that of May 1906. The Northern protectorate was not economically buoyant as the colony and protectorate of the 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.**