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**GST 203 REVIEW OF CHAPTER TWO**

**AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATE**

The historical background of the Nigerian government and politics involves the precolonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. The precolonial period refers to the time before the coming of the colonialists to Nigeria, while colonial period refers to the period of time where colonial administration was established. The Nigerian state is as a result of colonialization. The precolonial Nigeria comprised of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires.

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but their archeological evidences, showing that man had settled in the region known as Nigeria since the path eolithic period. It was also founded that Nigeria took part in stone age. All these findings show that the country has been inhibited for a long time.

Through excavation on the places where man lived; Nok, Ile Ife, Igbo Ukwu, Benin, which are referred to as the centers of civilization, information on many land marks in Nigeria was made possible. The history of the centers of civilization shows the scientific and technological development of the early Nigerian societies.

In the Nok culture/civilization is believed to be a transitional civilization between stone age and Iron age of Nigeria because of the presence of stone and iron objects. They existed between the 5th and 2nd century BC. Benin civilization/culture is well known for its works of arts. They carved in wood and ivory, and casted objects in bronze and brass. The Ife culture/civilization is known for its figures carved in stones and decorated with irons. Igbo Ukwu culture/civilization involves the use of bronze to sculpt.

They are three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa-Fulani. The Yoruba’s are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Yoruba trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founding father of the Yoruba land. Ile-Ife is regarded as their ancestral home. There are different versions of their origin. The first is; they originally came from the North-Eastern area of Africa, and after several years of journey, they settled in Ile-Ife in Nigeria. Oduduwa is believed to have the Yoruba people to Ile-Ife. The other version is that Ile-Ife is the center in which the world was created. In the pre-colonial political structure of the Yoruba kingdom, there is a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town has a king referred to as the ‘Oba’, who resides in the palace called the ‘Aafin’. The king is both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom. The king has supreme authority but there are limitations to his power called ‘eewo’. This is designed to prevent tyranny of the king, and violation of these rules could lead to the king’s death.

The precolonial political system in Igbo land is popular for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This is because from ancient times, they had no central state, they operated a type of government without kings, they practiced a direct democracy and or a decentralized system. There were some socio-political structures which existed in each village to perform legislative, executive and judiciary functions, such institutions included the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies. The family is the smallest political unit in Igbo society, headed by an ‘Ofo’ title holder. The family sees itself has having a common ancestor. The Igbo believe in reincarnation. Profaning of deities was a very serious offense among the Igbos. The lives of the Igbos are founded mysticisms and superstitions.

The precolonial political system in Hausa land consisted of seven legal states and seven illegal states, all together making up fourteen states, Islam was introduced into the culture in the eleventh century.

The first Europeans to arrive in Nigeria were the Portuguese, followed by the British. The Atlantic Slave Trade was the trade carried across the Atlantic Ocean between Europeans and Africans. There became a high demand in the 15th century for slaves by the Portuguese. The Trans- Atlantic trade put the Nigerian and British in contact. The trade matured until the 16th century. In the early 19th century, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade was abolished. After the abolishment of slave trade, the Europeans continued to dominate over Africans by colonialization. The struggle for power among the Europeans led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century.

In May 1906, the British amalgamated the Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorates of Southern Nigeria. This was the first amalgamation. it was done without consideration of Nigerians. The purpose of the amalgamation was economic.it was use the financial position of the southern protectorates to cover the development and administration costs of weaker colony and protectorates of Lagos. The second amalgamation was in January 1914 by Sir Fredrick Lugard, who later became Lord. The British government amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates, because the Northern protectorates was not all that buoyant as the South. The Britain governed Nigeria by a system of indirect rule.