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AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATES.

The background of Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial and the colonial period in Nigeria. The pre colonial period is the period before the coming of the colonialist while the colonial period is the period of colonial administration in Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation and a product that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonisation of Africa. Before the emergence of Nigeria state, the pre colonial Nigeria comprises of Empires and kingdoms like Borno Empire, Oyo Empire, Hausa states, Igbo sedimentary societies in east e.t.c they differ in their historical,social and cultural backgrounds. Nigeria is a big country with a big land size and has borders with other country in Africa.

The exact time man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidences that man settled down in the region since paleolithic period 500,000 - 9000BC and that Nigerians also took part in the stone age civilisation. There was an excavation of a stone age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo the skeleton was dated 12,000 years ago and this suggests that the country has been long inhabited. Man needed to survive in Nigeria therefore he started hunting animals as food, gather fruits, and started inventing some tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools. There are some places where man lived in Nigeria it includes Nok, Igbo ukwu, Ife and Benin aming others and is know as the centre of ancient civilisation.

The yorubas are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are United by language they trace back to their origin Oduduwa who was the founder of Yoruba kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the yoruba people, there are different versions of the origin of Yoryba people, some believed they originated from North-Eastern area of Africa. Another version believed that the Yoruba's originated from Oramfe which is located at Ile-Ife and they were sent by God led by Oduduwa. Their political structure are similar in nature each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns e.t.c The king is know as Oba he is the spiritual and political leader, his words are law and binding on everyone but has certain limitations in order to curb tyranny known as 'eewo' the pattern of administration was hierarchical we have the Baale who were the compound heads at the lower level, the next in line is the ward head who

administered his ward on behalf of the king. The apex was a group of civil chiefs (igbimo ilu)headed by the king. If the Oba violates the 'eewo' it could lead to his death.

The government of the old Oyo empire is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in yoruba land. The first organ of government in Oyo empire was the king known as Alaafin of Oyo. The administration of Alaafin of Oyo was unique and exceptional in it's system of government. It was one of the rare empires that had in-built checks and balances, and thus contributed to it's stability for centuries . The Alaafin was the head of the empire, assisted in his administration by a retinue of officials made up of priests, officials and eunuchs. He was the fountain of authority and was therefore regarded as the companion of the gods (Ekeji Orisa).

His powers were often limited and regulated by the Oyomesi, a council of seven members headed by Bashorun who acted as the prime minister and they were the ones to select a successor that is they were the king makers. Apart from the Alaafin cabinet, members of the oyomesi, there was another arm of government known as the Ogboni cult, it was a very powerful cult and composed of free and prominent members of the society as well as members of the oyomesi. It played a mediator role in conflict issues between the Alaafin and Oyomesi and kind of a counter power to the oyomesi as well.

Another arm of government in traditional yoruba society was the army it was organised and it's head was conferred with a title of Are-Ona-Kankafo and they were expected to live outside the capital. The army was credited in performing functions like stability of the empire, expansion of the empire, also keeping dissident territories in check . The Alaafin used the Bere annual festival periods to acknowledge the renewal of allegiance of the provincial governors to him.

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 they operated a kind of government without kings and they are grouped into five sub-cultures : The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, The Igbo of SouthSouth-Eastern Nigeria, The Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria, The Western Igbo and The Nothern Igbo. There are many versions of the migratory story of origin of the Igbo people the most popular is the one that points to Israel and the assumption is based on the similarities between the cultures of the Igbo and ancient Hebrew. Some believe that Igbo people had been in their present abode from beginning so Igbo land is the original home land.

According to Professor M. A. Onwuejeogwu (2000) he regards the Nri version as the only authentic version of origin in existence in the oral tradition of the Igbo the Nri version are of the view that the ancestors of the Igbo Eri, descended from the sky and sailed down the River Anambra and arrived at Aguleri he met some autochthonous group of people who had no living memory of their own and settled down with them. Their population increased some groups migrated to other parts of Igbo land to establish their own settlement. The Igbo traditional society have no highly centralised authority but had what is known as diffusion of authority into different groups they practiced a decentralised system of government. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society each family was headed by an "Ofo" title holder. One of the tile holders is regarded as the most senior known as the "Okpara " who held the Ozo title and presided over the council of elders mettings.

The Age grade was organised on a village basis the association grew from childhood and took a common name to commemorate an event associated with the time of their birth. Based on their age grades, the communities organised themselves for work, war e.t.c the youths cleared the path and public places, streams and also served as police. The elders enforced the decision. Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in the Igbo society all male adults usually met in this assembly to perform legislative functions. The secret societies consisted of the diviners like masquerades, ubinuknabi at Arochukwu e.t.c

Hausa land is located in Nothern Nigeria before 1804 it was made up if fourteen states they were of two distinct groups,the first group consist of seven states called Hausa Bakwai the legitimate states and the other seven states called Hausa Banza the illegitimate Hausa states. The sarki was known as the head if any typical Hausa state. Sarkin Kasar meanung ruler was the full name given to an efficient head of state. Islam was introduced in Hausa land in the fourteenth century and by the fifteenth century, it was accepted and the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio further strengthened and consolidated the religion in the area. The Emir was an absolute monarch in the emirate and appointed officers who administer on behalf of the Emir, the judicial administration of Hausa-fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called sharia and trained sharia court called Alkali.

The British who have been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria, the portugese were and arrived Nigeria through Bini Kingdom. The Atlantic slave trade was the trade carried on across the Atlantic ocean between the Europeans and Africans and became more important in the 15th century with the arrival of Portuguese. After three centuries of shameful slave trade and came the period of legitimate commerce. The British first annexed Nigerian territory in 1861 and took Lagos for a colony. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in them in 19th century, the scramble for Africa ,the Berlin conference of 1884 -1885 the Britain colonised Nigeria.

By 1900, Nugeria was under the responsibility of the British colonial office. The may 1906 amalgamation is know as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria the amalgamation of lagos colony and protectorate with of southern Nigeria to form a new colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation was in January 1919 the British government amalgamated the Nothern and Southern protectorate of Nigeria. Sir Lord Fedrick Lugard is best known as the father of the January 14 amalgamation.