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**COURSE: GST 203 (GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITIONS).**

**QUESTION:** In about 3-pages review chapter two, ‘An Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian state’ in salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics, pages 15-32.

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

The historical background of Nigerian Government and politics involves the pre-colonial period and colonial period in Nigeria. The pre-colonial period: is the period before the coming of the colonialist to Nigeria, while the colonial period: refers to the era that colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. It is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Precolonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms, and empires. These, among others, include the Borno empire, the Hausa states, and the Sokoto caliphate in the north; the Igbo segmentary societies in the east, Benin kingdom and the Oyo empire in the west and several ethnic identities in the Benue valley.

**EARLY MAN IN NIGERIA.**

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria Is unknown but, there are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which pointed to the fact that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 500,000-9000 BC. The artefacts, mostly stone tools, found by archaeologists further confirmed that Nigerians also took part in the stone-age civilization. These stone-ages can be divided into several periods. These are: Early Stone Age 3,000,000-35,000 BC, middle age stone 35,000-15,000 BC and; late Stone Age 15,000-500 BC.

**THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF EARLY MAN.**

The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment. First, he needed food, so for this purpose he began to hunt the animals to gather fruits. He later began to invest tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools. Archeologists called the tools ‘**OLDOWAN TYPE TOOLS’.** This is because this type of tool was first identified by the archeologists in the olduvani gorge in Tanzania. He began to make hand axes, these were tools which were oval and pointed in shape. They also had a cutting edge and trimmed from both sides. These tools were made during the early stone age, but were later refined during the middle Stone Age and late Stone Age.

**THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY NIGERIAN SOCIETIES.**

**MAJOR LANDMARK IN EARLY NIGERIAN HISTORY.**

The information on the major landmarks in early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote pasts. Some of the places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past included: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others. They are usually referred to as centers of ancient civilization.

* **NOK CULTURE/ CIVILISATION.**

The discovery of a 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 areas were these terracotta figurines were found is called, ‘the Nok culture or civilization area’. This culture is believed to be a transitional civilization between the Stone Age and the Iron Age in Nigeria because of the presence of a combination of stone and iron object.

* **BENIN CIVILISATION.**

This was important for its art work. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Art historians claim that bronze casting was introduced into Benin by an Ife artist. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks, one of which was the ivory mask used as FESTAC symbol in 1977.

* **IFE CIVILISATION.**

This is important because of it terracotta and bronze heads. Objects such as stools and figures were carved on hard stone called, quartz while animals and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails. An example is Opaoranmiyan in Ile-Ife.

* **IGBO UKWU CIVILISATION.**

Some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at igboukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called; THURSTAN SHAW. The three sites included a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall.

**TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTIUTIONS IN PRE-COLONIAL NIGERIA.**

In this section, the three majority ethnic groups are;

* ***Yoruba***: The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba people trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba Kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. There are different versions of the traditions of origin.

***The Oke Oramfe’s Version of the Origin of the Yoruba:***

Oke Oramfe is located in Ile-Ife .It is believed to be the center from which the world was created. In their paper Yoruba land up to 1800, Akinjogbin and Ayandele (1980) gave a full picture of what Oke Oramfe’s version is all about. According to him, there was a period when the whole world was covered by water. 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]. They were given fives pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth, and a cockerel. Somewhere on their way to the world, the leader, Obatala, got drunk with palm wine. Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority from him and eventually led the party to the world. The site on which they landed is traditionally known as Oke Oramfe in Ile-Ife.

* ***Igbo***: The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This is because they had no centralized states. In the Igbo traditional society, there was no highly centralized authority but instead they had what could be called a diffusion of authority into different groups. They practice direct democracy and/or a decentralized system of government because there were no traditional rulers in the form of Oba as in the case of the Yoruba and so on hereditary claims to the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo kingdom or empire. The family was the smallest political unit traditional society. Each family was headed by an ‘Ofo’ title holder.
* ***Hausa-Fulani in Nigeria***: Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria .They made fourteen states; they were of two distinct groups. The first group consists of seven states called ‘Hausa Bakwai’ states, which are Hausa legitimate states. The second groups consist of the remaining seven states and were known as ‘Hausa banza’ states, that is Hausa illegitimates states.

The members of this council were project officers appointed by Uthman Dan Fodio and each held a title specifying the specific functions he performed; (1) Sarkin Fada- The spokesmen of the Emir and organizer of palace workers, (2) Waziri- The Prime Minister of the Emirate, (3) Galadima- The administrator of the capital city; (4) Madawaki-The commander and Head of the Emirate Army; (5) Magaji-Government Treasurer in charge of the government treasury; (6) Sarkin Dan Doka- Inspector General of Police Force Called Dan Doka; (7) Sarkin Ruwa- Minister in charge of Water Resources or the river fishing official; (8) Sarkin Ruwa- Head of Chairman of Butchers at the Abattoirs; (9) Yari- Chief Superintendent of Prisons in the Emirate.

The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was unfortunate channel but first put the British in contact with Nigeria. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century. The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.