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**QUESTION:**

**In about 3-Page 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.**

**CHAPTER TWO**

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

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. The pre-colonial period is a period before the coming of the colonialists to Nigeria while the colonial era refers to the era where the colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation; it is a product of a historical arrangement that rose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonisation of Africa. The pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of various independent chiefdom, states, kingdom, and empires, which 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 Ethnic identities in the Benue valley. These ethnic groups differ significantly in their histories, social and cultural make-ups. The country is bordered to the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, which are on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. On the west Nigeria is bordered by Benin, on the north by Niger, and on the east by Cameroon. Nigeria stretches roughly 700miles from west to east and 650miles from south to north, covering an area between 30 and 150 E longitudes and between 40 and 140 N latitude.

The exact time man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but due to the archaeological evidence found in Nigeria man had settled in Nigeria since the Palaeolithic period 500 00- 9000 BC. The excavation of a Stone Age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state has thrown more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria. The skeleton was dated back to 12 00 years ago, this alone suggests that the country has been long ago inhabited. Some places where man inhabited in Nigeria in the very remote past included: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others. These places are usually referred to as the centres of the ancient civilisation. The history of these cultures presents us with the scientific and technological developments of the early Nigerian societies. These histories include: the Nok culture where the discovery of a terracotta head of monkey by tin miners in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as the wamba, Kastina-Ala and Jema. The area where these discoveries were made is called the Nok culture. This culture is believed to be transition of the Stone Age and the Iron Age.

.**Historical Background of pre-colonial Political System in Yoruba Land**

The Yoruba are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. They 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. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led Yoruba to Ile-ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to found other Yoruba Kingdoms.

**Political structures of the Pre-colonial Yoruba land**

The political structures of the Yoruba kingdom each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town has a king known as the **“Oba”** who resides in a place called **“Alaafin”.**  He is the supreme authority in the kingdom and his words are laws and binding on everybody. He is both the spiritual and political had of the kingdom. The Oba has a lot of privileges and certain limitations known as **“ Eewo”**, in which the if the king should violate it would lead to his death. The king also had other rulers of lesser ranks who were in charge of the subordinate towns. These rulers were called **“Baale”** and **“Oloja”**. The Baale were the third rank of rulers and were in charge of the villages, while the Oloja were the fourth ranks of rulers and were in charge of the farmlands. Each of these subordinate towns was divided into smaller units to facilitate smooth administration. These units heads were known as **“Ijoloye”**, these units were also divided into compound called **“Agbo-ijoloye”**. The patterns of administrations were hierarchical. The government of the old Oyo Empire is a typical example on the pre-colonial administration in the Yoruba land. The first organ of government is the Alaafin administration, and other arms being the Ogboni cult’s administration and the Army.

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

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary way of life. This is because the ancient times had no centralized states. They operated in a government without kings. The Igbos is grouped into five sub-cultures they are: the Igbo of the Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of the south- Eastern Nigeria, and the Igbo of the North- Eastern Nigeria, the Western Igbo and the Northern Igbo. Professor M. A Onwuejeogwu (2000) regards the Nri version as the only authentic version of origin in existence in the oral tradition of the Igbo. According to the Nri version, the ancestor of the Igbo, **Eri**, descended from the sky and sailed down the River Anambara. When he arrived at **Aguleri**, he met some autochthonous group of people who had no living memory their own and settled with them. As their population increased, some groups migrated to other parts of Igbo land to establish their own settlements.

**Political Structure of the Pre-Colonial Igbo Land**

In the Igbo traditional society, there was no highly centralized authority but instead they had what they called a diffusion of authority into different groups. In other words they practised direct democracy or decentralized system of government because there were no traditional rulers in the form of Oba as in the case of the Yoruba. Although, there was a decentralized system of government, 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. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo society. Each family was headed by an **“Ofo”** title holder. The family sees themselves as having one common ancestor. The most senior Ofo title holder was known as the **“Okpara”** who held the **“Ozo”** title and presided over the council of elders meeting where issues affecting the lives of the people where discussed. Age grade was organised on a village basis. These age grade was strongly organised among the northern and southern Igbos peoples. Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in traditional igbo society. All male adult members usually met in this assembly to perform legislative functions. They held meetings in the open village square. The decisions taken in those meetings were absolute and final. While the secret societies consisted of the diviners, masquerade. They act as intermediary between the living and their ancestors.

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

Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria. The Hausa land before 1804 was made up of fourteen states and they were of two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven states called **“Hausa Bakwai”** that is Hausa legitimate states while the second group **“Hausa Banza”** is known as the Hausa illegitimate states. Oral tradition attributed to the origin of the Hausa states to a man named **Bayajidda**. an Arab prince who travelled to the **Sahel** from **Baghdad.** He killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of **Daura**, and he married the queen. The queen already had six sons and then had one with Bayajidda; these sons ruled the seven Hausa city-states. Islam was not introduced to the region on any discernible scale until the eleventh century.

**Political Structure of the Pre-colonial Hausa Land**

The **“Sarki”** was known as the head of the head of any typical Hausa state. “**Sarkin Kasar”** which means **“ ruler of the land”** was a full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa state. The Sarkin Kasar combined both political and spiritual functions. He was also the chief executive and judge of the state, but he was aided by the council of the state. It is worthy of note that between the 14th and 15th centuries, socio-political organisation of Hausa state took another shape. For instance, Islam was adopted and this gave birth to new political institutions such as Magaji, Dogari, Madawaki.

**Emirate System of Government among the Hausa People**

Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the fourteenth century and by fifteenth century it was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidated the religion in this area. It led to the conquest of the existing old Hausa kingdom, the overthrow of the political leadership by the Fulani and the establishment of the caliphate and Fulani emirates in northern Nigeria. In every state conquered the former Hausa ruler was replaced by a Fulani Emir. Each of the Emir owed allegiance to Dan Fodio and his two representatives at **Sokoto** and **Gwandu.** The Emir was a political, administrative and spiritual leader. The Emir was an absolute monarch in his Emirate.

**Colonial Administration and Administration and Indirect Rule System in Nigeria- Historical Background**

The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Nigeria through bini kingdom. The Atlantic slave Trade was a trade carried on across the Atlantic Ocean between the Europeans and Africans. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the unfortunate channel that first put British in contact with Nigeria. In 19th century the british decided to abolish the trans-Atlantic trade. After three centuries of the slave trade came the legitimate commerce. During this period British formally annexed Nigerian territory. In 1861 took Lagos as a colony. The scramble for Africa by the Europeans led to the partitioning of Africa after the berlin conference of 1884-85.

**The Birth of Nigeria as a Geo-Political Entity**

Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by British were still under the responsibility of the British colonial office. The May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. The second amalgamation was that of 1914. Sir Federick Lugard is best known as the father of the second amalgamation. Britain therefore governed means of system known as “indirect rule” which is a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers. The British defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.