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COURSE: GST 201 – Peace and Conflicts Studies

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**ASSIGNMENT**: In about 3-Page review Chapter 2, "An Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State," in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria's Politics, pages 15-32.

The pre-colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria are involved in the historical background of Nigerian government and politics. The Nigerian state is a product of the historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Upon the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. They include the;

1. Sokoto Caliphate in the North,
2. Hausa states,
3. Borno Empire,
4. Igbo segmentary societies in the East,
5. Benin Kingdom,
6. Oyo Empire in the West

And several others in the Benue Valley. Nigeria is bounded to the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, to the West by Benin Republic, to the North by Niger Republic, and to the East by Cameroon. Nigeria is located between 3° and 15°E longitude and between 4° and 14°N latitude.

The exact time man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which points out that, man had settled in Nigeria since the Paleolithic period (500,000–9,000B.C). The Stone Age can be divided into several periods namely;

1. Early Stone Age (3,000,000 - 35,000BC),
2. Middle Stone Age (35,000 – 15,000BC),
3. Late Stone Age (15,000 – 500BC).

The Stone age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo State, was dated some 12,000 years ago and this suggests that Nigeria has long been inhabited. The tools invented by the early man who lived in Nigeria were called Oldowan-type tools by archaeologists. This is cause, this type of tool was first identified by the archaeologists in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania.

Excavation work on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote pasts, made it possible for information on the major land marks in early Nigerian history, possible. Some of these remote places include;

1. Nok,
2. Igbo Ukwu.
3. Ife
4. Benin, etc

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. 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. According to his book; History of the Yoruba (1950), Johnson traced the origin of the Yorubas to the East; the North-Eastern area of Africa. With them the East, is Mecca and Mecca is the East. It is from Egypt.

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This is because of the ancient times, they had no centralized state. Consequently, they operated a kind of government without kings. The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures;

1. The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria,
2. The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria,
3. The Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria,
4. The Western Igbo and
5. The Northern Igbo.

The Hausa people are located in the northern part of Nigeria. Before 1804, Hausa land was made up of 14 states and they were of two distinct groups. The first consist of 7 states called “Hausa Bakwai” states i.e., Hausa legitimate states. The second consist of the remaining 7 states and were known as “Hausa Banza” states i.e., Hausa illegitimate states. The Hausa Bakwai states are Daura, Biram, Zaria, Katsina, Kano, Rano and Gobir while the Hausa Banza states are Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi, and Yoruba.

Before 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 in Nigeria. Britain amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate of Southern and Northern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria. The principal reason for this is the same as that of May 1906. The Northern protectorate was not as financially buoyant as the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. Lord Frederick Lugard is best known as the father of the “January 1914” amalgamation.