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A REVIEW OF AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

The history background of Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. The pre- colonial period refers to the period before the coming of the colonialists while the colonial period refers to the period the colonialists ruled or colonial administration was established in Nigeria. Pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires which included The Borno Empire, The Hausa States and The Sokoto Caliphate in the North.

EARLY MAN IN NIGERIA

The exact time man started to live in Nigeria is unknown but archaeological evidences show that man settled in the region called Nigeria since the palaeolithic period 500,00-9000BC .

Achievements of early man

The man who lived in Nigeria those years had worked hard to cope. He started gathering fruits and hunting the animals. Soon he began to invent tools consisting of pebbles and he made them into chopping and cutting tools. Archaeologists called the tools the Oldowan-type tools because that type of tool was first identified by archaeologists in the olduvai gorge in tanazia. Early man then proceeded to invent another type of tool which was more efficient in cutting than existing tools .

The scientific and technological development of early Nigerian societies

Information on the major land marks was made possible through the excavation work done in the paces man lived in the very remote past and these places were: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife, Benin among others.

Nok culture/civilization

The discovery of a terracotta(burnt clay)head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted other discoveries in places like Wamba, Katsina -Ala and Jema. Through the use of carbon dating, it was discovered that the Nok culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century B.C.

Benin civilization

Benin was important for its art work. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks, one of which was the ivory mask used as FESTAC symbol in 1977.

Ife civilization

Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads .Objects such as stools and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz while animal and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails and an example is Opa-Oranmiyan in Ile-Ife.Art historians believe that the Ife art originated from the Nok culture because of the similarities in the two.

Igbo-Ukwu civilization

Some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo-Ukwu in 1939 and these led to the excavation of three sites which were a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall. The sites excavated have been dated to the middle of 9th century A.D.

Historical background of pre-colonial political system in Yoruba land

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic groups and they trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom .Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to Ile-Ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to find other Yoruba kingdoms.

The Oke Oranfe’s version of the origin of the Yoruba

Oke-Oranfe is located in Ile-Ife.According to the legend ,the Almighty god then decided to send some of his messengers to the world and they included Obatala or Orisa Nla or Orisa Alase and sixteen Oye. They were given 5 pieces of iron,a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth and a cockerel .Somewhere on the way to the world, Obatala got drunk and Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority and eventually led the party to the world. The site which they landed on is referred to as Oke-Oranfe.

Political structure of the Pre-colonial Yoruba land

The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. each had a capital town, subordinate town, villages and farmlands. Each town has a king referred to as “Oba” who resides in the palace called “Aafin”.He Oba enjoyed many privileges but certain limitations were placed on his powers .These limitations were referred to as ‘eewo” and if the king violated any ‘eewo”,it could lead to his death.

The Oyo Empire

1. The Alaafin Administration

2. The Ogboni cult’s administration

3. The Amy

Historical background of Pre-colonial political system in Igbo Land

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life .This because from ancient times ,they had no centralized states. Consequently, they operated a government without kings. They 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
5. The Northern Igbo

Political structure of the Pre-colonial Igbo Land

The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society. Each family was headed by an “Ofo”title holder. Among the “Ofo” title holders, one of them was recognized as the most senior to others .He was known as the “:Okpara” who held the “Ozo” title and presided over the council of elders meeting where issues affecting the lives of people were discussed.

Historical background of Pre-colonial political system in Hausa Land

Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 was made up of fourteen states, and they were in two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven states which were the Hausa legitimates states while the other group consist of the remaining seven states which were known as Hausa illegitimate states. The Hausa states may have been founded by Berber immigrants from north of the Sahara, or else by peoples coming from east Africa.

Political structure of the Pre-colonial Hausa Land

The “Sarki” was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. Sarkin Kasar which means “ruler of the land” was the full title given to any efficient and effective head of Hausa state and he combined both political and religious /spiritual functions.

Emirate system of government among the Hausa people

Important title holders in the Emir’s cabinet included:

1. Sarkin Fada: The spokesman 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 .Madawki: The commander and Head of the Emirate Army

5.Sarkin Pawa :Head of chairman of butchers at the abattoirs

The Birth of Nigeria as a geo-political entity

By the year 1900,the whole of Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British Colonial Office. The May 1906 is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria. However ,this was done without the consultation of Nigerians as regarding whether their views on whether or not they supported the amalgamation .The second amalgamation was that of 1914.In January 1914,the British amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria for the same principal reason as that of May 1906.Sir Fredrick Lugard is regarded as the father of “January 1914”amalgamation.Britain,therefore governed Nigeria by means of a system popularly referred to as “Indirect rule”. Indirect rule may be a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers.