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Question: review chapter two of salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics.

The historical background of Nigeria 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 colonialists 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 colonisation of Africa. Pre- colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states , kingdom 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. On the west, Nigeria is bordered by Benin, on the north, by Niger, and on the east, by Cameroon. In its extreme northeastern corner, lake chad separates Nigeria from the country of chad. Nigeria stretches roughly 700miles from west to east and 650miles from south to north covering an area between 3 and 15 E longitude between 4 and 14 N latitude.

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidence 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 500,00- 9000BC. The artefacts, mostly stone tools ,found by archaeologists further confirmed that Nigerians also took part in the stone-age can divided into several periods. These are: Early stone Age 3,000,000- 35,000BC; middle stone Age, 35,000- 15,000BC and; late stone Age, 15 000- 500BC. The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment. First, he needed food. For this purpose he began to hunt the animals and to gather fruits. But he soon began to invent tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools. This is because this type of tool was first identified by the archaeologists in the olduvai 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 were trimmed from both sides. Similar tools had been located earlier by archaeologists who worked outside Nigeria at a site in st Acheul in Northern Nigeria. These tools were made during the Early stone Age but they were later refined during the middle stone Age and late stone Age. Small stone tools believe to be used for hunting have been located in jos, plateau state and iwo Elerun in ondo state. Early man then proceeded to invent another type of tool, which is a heavy chopper. It was more efficient in cutting than existing tools. The type was first seen at sango Bay on the west shores of lake Victoria in Uganda, east Africa. This is why it is called the sagoan. Indeed ,one of the most active periods of technological effort in Nigeria was during this period around 500BC to 200AD. **The scientific and technological development of early Nigerian societies;** some of the place 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 centres of ancient civilisation. The history of these centres of ancient civilisation presents us with the scientific and technological developments of early Nigeria societies. **Nok culture/civilisation** is the discovery of a terracotta ( burnt clay) in 1936. The Nok culture is believed to be a transitional civilisation between the stone Age and the Iron Age in Nigeria because of the presence of a combination of stone and iron objects. It existed between 5th and 2nd centuryBC.  **Benin civilisation** is the 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** is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects such as stool and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz. An example of opa oranmiyan in ile- ife. **Igbo ukwu civilisation** is bronze objects and ornamentsare accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the evacuation 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. The sites excavated at igbo Ukwu have been dated to the middle of the 9th century A.D.

**Traditional political institutions in pre-colonial Nigeria:** the three majority ethnic groups of yoruba, igbo and hausa- fulani in Nigeria traditional political system of government shall be examined. **Historical background of pre-colonial political systems in yoruba land:** the yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are United by language. They are traced to ife ile their ancestral home of the yoruba people. Oduduwa who was the founder of the yoruba kingdom. The political structure of the pre-colonial yoruba land , each town has a king known as oba who is resides in the palace called Aafin. His paraphernalia of office included a beaded crown( ade) ,a slippers (bata), horsetail ( irukere) and sceptre Ase). The oba is both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom. Another group of rulers were the baale and the oloja , the baales were the third rank of rulers and they were in charge of the villages. The oloja were the fourth rank of leaders and they ruled over the farmlands. The town (ilu) was the basic political unit, while the subordinate towns were the bedrock on which the administration of the whole kingdom was based. These wards were under wards heads known as “ijoye”. The wards were in turn sub- divided into compound (agbo-ile) under the compound heads baale. Each compound was a group of patrilineal related people known as “idile" headed by the most senior Male member of the family. At the apex was a group of civil chiefs ( igbimo ilu) headed by the king. The **old oyo empire** is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in yorubaland. The first organ of government in oyo empire was king known as alaafin of oyo. Oyo was one of the rare empires that had in- built checks and balances, and this contributed to its stability for centuries. The Alaafin was the head of the empire ,and was resident in the capital. He was also regarded as lord of many lands. Theoretically, the Alaafin was the fountain of authority and was therefore regarded as the “ companion of the gods,” (Ekeji orisa) . Sometimes, he had an autocratic tendency but in practice, his powers were often limited and regulated by the oyomesi a council of seven members headed by Bashorun who acted as the prime minister. The members of oyomesi were king makers as well. At the demise of the Alaafin, they were the ones to select his successor. The oyomesi also had the power to remove any Alaafin especially when he appeared dictatorial or transgressed the laws of the land. Usually the deposed Alaafin was expected to commit suicide. The ogboni cult's Administration. It was a very powerful cult. The ogboni cult had a very vital position in yoruba society. It played a mediatory role in any conflict between the oyomesi and the Alaafin. The Army is another arm of government in traditional yoruba society. It was very organised. Its head was conferred with the coveted title of Are-Ona-Kankanfo was expected to live outside the capital. They were administered by princes, minor kings and Baale ( provincial governors). But Alaafin had personal agents, illari, all over provinces.

Historical Background of pre-colonial political system in Igbo land. The igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. They had no centralised states. They operated a kind of government without kings. Igbo are grouped into five sub- cultures: the igbo of eastern Nigeria, igbo of south-eastern Nigeria ,igbo of north- Eastern Nigeria, western igbo and the northern igbo. One of the most popular versions of the migratory stories of origin of the Igbo people is the one that points to Israel. This assumption is based on the so-called similarities between the cultures of the igbo and the ancient Hebrew. Some igbo scholars consider themselves as off-shoots of the last tribes of the Hebrews who migrated southward. The igbo society has always been known as acephalous. Political structure of the pre-colonial Igbo land. In other words, they practiced direct democracy and or a decentralized system of government because there were no traditional rulers in form of obas in the case of the yoruba and so no hereditary claims to the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo kingdom or empire. The family was the smallest political unit in igbo traditional society. Each family was headed by Ofo title holders. Among the Ofo title holders one of them was recognised 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 the people were discussed. Age grade was organised on a village basis. The age grade were strongly organized among the northern and southern igbos. The communities organized themselves through the age grade for work ,war and government. The elders enforced the elders decisions and in war ,guarded the settlements and fought on the battlefield. OHA-NA-EZE was a form of general assembly in traditional igbo society. In ancient times, the oha-na -eze’s meeting were held in the open village square.

Political structure of the pre-colonial hausa land. The sarki was known as the head of any typical hausa state. The sarkin kasar combined both political and religious/spiritual functions. For instance, islam was adopted and this gave birth to many new political institutions such as the offices of the Galadima,madawaki, magaji, dogari, yari sarki and sarki yau. Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the fourteenth century ,and by the fifteenth century it was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The jihad led to the conquest of the existing old hausa kingdom. Each of the emirs owed allegiance to Dan fodio and his two representatives at sokoto and Gwandu. The whole kingdom was divided into two confederations. The emir was an absolute monarch in his emirate, he was the political , administrative and spiritual leader. Furthermore to make the local government efficient and effective each Emirates was divided into districts and an official known as Hakimi was appointed by the emir to reside at the headquarters and administer the district on behalf of the Emir . The judicial administration of Hausa-Fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called sharia. Sharia courts were established throughout the emirate and each was headed by a trained sharia court judge called Alkali. The chief justice of the sharia courts was called Grand Khalid but more serious and criminal cases were referred to the emir for final and adequate settlement.

The Birth of Nigeria as a Geo-political Entity. The may 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in 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. Sir frederick lugard is the best known as the father of the January 1914 amalgamation. Britain therefore governed Nigeria by means of a popularly referred to as Indirect Rule. Indirect rule may be is a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditions rulers