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Summary of Chapter 2

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 colonialists to Nigeria while the colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria.

Nigerian state is a colonial creation. It is a product of historical arrangement that arouse out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Before the emergence of colonialism Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms,states, kingdoms and empires. People started settled down in Nigeria during the Paleolithic period 500000 - 9000BC. Nigerians also took part in the Stone Age. The excavation of Stone Age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state has thrown more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria. 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. Soon he began to invent tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools. The archaeologists called the tools the Oldwan-type tools. These tools were made in the early Stone Age but they were later refined during the Moddle Stone Age and Late Stone Age. There were evidence of more advanced technology in various parts of Nigeria during the bronze and metal Age. Indeed one of the most active periods of technology efforts in Nigeria was during the period of 500BC to 200AC. During this period people made sculptures. Forms of ground stone axes and smaller stone tools, iron axes and tools were also found on the sites. Similar findings have been made in parts of Ile-Ife, Jebba, Esie,. Igbo-Ukwu and Benin.

Some of the places where people lived in the remote past included Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin amongst others. The Nok Culture basically discovered Terra-cotta head of a monkey which was discovered by the tin-miners in Nok in 1936 which prompted more discoveries in other places. The area where these terracotta figurines were found is called Nok Culure or civilization area. The Benin was imports for Art work, the craft men 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 asFESTAC symbol in 1977. The Ife civilization is important because of its terra-cotta 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. The Igbo Ukwu civilization had some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archeologist called Thurstsn Shaw.

Traditional Political Institution in Pre-Colonial Era.

There are three major ethnic groups in Nigeria which are Yoruba,Igbo and Hausa. The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. 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 Origin of the Yoruba. The Oke Oramfe is located in Ile-Ife. It is believed to be the center of the world as created. According to Oke Oramfe the world was covered by water and then the Almighty God them decided to send some of his messengers to the world and they included Obatala or Orisa Nla and sixteen Oye (immortals) . They were given fives pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth, and cockerel. On their way to the world obatala got drunk with palm wine. Oduduwa later led them and the site which they landed is known as Oke-Oramfe in Ile-Ife.

The political structure of the Yoruba Kimgdoms were similar in nature each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages, and farmlands. Each town has its Oba who resides in the Aafin. The oba enjoys certain privileges but certain limitations were placed on his powers. Another group of rulers are the Baale and Oloja. The baale settled dispute among the people in the society. The pattern of administration was hierarchical

The Igbo people are best known for acephalous way of life. This is because they do not have a centralized system of government. Igbo scholars consider themselves as off-shoots of the lost tribes of the Hebrews who migrated south wards. The ancestor of the Igbo descended from the sky and sailed down the RIver Anambra. When he arrived at Aguleri, he met some autochthonous group of people who had no living memory of their own and settled with them. The Igbo society had a diffused authority, they practiced a direct democracy and a decentralized system of government. The family was the smallest unit in the Igbo traditional society. Each family was headed by an Ofo title holder. Here households see themselves as belonging to one family and this having a common father. Those who were still youth cleared path and public places streams and also served as police. The elders enforced the elders decision and in war guarded the settlements and fought on the battlefield. The male adult members usually met in the assembly to perform legislative functions. The hardworking and wealthy individuals were respected and given important responsibilities.

The Hausa are located in the Northern Nigeria. Hausa land before 1804 was made up of fourteen states and they were of two distinct groups. Oral tradition attributed the origin of the Hausa states to a man named Bayajida an Arab prince who recalled to the Sahel from Daura, and he married the queen. They had a son who ruled one of the seven Hausa states. The Sarki was known as the head of any typical Hausa states he worked with a retinue of officials in a well organized courts. The Sarkin Kasar which means ruler of the land was full title given to any effective and efficient head of state. When islam was adopted many new political institutions such as offices of Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Dogari, etc. Islam was introduced to Hausa in the fourteenth century. The Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidating and religion in this area. Each of the Emirs owed allegiance to Dan Fodio and his two representatives in Sokoto and Gwandu.

The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first European to land in Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Nigeria through Bini Kingdom. The Atlantic Slave Trade was the trade that carried on across the Atlantic Ocean between the Europeans and Africans. Demand for slaves could be traced to the introduction of plantation system of agriculture in places like Brazil,Jamaica and Haiti among others. In 1861 they took Lagos as a colony, but the bulk of Nigerian territory was occupied in the late 19th century.

The May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of the southern Nigeria to form a 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. Sir Fredrick Lord Lugard is best known as the the father of the January 1914 amalgamation. He introduced a system known as Indirect Rule. It’s a system where Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers.