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## Chapter 2

The ancient or historical background of the Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial and the colonial period in Nigeria. The pre-colonial and the colonial period in Nigeria. The pre-colonial period is the era before which the colonialists came to Nigeria and the colonial period was when the colonial administration was made or established in the country Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. The colonization of Africa is the beginning of the events of the European adventure. Earlier to the emergence of the Nigerian states, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, States, Kingdoms and empires. The country is bordered to the South by the gulf of guinea, on the north by Niger, on the west by Benin and the east by Cameroon, in its north-eastern corner, la Chad separates Nigeria from the country of Chad. The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidence is 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. The excavation of a Stone Age skeleton in Ondo state threw some more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria. The person who lived in Nigeria in those days worked hard to scope his environment. The early man made different tools for different activities and these things has been found in our modern day in different parts of Nigeria. Information on the major landmarks in Early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past. Some of the places where many lived in Nigeria in the very remote past include: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others. The discoveries of the centers' of the ancient civilization present us with the scientific and technological development of early Nigerian societies. .The discovery of terracotta in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places and the place where the terracotta was found is called the Nok culture or civilization area. Benin is important for its artworks. The Ife is important for its terracotta and bronze heads. Some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered

wile digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939, these sites excavated at Igbo ukwu have been dated to the middle of 9th century A.D.

The three major ethnic groups of the traditional political institutions in the pre-colonial era in Nigeria were the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani. The Yoruba's are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria are united by language. There are different versions of the traditions of Origin. In the book, History of the Yoruba 1950, Johnson traced the origin of the Yoruba to the East, According to him the Yoruba originally came from the northern-eastern area of Africa. In the Oramfe's version Oke Oramfe is located in Ile-Ife which is believed to be the centre from which the world was created. According to the legend there was a period where the world was covered in water and God sent his messengers who were immortal. God have those materials to help with the creation but one of the messengers started to drink and the symbol of authority was seized from him by Oduduwa who later set down the materials on the site where they arrived and the earth was formed and Oduduwa became the ruler. The political structure of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in

nature, each consisted of a capital town, Subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town has a king known as Oba who resides in the Palace called Alaafin. The Oba is both the spiritual and political head of the Kingdom. The Oba enjoyed certain privileges but certain limitations were placed on his power and authority. The limitations known as eewo were designed to curb tyranny and disposition in the part of the King and violation of any of the eewo was punishable by death. The pattern of administration was hierarchical. The government of the Old Oyo Empire is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in Yoruba land. The Oyo Empire was very unique in its system of government. For instance in the 16th century the Oyo Empire was one of the rare empires with inbuilt checks and balances and this contributed to its stability for centuries. The Alaafin was the head of the empire and resident in the capital. He was also regarded as Lord of many lands and was assisted by priests, officials and eunuchs. Theoretically, the Alaafin was the fountain of authority and therefore regarded as the companion of the gods. The members of the Oyomesi were king

makes and they also had the power to remove any Alaafin especially when he appeared dictatorial or transgressed the laws of the land. Apart from the Alaafin cabinet members of the Oyomesi cult constituted another arm of government. The army was another arm of government in traditional Yoruba society which was much arranged and was made up of infantry and cavalry. The army was credited with performing important functions which includes stability of the empire, expansions and keeping dissident territories in check. The Historical background of pre colonial political system in Igbo land was about the Igbo people being known as segmentary or acephalous. They operated a kind of government without Kings. They were grouped into 5 sub cultures which include the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of North-eastern Nigeria, the western Igbo and the northern Igbo. One of the most popular versions of the migratory Story of the origin of the Igbo people is one that points to Israel. This assumption is based on the so called similarities between the cultures of Igbo and the ancient Hebrew. Others believed that the Igbo people have been in their

present abode from the beginning, therefore, Igbo land is the original homeland. 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. Although there was no highly centralized authority, some social political institutions existed in each village to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions; such institutions include the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society. Each family was lead by an Ofo title holder; the family sees itself as having one common ancestor. Age grade was organized on a village basis. The association or age grade grew from childhood and took a common name to concentrate on events associated with time of their births. The communities organized themselves through the age grade for war, work and government. 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. In cities the oha-na-eze's meetings were held in the open village square. All decisions taken during those

meetings were final. The secret societies consisted of the diviners' masquerades, Ubinuknabi at arochukwu, the Amadisha of Ozuzzu and so on. They acted as intermediary between the living and the ancestors. They performed rituals and offered sacrifices at different shrines intended to Ward off evil and or appease the gods and goddesses, whenever they were angry, and thereby atone for the sins of the members of the community. Official religion practiced in pre colonial Igbo land and was the traditional religion.

Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 as made up of fourteen states, and they were of two distinct groups. The first group consists of seven states called Hausa Bakwai states, that is, Hausa legitimate states. The second group consists of the remaining seven states and was known as Hausa banza states that are Hausa illegitimate states. Oral tradition attributed the origin of 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 queen. The Queen had six sons already and she

produced another son with Bayajidda, and each of these sons ruled one of the seven of the seven Hausa city-states becoming the first kings. The Hausa states may have been founded by Berber immigrants from North of the Sahara, or else by people's coming from East Africa. The political structure of the pre-colonial Hausa land is about the sarki was known as the head of any typical Hausa. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well-organized court. Sarkin kasar, which means ruler of the land, was the full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa state. The Sarkin kasar combined both political and religious/spiritual functions. Emirate system of Government among the Hausa deals with the conquest led by the jihad of the existing old Hausa kingdom. The overthrow of the political leadership by the Fulani and the making of the caliphate and Fulani Emirates in northern Nigeria. In every state conquered, the former Hausa ruler was replaced by a Fulani emir and after the conquest a centralized political system of Government was introduced. The emir was an absolute monarch in his emirate; he was the political, administrative and spiritual leader. To



make the local governments efficient and effective each Emirate was divided into districts and official known as hakim. The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria we're not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria through Benin Kingdom. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century. Each of the European powers was given the opportunity to establish colonies where it had vested interests. Britain's colonized Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia, and Sierra-Leone in West Africa. Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. They May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Niger. However this was done without consultation with Nigerians regarding their views as to whether or not they supported the amalgamation. The British officers defined the framework of politics to be adopted and Left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.

Pressure group a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage.

According to Anifowose (1999) pressure groups is described as "interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups."

Pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or group. Oyeleye, (1998) said what pressure groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government does their biddings and with some pressure through the right channels and means, pressure groups are able to make government listen to them. Some examples of pressure groups, in Nigeria are Nigeria Bar Association of Nigeria (NBA), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC).

Pressure Groups and political parties' activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. The first distinction is that political parties seek to gain governmental powers; while on the other hand, pressure groups do not seek to gain power. Rather, their aim is

to influence political decisions. Second, political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Also pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions, while political parties do account for their actions

## Types of Pressure Groups

\*Interest Groups: This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, the trade unions, for instance, CBI (Confederation of British Industry) known as the voice of business in the country, and in Nigeria, Convention on Business Integration (CBI).

\*Cause Groups: These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes like, charities and environmental groups. For instance, we can see the Amnesty International, which campaign for the need to end human right abuses. Any group that champions social movement is also seen as "cause group," even though the group lacks formal structure. It is always aimed at achieving a single objective, like protesting about the expansion of airport, Sport Date etc.

\*Insider Groups and Outsider Group:

Groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators e.g. (NBA). They intend to have influence on government's mission and visions. On the other hand, Outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. Groups in this category are radical in nature because they are mostly denied by the government. However, the Insider and Outsider group changes from time to time based on the party or government in power.

**\*Anomic Groups:** Groups here have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style of rule, and they may sometimes act violently. Protest, rioting, strikes, and sometime revolution, are some of the means through which they mount pressure.

**\*Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups:** Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. Also, these groups have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. On the other hand, non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organization. Their

arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, social traditions, tribal or even race afflictions.

## **Functions of Pressure Groups in Government**

1. Promotes Participation in Government: Another function of pressure groups is that it promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day. Some pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government. The activities of pressure groups therefore, promote political participation and carry the citizenry along.
2. Serving as Sources of Information to Government: They serve as sources of information to the government. As the pressure groups lobby government on various fronts, the interaction offers the government valuable information on aspects of issues.
3. Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies: Criticism of government policies curtail any dictatorial tendency pavement may have. Also, the activities of

pressure groups ensures that governments do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby setting into a dictatorship

4. Promotion of the Interest of the Minority: Pressure groups champion the rights of the under-privileged. As they go about their activities, they ensure that the interests of minority groups are not trampled upon by the government. Thus, pressure groups act as watchdogs on the government
5. Pressure Groups Lobbying: Pressure groups may adopt variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action. Clearly, some pressure groups exert more influence than others. The degree to which such groups are able to achieve their goals may depend on their ability to be recognized as legitimate by the population and those in power.