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19/ SMS02/039

CHAPTER 2:

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-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 European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa .Prior to the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre- colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms 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 kingdoms and the Oyo Empire in the west and several ethnic identities in the Benue valley . These ethnic groupings significantly differ in their historical, social and cultural make-ups. The country is bordered to the bights of Benin and Biafra, which are on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. 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.

EARLY MAN IN NIGERIA

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which pointed to the fact that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria, since the palaeotithic period 500000-9000BC.the artifacts mostly stone tools found by archaeologists further confirmed that Nigerians also took part in the stone-age civilization .The stone age can be divided into several periods .these are early stone age 3,000,000- 3500000Bc, middle stone age ,35000-15000Bc and late stone age 15000-500Bc.the excavation of a stone age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state has thrown more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria . The skeleton was dated some 12,000 ago ,and this suggests that the country has been long inhabited.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EARLY MAN

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 archaeologist called the tools, the oldowan- type tools .this is because this type of tool was first identified by the archaeologists in the olduvai George in Tanazia. Early man in Nigeria advanced from the early Stone Age. He began to make hand axes. These were tools which were oval and pointed in shape .they also had cutting edge and were trimmed from both sides. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY NIGERIAN SOCIETIES Major Landmark in early Nigerian Information on the major landmarks early Nigeria history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past Nok culture/civilization: the discovery of a terracotta (burnt clay)head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as wamba, katisina-Ala and Jema. Benin civilization: Benin was important for its art-work. Ife civilization:Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Igbo Ukwu civilization: some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN PRE-COLONIAL NIGERIA.

The three major ethnic groups: Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani.

YORUBA

Historical background of pre-colonial political system in Yoruba land- The Yoruba’s are one of the largest ethnic groups and are united by language. The origin of Yoruba is traced to Oduduwa the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile-ife is the ancestral home of the Yoruba. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader who lead Yoruba people to Ile-ife and sent his sons to find other Yoruba kingdoms.

The Oke Oramfe’s version of the origin of the Yoruba- Oke Oramfe is located in Ile-ife. It is believed to be the centre from which the world was created. Once, the world was covered by water then the almighty God decided to send Obatala or Orisa Nla or Orisa Alase as the leader and sixteen Oye (immortals).

Political structure of the pre-colonial Yoruba land- Each town has a king known as Oba, who is both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom. He enjoys many privileges nut there are limitations to his power called eewo. Once violated could lead to his death. He had lesser rulers in charge of the subordinate towns. The Baale – the third rank in charge of villages. The oloja- the fourth rank, ruled over the farmlands. The town was the basic unit while the subordinate towns were the bedrock. The town was divided into compounds (agbo ile) under the compound head known as Baale. Each compound is a group of patrilineal related people known as Idile, headed by the most senior male member of the family.

The Oyo Empire is an example of the pre-colonial administration. It has its organ: the Alaafin administration, the ogboni cult administration and the army. The Oyo Empire has a king known as Alaafin of Oyo. the Alaafin administration was built on check and Balance, the Alaafin was the head of the empire and was resident in the capital. The ogboni cult was a very powerful cult .the army was another arm of government traditional Yoruba society.

IGBO

The Igbo are grouped into five sub culture: The Igbo Eastern Nigeria, Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria, Igbo of North Eastern Nigeria, the Western Igbo and the Northern Igbo.

Political structure of the Igbo land- There’s no highly centralized authority as they had diffusion of authority into groups and practiced direct democracy. The family is the smallest unit headed by an Ofo title header. Among the Ofo title holders, one of them is recognized as the most senior to others known as 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 organized on a village basis, the association or age grade grew from childhood and took a common name to commemorate an event associated with the time of their birth. Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in the traditional Igbo society.

HAUSA Historical background of pre-colonial political system in Hausa land: Hausa land is located in the northern Nigeria .Hausa land, before 1804 was made fourteen states, and they were of two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven states called Bakwai states that is, the legitimate state. The second group consists of the remaining seven states and was known as Hausa Banza, which were illegitimate states. The oral traditional attributed the origin of the Hausa states to a man named Bayajidda an Arab prince.

The political structure of the pre-colonial Hausa Land ; The sarki was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well-organized court, Sarki kasar, which means ruler of the land. Sarki Kasar combined both political and religious or spiritual functions. It is worthy of note that between 14th and 15th centuries ,socio-political organization of Hausa states took another shape, for ,instance , Islam was adopted and this gave birth to many new political institutions such as the ice of the Galadima, Maadawaki, Magaji, Dogari, Yari sarki and sarki Yau. The Isamization of hausa land also influenced its judicial system. The sharia law started taking shape . some new title such as Alkali and Qadis (judge ) became a common place in the administration of justice.

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND INDIRECT RULE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria .The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria through Bini Kingdom. According to Hodgk in the second half of the country saw the arrival of the first Europeans in Bini, the Portuguese Ruy de Sedueira in 1472.it became more important in the 15th century with the arrival of the Portuguese, In 1441, a Portuguese voyager, Gonzales presented 10 African slaves to prince Henry the navigator as gifts. By 1460 , about 700 to 800 slaves were exported annually to Portugal from west Africa . The trans-Atlantic slave trade was channel that first put the British in contact with Nigeria.

THE BIRTH OF NIGERIA AS A GEO-POLITICAL ENTITY

Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. But by 1906, the whole Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British colonial officer. The May amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. British government amalgamation of Lagos colony with the protectorate of southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation was in 1914,the British government amalgamated Northern and southern Nigeria . The principle reason for this is the same as that of May 1906. The northern protectorate was not as economically buoyant as the colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. Sir Frederick Lugard is best known as the father of the January 1914 amalgamation. Britain, therefore, governed Nigeria by means of a system popularly referred to as indirect rule. Indirect rule may be is a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers. The British officers defined the framework of the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.