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## 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 of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonisation 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 Kingdom and the Oyo Empire in the West and several ethnic identities in the Benue Valley. Nigerians took part in the stone age civilisation which is divided into several periods which are: Early Stone Age 3,000,000- 35,000BC; Middle Stone Age, 35,000-15,000BC and; Late Stone Age, 15,000-500BC. 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. It was dated 12,000 years ago which shows that the country has been long inhabited. The man who lived in Nigeria during those years began to invent tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools which archaeologists called Oldowan-type tools. 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 believed to be used for hunting have been located in Jos, Plateau State and in Iwo Eleru in Ondo State. Early man then proceeded to invent another type of tool, which is a heavy chopper and was more efficient in cutting than existing tools. It was first seen at Sango Bay on the west shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda, East Africa.

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, Katsina- Ala and Jema. The area where these terracotta figurines were found is called the Nok Culture or civilisation area. 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 1977. 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. An example is Opa Oranmiyanin Ile-Ife. 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 archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw.

The Yoruba people trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba Kingdom and is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to Ile-Ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to found other Yoruba Kingdoms. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. Oke Oramfe is located in the Ile-Ife. It is believed to be the centre from which the world was created. According to the legend, there was a period when the world was covered by the water. The Almighty God then decided to send some of his messengers to the world and they included Obatala or Orisa Nla or Olisa Alase (as the leader) and sixteen Oye (immortals). They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth, and a cockerel. Somewhere on their way to the world, the leader, Obatala, got drunk with palm wine. Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority from him and eventually led the party to the world. The site on which they landed is traditionally known as Oke Oramfe in Ile-Ife. The political structures of the Yoruba Kingdoms consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages, and farmlands. Each town has a king known as "Oba" who resides in the palace called "Aafin".

The government of the Old Empire is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in Yorubaland. The first organ of government in Oyo Empire was the king known as Alaafin of Oyo. The Alaafin was the head of the empire, and was resident in the capital. He was also regarded as "Lord of many lands". Apart from the Alaafin cabinet, members of the Oyomesi cult constituted another arm of government. The Ogboni cult played a mediatory role in any conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin. The Army was another arm of government in traditional Yoruba society whose head was conferred with the coveted title of Are-Ona Kakanfo and was made up of infantry and cavalry.

The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures: The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria, The Igbo of North-Eastern Nigerian, The Western Igbo and The Northern Igbo. In the Igbo traditional society, they practiced direct democracy and a decentralised system of government because there were no traditional rulers in the form of Oba as in the case of the Yoruba, and so no hereditary claims to the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo Kingdom or empire. Age grade was organised on a village basis. The age group was a society of companionship and protection. Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in traditional Igbo society. All the male adult members usually met in this assembly to perform legislative functions. The elders formed the core of village administration. The secret societies consisted of the diviners' masquerades, "Ubinuknabi" at Arochukwu, the "Amadisha" of Ozuzu. The Igbo believe in re-incarnation.

Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 was made up of fourteen states, and they were of the 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 were known as The "Hausa banza" states are illegitimate states. The Hausa "bakwai" states are Daura, Biram, Zaria, Katsina, Kano, Rano, and Gobir while the Hausa "Banza" states are Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi, Yoruba. Oral tradition

attributed the origin of the 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 the queen. The queen had six sons already, and she produced another son with Bayajidda, and each of these sons ruled one of the seven Hausa city-states, becoming the first kings. 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 effective and efficient head of Hausa state. It is worthy to note that between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the socio-political organisation of Hausa States took another shape. 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 of Uthman Dan Fodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidated the religion in this area. The Jihad led to the conquest of the existing old Hausa Kingdom, the overthrow of the political leadership by the Fulani and the establishment of the Caliphate and Fulani emirates in Northern Nigeria. In every state conquered, the former Hausa ruler was replaced by a Fulani Emir. Important title holders in the Emir's cabinet included: Sarkin Fada (The spokesman of the Emir and organiser of palace workers), Waziri (The Prime Minister of the Emirate), Galadima (The Administrator of the capital city), Madawaki (The commander and Head of the Emirate Army), Magaji (Government Treasurer in-charge of the government treasury), Sarkin Dan Doka (Inspector General of Police Force called Dan Doka), Sarkin Ruwa (Minister in-charge of Water Resources or the river fishing official), Sarkin Pawa (Head of Chairman of Butchers at the Abattoirs), Yari (Chief Superintendent of Prisons in the Emirate). 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 Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria through Bini Kingdom. According to Hodgkin, "the second half of the century (fifteenth) saw the arrival of the first Europeans in Benin, the Portuguese Ruy de Sequeira in 1472 in Ewuare's reign and Alfonso de Aviero in 1484 in Ozolua's reign." The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the unfortunate channel that first put the British in contact with Nigeria. The trade got to maturity in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but in the early decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British decided to abolish the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. But by 1900, the whole Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British Colonial Office. The May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. The second amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria by the British government was in January 1914. Sir Frederick Lugard was 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".