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**QUESTION: SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2.**

When speaking on the historical background of Nigerian government and politics, one must involve the pre-colonial period and the colonial period of Nigeria.

Nigeria is the creation of the colonialists; the historical arrangement of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonialization of Africa.

Before this, Nigeria or pre-colonial Nigeria was made up of different kingdoms states, empires and chiefdoms all which were independent. These includes; the Borno empire, the Hausa states, the Sokoto caliphate, the Igbo societies, Benin kingdom and the Oyo empire as well as several societies in the Benue valley among others.

Nigeria is bordered by the bight of Biafra and Benin which are on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria is also bordered on the west to Benin, on the north to Niger on the east to Cameroon. In the northeastern corner, the lake chad separates Nigeria from the country of Chad.

Its unknown however, when man first started leaving in Nigeria although, archeological evidences from different parts of the country have pointed out the fact that man settled in Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 500,000-9000BC.

With archeological evidence too, its evident that Nigeria took place in the stone age era which can be divided into several period; Stone Age 3,000,000- 35,000BC; Middle Stone Age; 35,000-15, 000BC and; Late Stone Age, 15, 000-500 BC.

People who lived in Nigeria during those periods used tools like the ‘oldowan’ tools this tools were named ‘oldowan’ by archeologists because, they were first found in olduvai gorge in Tanzania. Early man then advanced from the early stone age and stared using ‘hand axes. Early man then went ahead and created the ‘heavy chopper’ which was more efficient in cutting tools.

There’s more evidence of new, advanced tools made in Nigeria during the bronze and metal age; one of the most active periods of technological efforts in Nigeria was during the 500 bc to 200AD. During this period there were people who lived and made sculptures in Nigeria many of which were human heads and figures. The site in which the figures were found is called Nok. Similar foundingss have been made in Benin, Igbo-Ukwu, Jebba, Essie, Ile-Ife.

Major landmarks in early Nigerian history were made possible through archeological findings in Nok, Igbo-ukwu, Ife and Benin among others. They are regarded as the centers of ancient civilization

In 1936, the discovery of a terracotta head of a monkey made by tin miners in Nok, prompted discoveries in other places such as Wamba, Kastina-Ala and Jema. The Nok culture or civilization is believed to be a transitional civilization between the Stone Age and the Iron age in Nigeria because of the presence of a combination of stone and iron objects.

Benin was also important for its artwork. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Its claimed that bronze casting was introduced to the Benin’s by an Ife artist. One of their famous works is the FESTAC SYMBOL in 1997.

Ife civilization is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Stools, and figures were carved on hard stone called ‘quartz’ while animal and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with nails. An example is Opa Oranmiyan in Ile-Ife.

Igbo- ukwu bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while trying to dig a pit toilet in 1939 it eventually led to an evacuation by Thurston Shaw three sites included a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall. Amongst found was a decayed body which suggested a king and five of his slaves were buried with him.

The three majority groups in Nigeria are; Hausa Fulani, Igbos and Yoruba.

The Yoruba’s are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. They trace their origins to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home. In the book, history of the Yoruba, Johnson, traced the origin of the Yoruba’s to the east, its implied they migrated from mecca.

Oke Oramfe is located in Ile-Ife. Its believed to be the center from which the world was created. In their paper, Yorubaland up to 1800, which Akinjogbin and Ayandele gave a full picture of what Oke Oramfes version is all about. According to legend, there was a period when the world was covered by water. God then decided to send some of his messengers to the world and they included Obatala, Orisa Nla or Orisa Alase and sixteen Oye. They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth and a cockerel. However, Batali on their way to the earth got drunk and Oduduwa seized control. The site they landed on is known as Oke Oramfe in Ile-Ife. When they arrived Oduduwa set down five pieces of iron and placed the lump of earth on them. The cockerel then spread the lump of earth throughout with its feet. The earth was formed and Oduduwa became ruler. It was Ile-Ife he extended his other authorities to other Yoruba towns and villages.

The political structure of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. They consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town had an Oba who resides in a palace called the ‘Aafin’ part of his office required him to have a beaded crown (ade), a slippers(bata), horse tail(irukere) and scepter (ase). The oba is both the spiritual and political head of the kingdom. He is the supreme authority in the kingdom and his words are laws and binding on everybody. The Oba enjoys many privileges but they’re also certain limitations were placed on his powers. The king also had other rulers of lesser rank and status. The lesser rulers were in charge of the subordinate towns and wore crowns made of white beads known as ‘sese ofun’. Another group of rulers were the Baale and the Oloja, the Baales were the third rank and Olojas fourth rank of rulers. The pattern of administration was hierarchical. At the lowest level were the compound heads (baale). They formed the lowest consultative group in town affairs. With the assistance of heads of component lineages (idile), they administered the compound (agbo ile) on behalf of the king but was subject in the instance to the ward head in the quarter. Next in line was the ward head who administered his ward on behalf of the king. At the Apex was a group of civil chiefs (igbimo ilu) headed by the king. This body in the various Yoruba towns were called different names such as Oyomesi, Ewarefa etc.

The old Oyo empire government is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in Yoruba land. The first organ of government in old Oyo empire was the king known as Alaafin of Oyo.

The Alaafin was head of the capital and was resident in the capital. He was also regarded as ‘lord of many lands. The Alaafin was assisted in his administration by a retinue of officials made up of priests, officials and eunuchs. He had a well-organized court as well. The Alaafin was also 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 oyomesi consisted of king makers as well. At the demise of the Alaafin, they had to appoint a successor they could also remove any current Alaafin when he appeared dictatorial or transgressed the laws of the land. The deposed Alaafin had to commit suicide

Members of the oyomesi cult constituted another arm of government. It was made up of free and prominent members of the society as well as members of the oyomesi. It played a mediatory role between the oyomesi and the Alaafin it could also counter power the oyomesi.

The army in the Oyo empire was also important. It was very organized; the head was conferred with the title of ‘Are-Ona-Kankanfo’ it was made up of infantryand calvary. The head had to live outside the capital. The army were modelled after the central government. They were administered by princes, minor kings and Baale (provincial governors) all who were subject to the over lordship of the Alaafin. The provincial governments enjoyed considerable autonomy. But the Alaafin had personal agents, “Ilari” all over the provinces and used the ‘Bere’ annual festival period to acknowledge the renewal of allegiance to the provincial governors to him.

The Igbo people of Nigeria are best known for their segmentary and or acephalous way of life. The Igbo’s are divided into five sub cultures: the Igbo eastern, the Igbo of south eastern the Igbo of north eastern, the western and southern Igbo of Nigeria.

The most popular migratory story is that which points to Israel. In this assumption, the Igbo’s migrated from Israel, this may be as a result in their cultural similarities.

According to Nri Tradition, Professor M.A Onwuejeogwu, explains that the ancestor of the Igbos, ‘Eri’ descended from the sky and sailed down the river Anambra. he arrived in Aguleri and he met some autochthonous group of people who had no living memory of their own and settled with him.

There was no highly centralized authority but instead they had what could be called diffusion of authority into different groups. This means they practiced direct democracy and a decentralized system of government because there were no traditional rulers and so no hereditary claims to the traditional stools as there was never an Igbo kingdom or empire.

Although there was no highly centralized authority, some socio-political institutions existed in each village to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions such institutions included family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society. Each family was headed by an ‘Ofo’ title holder. The family sees itself has having one common ancestor. This principle is also present in the minimal lineage. The whole village believes that it has a common ancestor. The inhabitants come together to take decisions on issues of common interest as brothers.

Among the ‘Ofo’ title holders, the ‘Okpara’ was the most senior who held the ‘Ozo’ title and presided over the council of elders meeting where issues affecting the lives of people were discussed.

Age grade was organized on a village basis; it grew from association and childhood and took a common name to commemorate an event associated with the time of their birth. The youths cleared the grass, places, streams and served as policemen. The elders fought on the battlefield and collected fines from the offenders.

Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in Igbo society. All the male adult members usually met in this assembly to perform legislative functions.

The secret societies consisted of the diviners’ masquerades, ‘ukinuknabi’ at Arochukwu, the Amadisha of Ozuzzu. They acted as intermediary between the living and the ancestors. The traditional religion was the religion of the pre-colonial Igbo era and they believed in reincarnation.

The Hausa land is located in the northern part of Nigeria and before 1804 consisted of fourteen states and two distinct groups; the first group ‘Hausa bakwai’ consist of even states. The second group consist of the remaining seven states and were known as ‘Hausa banza’ states, that is Hausa illegitimate states.

 Oral traditions of the Hausas, explain that they originated from a man named bayajidda who came from Baghdad.

The sarki was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well-organized court. Sarkin Kassar means ‘ruler of the land’ was a full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa state.

Between the 14th and 15th century socio-political organization of Hausa states took another shape; Islam was adopted which gave birth to the offices of Galadima, Nadwaki, Dogari, Yari sarki and Sarki yau.

The Islamization of Hausa land gave influenced its judicial system.

Islam was introduced in the 14th century in Hausa land. The jihad of Uthman dan Fodio of 1804 strengthened the consolidation of religion in this area; jihad led to the conquest of the existing Hausa kingdoms. The sultan acted in advisory and appointed emirs over emirates

The sultan had little control over the affairs and day to day administration of the emirates.

The emir was the absolute monarch in his emirate, he was the political, administrative and spiritual leader. However, in performing these functions the emir was assisted by a group of district/village heads, a body of councilors and council of advisers, with which consultation is made regarding matters affecting the emirate.

The members of the council were appointed by Uthman Dan Fodio, they included; the Sarkin Fada, the Waziri, Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Sarkin don doka, Sarkin ruwa, Sarkin pawa and Yari.

To make local governments efficient and effective each emirate was divided into districts and an official known as “Hakimi” was appointed emir to reside at the headquarters and administer the district on behalf of the emir.

The judicial administration of the Hausa Fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called sharia. Sharia courts were established throughout the emirates and each was headed by trained sharia court judge called ‘Alkali’. The emir remained the head who had the final say in deciding critical judgments regardless of provisions. The grand khadi is the chief justice of the sharia courts.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria; they landed in Benin city despite people saying the British did first. The Atlantic slave trade was the trade carried on across the Atlantic Ocean between the Europeans and Africans. It became more important in the 15th century with the arrival of the Portuguese; demand for slaves could be traced back to the introduction of plantation system of agriculture in places like Brazil, Jamaica, and Haiti among others.

The trans-Atlantic trade was the unfortunate channel which brought Nigeria and the British into contact for the first time.

After three years of so-called shameful slave trade, came the so- called period of legitimate commerce.

In 1861, they took Lagos as a colony but, the bulk of Nigerian territory was occupied in the late 19th century.

The struggle among European powers for colonies led to the portioning of Africa among them in the 19th century. Each of the European powers was given the opportunity to establish colonies where it had vested interest. The scramble for Africa by these European powers led to the portioning of Africa after the berlin conference of 1884-85. Britain colonized Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia and sierra-Leone

By 1900 Nigeria was under responsibility of the British colonial office.

The may 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria.

According to Tamuno (1980) the primary aim of the 1906 amalgamation was purely economic, that is ‘to use the better financial position of the protectorate of southern Nigerian to cover the costs of administration and development in the financially weak colony and protectorate of Lagos, then saddled with the white elephant of a railway in need of extension since 1901”.

The second amalgamation was that of 1914. Britain governed Nigeria using the ‘indirect rule’ and the British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.