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 CHAPTER TWO

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves the precolonial period and the colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. The precolonial period is the period before the coming of the colonialist to Nigeria while the colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria. Nigeria is a colonial creation. Precolonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms, and empires.

 EARLY MAN IN NIGERIA

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidence 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 500000-90000BC. The artifacts mostly stone tools, found by archaeologist confirmed that Nigerians also took place in stone age civilization. The excavation of a stone age skeleton at two eleru near Akure in ondo state has thrown more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria The skeleton was dated some 12000 years ago which suggests the country was long created.

 THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF EARLY MEN

The man who lived in Nigeria worked hard to cope with the environment, where he needed to find food by hunting the animals and to gather fruits. He soon began to invent tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools, the archaeologist called the tools Oidowon tools because this type of tools was first found by an archaeologist from OlduvaiGorge in Tanzania. The early man started to advance to making axe, there tools were oval, pointed and trimmed from both sides and wee similar to tools found in st Acheul in Northern Nigeria, this tools were made in the early stone ages but later refined by middle stone age and the late stone age, some small stone tools have been located in jos, plateau, and in Iwo Eleru in Ondo state. They also created heavy chopper which was found in upper sokoto river in sokoto state. During the period of 500bc to 200 ad there was an active periods of technological efforts in Nigeria.

 THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY NIGERIAN SOCIETIES

**Major Landmark in Early Nigerian History**

Information on major land marks in early Nigeria history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past included nok, Igbo ukwu, Ife and benin among others. The history of these centers of ancient civilization presents us with the scientific and technological developments of clearly Nigerian societies.

**Historical Background of Pre-Colonial Political System in Yoruba Land**The Yoruba’s are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. There are different versions of the traditions of origin. In his 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 North-Eastern area of Africa.

**Political Structure of the Pre-colonial Yoruba Land**

The political structures 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 "Aafin." His paraphernalia of office included a beaded crown (Ade), a slippers (bata). horse tail (irukere) and sceptre 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 biding on everybody.

**The Oyo Empire**

The government of the old Oyo 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 Administration**

The Alaafin Administration Oyo Empire was very unique and exceptional in its system of government. For instance, in the sixteenth century, Oyo was one of the rare empires that had in-built checks and balances, and, this contributed to its stability for centuries. The Alaafin was the head of the empire 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.

 **The Ogboni Cult's Administration**

Apart from the Alaafin cabinet, members of the Oyomesi cult constituted another arm of government. It was a very powerful cult. It was composed of free and prominent members of the society as well as members of the Oyomesi. The Ogboni cult had a very vital position in Yoruba society. It played a mediatory role in any conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin.

 **Background of Pre-Colonial Political System in Igbo Land**

The Igbo people are best known for their seminary or acephalous way of life. This is because from the ancient times, they had no centralized states. Consequently, they operated a kind of government without kings. The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures: by

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 stories of origin of the Igbo people is the one that points to Israel.

**Political Structure of the Pre-colonial Igbo Land**

In the Igbo traditional society, there was no highly centralised authority but instead they had what could be called a diffusion of authority into different groups. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society. Each family was headed by an "Ofo" title holder. The family itself as having one common ancestor. Age grade was organised 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. The age grades were strongly organised among the northern and southern Igbo peoples. Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in traditional Igbo society consisting of male adults. 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 or 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 members of the community.

**Historical Background of Pre-Colonial Political System in Hausa Land**

Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 was made up of fourteen states, and they were of two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven states called "Hausa Bakwai" states, that is, Hausa legitimate states. The second group consist of the remaining seven states and were known as “Hausa banza" states that is Hausa illegitimates states. 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 Kasar, which means "ruler of the land," 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. 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 treasurySarkin 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. 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 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 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. The Northern protectorate was not as economically buoyant as the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. . Sir Frederick Lugard (later became Lord) 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.