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**CHAPTER 2**

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial period which was before the coming of the colonialists to Nigeria, and the colonial period that colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a product of creation and a product of historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with it’s eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Nigeria comprises of different chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires which include the Borno empire, the Hausa states, sokoto caliphate in the north, the Igbo segmentary societies in the east, Benin kingdom and the Oyo empire in the west.

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidences from differ parts of Nigeria which pointed to the fact that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the palaeolithic period 500,000-9000BC. The artifacts, mostly stone tools, found by archaeologists further confirmed that Nigerians also took part in the stone-age civilization. These are divided into several periods, 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 Akiri in Ondo state was dated to some 12,000 years ago and has thrown more light on the earliest occupations of Nigeria.

The man who lived in Nigeria during those years had to work hard by hunting animals and gathering fruits for food. He began to invent tools like pebbles made into cutting and chopping tools. Archeologists called the tool Oldowan-type tools because it was first identified by an archaeologist in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanazia. He then began to make hand axes, these were tools which were oval and pointed in shape. There is evidence of more advanced technology in various parts of Nigeria during the bronze and metal age. One of the most active periods of technological efforts in Nigeria was around the 500BC-200AD. During this period there were people who lived in Nigeria who made sculptures, many were of human heads and figures. The site in which the figures were found was the village of Nok which were made of terracotta and all possessed a distinctive artistic style. Forms of ground stone axes and smaller stone tools , iron axes and tools, were also found on the sites.

It was said that some of the places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past included : Nok , Igbo Ukwu , Ife and Benin among others. They are referred to as centers of ancient civilization. The discovery of a terracotta which is known as ‘burnt clay’ ,head of a monkey by a tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as wamba , Katsina - Ala and Jema. The terracotta figurines were found in Nok culture or civilization area. The Nok culture is believed to be a transitional civilization between the Stone Age and the Iron Age in Nigeria. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bras and bronze. It was claimed by Art historians that bronze casting was introduced into Benin by an Ife artist. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks. In the Ife civilization it is important to note that 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. For example the Opa Oranmiyan in Ile-Ife. It was said that most of the bronze and terracotta heads were to be life size decorated with facial marks and natural hair. Art historians believe that Ife art originated from the Nok culture because of the similarities in the two, especially beaded neck, wrist and ankles.

The Igbo are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This is because from the ancient times, they had no centralized states. Consequentially, they operated a kind of government without kings. The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures. They are the Igbo of Eastern Nigerian, the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo Of North Eastern Nigeria, the Western Igbo and the Northern Igbo

The 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 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 is Hausa illegitimates states. The Hausa ‘Bakwai’ states are Daura, Biram, Zaria, Kastina Kano, Rano and Gobir while the Hausa ‘banza’ states are Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi and Yoruba. The Emirate system of government was later introduced which is made of Emir as the head and other assisting officials giving specific functions like Waziri, Madawaki and Magaji.

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 Nigeria. British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of the Southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamates Northern and Southern Nigeria. The principle reason for this is the same as that of May 1906. The Northern protectorate was not economically buoyant as the colony and protectorate of the Southern Nigeria. That was why, for the British imperial offices, since the Southern trade was booming, amalgamation would allow the surpluses acquired in the South.