**NAME: AMECHI-IGWE JUNIA NNEOMA**

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SUMMARIZE CHAPTER 2 AND 15 OF SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS.

CHAPTER 2

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial and colonial period in Nigeria. Prior to emergence of the Nigerian states, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. The exact time when man started to live in Nigeria is unknown but from the archaeological evidence from different parts of Nigeria, it pointed out that man had settled in Nigeria since the Palaeolithic period 5000,000- 9000 BC. Early man in the need for food hunted animals and gathered fruits to eat. He also made chopping and cutting tools. He also began to make hand axes. These tools made during the Early stone age were later refined during the Middle and Late stone age. There is evidence of more advanced technology in various parts of Nigeria. One of the most active periods of technological efforts in Nigeria was during this period, around 500BC to 200AD. During this period there inhabitants of Nigeria who made sculptures, many of which were of human heads and figures. The sites of these figures were found in the village of Nok, there were also known to be made of terracotta. Forms of ground stone axes and smaller stone tools, iron axes and tools, were also found in this sites as well as similar findings made in Ile-Ife, Jebba, Esie, Igbo-Ukwu and Benin. Information of the major land marks in early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavation work done on the inhabited places in Nigeria including: Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Ile-Ife, Benin and so on. The discovery of terracotta by tin miners in Nok in 1936 led to other discoveries. The Nok culture is believed to be a transitional civilisation between the Stone Age and the Iron Age. Benin was important for art-work then. The art historians claimed that bronze casting was introduced into Benin by an Ife artist. Ife was important due to its terracotta and bronze heads. Art historians believe that Ife art originated from the Nok culture because of the similarities between the two. Some bronze objects and ornaments were discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo-Ukwu in 1939. This led to the excavation of three sites by Thurstan Shaw, an archaeologist. The three sites included a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall.

The Oke-Oramfe’s version of the origin of the Yoruba states that the Almighty God sent some messengers to the world (Obatala and 16 other immortals). They were apparently sent to the world with some materials which they used to form the Earth. It is believed that Oke-Oramfe is the centre upon which the world was created. The pre-colonial political structure of the Yoruba land 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 “Aafin”. The Oba enjoyed certain privileges but had some limitations. The pattern of administration was hierchical. At the lowest level were the Baale and the Igbimo-ilu were at the apex level. The government of the Oyo Empire is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in Yorubaland. The first organ of government was the King as Alaafin of Oyo his powers were often limited and regulated by the Oyomesi council; there was also the Ogboni cult which played a mediatory role between the Oyomesi and Alaafin as well as the army headed by the Are-Ona-Kankanfo.

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. One of the most popular versions of the migratory stories of the origin is the Israel. This assumption is based on the so-called similarities between the Igbo cultures and the ancient Hebrew. Prof. Onwuejeogwu regards the Nri version as the authentic version of the origin in existence in the oral tradition in Igbo. According to the Nri version, the ancestor of the Igbo, Eri, descended from the sky and sailed down the River Anambra. When he arrived at Aguleri, he met some autochthonous group of people who had no living memory of their own and settled with them. In the Igbo traditional society, there was no highly centralised authority but instead diffusion of authority and practice of direct democracy. The family was the smallest unit in Igbo traditional society. Age grade as well as the Oha-na-eze, the secret societies and so on were all part of the administration of government of the Igbo society.

The Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria. The Hausa land before 1804 was made up of fourteen states of two distinct groups: Hausa Bakwai and Hausa Banza states. The oral tradition attributed the origin of the Hausa states to Bayajidda who killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of Daura and he married the queen.