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| NAME: | ATUME MIMIDOO VICTORIA |
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| DEPARTMENT: | MEDICINE AND SURGERY |
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| ASSIGNMENT | Summarize chapter 2 of Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics. |
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INTRODUCTION.

The historical background of Nigerian government includes or involves the pre-colonial period and the colonial period. 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 and is the product of historical arrangement that arose out of the European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonisation of Africa. Before colonisation, Nigeria was made up of kingdoms, empires, chiefdoms and states which included: the Bornu Empire, the Hausa states and the Sokoto Caliphate in the north, and the Igbo segmentary societies in the east; Benin kingdom and the Oyo Empire in the west and several ethnic identities in the Benue Valley.

Geographical Information: Nigeria is bordered to the west by Benin Republic, East by Cameroon, North by Niger and South by Bights of Biafra and Benin which are on the Gulf of Guinea which is in the Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria stretches 700 miles from east to west and 650 miles from north to south. Archaeological evidence shows that man settled in Nigeria since 500,000BC – 9,000BC thereby taking part in the stone-age civilisation. The excavation of a Stone Age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state showed that the skeleton found was dated some 12,000 years ago. The early man achieved a lot including coping with his environment to get food, sculpture making, terracotta, intervention of certain tools, stone, metals, etc. The centres of ancient civilisation are Nok, Ife, Benin and Igbo-Ukwu.

Origin of Yoruba.

Ile- Ife is considered the ancestral home f the Yoruba people. They trace their origin to Oduduwa and they have different versions of the traditions of origin. The first account says that the Yoruba migrated from the east. They believe that they migrated from the North-Eastern part of Africa (Mecca) then they came to Egypt then to north eastern Nigeria and finally to Ile-Ife.

The second version which is the Oke Oramfe version says that the earth was full of water and Olodumare sent messengers which included Obatala the leader and sixteen Oye servants with five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth and a cockerel who created the world.

Political structure of the Yoruba.

Their political structure was made up of capital towns, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town had a king called *Oba* who had who resided in a palace called *Aafin.* His paraphernalia of office included a beaded crown (Ade), slippers (Bata), sceptre (Ase), Horse tail (Irukere). Oba is the spiritual and political head of the kingdom.

Pre-colonial Political System in Igbo Land Their Origin.

The Igbo are known for their acephalous or segmentary way of life. They have no centralised state They were grouped into Western Igbo, Northern Igbo, Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria and Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria. One version of their origin says that the Igbo originated from Israel due to the similarities between the cultures of the Igbo and ancient Hebrew. Some scholars believe that the Igbo are among the last tribes of the Hebrews. The second version is the Nri version which is the authentic version according to their oral tradition. Here, their ancestor called Eri descended form the sky and sailed down the River Anambra. Arriving at Aguleri, he met some autochthonous group of people who had no living memory of their own and settled with them.

Political Structure of the Pre-Colonial Igbo Land.

The Igbo have no centralised authority but diffusion of authority into diverse groups. Although there was no highly centralised authority, some socio-political institutions existed to carry out various functions which include: the family, age-grade societies, council of elders, secret societies all of which helped in enforcement of law and order. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society. Each family was headed by an *Ofo* title holder. The family sees itself as having one common ancestor. Thus, 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 eldest was referred to as the *Okpara* who held the *Ozo* title. Age grade was organised on a village basis. The communities organised themselves through the age grade for war, work and government. The secret societies played significant roles in the society such as acting as intermediaries between the living and the ancestors. They had chief priests who performed sacrifices from time to time to appease the gods.

Pre-Colonial Political System in Hausa Land.

Before 1804, Hausa land was made up of fourteen states; Hausa Bakwai (Biram, Daura, Katsina, Gobir, Kano, Rano, Katsina) and Hausa Banza (Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi). The origin of the hausa is attributed to a man who travelled to the Sahel from Baghdad. He killed a snake in Daura, married the queen who already had six sons and together, they had more son. These sons ruled the city states becoming the first kings. The combined kingdoms were sometimes called *the Daura.*

Political Structure of the Pre-Colonial Hausa land.

The Sarki was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well-organised court. *Sarkin Kasar* was the full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa state. The Sarkin Kasar combined both poilitical and religious/spiritual functions. Between the 14th and 15th centuries, the socio-political organisation of the Hausa states took anither shape. For example, Islam was adopted and this gave birth to many new political institutions like Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Dogari, etc Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the 14th century and was accepted as religion of the ruling class. The Jihad of Uthman Danfodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidated the religion in this area.

Colonial Administration of Nigeria.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to come to Nigeria through the Bini kingdom. The trans-Atlantic slave trade was the channel that put the British in contact with Nigeria and West Africa as a whole. This trade was abolished in the 19th century. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century after the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. As from 1898, the British government sought to establish and maintain a colonial state in Nigeria

Birth of Nigeria as a Geo-Political Entity: Before 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. But by 1900, the whole of Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British colonial office. The amalgamation that took place in May 1906 was the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of 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 amalgamated northern and southern Nigeria and the principal reason was the same as that of 1904 which was for purely economic purposes. Lord Frederick Lugard is best known as the father of the 1914 amalgamation. Britain therefore governed Nigeria by means of a system popularly referred to as indirect rule. Indirect rule may be defined as a system of Britain raking her colonies through local traditional rulers. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.