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**CHAPTER TWO: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE**

The historical background of the Nigerian government and politics involves the pre-colonial period and the colonial period in Nigeria. 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 Nigeria state is a colonial creation. Prior to the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. The country is bordered to the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, which are on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. On the west, Nigeria is bordered by Benin, on the north, by Niger, and on the east, by Cameroon.

**EARLY MAN IN NIGERIA**

The exact time man began to live in Nigeria is unknown, but archaeological evidences point to the fact that man had settled in the region known as Nigeria now since the Paleolithic period 500,000- 9000BC. The Stone Age 3,000,0000- 35,000BC; Middle Stone Age, 35,000- 15,000BC and; Late Stone Age, 15,000- 500BC.

**THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF EARLY MAN**

The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment. In order to do so, he invented tools that helped him. First he invented tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools. Archaeologists called the tools the Oldowan-type tools. Early man in Nigeria advanced from the Early Stone Age. He began to make hand axes. These tools were used for many purposes by the man who made them. Similar tools had been located earlier by archeologists who worked outside Nigeria at a site in St Schedule in Northern Nigeria. These tools were made during the Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age. Early man the proceeded to invent another type of tool, which is a heavy chopper. It was more efficient in cutting than existing tools. This is why it is called the Sagoan.

There is evidence of more advanced technology in various parts of Nigeria during the bronze and metal age. Around 500BC to 200AD, there were people who lived in Nigeria who made sculptures. Most were of human heads and figures. They varied greatly in size, from small-sized objects of only two and a half centimetres to huge objects. The site in which the figures were found was the village of Nok. Similar findings have been made in parts of Ile-Ife, Jebba, Esie, Igbo-Ukwu and Benin.

**THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY NIGERIAN SOCIETIES**

**Major Landmark in Early Nigerian History**

The excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past helped to inform the major land marks in early Nigerian history. Some of the places man lived in Nigeria included: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others.

**Nok Culture/Civilisation:** The Nok culture is believed to be a transitional civilisation between the Stone Age and the Iron Age in Nigeria because of the presence of a combination of stone and iron objects. The discovery of a terracotta (burnt clay) head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as Wamba, Katsina-Ala and Jema. The area where these terracotta figurines were found is called the Nok culture or civilisation area. Nok culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century B.C.

**Benin Civilisation:** The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Art historians claim that bronze casting was introduced into Benin by an Ife artist. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks, one of which was the ivory mask used as FESTAC symbol in 1977.

**Ife Civilisation:** Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Most of the bronze and terracotta heads were said to be life-size decorated with facial marks and natural hair. Some of the bronze heads were said to be portraits of some of the rulers.

**Igbo Ukwu Civilisation:** Some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw. The three sites included a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall. Many objects made of bronze were discovered in the various sites including the remains of decayed skeleton which was suggested to be those of a king and five slaves who were buried with him. The sites excavated at Igbo Ukwu have been dated to the middle of the 9th century A.D

**TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN PRE-COLONIAL NIGERIA**

**History Background of Pre-Colonial Political System in Yoruba Land**

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba people trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to Ile-Ife.

The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. Each town has a king known as "Oba who resides in the palace called 'Aafin'." The Oba is the supreme authority in the kingdom and his words are laws and biding on everybody. The Oba enjoyed many privileges but certain limitations known as "eewo" were placed on his powers to curb the despotism and tyranny on the part of the king. The king also had other rulers of lesser rank and status. The pattern of administration was hierarchical. At the lowest were the compound heads (Baale). At the apex was a group of civil chiefs (igbimo ilu) headed by the king which were called different names such as Oyomesi, Ewarefa, etc.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PRE-COLONIAL POLITICAL SYSTEM IN IGBO LAND**

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous wayof life. Consequently, they operated a kind of government without kings. One of the most popular versions of the migratory stories of origin of the Igbo people is the one that points to Israel. Some Igbo scholars consider themselves as off-shoots of the lost tribe of the Hebrew. According to the Nri version, the ancestor of Igbo, Eri, descended from the sky and sailed down the River Anambra.

The Igbo people practiced democracy and/ or a decentralized system of government. Although, there were no highly centralised authorities, some socio-political institutions existed in each village to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions; such institutions included the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

**HITORICAL 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 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 illegitimate states. Oral tradition attributed the origin of the Hausa states to a man named Bayajidda, an Arab prince who travelled to the Sahel from Baghdad.

The “Sarki” was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. Sarkin Kasar, which means “ruler of the land,” was the full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa State. The Sarkin Kasar combined both political and religious/spiritual functions. He was also the chief executive and judge of the State, but he was aided by a council of state. 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.

**COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION AND INDIRECT RULE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to land in Nigeria. 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. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century. Britain colonized Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia and Sierra-Leone in West Africa. As from 1898, the British government sought to establish and maintain a colonial state in Nigeria. To achieve this, a number of measures were to be taken, for example, removal of all visible opposition to the imposition of colonial rule, expansion and consolidation of British authority over the territory later known as Nigeria.

**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. 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 1914pppp. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria. The principal reason for this is the same as that of May 1906. 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 is a system of Britain ruling her colonies through local traditional rulers.