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 ***CHAPTER 2***

When describing the historical development if Nigeria, one must put into consideration the pre-colonial(before the arrival of the colonialists) and the colonial (after the arrival of the colonialists ) periods of Nigeria. It is the collective activities of both periods that led to the formation of Nigeria. Nigeria is a colonial creation that arose as a result of the activities of the Europeans which eventually led to the colonization of Africa as a whole. Before the creation of a colonial Nigeria. The pre-colonial Nigeria comprised of independent states and kingdoms. They include, the borne empire, the hausa states, sokoto caliphate in the North amongst others. These independent kingdoms , states have their unique historical, social and cultural makeup. Nigeria stretches 700miles from west to east and 650 miles from south to north. She is between 3° and 15° E longitude and between 4°and 14°N latitude . Nigeria is bordered on the west by Benin republic , on the north by Niger, on the east by Cameroon and on the north-eastern border by lake Chad which separates it from Chad. The exact time when man started to dwell in the Nigerian region is unknown. However, investigation carried out by archaeologists revealed that man has settled in Nigeria since the Palaeolithic period (500 000 – 900 000 BC). Further investigations led to the discovery of several stone tools which confirmed that the first men that settled in Nigeria took part in the stone age civilisation. A stone age skeleton discovered at Iwo Eleru near Akure, revealed the earliest occupation practised. The skeleton was about 12 000 years old. This suggests that the country has been long inhabited. The early man that first settled in Nigeria needed to survive in his environment. He began to hunt animals and gather crops. He used tools that he invented which the archaeologist referred to as Oldowan – type tools(because they were first discovered in Olduvia george, Tanzania). The early man advanced and began to make hand axes. They looked like they served several purposes. They were made in the relay stone age but they were later refined in the middle and late stone age. Small stone tools were used for hunting and the early man invented the heavy chopper which is more efficient than cutting tools. During the bronze and metal age, there is evidence of more advanced technology. The most active period of technological effort was around 500BC to 200 AD. During this period, there were people who made sculptures, some of them were human heads and others were figures. They varied greatly in size. These sculptures were found in Nok. They had a distinctive style and they were made of terracotta. Similar sculptures were found in ile-ife, jabba, esie, igbo okwu and Benin.

Information on Nigerian history was only obtained through excavation on places where man has lived in Nigeria. These areas and usually referred to as centre of ancient civilisation . Their history enlighten us with the scientific and technological developments of the early Nigerian societies. As stated earlier about pre-colonial Nigeria, these areas have their own civilisation which are unique. Their civilisation were discussed . Nok civilisation was brought to light after the discovery of terracotta and other discoveries. It is believed to be a transition between the stone age and the iron age because of the presence of stone age and iron age object. It existed between the 5th and 2nd century B.C. Benin civilisation was known for its art work. The Benin craftsmen carved wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Art historian claim that bronze casting was introduced by an ife artist. One of their popular work is the ivory mask used as FESTAC symbol in 1977. Ife civilisation was famous for their terracotta and bronze head. Figures were carved on hard stones while animals and human figures were cast on granite. An example is opa oranmiyan. Most people believe ife art originated from Nok culture because of the similarities. The ife civilisation art was life like. Igbo ukwu civilisation was discovered after digging a toilet pit in a place historians classed Thurston shaw. Objects made of bronze were discovered and the remains of decayed skeleton were found. They were assumed to be the king and five slaves buried with him .

This chapter also critically examine the traditional political institution of ethnic groups in pre-colonial Nigeria. The three major ethnic group; Yoruba, igbo and hausa- fulani were examined. Yoruba us one of the largest ethnic group whose origin can be traced to oduduwa who is believed to be the father of the yoruba kingdom. Ile ife is considered the ancestral home of the Yorubas. Yoruba has different versions of origins. One of which was postulated by Johnson who believed that the yoruba migrated from the east, mecca and settled in ile ife with oduduwa as their leader .Another version is the oke oramfe’s version. Oke oramfe is located in ile ife and is believed to be the centre from which the world was created. According to this version, the world was entirely covered in water. Then God sent orisa/obatala and sixteen immortals with five pieces of iron, a lump of earth, a white piece of cloth and a cockerel. Obatala got drunk and God removed him from authority and made oduduwa leader instead. He went work the immortals and settled in ile ife where he placed the five pieces of iron and the lump of earth. The cockerel spread the earth around the world and land was formed. Oduduwa ruled ile ife and the yoruba community spread from there. The political structures of yoruba kingdoms were similar. Each had a capital town, a subordinate town villages and farm lands. The king enjoyed a lot of privileges but also had limitations. Their were rulers of lesser ranks and status whi controlled subordinate towns. The oyo empire is a typical illustration of a pre-colonial administration in the yoruba kingdom. They had inbuilt checks and balances that contributed to the stability of the administration. Alaafin was the head of the empire. He was the foundation of authority but also had assistants made up of priests, officials and so on. He had an autocratic tendency but his powers were limited and regulated by oyomesi (a council of seven elders headed by bashorun) . The oyomesi were also king makers that could remove and make anyone king. The ogboni cult acted as a link between the oyomesi and the Alaafin. The army is another arm of government concerned with keeping stability of the empire, expansion and keeping dissident territories in check.

 The igbos are grouped into five sub cultures : igbo of eastern Nigeria, igbo of south eastern Nigeria, igbo of North eastern Nigeria the western igbo and the northern igbo. Igbos just like the yoruba have several migration story, one claimed that they were the lost tribe of the Hebrews that migrated southward. Another version is the nri version , where the ancestors of igbo descended in aguleri and met some people with no memory of their own and settled with them. These people migrated to other parts and created other igbo parts. In igbo there were no central authority, rather authority was diffused into different groups . The family (the smallest),age grade system, oha-ne-eze and secret societies that act as an intermediary between the living and the dead. They had chief priests who appeased the gods in case of calamities.

 The hausa land before 1804 was made up of fourteen . They were divided into two distinct group. The first group was the hausa bakwai made up of the seven legitimate hausa states and hausa banza , the illegitimate state. The origin of the hausa was said to be from a man named bayajidda, an Arab prince athat killed a snake and later married the queen who already had six sons. She gave birth to another son. Each of her sons ruled the seven city states of the kingdom. The Sarki is the head of the hausa kingdom. He works with other officials and he performs both political and religious functions. In the 14th and 15th century the sociopolitical organisation of hausa states took another shape. Islam was introduced to the hausa kingdom in the 14th century. The jihad led to the conquest of existing hausa states. Each hausa state conquered an emir took over . The sultan supervised the administration of the entire system. The emir was a spiritual leader that controlled the economic activities of the state. He was assisted by other officials.

 The Portuguese were the first to arrive in Nigeria. For three centuries, the tried slave trade but it always ended up in unfortunate incidents. They wanted to get involved in african states. They practiced gun boat politics. They usually The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa. The British government sought to establish and maintain a colonial state in Nigeria. A number of measures were taken to achieve this. They were, removal of all oppositions, expansion and consolidation of British authority over the territory which was later known as Nigeria. By 1900 Nigeria was under the British colonial government . In 1904 they amalgamated Lagos and the southern protectorate. This was purely for economic reason. Sir Frederick lord lugard championed the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate in 1914 for the same reason. After that the British began to rule Nigeria through indirect rule(a system of government where the british rule through traditional leaders) . This led to the creation of Nigeria as a geo political entity.