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MATRIC NO: 19/MHS11/021

DEPARTMENT: PHARMACY

COURSE: GST 203(GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUITIONS)

SUMMARY ON CHAPTER 2 OF THE BOOK ‘SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIERIA POLITICS’

History in Nigeria cannot be discussed without mentioning the pre-colonial and colonial periods. The pre-colonial period was the period before the coming of the colonialists. Pre-colonial Nigeria consisted of many chiefdoms, kingdoms and was so full with culture. The colonial period refers to the era that colonial administration was established. However Nigeria is a colonial creation, it is a product of historical arrangements that came about due to its colonization by the Europeans. Nigeria is bordered on the south by the bights of Benin and Biafra, on the west it is bordered by benin, on the north it is bordered by Niger an on the east it is bothered by Cameroon, the northeastern region however is bordered by lake chad which separates Nigeria from chad.

The exact time when people started to live in Nigeria is unknown however archeological findings date it back to the Paleolithic period (500000 – 900000BC). Some other finding say that we took part in the Stone Age civilization. Notable among those findings, was the excavation of a Stone Age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state. The early man who lived in Nigeria, in order to survive worked very hard. He hunted animals and gathered fruits for food, he invented different type of tools for these. These tools where called the Oldowan type tools by the archaeologists. A more advanced technology was noted around 500BC to 200AD. During this time the people made sculptures which varied in size or shape, these sculptures were made of terracotta. They were first discovered in a village called Nok. However similar findings were then discovered in parts of Ile-Ife, Jebba, Esie, and Igbo-Ukwu and Benin. Major landmarks were discovered later, this major landmarks are referred to as the centers of ancient civilization. The history of these centers of civilization gave us insights on the scientific and technological developments of early Nigerian. Notably among these are the: **Nok Civilization**, the Nok culture is believed to be a transitional civilization between Stone Age and Iron Age. It was discovered as a terracotta head of a monkey by tin miners in 1936, however carbon dating discovered that it existed between the 5th and 2nd century BC. **Benin Civilization**, Benin was important for its artworks which were carved in wood and ivory and its cast objects in bronze and brass. Art Historians claim that an Ife artist introduced bronze casting to Benin. They cast wooden doors and ivory mask which was used as FESTAC symbolin 1977. **Ife Civilization**, Ife became a landmark because of its terracotta and bronze heads. They made objects out of quartz and human figures from granite. It is believed that it originated from Nok art because of some similarities like beaded neck etc. they also believed its from them Benin learnt bronze sculpture. **Igbo-Ukwu Civilization**, after the discovery of bronze objects and ornaments, Thurstan Shaw excavated three sites which were a burial site, a pit and a compound where he found other bronze objects and remains of a decayed skeleton, Igbo-Ukwu art can be dated back to the 9th century AD.

The three major ethnic groups all have their traditional political systems of government; The Yoruba’s believe that Oduduwa is their founder and Ile-Ife is their ancestral home, there are however different stories on how this came to be. Johnson in his book “History of the Yoruba” traced the origin of Yoruba to the east. He said that the Yoruba’s originated from the north eastern part of Africa, Mecca. He said that they travelled through Egypt and finally settled in Ile-Ife and that it was Oduduwa who led them. Most Yoruba’s believe that Oke Oramfe in Ile-Ife is the center of creation of the world. According to the legend, the world was covered with water, the Almighty God then sent some of his messengers of which Obatala was the leader to the world, and they were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth and a cockerel. On their way Obatala got drunk, so Oduduwa took up the mantle of leadership and came to the earth were he settled in Ile-Ife. The cockerel then spread the lump of soil round the earth and thus the world was formed. The political structures in Yoruba land is hierarchical, each town is headed by a king called the Oba who resides in the palace called Aafin. The king was given a crown (ade), a slippers (bata), horse tail (irukere) and scepter (ase). The Oba had limitations called eewo and if he broke any eewo he would be killed. The other rulers of lesser rank wore white beads called sese ofun. Baale were the third rank of ruler’s who ruled over villages. The Olojas were the fourth rank and they ruled over the farmlands. The town (ilu) were divided into smaller units called ijoye. The Ijoye’s were hen further divided into compounds called (agbo-Ile). Each compound was a group of patrilineal related people known as “idile”, which was heded by the most senior male. At the lowest level were the Baale’s, next in line was the ward head, then the civil chiefs at the apex, who were headed by the king. The government of the Oyo Empire is a typical example of the precolonial administration in Yoruba land. The Alaafin was the head of the empire and he resided in the capital, he was assisted by priests, officials and eunuchs. He sometimes had an autocratic tendency but his activities where checked by the Oyomesi; who were a council of seven king makers headed by Bashorun. They aso had power to remove or change Alaafin’s. Members of the Oyomesi cult also constituted another powerful cult called the Ogboni cult, this cult also constituted of other members. Its function was to act as a mediator in conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin. The army was another important arm in Yoruba government. Its head was called Are-Ona-Kankanfo who lived outside the capital. The function of the army was to ensure stability of the empire, expansion and also to keep dissident territories in check.

The Igbo people have always been known to live a acephalous lifestyle. Unlike the Yoruba people they do not have kings. The people are grouped into five groups: the Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of north-eastern Nigeria, the western Igbo and the northern Igbo. Some believe they originated from Israel, because of the similarities of their culture with the Hebrew. Others believe that they have always lived in their present abode. However the most authentic version id the Nri version, which believes that Eri descended from the sky and sailed to Anambra. In Aguleri, he met some people who had living memory of their own and he settled with them. In the Igbo land, they practiced direct democracy. The family was the smallest unit and it was led by an “Ofo”. Among the Ofo title holders one of them is recognized as the most senior and he is called the “Okpara” who holds the Ozo title. Age grade association were also organized. Those who were youths cleared the path of public places, streams, they also served in police. The elders made decisions in war, guarded the settlements, and fought on the battle field. Seniority was important in the age grade association. The age grade taught morality and was also a society of companionship and protection. A form of general assembly called the Oha-na-eze was formed, where the adult males mat to discuss legislative functions. The decisions taken during this meeting were absolute and final. The Elders were highly respected among the people, hardworking and wealthy men were also given important responsibilities. Each age set had their special rights, duties and obligations. The Igbo people formed secret societies such as the diviner’s masquerades, Ubinuknabi at Arochukwu, the Amadisha of Ozuzzun among others. They acted as intermediary between the living and the ancestors. They performed rituals and sacrifices and their religious lives were surrounded by mysticisms and superstitions.

The Hausa land is located in northern Nigeria, before 1804 it had 14 states, which were divided into two; Hausa bakwai and the Banza bakwai. The Hausa people get their origin from the story of a man named bayajidda, who sailed from Sahel to daura. In Daura he killed a snake who had been oppressing the people, out of gratitude the queen married him, before she married him shed had six sons, she then gave birth to a seventh son for him. These seven sons ruled the seven Hausa states bringing about the Hausa bakwai states. The hausa people were generally polythesists before Islam came. The Hausa land is ruled by the Sarkin Kasar (ruler of the land). He was also aided by the council of state. The Islamization of Hausa land took a toll on its legislative and judiciary systems. Islam was introduced into hausa land in the 14th century and was accepted in the 15th. The jihad of uthman dan fodio strengthened the religion. In every conquered state, the hausa ruler was replaced with a Fulani emir. The former hausa land was divided into 2 confederations and he was monarch in his emirate. Uthman appointed officers which hweld titles such as sarkin fada, waziri, galadima, madawaki, magaji e.t.c. each emirate was divided into district and Hakimi as the official who appointed village heads. This judicial administration of hausa-fulani was based on Islamic legal system called sharia which were established throughout the emirates. Village heads settled minor disputes.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria through Benin kingdom. In the 15th century,the demand for slaves. By 1460, about 700 to 800 slaves were exported annually to Portugal from west Africa for introduction of plantation system of agriculture in places like Brazil Jamaica and Haiti. After 3 centuries of slave trade, the period of legitimacy commenced. among others who stop the struggle among the European powers for colonies led to positioning of Africa among the 19th century. The may 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation. British government amalgamated Lagos colony. The second amalgamation was done in 1914 January; where the Northern and southern governments were amalgamated. Sir Frederick Lord lugard was known as the father of January amalgamation. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.