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**SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2**

Historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves pre-colonial and colonial era. Nigerian state is a colonial creation. Pre colonial era consisted of chiefdoms, states, kingdoms, and empires; Borno empire, Hausa states, Sokoto caliphate in the North, Igbo segmentary societies in the East, and Benin kingdom and Oyo empire in the West. Nigeria bordered with Bights of Benin and Biafra at the South, Benin at the West, Niger at the North, and Cameroon at the East. Lakechad seperates Nigeria from Chad. Nigeria streches 700 miles from West to East, 650 miles from South to North and covers area of 3 degrees and 15 degrees longitude and 4 degrees and 14 degrees latitude.

Archaeological evidences has shown that man had settled in the region called Nigeria since Palaeolithic period 500,000-9000BC. Artefact confirmed that Nigerians took part in stone age civilization. It consisted of Early stone age (3,000,000-15,000BC), Middle stone age (35,000-15,000) BC, and Late stone age(15,000-500)BC. To survive, man started the invention of tools. Archaeologists called the tools early man’s achievements, the Oldowan-type tools. It was first identified by archaeologists in Olduvai George in Tanzania. One of the most active periods of technological efforts was 500BC-200AD.

Information on major landmarks in Nigerian history was made possible because of excavation work done where man lived in remote past; Igbo-ukwu, Nok, Benin, and Ile Ife(centres of ancient civilization).

In precolonial administration, there were three ethnic groups; Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba. Yoruba was one of the largest ethnic group and was united by language. Oduduwa was founder of Yoruba kingdoms. Ile Ife was the ancestral home. Johnson’s “ History of Yoruba(1950)” traced origin to the East (North-eastern area of Africa, Mecca). from Egypt, after several journeys, Yoruba settled in Ile Ife. The other story version is that of Oke Oramfe. In the history, earth was covered with water, God sent Obatala and sixteen Oye(immortals). they were given a five pieces of iron, lump or earth tied with a white cloth, and a cockerel. Obatala got drunk and Oduduwa tooK the items and led others to the world. They stopped at Oke Oramfe in Ile Ife where they settled. The cockerel spread the lump of earth with its feet.

Yoruba consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns,villages and farmlands. The towns were the basic political unit. It was headed by Oba. His paraphelia of office included crown(ade), slippers(bata), horsetail(irukere), and sceptre(ase). He was both the political and spiritual head.there were limitations referred to as eewo. Violation of it can lead to death. Subordinate towns was the bedrock of administration of the whole kingdom. They were headed by lesser rulers. They were known with white beads “sese ofun”. villages were headed by Baales while farmlands were headed by Iyalojas.

Towns were divided into smaller units;wards(headed by Ijoye) and compounds(agbo ile) headed by Baale. Chiefs were the king- advisers and serve as a link between the king and wards. The administration was hierarchical. Ward head administered on behalf of king. The level rank was igbimo ilu(civil chiefs e.g Oyomesi) which is headed by king.

In the the Oyo empire, the first organ was king known as Alaafin of Oyo. Alaafin was also regarded as “Lord of many lands” “companion of Gods”(Ekeji Orisa). he was assisted by priests, officials, and eunuchs. Oyomesi consisted of seven members and was headed by Bashorun who served as a prime minister. Ogboni cult was another arm of government. They played mediatory role in any conflict between the Alaafin and Oyomesi. They sometimes, they counter the power of the Oyomesi. Also, the army was another arm of government headed by Aare Ona Kakanfo. They ensure the stability of empire, expansion and keeping dissident territories in check. Provincial government was administered by princes, minor kings and Baales.

Igbo was known for their segmentary and acephalous way of life. The system was not centralized. It is subdivided into; Igbo of eastern Nigerian, Igbo of southeastern Nigeria, Igbo of northeastern Nigeria, western Igbo and northern Igbo. One of the most popular version of migratory stories of origin of Igbo is the one the pointed to Isreal. Professor M.A Onwuejeogbo(2000) regards the Nri version as the authentic. Eri, the ancestor of Igbo descended from sky and sailed down to river Anambra. When he got to Aguleri, he met people and settled with them.

There was no centralized government, rather, there was diffusion of power and they practiced democracy. Family was the smallest unit headed by Ofo, most senior of “Ofo” is “Okpara” who held “Ozo” title and presided over elders of council. Age-grade was organized on village basis. The youths cleared path, streams and serve as police. Elders enforced the elder’s decisions, fought wars, collect fines from offenders, guided public morality, etc. Oha na eze was a form of general assembly. They perform ;legislative functions. Secret societies acted as intermediary between living and ancestors. They lives was surrounded by mysteries and superstitions.

Before 1804, Hausa was of fourteen states and two district groups;; Hausa Bakwai(Kano, Rano, Gobir, Katsina, Zaria, Birau) were legitimate states and Hausa Banza(Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara and Kebbi). Bayajidda, an arab prince, traveled to Sahel from Baghdad and killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of Daura. He got married to the Queen. Each son ruled over the states as first kings.

Sarki was head of typical Hausa states. He performed the executive, legislative and judiciary functions. Between 14th ans 15th century, socio-political organization was restructured. Islam was adopted and new offices were made. Jihad by Uthman Dan Fodio happened in 1804 which led to conquest of old Hausa kingdom. Fulani emir represented the former Hausa ruler. Hausa was divided into Sokoto and Gwandu. Council of advisers were appointed, e.g Sarki Pawa (Head of charman of butchers at the abattoirs, Galadima(Administrator of capital city), etc. There was Hakimis and Grand as judges and Chief justice respectively.

Portuguese were first Europeans to land in Nigeria through Bini kingdom. Atlantic slave trade carried across Atlantic Ocean between Europeans and Africans. Introduction of system of agriculture demanded for slaves. Sources of slaves were condemned criminals, political prisoners, etc. Trans-Atlantic slave trade brought British in contact with Nigeria. British abolished the trade and legitimate commerce were introduced. Europeans introduced “Gun-boat” politics and took Lagos as colony in 1861. Britain colonized Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, and Sierra Leone in West Africa.

1990, Nigerai was under the responsibility of British colonial office. May 1906 amalgamation was the first amalgamation where Lagos colony & protectorate with protectorate of southern Nigerian formed new colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. The primary objective of the British was economic. In January 1916, second amalgamation occurred. It joined southern and northern Nigeria. The objective was the same as the first amalgamation. Sir Frederick Lord Lugard was the father of the 1914 amalgamation. Britain ruled Nigeria through indirect rule i.e through local traditional rulers. British officer defined the political framework while the local personnel of rulers implement it.