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Chapter 2 : An historical analysis of the evolution of the Nigerian State. ( Review)

The period when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown, but through archeological evidences in different parts of Nigeria, it was then believed that man settled in this region since palaeolithic period 500,000-9000 BC. It was also through this that it was found out that Nigeria also took part in stone age civilization. The excavation of stone age skeleton Iwo Elewu near Akure in Ondo State threw more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria

Man who lived in Nigeria at this time had to cope with his environment. The need for food brought about hunt for animals and gather of fruits. This lead to the invention of tools consisting of pebbles, this tools were named the Oldowan-type of tools by the archeologist because it was first found in the Olduvai Gorge of Tanzania. Early man in Nigeria advanced from the Stone Age and began to make hand axes and was used for many purposes by the man who made them. Small stone tools believed to be used for hunting have been located in His, Plateau state , Iwo Elewu in Ondo State. The invention continued to a heavy metal chopper and then moved on to bronze and metal age

The Scientific and Technical Development of Early Nigeria Societies

Major Landmark in early Nigerian History

The information about this was made possible through excavation work done in places where man lived in Nigeria. Some of them include Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife, Benin and others. They were referred to as centres of ancient civilization

Nok Culture/ Civilization: The discovery of a terracotta head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted discoveries in other places. This culture is believed to be the transitional civilization between stone and iron age due to presence of the combination of stone and iron objects. This culture was discovered to have existed between 5th and 2nd century B.C through carbon dating

Benin Civilization: They are known for their art work. The craftsmen carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks, one of which was the ivory mask used as FESTAC symbol in 1977

Ife Civilization: It is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects such as

stools and figures were carved on hard stone while animal and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails. Example is Opa Oranmiyan in Ile Ife. Art Historians believe that Ife art originated from the Nok culture because of similarities in the two. It is believed that it was from Ife that Benin probably learnt bronze sculpture

**Igbo Ukwu Civilization:** Bronze objects and ornaments were discovered accidentally while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. Many objects made of bronze were discovered in various sites. The excavated sites at Igbo Ukwu have been dated to the middle of 9th century A.D

#### Traditional Political Institutions in Pre-Colonial Nigeria

The three majority ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani in Nigeria traditional political system of government shall be studied;

**The historical background of pre-colonial political system in Yoruba Land :** They are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria. Ile Ife is regarded as their ancestral home and Oduduwa is believed as the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. There are different versions of their origin

The Oke Oramfe's version of the origin of the Yoruba states Oke Oramfe located in Ile Ife is the centre from which the world was created. Akinjogbin and Ayandele (1980) gave a full picture of what Oke Oramfe's version is all about

**Political structure of the pre-colonial Yoruba Land:** The political structure consisted of capital town, subordinate towns, villages, and farmlands. Each town has a king and a palace. The king 'oba' enjoys many privileges but certain limitations were placed on his powers and if violated can lead to death. He has rulers of lesser rank who are in charge of subordinate towns, villages, farmlands, town in which towns were divided into wards, compounds, heads known as baale, respectively. They were also civil chiefs at the apex which were called different names such as Oyomesi etc

**Oyo Empire:** It is an example of pre-colonial administration in Yorubaland. The king is called Aaafin of Oyo and is assisted by a retinue of officials. It was the fountain of authority and regarded as the companion of the gods. His powers are regulated by the Oyomesi ( a council of seven members headed by Bashorun

**Ogboni Cult Administration:** It is a powerful court composed of free and prominent members of the society. They play mediatory role in any conflict between Oyomesi and Alaafin

**The Army:** An arm of government in Yoruba society. The head has a title of Are-Ona-Kankanfo. They perform functions such as stability of the empire, keeping dissident territories in check, etc

**Historical background of pre-colonial political system in Igbo Land:** The Igbo people are known for their segmentary way of life because they had no centralised states. They are grouped into five sub-cultures: The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria, The Igbo of North-

Eastern Nigeria, The Western Igbo and The Northern Igbo. The most popular versions of the migratory stories of origin of the Igbo people is one that points to Israel. Igbo Land is original homeland. Professor M.A. Onwuejeogwu (2000) regards the Nri version as authentic version of the origin of the Igbo

Political structure of the pre-colonial Igbo Land: There was no central authority so it was a diffusion of authority into different groups. The family is the smallest unit headed by an 'Ofo' title holder. Age grade was organized on a village basis. They enforced discipline among themselves and also guarded public morality. Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in traditional Igbo society and decisions taken during the meetings were final. The chief priest was the link between the people and deities. The religious lives of the Igbos were surrounded by mysticisms and superstitions

Historical background of the pre-colonial political system in Hausa Land: This is located in the Northern Nigeria. Before 1804 it was made up of 14 states, the first consist of the 7 legitimate Hausa states (Hausa Bakwai) and the remaining 7 of the illegitimate Hausa states (Hausa banza). The origin of the Hausa states is attributed to a man Bayajidda, an arad prince who travelled and killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people, he married the queen who already had six sons and produced another for Bayajidda who founded the Hausa people and his seven sons became the first kings of the seven states

Political structure of the pre-colonial Hausa Land: 'Sarki Kasar' is the head of any typical Hausa state. He combined political and religious functions. Between 14th and 15th century the socio-political organization of the Hausa took another shape (Islam was adopted, sharia law started taking it shape..)

Emirate system of government among the Hausa people: A centralised political system of government was introduced, selecting and appointing rulers described as Emir's to rule caliphate. The whole of the former Hausa kingdom was divided into two confederations. The Emir was an absolute monarch in his emirate and was the political, spiritual and administrative leader. The Emir was assisted by a council and the members were appointed by Uthman Dan Fodio and each held a title. The judicial administration was based on the Islamic legal system called Sharia held by a chief 'Grand Khadi'

Colonial administration and indirect rule system in Nigeria historical background: The portuguese were the first to land Nigeria through the Bibi Kingdom. Slaves were exported annually to Portugal from West Africa. This trade put the british in contact with Nigeria, they abolished the trade in early decade of 19th century. To achieve power measures were taken like consolidation of british authority over the territory later known as Nigeria

The birth of Nigeria as a geo-political entity: By 1900 all Nigeria was under british colonial office. There was the first amalgamation and the second in 1906 and 1914 respectively. The first was for the british in Nigeria and the second for North and south Nigeria. The british officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local rulers