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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATE**

The historical background of Nigeria government and politics, includes the precolonial and colonial period in Nigeria. The precolonial period was involved in the period before the coming of the colonist to Nigeria, while the colonial period involves the era that the colonial administrations were established in Nigeria.

Precolonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, kingdoms, empire and States includes: the Igbo segmentary societies in the east, Benin kingdom, Hausa states, Oyo empires in the west and several ethnic identities in the Benue valley. Precolonial Nigeria is bordered to the south by the bights of the Benin and Biafra, which are only on the gulf of guinea in the Atlantic ocean. On the west, Nigeria is bordered by Benin, on north by Niger and on the east by the Cameroon. From 700 miles Nigeria stretches from east to west and 650 miles from north to south.

#### **EARLY MEN IN NIGERIA AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS**

There are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which points out that man had settled down in that region which is now known as Nigeria since the Paleolithic period from 500,000—9000BC. The excavation of stone age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Ondo state has thrown more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria, the skeleton was dated 12,000 years ago and this suggests that the country has been long inhabited. The men who lived in Nigeria in those years had worked very hard to cope with his environment. He needed food and in order to get food, he began to hunt animals, gather fruits and then he began to invent tools which consisted of pebbles for chopping and cutting. Archeologists called these tools the OLDWAN-TYPE TOOLS. Early men in Nigeria advanced from early stone age and begun making hand axes. These tools were oval and pointed in shape. Small stone tools have been located in Jos, Plateau state and in Iwo Eleru in Ondo state. One of the most active periods of the technological efforts in Nigeria was during this period around 500BC to 200AD. During this period, there were people who lived in Nigeria that made sculptures. Some were human heads and figures. The figures were found in a village of Nok. These figures were made of terracotta and they possessed a distinctive artistic style.

#### **MAJOR LANDMARKS IN EARLY NIGERIAN HISTORY**

**NOK CIVILIZATION;** A terracotta head of monkey was discovered by miners in Nok in 1936, the area where the terracottas were found is called nok culture of civilization area. The Nok culture is believed to be a transitional civilization between the stone age and iron age in Nigeria. Nok culture existed between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

**BENIN CIVILIZATION;** the craftsmen of Benin carved in woods and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. The ivory was used as FESTAC symbol in 1977.

**IFE CIVILIZATION;** Art historians believe that Ife art was originated from Nok culture because of the similarities in the two especially beaded hand, neck and ankles. They believed that Benin learnt bronze sculpture from Ife.

**IGBO UKWU CIVILIZATION;**

Bronze objects and ornaments were found accidentally while digging a toilet pit in 1939 and it led to the excavation of 3 sites in which they discovered many objects made of bronze which included the remains of a decayed king and five slaves with him. The excavation at Igbo Ukwu has been dated to the middle age of the 9<sup>th</sup> century 9<sup>th</sup> century AD.