

## Chapter 2

### A Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State

The historical background of Nigeria as a state, comprises of both pre-colonial and colonial period. Nigeria is a colonial state and was colonized by the Europeans, with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. The pre-colonial period is known as the period before the colonialists came to Nigeria.

During the pre-colonial age, Nigeria was comprised of different chiefdoms, kingdoms and empires. These include; Borno empire, Hausa states, and the Sokoto caliphate in the north; the Igbo segmentary societies in the East; Benin kingdom and Oyo empire in the west and several ethnic identities in the Benue Valley. These ethnic groupings differ historically, socially and culturally.

Early man in Nigeria: from archaeological evidences, man settled in the region of Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 500,000-9000BC. Nigerians also took part in the stone age civilization. A stone age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state was dug up and it confirmed the earliest occupation of Nigeria.

Achievements of Early Man: man, who lived in this era had to learn to cope and adapt with his environment by:

- Hunting animals and gathering fruit for food.
- Making tools for chopping and cutting (Oldowan-type tools).
- Man, advanced and began to make axes.
- Making a heavy chopper.

### Scientific and Technological Development of Early Nigerian Societies

Remote places where man lived in Nigeria include: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin etc. these are referred to as Centers of Ancient Civilization.

Nok: a terracotta head of a monkey was discovered in Nok in 1936. The area is called the Nok culture or civilization area (stone age and iron age). This is because of the presence of stone and iron objects. The Nok culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century BC.

Benin Civilization: Benin was important for its artworks in wood, ivory, bronze and brass.

Other centers of ancient civilization also present us with the scientific and technological developments of early Nigerian societies.

### Historical Background of Pre-Colonial Political System in Yoruba Land

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to Ile-Ife and subsequently sent his sons and grandsons to found other Yoruba kingdoms.

#### Political Structure of Pre-colonial Yoruba Land

Political structures of Yoruba kingdoms are:

- A capital town
- Subordinate town
- Villages; and
- Farmlands

### Historical Background of Pre-colonial Political System in Igbo Land

They are into 5 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

People believe the Igbo land has been in their present abode from the beginning. Therefore, Igboland is the original homeland. As population increased, some groups migrated to other parts of Igboland to establish their own settlements.

#### Political Structure of Pre-colonial Igbo Land

Here, there were no traditional rulers. Direct democracy was practiced. Socio-political institutions in villages carried out legislative, administrative, military and judicial functions. The institutions include: family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

#### Historical Background of Pre-colonial Political System in Hausa Land

In 1804, Hausa land was made up of fourteen states of two distinct groups. These groups are:

1. Hausa Bakwai
2. Hausa Banza

Hausa Bakwai states are: Daura, Biram, Zaria, Katsina, Kano, Rano and Gobir

Hausa Banza states are: Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi, Yoruba

#### Political Structure of the Pre-colonial Hausa Land

The ruler of the Hausa state is called a Sarki. The Sarki performs both political and religious/spiritual functions. Between the 14th and 15th centuries, the socio-political organizations of Hausa states took another shape.

#### Colonial Administration and Indirect Rule System in Nigeria

##### Historical Background

The British were not the first to get into Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria through Bini Kingdom. Atlantic Slave Trade was the trade carried on across Atlantic Ocean between the Europeans and Africans. Demand for slaves could be traced to the introduction of plantation system of agriculture in places like Brazil, Jamaica, and Haiti among others.

The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the unfortunate channel that put the British in contact with Nigeria. This slave trade lasted for about three centuries. A so-called period of legitimate commerce was an opportunity the Europeans used to get in affairs with Africans. Africans were attacked and then the British marked the Nigerian territory.

The struggle of European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa in the 19th century after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.

##### The Birth of Nigeria of as a Geopolitical Entity

In 1900, Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British Colonial Office. In 1906, the British and Nigeria united. The British united Lagos colony and protectorate with protectorate of southern Nigeria. All this was done without consent from Nigerians. The union was purely economic.

The second union, in January 1914 the British made a union with the Northern and Southern Nigeria. This was also for economic purposes. Sir Frederick Lugard is the father of January 1914 amalgamation. British ruled Nigeria with Indirect rule i.e. ruling colonies through local traditional rulers. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or the rulers.