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The era that colonial administration was established in the country Nigeria was the precolonial period before the coming of the colonialists.

The Nigeria state is a colonial creation. It is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out if european and entyre with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Prior to the emergence of the Nigeria state, precolonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. These among others include Borno empire, the hausa state, and the Sokoto Caliphate in the north; the Igbo segmentary societies in the East; Benun kingdom and the oyo empire in the west and several ethnic identities in the Benue valley. These ethnic groupings significantly differ in their historical, social and cultural make-ups.

The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidences from different part of Nigeria which counted to the fact that man has settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 500,000-9000BC.

Nigeria also took part in the stone age civilisation. The stone age can be divided into several periods . These Re: Early stone age 3,000,000- 35,000BC; middle stone age, 35,000-15000BC and; Late stone age, 15,000-500BC. The excavation od a stone age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure has thrown more light on the earliest occupation of Nigeria. The skeleton was dated some 12000 years ago, and this suggests that the country has been long inhabited.

During those years, the man who lives in Nigeria worked hard to cope with his environment. Early man un Nigeria advances from the early stone age, as the began to make tools like hand axes . These tools were made during the early stone age, but they were later refined during the middle stone age and late stone age.

After that, early man proceeded to invent another type of tool, which is a heavy chopper. It was more efficient in cutting than existing tools. There is evidence of more advanced technology in various parts of Nigeria during the bronze and metal age. During this period, they were people who lived in Nigeria who made sculptures , many were of human heads and figures of various sizes. The site in whixh the figures were found was the village of Nok. The figures were made of terracota and they all possessed a distinctive artistic style.

Information on the major landmarks in early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past. Some of the places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past included: Nok, Igbo ukwu, Ife and Benin among others. They are usually referred to as centres of ancient civilisation.

The discovery of terracotta (burnt clay) head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as Wamba, Kastina-Ala and Jema. The area where these terracotta figurines were found is called the Nom culture or civilisation area. Through the use of Carbon dating, it was discovered that the Nok culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century B.C.

Benin was important for its art work. Art historian claim that bronze casting was introduced into Benin by Ife artists.

Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects such as tools and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz while animal and human figures were carved frkm granite and decorated with iron nails. An example is Opa Oranmiyan in Ile Ife. Art historians believed that Ife art originated from the Nok culture because of similarities in the two, especially beaded neck, wrist and ankles. They also believed that it was from Ife that benin probably learnt bronze sculpture.

In 1939, some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while dighing a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu. This eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeological called Thurstan Shaw.

The three majority ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani in Nigeria traditional political system of government shall be examined. The yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. The yoruba people trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of the yoruba kingdom. Ile ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to Ile ife and subsequently sent hus sons and grandsons to find other yoruba kingdoms.

It is believed that Oke Oramfe is located in Ile Ife, It is believed to be the centre from which the world was created. According to the legend, there was a period when the world was covered by water. It was from Ile Ife that he extended his authorities to the other yoruba towns and villages.

The government id the old oyo empire us a typical example of the precolonial administration in the yoruba land. The first organ of government in oyo empire was the king known as Alaafin of Oyo. He was the Lord if many lands. The Alaafin was the fountain of authority and was therefore regarded as the “companion of the gods". His powers were often regulated by the Oyomesi, a council of seven members headed by Bashorun who acted as the prime minister.

Apart from the Alaafin, members of the Oyomesi cult constituted another arm of government. The army was another arm of government in the traditional Yoruba society. It was made up of infantry and cavalry. They were modelled after the central government. All of them were subjects to the overlordship of the Alaafin. The Alaafin used the Bere annual festive periods to acknowledge the renewal of the allegiance of tge provincial governors to him.

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary way of life. They are grouped into 5 sub cultures: The Igbo of Western Nigeria, the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria, the Western Igbo, and the Northern Igbo. They practiced direct democracy because there were no traditional ruler in the form of Oba as in the case of Yoruba. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society. The elders formed the core of the village administration as they were highly respected accordingly. They believed in re-incarnation. Tbe religious lives of the Igbos were surrounded by mysticisms and superstitions.

Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria. Before 1804, Hausa land was made up of fourteen states which were of two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven states called “Hausa Bakwai" states, that is, Hausa legitimate states. The second group consists of the remaining seven states and were known as Hausa banza. The Hausa states may have been founded by Berber immigrants from north of the sahara.

Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the fourteenth century , and by the 15th century, it was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The whole of the former Hausa kingdom was divided into two confederations. Important title holders in the Emir's cabinet included:

1. Sarkin Fada- the spokesman of the Emir
2. Waziri- the prime minister of the Emirates
3. Galadima- administrator of the capital city
4. Madawaki- conmander and head of the emirate army
5. Magaji- Government treasurer in charge of the government treasure
6. Sarkin Ruwa- minister in charge of water resources
7. Sarkin Pawa- head of chairman of butchers at the Abattoirs
8. Yari- chief superintendent of prisons in the Emirate
9. Sarkin Dan Doka- Inspector general of police force called Dan Doka.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Nigeria through Bini kingdom. The Atlantic slave trade was the trade carried on across the Atlantic ocean. The trade got to maturity in the 16th century. After three centuries of the shameful slave trade, came the so-called period of legitimate commerce. The scramble for Africa after Berlin conference of 1884 to1885. Britain colonised Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia and Sierra- Leone in West Africa. As from 1898, the British government sought to establish and maintain a colonial state in Nigeria. To achieve this, a number of measures were to be taken, for example, removal of all visible opposition to the imposition of colonial rule, expansion and consolidation of British authority over the territory later Known as Nigeria.

The second amalgamation was that of 1914 when the British government amalgamated the Northern and Southern Nigeria. Britain therefore governed Nigeria by means of a system called Indirect rule. The British officers defined the framework of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the Local personnel.