

## CHAPTER 2

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

Nigeria is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Although the exact time man began to live in Nigeria is unknown there are several archaeological facts that points out that man habited the region since the Paleolithic period 500,000-9000BC. Artefacts, mostly stone tools were discovered by archaeologists which further confirmed that Nigerians took part in the Stone Age civilization. The stone age can be divided into several periods which are: Early stone age 3,000-35,000BC; Middle stone age, 35,000-15,000BC and Late stone age; 15,000-500BC. There were various achievement of the early man during those years. He needed food and for this purpose he began to hunt animals and gather fruits but he soon began to invest tools made up of pebbles into chopping tools and cutting tools. According to the archaeologists, these tools are called Oldowan-type tools which was identified by the archaeologist in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. The early man then advanced to the production of axes, heavy choppers. The major landmarks in the early Nigerian history included: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin among others. They are usually referred to as center of ancient civilization. Nok culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century B.C. They were responsible for the production of terracotta figurines. The Benin civilization was important for its art work. Ife civilization were known for their terracotta and bronze heads. Art historians believe that Ife art originated from the Nok culture because of similarities between them.

The Historical background of pre-colonial political system in Yoruba land: The Yoruba is one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria. Their origin can be traced back to Oduduwa. Ile-Ife is considered the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. According to Oke Oramfe version of the origination of the Yoruba people, there was a period when the world was covered with water. The almighty God then decided to send some of his messengers to the world obasala and sixteen Oye. They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth and a cockerel, Obatala got drunk then Oduduwa seized his authority and gave it to the world and they landed on the site called Oke Oramfe in Ile-Ife.

The Political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. They consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town had a king called "Oba" who resides in the palace called "Aafin". His paraphernalia of office included a beaded crown (Ade), a slippers (bata), horse tail (irukere) and scepter (Ase). The king also had other rulers of lesser status. They were in charge of the subordinate towns and wore crowns made of white beads called "Sese ofun." The Baale were in charge of the villages while the Oloja ruled over farmlands. The pattern of administration was hierarchical.

The government of the old Oyo empire is an example of the pre-colonial administration in Yoruba land. The first organ is the king known as Alaafin of Oyo. The alaafin was the head and contributed to its stability for centuries. He was regarded as the "lord of many lands". Sometimes he had an autocratic tendency but in practice, his powers were often limited and regulated by the Oyomesi. They had the power to remove any alaafin that transgressed the laws of the land. Apart from the alaafin cabinet, members of the Oyomesi cult constituted another arm of government. It was composed of free and prominent members of the society as well as members of the oyomesi. The army was another arm of government , its head was conferred with the coveted title of Are-ona-kankanfo. They performed functions such as stability of the empire, expansion, as well as keeping dissident territories in check. They were subject to the over lordship of the Alaafin.

Historical background of pre-colonial political system in Igbo land: they consequently operate a type of government without kings. They are divided 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. The popular version of origination is the one that points to Israel. According to the Nri version, the ancestor, Eri, descended from the sky and sailed down the river Anambra. When he arrived at Aguleri, he met some autochthonous people who had no memory and settled with them. As their population increased, some groups migrated to other parts of Igbo land to establish their own settlements.

The Igbo practiced direct democracy because there were no traditional rulers and so no hereditary claims as there was never an Igbo empire. The family was the smallest political unit in Igbo land. Each family was headed by an "Ofo" title holder. Among the "Ofo" title holders, one is recognized as the most senior to others and is known as the "Okpara" who held the "Ozo" title. The age grades were strongly organized among the northern and southern Igbo people. They were organized for work, war and government. Seniority was of great importance.

Oha-na-eze was a form of general assembly in traditional Igbo society. The male adult members usually meet in this assembly to perform legislative functions. The secret societies consisted of the diviners, masquerades, "Ubinuknabi" at Arochukwu, the Amadisha of ozuzzu. They all played important roles in the Igbo society. The Igbo believe in reincarnation.

Historical background of pre-colonial system in Hausa land: Hausa land is located in northern Nigeria. It is made up of 14 states and 2 distinct groups. The first consist of 7 states called "Hausa banza" states and "Hausa bakwai" states. Oral tradition attributed the origin of the Hausa states to man called Bayajidda. Islam was not introduced to the region until the 11th century.

The "Sarki" was known as the head of any Hausa state. The Sarkin Kasar combined both political and religious functions. Between 14th and 15th century, the socio political organization of Hausa states took another shape. Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the 14th 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. The Sultan supervised the administration of the emirate system. The judicial administration of Hausa-fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called Sharia.

Colonial administration and indirect rule system in Nigeria: according to Hodgkin, "the second half of the century saw the arrival of the first Europeans in Benin, the Portuguese Ruy de sequeira in 1472 in Ewuare region." The atlantic slave trade was the trade carried on across the atlantic ocean between the Europeans and Africans. After 3 years of slave trade, came the period of legitimate commerce. In 1861, they took Lagos as a colony. The scramble for Africa, by these Europeans power led to the partitioning of Africa after the Berlin conference of 1884-1885. The May 1906 amalgamation is the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January, 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria. Sir, Fredrick Lugard is known as the father of the January 1914 amalgamation.