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**MATRIC NO: 19/sms03/021**

**Date: 16th-1-2021**

**COURSE CODE: GST 203**

**ASSIGNMENT: CHAPTER 7, POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

The political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age. In liberal democracy system, they help to keep governments accountable to public opinion; even in autocratic system, they help government maintain its hold on power. The political party crops up in all aspects of politics. It is an invention that first developed the nineteen century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters.

The first modern electoral democracy was the united state of America, and it was here that the first parties developed. By 1820s, there were well organized parties, and the democratic party, which can trace its roots back to that time, is the oldest political party in the world. In Britain, 1867 was the first year in which there was a reasonably widespread extension of the votes. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalist Consciousness and sentiments and nationalists' movements in the 1920s. This chapter aims at discussing the evolution of political parties in Nigeria.

Conceptual clarification if the idea of political party; there are many definitions according to the political thinkers. According to R.G. Gettel, "political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who acts as a political unit. Herman Finer, on his part defined political party as" an organized body with voluntary membership. A political party performs so many tasks in the political process that it is difficult to establish a single definition.

A political party is a group of officials or would-be officials who are linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organization; a chief object of this organization is to ensure that its officials attain power or maintain power (Shively, 2008). Finally a party joins people together in a formally organized structure. Here are some characteristics of political parties: political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as party ideology.Political parties has party manifestos which guide their conduct during and after winning elections. Political parties are guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials.

There are five types of political parties which include : elitist/Cadre parties, mass parties, ideological parties, broker party, and Christmatic or personality party.

Political parties perform the functions listed below ;

>political mobilization and recruitment ;

>political education;

>political representation;

>interest aggregation;

>political stability;

>conflict management and political integration;

>organization of government. Etc

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements {ikelegbe, 2010}. The fulcrum for the emergence of parties' formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. The Clifford constitution of 1922 provided for four elective seats in its legislative council, while the Richards constitution of 1946 retained the four elective seats and established regional assemblies.

The Nigeria national development party (NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigeria nationalism.

According to Ikelegbe, 2010; two-major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951. These were the Action Group and the Northern people's congress. These parties emerged from cultural associations because of the prospects of the 1951 elections, following the Macpherson's constitution.

Problems that confronted pre-independence political parties: political parties before independence in Nigeria were not without some challenges. Some of them are:

>the political parties were without national outlook.

>the political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues;

>intra-party and inter-party conflict in most cases polarized the political parties and thereby splitting them into factions;

>political party defection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this Era.

Political parties in the second republic in Nigeria : the ban on politics was lifted in September, 1978. Following that, about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections.