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**ASSIGNMENT**

Write a two page review of chapter 7, ‘POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA’, in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Introduction

Political parties are a link between government and people. Political party is an invention that first developed in the 19th century in response to the appearance of elections involving large number of voters. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalists’ movement in 1920s.

Conceptual Clarification of the Idea of Political Party

 Many political thinkers came up with some definitions of political parties, here are a few;

1. R.G. Gettel – political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies.
2. Agbaje (1999) – a political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention, for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its offices.
3. Dowse and Hughes – political parties are associations formally organised with the with the explicit and declare purpose of acquiring and maintaining legal control, either singly or in coalition with other similar associations, over the personnel and the policy of the government of the government of an actual or prospective state.

From the above opinions, we infer that political parry is a group of citizens, more or less organized, having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

Characteristics of Political Party

1. Capturing political power by some peaceful constitutional means.
2. They always have political ideology.
3. All political parties must be nation-minded in aims and functions.
4. They are guided by the constitution.

Types of Political Parties

1. Elitist/Cadre Parties: is a political party that draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country.
2. Mass Parties: is a political party that draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.
3. Ideological Party: is a political party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.
4. Broker Party: is a political party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society.
5. Charismatic/Personality Party: is a political party formed or led by individuals with charisma.

Functions of Political Parties

1. Political education, representation, mobilisation and recruitment.
2. Political stability and interest aggregation
3. Conflict management and political integration
4. Organization of government
5. Electoral competition and governance and goal formation.

Political Parties in Nigeria

Nationalist formed group and association to organise against colonial misrule, thus Lagos Youth Movement in 1934 was formed. The fulcrum for the emergence of political parties’ formation in Nigeria was constitutional development.

Early Political Parties 1920 – 1950; the Nigeria National Development Party (NNDP),led by Herbert Macaulay, was the first political party formed in Nigeria due to the elective seats the Clifford constitution provided. The party was based in Lagos and won all the seats allocated to Lagos in 1923, 1928 & 1933 elections. The Nigeria Youth Movement was formed in 1934 by a group of young Nigerians. Their aim was to promote unity, national consciousness, and achieve complete autonomy in the British Empire. It won elections in 1938. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) was formed in 1944 which was later renamed the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens in 1960. The aim of this party was to seek independence for Nigeria. It was a major political party.

Political Parties in Nigeria in 1950 – 1966; two major political parties were formed in the year 1951 which were the Action Group (AG) and Northern People’s Congress (NPC).

Political Parties in the First Republic Iin Nigeria; smaller political parties were formed from the major political parties, they were; Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU), the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), the United National Independent Party (UNIP).

Political Parties in the Second Republic in Nigeria; after the ban on politics was lifted in 1978, 53 political parties contested for the 1979 elections. Some were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission which were; the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), National People’s Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

Political Parties in the Third Republic Nigeria; for the first time the first two party constitutional system which were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). They were established by the government.

Political Parties in the Fourth Republic; 3 political were registered by INEC in preparation for the Fourth Republic in 1988 which were Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Since then about 70 political parties have being formed.

Conclusion

Nigeria political parties face some problems. Some are high level of corruption; some political parties forge coalitions of the wealthy as basis for their registration; political parties are established as coalitions of various factions of regional and economic rent-seekers.