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Assignment

Chapter 7

Evolution of Political parties in Nigeria

According to R.G.Gettel,"political party is a group of citizens more or less organised, 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".

The major or central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. The means of capturing such power must also be peaceful and lawful.

There are five types of political parties namely; elitist or cadre parties, mass parties, ideological party, broker party and charismatic or personality party. The Elitist parties draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country. The party boasts of members who are intellectuals like doctors, lecturers or traditional rulers. Mass parties draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership. They take such name as; labour party, workers party, etc. Their manifestos are aimed at alleviating the suffering of the masses. Ideological party is formed with political benefits which form the bases of the party. Brokers party is formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society. Their primary aim is to reconcile the conflicting interest of the rich and the poor by carrying out policies of social justice for the interest of all. Lastly, charismatic party is led by individuals with charisma. It revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.

Political parties perform the following functions: Political mobilization and recruitment, political education, political representation, interest aggregation, goal formation and so on.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalists movements (Ikelegbe,2010). According to Ikelegbe, nationalists agitators formed groups and associations to organize against colonial misrule.

The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP)was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism and it was formed in 1923.

According to Ikelegbe; two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951. These were the Action group (AG) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC). The Action group (AG) emerged from the Egbe Omo oduduwa. It was formed in 1945, as a pan Yoruba cultural society. Its leader was Obafemi Awolowo, the general secretary of Egbe Omo oduduwa. The main aim of the AG was to provide leadership to and capture political power in the western region. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) emerged from the Jam'iyya Mutanein Arewa. The cultural association was formed in 1949 by Dr. Dikko, M.Yahaya Gusau, Aminu Kano and Abubakar Imam. It constituted itself into a political party, the NPC in October 1951. The main purpose of the association was combating ignorance, idleness and so on in the Northern region and control of the government in the North.

Presently in Nigeria, political parties are facing some challenges. There is extremely high level of corruption which has made politics a competitive business. There is need to make political parties to be directed to fostering cohesion among Nigerians and engendering the

development of Nigeria.