OSAGIE EFE VICTORIA 200L DENTISTRY 19/MHS01/361

GST 203 ASSIGNMENT

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 7: POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

In this chapter, the emergence and evolution of politics is discussed. Political parties are said to be an essential feature of politics in modern times. They are an important bridge between the people and the government and play the role of keeping the government accountable to public opinion in liberal-democratic systems. Political parties were developed in the 19th century as a device to help politicians and the comrades get elected. The first modern electoral democracy was the USA, and by the 1820s, the Democratic party could trace its roots as the oldest political party. So, what is a political party? As stated in the chapter, there and many definitions. However, I will state just two. According to R.G Gettel, a political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political party aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies. Another definition by Herman Finer, defined political party as an organized body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power.

Some characteristics of political party include - The main feature is capture governmental power through constitutional means. -They always have broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization which is referred to as party ideology. – Every political party must be national minded.

There are also 5 types of political parties such as the Elitist/cadre parties which draw membership from highest echelon of social hierarchy. Mass parties which draws membership from all sections of society and have wide membership like labour parties. Ideological parties which are formed for the benefits and ideology which form the bases of the party. The Broker party in which members are from the upper and lower classes of society. The aim is to reconcile the differences between the rich and the poor. And lastly, Charismatic/Personality party which is led by individuals with charisma.

Political parties perform functions like political mobilization and recruitment, political education, political representation, interest aggregation, organization of government and so on.

Talking on the political parties in Nigeria and how they came to be, they developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments. Thus, nationalist agitators formed groups and associations to organize against colonial misrule. The National Congress of British West Africa Territories was formed in 1920. Figureheads like Herbert Macaulay, Obafemi Awolowo and so on were precursors of political parties and were at the forefront of the activities. However, what propelled the emergence of political parties in Nigeria was the constitutional development, in which the Clifford constitution of 1922 provided 4 elective seats and established regional assemblies. The early political parties (1920-1950) like the Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) was the first political party established in Nigeria. It was the Clifford constitution of 1922 that gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. This party was headed by Herbert Macaulay who was regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. However, the political party was solely based in Lagos and had no national colouration. It won all three seats allocated to Lagos in the legislative council in the elections of 1923,1928 and 1933. The campaigns were also aided by a newspaper called Lagos Daily News established in 1925. From political parties in Nigeria (1950-1966), two major parties emerged between 1950 and 1951: The Action Group(AG) and the Northern People’s Congress (NPC). They emerged from cultural associations because of the prospects of the 1951 elections following the Macpherson’s constitution. The action group emerged from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (1945), at first as a wing in 1950 but later inaugurated. The NPC emerged from the Jam’iyya Mutanein Arewa, which was a cultural association formed in 1949 by Dr.Dikko, M. Yahaya Gusau, Aminu Kano and Abubakar Imam. The jam’iyya constituted itself into a political party in October 1951 and its main purpose of the association/party was combating ignorance, idleness, injustice in the northern region and control of the government in the North.

Also, looking at the problems that confronted pre-independence in Nigeria were not without some challenges: - The political parties were without any national outlook. They had regional support and ethnic loyalty. – The parties placed much emphasis on personality rather than issues. – Intra-party and inter-party conflicts in most cases polarized the political parties, splitting them into factions.

Under Political parties in the second republic of Nigeria, the ban on politics was lifted in September 1978. Following that, about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections. 5 of these associations were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission. These were the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), The Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), The Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), the Peoples Redemption Party(PRP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria(UPN). Under Political parties in the Third Republic of Nigeria, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties where registered in accordance with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1989. Thus, for the first time, Nigeria had a constitutional two-party system. The constitutions, objectives, policies and programmes of the two political parties were set up by the military government. Political parties in the fourth republic; three political parties were registered in preparation towards the fourth republic in 1998 by the Independent National Electoral Commision (INEC) among several political parties. The names of the registered parties are the Alliance for Democracy (AD), All peoples party (APP) which 2002 changed its name to All Nigeria People’s Party (ANPP) and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). These parties are organized and administered at the ward, local government area, state, and zonal and national levels. These political parties contested the 1998 and 1999 general elections.

Since the inception of the fourth republic, other political parties have been registered by INEC. Some of the parties are: Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party(ANRP), All Blending Party(ABP), All Grand Alliance Party (AGAP), All Grassroots Alliance (AGA), Action Democratic Party(ADP), Congress Of Patriots (COP), Fresh Democratic Party(FRESH), Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) and numerous others.

In conclusion, Nigeria’s political parties face challenges like extremely high levels of corruption which has made politics a competitive business. The regulatory framework for the establishment of parties should be changed so that new parties do not have to forge coalitions of the wealthy as a basis for the registration. Many party leaders see their political party activity as a means to further their business interests.