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Political parties in Nigeria {chapter seven}

Political parties help to keep the government accountable to public opinion, they help the government in the autocratic system to maintain its hold on power. Political parties serve as an important link between the government and the people.

There are different definitions of political science so as there are different people who aspire to define it, but I will be giving to you the definition of R.G Gettel,” political party is a group 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. Note that a political party performs so many task in the political process that it is difficult to establish a single definitions.

Types of political parties

Elitist/cadre parties: this party draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country. The party boast of members who are intellectuals like doctors, lawyers or business tycoons.

Mass parties: this political party draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership. Such parties take such name as; people’s party, labour party, workers party and their manifestos are aimed at alleviating the suffering of the masses

Ideological party: this type of political party is formed with political ideology or benefits which forms the bases of the party

Broker party: this party is formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society, the aim of this party is to reconcile the conflicting interest of the rich and the poor by carrying out polities of social justice for the interest of all

Charismatic or personality party: this party is led by individuals with charisma.it revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.

Characteristics of political party

1. The main or major feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means, note that capturing power in a violent means cannot be allowed in the area of politics parties, the means of capturing powers must be peaceful and lawful.
2. Every political party must be national minded, that is in aim and functions, it must take into consideration the interest of the nation. A party that which falls short of national character and represents only a sectarian outlook cannot be a political party
3. Political parties always have a broad principle of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as a party ideology, the party ideology serves as the basis for classifying parties as either leftist, rightist, communist etc.
4. Political party should be an organized body because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure
5. Political parties has manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning an elections
6. Political parties are guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government

Functions of political party

Note that political parties performs different functions like

1. Political mobilization and recruitment
2. Political education
3. Political representation
4. Interest aggregation
5. Political stability
6. Conflict management and political integration
7. Organization of government
8. Goal formation
9. Electoral competition and government