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Review on Political parties in Nigeria (Chapter 7)

**INTRODUCTION**

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. Either ways, political parties are important links between government and the people. The first modern electoral democracy was the United States of America, and it was here that the first parties developed.

**CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF THE IDEA OF POLITICAL PARTY**

There are as many definitions of political parties as the political thinkers. One of the followings are ; According to 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.”

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). In conclusion a party joins people together in a formally organized structure.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTY**

1. They have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.
2. Political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as party ideology.

**TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

They are different types which are listed below:

1. Elitist Parties
2. Mass Parties
3. Ideological Party
4. Broker Party
5. Charismatic Party

**FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY**

* Political education
* Interest aggregation
* Organization of government
* Political stability
* Goal formation and so on.

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements. The reason for the emergence of parties formation in Nigeria was constitutional development.

Early Political Parties 1920-1950

The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of Nigeria National Development Party (NNDP) in 1923 which is regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. It’s was led by Herbert Macaulay who was referred to as the father of Nigerian nationalism.

Political parties in Nigeria: 1950-1966

According to Ikelegbe, Action Group (AG) and the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) were the two major political parties formed between 1950 and 1951. They emerged as a result of cultural associations because of the prospect of the 1951 elections, following the MacPherson constitution. Action Group resulted from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa while Northern Peoples Congress also resulted from the Jam’iyya Mutanein Arewa. The Nigeria multi-party system of the first republic gave rise to the emergence of many political parties apart from the major political parties.

Problems that confronted pre-independence political parties

Some of the problems faced are:

1. Political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues
2. Inter-party and intra-party conflicts in most cases polarized the political parties and thereby splitting them into factions.

Political parties in the Second Republic in Nigeria

The ban on politics was lifted in the September, 1978. Afterwards about 53 political groups decided to contest the 1979 general elections. Five parties were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission. These were Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and so on.

Political parties in the Third Republic in Nigeria

General Ibrahim Babangida publicized 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. Therefore, for the first time, Nigeria had a constitutional two party. The constitutions, objectives, policies and programmes of the two 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 Commission (INEC- among several political parties that struggled for registration as political parties.

Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, however, other political parties have been registered by INEC like All Progressive Congress (APC); Alliance National Party (ANP); Liberation Movement (LM); Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); Young Progressive Party (YPP) and so on.