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CHAPTER SEVEN

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation as well an important link between government and the people according to Dickerson and Flanagan 2002. It first developed in nineteenth century in response to an appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. Politicians developed the idea of political parties to help themselves and like minded friends get elected but party proved to have many other uses as well and went on to become a ubiquitous feature of modern politics. The first modern electoral democracy was in the united States of America, by 1820s there were well organized political parties. In 1867 Britain was the first year in which there was a reasonably widespread extension of votes.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF THE IDEA OF POLITICAL PARTY

According to RG Gettel “political party is a group of citizens more or less organized who act as a political party unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying bout it’s general policies”. There so many definition by political thinkers like Herman Finer, Joseph LaPalombara,Agbaje, Edmund burke and others. A political party performs so many tasks in the political process that it is difficult to establish a single definition.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTY

* To capture governmental powers through constitutional means.
* Political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted it’s organization called party ideology.
* They are an organized body
* They have manifestos which guide their conduct before and after winning an election
* They are guided by party constitution.

TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

* Elitist/Cadre parties: they draw there membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in country.
* Mass Parties: this is political party that draws it’s membership from all sections of the society.
* Ideology party: it is formed with a political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.
* Broker party: it is formed from the upper and the lower classes of the society.
* Charismatic or Personality Party: it is formed or led by individuals with charisma

FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY

* Political mobilization and recruitment
* Political education
* Political representation
* Political stability

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

According to the Ikelegbe agitators formed groups and associations to organize against colonial misrule which are the national congress of British West Africa territories formed in 1920, the west African students union in 1925 and Lagos youth movement in 1934.

EARLY POLITICAL PARTIES 1920-1950

The first political party formed in Nigeria was the Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) led by Herbert Macaulay. Nigerian youth movement formed in 1934 led by Ernest okoli,Samuel Akinsanya and Dr JC Vaughan, there were other parties formed like NCNC formed in 1944.

POLITICAL APRTIES IN NIGERIA 1950-1966

According to Ikelegbe two major parties emerged in 1950 and 1951 which were the Action Group formed in 1945 and Northern people’s congress formed in 1949 by Doctor Dikko M Yahaya Gusau Aminu Kano and Abubakar Imam, Due to multi party system in first republic gave rise to other parties like NEPU and others.

PROBLEMS CONFRONTED BY PRE INDEPENDENCE POLITICAL PARTIES

* Political parties were without national outlook, they only had regional support and ethnic loyalty.
* The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues
* Political parties defection weakened or led to collapse of political parties during this era.

POLITICAL PARTY IN SECOND REPUBLIC

In 1978 September the ban on political parties we lifted and about 53 parties sort to contest in the 1979 general elections. The National party of Nigeria, Nigerian people’s party, Unity Party of Nigeria and three others were registered by the federal electoral commission to contest for the election.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

General Ibragim Babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties where registered in accordance with the constitution of Nigeria, this Nigeria had two party system for the first time. Which were the social democratic party and National republican convention.

POLITICAL. PARTIES IN FOURTH REPUBLIC

The independent national electoral commission registered three parties in preparations for the fourth republic in 1998 which were AD, ANPP and PDP followed by other political parties.