

NAME: UGOCHUKWU CHIZITEREM PRECIOUS

MATRIC NUMBER: 19/MHS01/414

COLLEGE: MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT: MEDICINE AND SURGERY

COURSE: GST 203

CHAPTER 7.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. In liberal-democratic systems, they help to keep governments accountable to public opinion, they help the government maintain its hold on power. Political parties are an important link between government and the people (Dickerson and Flanagan, 2002). The political party crops up in all aspects of politics. It is an invention that was first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. Politicians developed the idea of political party at that time as a device to help themselves and like-minded friends get elected, but the 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 the United States of America, and it was here that the first parties developed. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements in the 1920s.

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 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.

Characteristics of political party

1. To capture governmental power through constitutional means.
2. Political parties always have a broad principle of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as party ideology.
3. Every political party must be national-minded, i.e., in aims and functions, it must take into consideration the interest of the nation.
4. Political party should be an organized body, because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure.
5. Political parties have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.
6. Political parties are guided by party constitution which directs the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

Types of political parties

Elitist/cadre parties: This is a political party that draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country.

Mass parties: This is a political party that draws its membership from all sections of the society and has wide membership.

Ideological party: This is a political party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.

Broker party: This is political party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society.

Charismatic or personality party: This is political party formed or led by individuals with charisma. It revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.

Functions of political party

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. Provision of alternative government and policies
9. Electoral competition and governance
10. Goal formation.

Political parties in Nigeria

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements (Ikelegbe, 2010). According to Ikelegbe, nationalist agitators formed groups and associations, to organize against colonial misrule. Thus for this purpose, the National Congress of British West Africa Territories was formed in 1920, the West African Students Union in 1925 and the Lagos Youth movement in 1934. Herbert Macaulay, H.O. Davies, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and others were precursors of political parties in Nigeria.

Early political parties 1920-1950

The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. Nnamdi Azikiwe became president in 1946 after Herbert Macaulay's death.

Political parties in Nigeria 1950-1966

According to Ikelegbe, 2010; 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 was started as the political wing of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa in 1950. It was formally inaugurated in April, 1951. Its leader was Obafemi Awolowo, the general secretary of Egbe Omo Oduduwa. The NPC emerged from the jam'iyya Mutanein Arewa. The cultural association was formed in 1949.

Problems that confronted Pre-Independence political parties

1. The political parties were without national outlook. They had regional support and ethnic loyalty;
2. The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues;
3. Intra-party and inter-party conflict in most cases polarized the political parties and thereby splitting them into factions;
4. Political party defection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era.

Political Parties in the Second Republic in Nigeria

The ban on politics was lifted in September, 1978, following that, about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections. The NPN was officially launched in September, 1978 in Lagos after lifting of ban on party politics by the military government. The parties' main goal was national unity.

Political parties in the third republic Nigeria

General Ibrahim Babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties were 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.

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 associations that struggled for registration as political parties. Examples of some Nigerian political parties; All Progressive Congress (APC), Action Alliance (AA), Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party (ANRP), Progressive Peoples Congress (PPC).etc