

Chapter Seven (Political Parties in Nigeria)

According to P. G. Gettel, "Political party is a group of citizens more or less organised, 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".

Characteristics of Political Party

1. The major or central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.
2. Political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organisation, which is referred to as party ideology.
3. Political parties has party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.

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: It draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.
- * Ideological party
- * Broker party
- * Charismatic or personality party

Functions of Political Party

- I. Political mobilisation and recruitment
- II. Political education
- III. Political representation
- IV. Interest aggregation
- V. Political stability
- VI. Conflict management and political integration
- VII. Organisations of government.

Political Parties in Nigeria

Political parties developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements.

- Early Political Parties 1920-1950

The Nigerian National Developmental 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.

Problems that confronted Pre-independence Political parties

- i. The political parties were without national outlook.
- ii. The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues.
- iii. Intra-party and inter-party conflicts in most cases polarised the political parties and thereby splitting them into factions.

- Political parties in the second Republic in Nigeria

The ban on politics was lifted September, 1978. Following that, about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections. Five of these associations, were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission.

- 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.

- Political Parties in the fourth Republic

Three Political parties were registered in preparations towards the Fourth Republic in 1998 by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) among several political associations that struggled for registration as political parties.