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CHAPTER 7

Political parties are a very essential feature in the world of mass participation. In liberal democratic systems, they help to keep governments accountable to public opinion. Political parties are an essential link between the government and the people. The first modern electoral democracy was in the united state of America, it was here the first parties were developed. Political parties in Nigeria formed using the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalists movements in the 1920s. Political parties have been described in many ways by many people like R.G Gettel. According to him a 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. Another person (Herman finer) defined it as an organized body with voluntary membership, its energy concerted energy being employed in pursuit of political power. And many more have defined it. 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. There are some characteristics of political party, some of them are; capturing governmental power through constitutional means, it always has a broad principle of public policy adopted by its organization which is often known as part ideology, and all political party must be national minded and many others. The types of political parties are elitist/cadre arties, mass parties, ideological party, broker party charismatic or personality part. Its functions like; political education, political stability, organization of government and many others. As I mentioned before the different political parties in Nigeria developed using the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalists movements. According to ikelegbe, nationalist’s agitators formed groups and associations, to organize against colonial misrule. For this reason, parties like the national congress of British West Africa territories were formed in 1920, the West African students union in 1925 and many others. In the early political parties in 1920-1950 we had the Nigerian development party as the first political party made in Nigeria. And in this era it had other political parties like the Nigerian youth movement (NYM) and many more. Political parties in Nigeria as of the year 1950-1966 there were two major ones called the action group (AG) and the northern people’s congress (NPC). As many political parties were created in the pre-independence era we shouldn’t forget the problems they faced as a whole. Some of which are; intra-party and inter-party conflicts in most cases polarized the political parties and thereby splitting them into factions, these political parties were without national outlook, the political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues. The ban on politics was removed on September, 1978. Following that, about 53 political associations sought to contest 1979 general elections. 5 of these associations were registered by the federal electoral commission. One of them is the unity party of Nigeria (UPN) and several more. And this all happened in the second republic in Nigeria. The parties in third republic were many and more defined. For the first time Nigeria had constitutional 2 party system. The two parties were the social democratic party (SDP) and the national republican convention (NRC) which were established by the government. 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. One of the names of the political party is the all peoples party (APP). Since the beginning of the forth republic, other political parties have been registered by INEC like; advanced allied party (AAP), alliance for democracy (AD), providence people’s alliance (PPC), young democratic party (YDP), save Nigeria congress (SNC), social democratic party (SDP), united patriots (UP), youth party (YP) and many others. As it is now political parties are not all they seem to be. Most party leaders see their political party activity as means to push their business interests forward which need to stop. Political parties need to be directed to creating cohesion among Nigerians and increasing the development of Nigeria.