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A TWO PAGE REVIEW OF CHAPTER 7 “POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA”, IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS

Introduction

 Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. It is an important link between government and the people. It is an invention that first developed in the 19th century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. The first modern electoral democracy was the United States of America, and it was here that the first political parties were created. By 1820, there were well organized and the Democratic Party is one of the oldest political party in the world. In Britain, 1867 was the first year in which there was a reasonably widespread extension of the votes. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist’ movement in the 1920’s.

Conceptual Clarification of the Idea of Political Party

 There are countless definitions of political parties as they are political thinkers. Some of these definitions are: “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” by R.G Gettel. Edmund Burke defines political party as a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interests upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed. According to Agbaje, “a political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention, for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its offices.”

 Therefore, a political party is a group of citizens, more or less organized, having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means

Characteristics of Political Party

1. One major feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means
2. They always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as party ideology.
3. Every political party must be national-minded
4. It should be organized body
5. Political parties must have party manifestos to guide their conduct before and after elections. They are also guided by a party constitution

Types of political parties

There are five types of political parties which are: The elitist or cadre parties are political parties that draw their membership from the highest class of social hierarchy in a country. Mass parties draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership. Ideological parties are formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party. Broker parties are formed with members from upper and lower classes of the society. Charismatic or personality party are formed or led up individuals with charisma.
Functions of Political Party: Political mobilization, political education, representation, interest aggregation, political stability, conflict management, organization of government, provision of alternative government and policies, electoral completion and goal formation.

Political Parties in Nigeria

 It is known that political parties were created in Nigeria as a result of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments. These groups or associations were organize against colonial misrule. This led to the creation of the National Congress of British West Africa Territories of 1920, the West African Students Union in 1925and the Lagos Youth movement in 1934. The fulcrum for the emergence of parties’ formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. We have different political parties over the years, therefore we would be divided them into categories. (i) Early political parties from 1920 t950: the parties stated above can be found under this category. The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) was regarded as the first political party in Nigeria.
(ii) Political parties in Nigeria from 1950 to 1966: two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951 which were the Action Group (AG) formerly inaugurated in April 1951 and the Northern Peoples’ congress (NPC). These parties emerged from cultural associations. Some problems faced by pre-independence political parties are that they were without national outlook, placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues and inter-party conflicts.

 (iii) Political parties in the second republic in Nigeria: five political parties were registered for the 1979 constitution, they were The National Party of Nigeria (NPN), The Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), The Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). A sixth one was registered during the 1983 elections known as the Nigerian Advance Party (NAP). (iv) Political parties in the Third Republic Nigeria: the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (v) Political parties in the Fourth republic: over 77 political parties have been registered by INEC some of which are Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Nigeria People’s Party (ANPP), and People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and so on.