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**CHAPTER: CHAPTER 7 (Political Parties in Nigeria)**

Political parties are indispensable to politics. They serve as a link between the government and the people while also keeping government accountable in a democratic government. It was first developed in the 19th century where politicians decided to help themselves and likeminded people to get elected despite to the large number of people fighting for the posts and it has developed into an important feature of modern politics. Modern politics originated in the United States and the Democratic Party created around the 1820’s is the oldest political party in the world. Experience shows that political parties appear whenever a large and varied electorate is established with the coming of democracy.

 The term “Political party” has been defined by different scholars over the year’s one of them being R.G. Gettel who says “political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and by who the use of political power aims at controlling the government and carrying out general politics.” Herman Finer also defines political party as an organized body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of Political Power. It has also been defined as 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 certain traits that all political parties must have one of which is that they have broad principles of public policy adopted by the organization which is otherwise known as ideology. Another trait is they get governmental powers through constitutional means. They have party manifestos that guide their dealings. Political parties always take into account the national interest. They have an organized body to ensure their smooth running and lastly, political parties are guided by political constitutions that guide their conducts both in and outside the party.

 There are five types of political parties one of which is **Elitist** also known as the Cadre parties and is a type of party whose members are from the elite in the society. **Mass parties**, this party gets its members from all sectors of the society. They have names such as people’s party, Labour party, etc. Ideological party, it as a party formed with political ideological or believes that form the bases of the party. **Broker party**, it is a party made up of the upper and lower class of society with the aim of reconciling them together. And lastly, **Charismatic or Personality Party**. It is formed and lead by someone with charisma and revolves around the qualities of the leader.

 Political parties were made to do the following things, mobilize and recruit people. They were made for political education, political representation, political stability, interest aggregation, conflict management, goal formation, electoral competition and provision of alternative government and policies and lastly, organization of government. Political parties in Nigeria developed after the growth of nationalist consciousness and nationalist movement. The nationalist made associations to kick against misrule some of which are The National Congress of British West Africa Territories, West African Students Union and the rest. These associations made the way for political parties. But constitutional development also played a huge role in the development. Where the Clifford and Richards’s constitution provided elective seats and the Macpherson constitution made room for indirect election.

 The Nigerian National Development party was the first political party made in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay. And was exclusively based in Lagos. They won all the seats in the Legislative council. The Nigerian Youth Movement soon came after in 1934 formed by Samuel Akinsanya, Dr.J.C. Vaughan and Ernest Ikoli. Their aim was to promote national unity. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon was made in 1944 but was later remanded National Convention of Nigerian Citizens was. The NCNC was the Major party between 1920 and 1950.

 Between 1950 and 1951 two major political parties emerged from cultural associations. They are the Action Group (AG) which came from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and was headed by Obafemi Awolowo in 1945. The second group is the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) that emerged from the Jam’iyya Mutanein Arewa in 1951. Their aim was to combat ignorance and injustice in the North and also control the government while that of AG was to capture political power in the Western region. The smaller political parties during this period were as a result of disagreement in the larger parties causing them to split. The political parties in this period did not thrive because they did not have a national outlook. They placed more emphasis on personality rather than issues. Also, they had a lot of inter and intra party conflicts which polarized the political parties causing them to split up this then weaken the parties and caused them to collapse.

 Political parties in the second republican started to function after the ban on politics was lifted in 1978. There were 5 registered parties which are NPP, NPN, GNPP, PRP, and UPN. The NPN’s goal was national unity and they were the ruling party for 4 years they even won the 1983 election. The Unity Party was from the AG and were the opposition party to the NPN. The NPP was from the NCNC with its main base in the Igboland. They controlled 3 Igbo states. And lastly the GNPP it controlled 2 states Borno and Gongola and was based in Kanuri.

 IBB promulgated the transition to civilian rule for the third republic and this period Nigeria practiced a 2 party system for the first time. The Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention. The SDP had its register office in FCT, ABUJA all the state capitals and all local government headquarters. The party was purported to have won the annulled June 12 election. The NRC was registered by the Armed Forces Ruling council, had registered offices in FCT every state capital and local government headquarters. It favored private initiative.

 Parties in the fourth republic had just 3 registers parties for the 1998 election being the Alliance of Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP), and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). They were registered at all levels. AD ruled in 6 states of the south-west and won state assembly seats and local government election. The APP won 9 governorship elections during 199 elections won both state and national assembly seats. PDP won the presidential election in 1999 and has had a stronghold on presidency for 16 years. Since the start of this hew republic more political parties have come into the picture making them a total of 72 political parties presently in Nigeria.

 It can be deduced that the cause of a lot of political problem is due to the high levels of corruption and also due to the fact that wealthy people are needed in other to form a political party.