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**GST 203 ASSIGNMENT: CHAPTER 7; POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

In the 19th century, political parties were formed by politicians, due to the large numbers of voters during elections. Politicians developed the idea of a political party at that time, in order to assist themselves and get like-minded individuals elected, but the formation of these parties brought about many issues, which is what makes modern day politics pervasive. The first political parties were developed at the first modern electoral democracy of the United States of America. The Democratic party, which can trace its roots to that time, is the oldest political party in the world.

According to Joseph LaPalombara, 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 the government and its offices. It is also defined by Shively, as a group of officials or would-be officials who a linked with a sizeable group of citizens into an organization; a chief object of this organizations to ensure that its officials attain power or maintain power.

The major feature of a political party is to apprehend governmental power through constitutional means, in a peaceful and lawful way. Another, is that political parties should take into consideration, the interest of the nation, when performing political activities. Political parties should be organized, they should have ideologies, they should have a manifesto which guides their conduct during elections, and also follow up with them after winning the elections. The activities of a political party should be guided by a party constitution, which directs the conduct of the party’s officials and members.

There are different types of political parties, one is the Elitist political party; it’s a party that obtains its membership from the highest level of social hierarchy in a country. Another is the Ideological party, which is formed based on the political ideology or benefits of the political party. There are also the Mass parties, which obtains its members from all levels of the society, and It has a wide membership. The Broker party is a party formed when its members are obtained from the lower and upper classes of the society, this is to resolve the constant conflict between the rich and the poor. The Charismatic party, is a party formed or led by people with great personalities.

According to Ikelegbe, nationalist activists formed groups and associations, to organize against colonial misrule. Political parties were formed in Nigeria due to the growth of national consciousness and opinions. The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP), was considered as the first political party formed in Nigeria. It was formed in 1923, following the elective principle of Clifford Constitution in 1922. The party was headed by Herbert Macaulay.

The formation of this party, led to the formation of other parties, which used different elective principles like the Richard constitution, Macpherson constitution, and so on. These parties were all lead by respectable persons of the society. Although, these political parties formed before independence faced lots of challenges; The parties placed much importance on personalities rather than issues. The parties were without national outlook, conflicts between political parties and in political parties, caused them to be divided.

In the second republic of Nigeria, the ban on politics was lifted in September 1978. About fifty-three political parties wanted to contest in the 1979 general elections, but only five of these parties were registered by the Federal Electoral commission. In the third republic of Nigeria, Nigeria had a constitutional two party system, as a result of the transition to civil rule decree by which two political parties where registered in accordance with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1989 by General Ibrahim Babangida. The constitutions, aims, rules and programs of the two political parties were set up by the military government.

In the fourth republic of Nigeria, three political parties were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), among several political associations that struggled for registration as political parties, in preparation towards the fourth republic in 1998. Although since the commencement of the fourth republic, several political associations have been registered by INEC, to become official parties.

Nigerian political parties still face high levels of corruption, and other challenges. There is need for urgent rehabilitation.