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**CHAPTER 7**

ASSIGNMENT

Political parties are an important link between the people and the government. In liberal-democratic system political parties are answerable to public opinion while in the autocratic system they maintain the government’s grip on power. The first political parties were developed in the nineteenth century. First in the United States of America in the 1820s. The democratic party which is the oldest political party in the world. In Britain, 1867 and all through Europe whenever there was a wide spread of electorate, political parties came to play. Political parties were developed in Nigeria in the 1920s following the growth of nationalist consciousness, sentiments and movement. There are different definitions of political parties given by several scholars and from the various definitions we can deduce that political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, having some agreements in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by constitutional means.

Characteristics of political parties

1. Capture of governmental power through constitutional means. The means of capturing such power must be peaceful and lawful
2. The party ideology; principles of public policy adopted by the party. It serves as a means of classifying the party into leftist, rightist, labour, conservatives among others.
3. Every political party must be national minded. A party which is otherwise cannot be called a political party
4. Political party should be an organized body, it gains strength and establishes rapport with the masses through its organizational structure.
5. Political parties have party manifestos to control actions during and after wining election.
6. Political parties are guided by party constitution.

TYPES OF POLITCAL PARTIES

1. Elitists or Cadre parties
2. Mass parties
3. Ideological party
4. Broker party
5. Charismatic or Personality party

Political parties carry out the following functions

1. political mobilization and recruitment
2. Political education
3. Political representation
4. Interest aggregation
5. Political stability
6. Conflict management and political integration
7. Organization of government
8. Provision of alternative government and policies
9. Electoral competition and governance
10. Goal formation.

Political parties in Nigeria

The Nigerian National Development Party NNDP is regarded the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. The elective principle of the Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. it was exclusively based in Lagos and was led by Herbert Macaulay who was regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. Its political activities and campaigns were aided by Lagos Daily News a newspaper launched in1925. The Nigerian Youth Movement was formed in 1934 and led by Ernest Okoli, Dr. J.C. Vaughan and Samuel Akinsanya.

Between 1950 and 1951 the two major political parties were the Action Group [AG] and The Northern Peoples’ Congress. The main aim of the AG was to provide leadership and capture political power in the western region however, the main aim of the NPC was combating ignorance, idleness injustice in the northern region and the control of government in the north. The Nigerian multiparty system of the first republic gave rise to the emergence of many political parties apart from the earlier mentioned. Those smaller parties include Northern Element Progressive Union [NEPU], United Middle Belt Congress [UMBC], United National Independent Party [UNIP].

The ban on politics was lifted in September 1978 and fifty three associations sought to contest, only five of these associations were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission. They were; The National Party of Nigeria [NPN], The Nigerian People’s Party, The Great Nigeria Peoples Party [GNPP], the People’s Redemption Party and the Unity Party of Nigeria [UPN]. A sixth party The Nigerian Advanced Party was registered to contest in the 1983 elections.

During the third republic General Ibrahim Babangida enacted the transition to civil through which two political parties were registered in accordance to the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria. Making it the first time Nigeria practiced the two party system. The parties were SDP Social Democratic Party and NRC National Republican Party. The parties were set up by the military government.

Alliance for Democracy, All People’s Party and People’s Democratic Party were the parties that were registered in preparation of the fourth republic 1998, by the Independent National Electoral Commission[INEC]. However overtime more parties have been registered by the INEC.