MATRIC NO; 19/LAW01/244

CHAPTER 7

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. In liberal-democratic systems, they help to keep government accountable to public opinion. In either case, political parties are an important link between government and the people. The political party is an invention that first developed in the nineteenth 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 the first political parties developed. In Britain, 1867 was the first year in which there was a reasonably widespread extension of the votes. The concept of political party has been defined by several political thinkers according to R.G. Gettel, ’’political party is a group of citizens more or less organised, 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’’. According to Herman Finer, ’’political party is an organised body with voluntary membership and its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power’’.

Types Of Political Parties

**Cadre Parties**; This is a political party that draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country. **Mass parties**; This political party draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership **Ideological party;** This is a party formed with political ideology **Broker party**; This is the political party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society**. Charismatic party**; This is the political party led by individuals with charisma

**Early Political Parties;** From 1920 to 1950, The Nigerian National Development Party was regarded as the first political party in Nigeria. In 1923 the elective principle of Clifford constitution gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923, the NYM was formed in 1934 by a group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsaya and Dr. J.C. Vaughan. The NCNC was formed in 1944, it was later renamed the national convention of Nigerian citizen in 1960. It was the first political party to seek total independence for Nigeria. The party was the major party until 1950 as Nnamdi Azikiwe became its president in 1946 after Herbert Macaulay’s death. From 1950 to 1966, Two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951. These were the Action Group and Northern People’s Congress. They emerged from cultural associations because of the prospects of the 1951 elections’ following the Macpherson constitution. The AG was inaugurated in April 1951. The NPC emerged from the Jam’iyya Mutanein Arewa, it was formed in1949 by Dr. Dikko, M. Yahaya Gusau, Aminu Kano and Abubakar Imam. The Jam’iyya joined the NPC in October 1951. The main purpose of the party was combating ignorance in the northern region

**Parties in the second Republic**; The NPN was officially launched in September, 1978 in Lagos after lifting of ban on politics by the military government. The party’s main goal was national unity, with the slogan one nation one destiny, the party won the presidential election and ruled the country for 4 years and 3 months. The Unity party of Nigeria was an offshoot of AG, and its aims were free education, free health services and employment. It won gubernatorial elections in five states in 1979 and lost one of them in the 1983 election. Following this was the NPP reincarnated from the NCNC it was supported by the igbos, and its leader was Nnamdi Azikiwe. The party won gubernatorial election and controlled three states Imo, Anambra, and Plateau, while the GNPP was held by Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri and it was based in Kanuri, It controlled two states, Borno and Gongola, between 1979 and 1983

**Parties in third Republic**; In 1989, two parties were set up by the military government, which are (SDP) Social Democratic Party, (NRC) National Republican Convention, were established by the government. The registration of SDP was approved by the Armed Forces Ruling Council, it had its registered offices at the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. It won the annulled presidential election of 12 June, 1993 and controlled both senate and house of reps in the aborted third republic. The NRC was registered through the armed forces ruling council, and its party programmes favoured more private initiatives.

**Parties in the Fourth Republic;** Three parties were registered in this republic in 1998 by the Independent Electoral Commission which were Alliance for democracy which gained power in six states of the south-west of the federation between 1999 and 2003 by winning governorship election. While the All Peoples Party won nine gubernatorial elections in the north-west and middle belt during 1999 election. While the PDP won the presidential elections in 1999