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CHAPTER 7.

Political parties are essential feature of modern politics. It serves as a link between the government and the people. It was first developed in the 19th century, when elections in large numbers started to arise. Political parties arose as an idea to help politicians and their like-minded friends get hold of power but political parties have other uses. The first modern electoral democracy was the United States of America and had the first developed political parties. Similarly, all over Europe, whenever there was a election in large numbers, political parties appeared. Many thinkers have different perspectives and definitions. Some include R.G Gettel and he described political party as a group of citizens more or less organised who act as a political unit and who by the sue of political aim at controlling the government and carrying out its policies, then we have Herman who described it as an organised body with voluntary membership, its converted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power. But there is a definition that can be drawn from all these points above and that is political parties are a group of citizens, who are more or less organised, that have some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

Now some features of political parties include; capturing governmental power through constitutional means, political parties always have broad principles of public policy adopted by its organisation, they must be national-minded, political parties must be organised in order to achieve their goal more effectively. There are many types of political parties which include Elist /cadre parties, ideological parties, broker parties, charismatic or personality party. As vast all these political parties are, they have the same functions which include; they help in political mobilisation and recruitment, in political education, political representation, interest aggregation and political stability, they provide alternative government policies.

Political parties in Nigeria started following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and nationalist movements, according to Ikelegbe, nationalist formed groups and associations, to organise colonial misrule. Some of these groups like the West African students Union in1925 were formed by the precursors of political parties in Nigeria and they include Herbert Macauly, H.O Davies, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo. The fulcrum for the emergence for these political parties was the constitution which provided electoral seats in its legislative council and established regional assemblies.

The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria which was led by Herbert Macauly and operated under the Clifford constitution of 1922 which gave rise to it in 1923. Then we have the NYM (Nigerian Youth Movement) that was formed in 1934, the NCNC (National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon) formed in 1944. These political parties help seek independence for Nigeria. These political parties among the early ones to emerge.

According to Ikelegebe in 2010, two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951, which were the Action Group (AG) and the Northern people’s congress. The leader of the Action Group was Obafemi Awolowo, the general secretary of Egbe omo Oduduwa. While the NPC was formed by Dr Dikko, M.yahaya Gusau, Aminu Kano and Abubakar Imam. They were some problems that these pre-independence political parties faced and they include; some didn’t have a national outlook, some closed emphasis on personalities rather than issues. During the second republic in Nigeria, there were parties like the NPN (National party of Nigeria), The Nigerian people’s party (NPP), The Great People’s Party (GNPP) and the Unity party of Nigeria (UPN) which were created by Federal Electoral commission. Then in the third republic in Nigeria, we had political parties like the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National republican convention (NPC). Now in the fourth republic, we have the Alliance for Democracy (AD), All People’s Party (APP) and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) all created by INEC.