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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.

**EARLY POLITICAL PARTIES(1920-1950)**

The nigerian national development party(NNDP)was formed in 1923 and is regarded as the first political party formed in nigeria. The nigerian youth movement(NYM) was formed in 1934, the national council of nigerian and cameroon(NCNC)was formed 1944 and was later re-named the national convention of nigerian citizen in 1960.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA-1966)(1950

The action group was formed in 1945 but was formally inaugurated in april,1951,and the leader was obafemi awolowo.the northern peoples’congress(NPC)was formed in 1949 and was contituted into a political party by jam’iyya mutanein arewa in october 1951,the northern element progressive union(NEPU) was formed august 1950 and the united middle belt congress(UMBC) was formed in 1955.

Problems that confronted pre independence political parties

They were without national outlook.they had regional support and ethnic loyalty,they placed more emphasis on personalities rather than issues and political party defection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era.

Political parties in the second republic in nigeria

The ban on politics was lifted in september,1978 and five political associations were registered by the federal electorial commission and they were the national party of nigeria(NPN),the nigerian people’s party(NPP),the great nigeria peoples party(GNPP),the peoples redemption party(PRP)and the unity party of nigeria(UPN).the NPN was officialy launched in september,1978 in lagos after lifting the ban on party politics by the millitary government,the main goal was national unity,with the slogan,**one nation,one destiny**.the nigerian peoples’ party(NPP)was reincarnated from NCNC.the aim of the NPP is to work towards full employment for all nigerians and to promote economic,social and political equalityof all sections of the country.the party won three gubernational elections and controlled three states,the great nigeria people’s party(GNPP) was led by alhaji waziri ibrahim,the slogan was **politicians without bitterness.**it controlled two states,borno and gongola between 1979 and 1983.

**Political parties in the third republic in Nigeria**

general ibrahim babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties where registerd in accordance with the constitutiin of the federal republic of nigeria 1989,thus the first time nigeria had a constitutional two party system. The two parties were,the social democratic party(SDP)and the national republican convention(NRC),the registration of SDP was approved by the armed forces ruling council with chief tony Anenih as it national chairman,it had its registered offices at the federal capital territory,abuja,the party programmes,were favouring more public ownership and control of the economy. The NRC on the other hand,was registered through the approval of the armed forces ruling council with chief Tom Ikimi as its national chairman,the party’s programmes favoured more private initiatives and more state regulations.its paid less attention to free education and other social welfare policies.

**Politics parties in the fourth republic**

Three political parties were registered in preparation towards the fourth republic in 1988 by the independent national electorial commission(INEC)among several political associations that struggled for registration as political parties.the names of the registered parties are the alliance of democracy(AD),all peoples party(APP) which in 2002 changed its name to all nigeria people’s party(ANPP) and the people’s democratic party(PDP). alliance for democracy sponsored and contested elections throughout nigeria during 1998 and 1999.the all peoples party(APP) won nine gubernatorial elections in the north-west and middle belt during the 1999 electtions.the third peoples’ democratic party(PDP) has its major aim which is maintaining and preserving the integrity,unity and soverignty of nigeria as one indivisible political entity.

Since the iception of the fourth republic,however other political parties have been registered by INEC. So nigeria has the following political parties; action alliance(AA),all progressive grand alliance(APGA),all progressive party(APC),labour party(LP),peoples democratic party(PDP),and so on.