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**CHAPTER 7**

Politics is and essential feature in this age due to the mass participation. In a liberal system it helps keep the government accountable to their actions while in an autocratic system it helps the government maintain its hold on power. In both cases politics parties have a great link between the leaders and the people. According to R.G GETTEL, “A political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, 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”.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF A POLITICAL PARTY**

The major feature of a political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.

Political parties always have a broad principle of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as party ideology.

Political parties have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.

Political parties are guided by constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

**TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

* ELITIST/CADRE PARTIES: This is a political party that gets its members from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country.
* MASS PARTIES: It draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.
* IDEOLOGICAL PARTIES: This is a political party formed with political benefits. Which becomes the aim of the political party.
* CHARISMATIC OR PERSONALITY PARTY: This are political parties led with charisma and people with leadership qualities.
* BROKER PARTY: This is political party formed with the interest to reconcile the conflict between rich and poor by carrying out policies of social justice for the interest of all.

**FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY**

* Political mobilization
* Political education
* Political representation
* Interest aggregation
* Political stability
* Conflict management and political integration
* Organization of government
* Provision of alternative government and policies
* Electoral competition and governance
* Goal formation

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

Political parties developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements.

Early political parties (1920-1950)

The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. NNDP was by Herbert Macaulay who is regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The Nigerian youth movement (NYM) was formed 1934 by a group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoyi, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. J.C Vaughan. The National council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC) was formed in 1944. It was later re-named the National convention of Nigerian citizens in 1960 when some parts of Cameroon broke away from Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe became its first president in 1946 after Herbert Macauley’s death.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA (1950-1966)

In 1950-1951 two major political parties emerged. These groups are Action group (AG) and the Northern people congress (NPC). The Nigerian multi-party system of the first republic gave rise to the emergence of many political parties were splinter political parties formed as a result of disagreement that arose in the major parties.

**PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONTED PRE-INDEPENDENCE POLITICAL**

**PARTIES**

* The political parties were without national outlook
* The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues
* Intra-party and inter-party conflict in most cases polarized the political parties and thereby splitting them into fractions.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC NIGERIA

The ban on politics was lifted in September, 1973. After which 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections. Five of which were registered by the federal electoral commission.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC NIGERIA

General Ibrahim Babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties were registered in accordance with the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria 1989.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

Three political were registered in preparations for the fourth republic in 1988 by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) among several political associations that struggled for registration as political parties.