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LEVEL:200

DEPARTMENT:NURSING SCIENCE

TOPIC: REVIEW ON POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

 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 autocratic systems of government they help the government maintain its hold on power. 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 appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. They develop this in order to help themselves and like-minded friends get elected but the party proved to have many other uses as well and went on to become a ubiquitous feature of modern politics.

 The first modern electoral democracy was the united state of America and it was here that the first parties developed by the 1820’s there were well organized paty and the democratic party which can trace its root back to that time is the Oldest political party in the world. This chapter aims at discussing the evolution of political parties in Nigeria.

The several conceptual clarification of the idea of political party; there are several definitions of political parties as political thinkers. R.G Gettel defined political party as a group of citizens more or less organized who act as apolitical unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies. Herman Finer, Joseph La Palombara. Agbaje (1999), Edmund Burke, Dose and Hughes… these people defines political parties in their own terms.

A political party is a group of officials or would be officials who are linked with sizable group of citizens into an organization; a chief Object of this organization is to ensure that its official attain power or maintain power .The most acceptable definition of political party is R.G Gettel definition which is a group of citizen more or less organized having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

The characteristics of political parties are; To capture government power through constitutional means.

 Must always have a broad principle of public policy adopted by its organization ,Every political part must be national-minded i.e in aims and function ,must take into consideration the interest of the nation. E.t.c..

There are five(5) types of political parties and they are; Elitist/cadre parties ,Mass parties, Ideological party, Broker party i.e party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society. The basic aim of this party is to bridge the gap between the rich and poor, the last type is the Charismatic or Personality party which is led by individuals with charisma. It revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.

The functions of political party are; Political mobilization and recruitment, political education, political stability, political aggregation, political representation, organization of government, goal formation e.t.c..

The fist Political party that was formed in Nigeria was the NNDP( Nigeria National Development Party) The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigeria Nationalism.

According to Ikelegbe , 2010 two major politicalparties emerge between 1950 and 1951 These werr the Action group(AG) and the northern people’s congress(NPC) . Action group emerged from the Egbe omo Oduduwa. Egbe omo oduduwa was formed in 1945, as a pan Yoruba cultural society. The main aim of the AG was to provide leadership to and capture political power in the western region.

The Nothern people’s congress emerged from the Jam’iyya Mutanein Arewa. The Cultural association was formed in 1949. The main aim of the NPC is combating ignorance , idleness, injustice, in the northern region and control of the government in the North.

The problems that confronted pre-independence political parties are; the political parties were without national outlook. They had regional support and ethnic loyalty.

The political parties place much emphasis on personalities rather than issues

Political party defection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era.

The Political Parties In The Second Republic in Nigeria; The ban on politics was lifted in September, 1978. Five associations were registered by Federal Electoral commission. They were the National Part Of Nigeria (NPN) ,Nigeria People Party (NPP), Great Nigeria People Party(GNPP) , The People’s Redemption Party(PRP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) . A sixth party the Nigerian Advance Party(NAP) was registered to contest the 1983 elections. The NPN was launched in September and held by a host of social clubs, tribal unions and association, etc.. The paty main goal was national unity with the slogan ‘’One nation, One destiny’’

The Political Parties In The Third Republic Nigeria; Nigeria had a constitution two party system, the two parties are Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republical Convention (NRC) were established by the government. The registration of SDP was approved by the armed forces ruling council with chief Tony Anenih as its national chairman.

Political parties in the fourth republic; Three political parties were registered in preparation towards the fourth republic in 1998 by INEC among several political associations that struggled for registration as political parties. The names of the registered parties are the Alliance for Democracy(AD) All people party (APP) and the people’s Democratic Party.