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CHAPTER SEVEN

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are often important feature of politics in the modern age pf mass participation. 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. Politicians developed the idea of political party at that time as a device to help themselves and like-minded friends get elected, but the party proved to have many other users as well and went on to become a ubiquitous feature of modern politics.

There are also many definitions of political parties as the political thinkers. According to R.G. Gettel, “political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies.

We have different types of political parties. They are:

1. Elitist/Cadre Parties

1. Mass Parties
2. Ideology Party
3. Broker Party
4. Charismatic or Personality Party

The political parties help in mobilization and recruitment. They also function in conflict management and political integration; organization of government; political stability; electoral competition and governance; goal formation and political representation.

Political party in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements. According to Ikelegbe, nationalists agitators formed groups and associations. To organise against colonial misrule. Thus for this purpose, The National Congress of British West African Students Territories was formed in 1920, the West African Students Union in 1925 and the Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. The likes of Herbert Macaulay, Obafemi Awolowo and others were precursors of political parties in Nigeria., were in the forefront of political activities and party formation in the 1920s and thereafter.

Nowadays, Nigeria’s political parties face some challenges. First, there is an extreme high level of corruption which has made politics a competitive business. Second, the regulatory framework for the establishment of parties should be challenged so that new parties do not have to forge coalitions of the wealthy as a basis for their registration. Moreover, the aim or the political project of most Nigerian parties has been the development of a national system for sharing out the “national cake” as a system of patronage. There is need to arrest the trend and make political parties to be directed to fostering cohesion among Nigerians and endangering the development of the Nigeria.