CHORIO RILAMAH EMMANUEL

GST 203: Summary of Chapter 7 of Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics

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Topic: Political Parties in Nigeria.

Political parties are an important link between the government and the people. 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 uses as well and went on to become a ubiquitous feature of modern politics. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalists’ movements in the 1920s.

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. Herman finer defined political party as a formal organization whose self- conscious, primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office person who will control alone or in coalition, the machinery of government.

**Characteristics of Political Party**

1. The major or central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.
2. They have broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization which is referred to as party ideology.
3. They must take into consideration the interest of the nation.
4. Political party should be an organized body.
5. Political parties have part manifestos.
6. Political parties are guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

**Types of political parties**

* Elitist / cadre parties: this political party draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country.
* Mass parties: this political party draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.
* Ideological party: this is a political party formed with ideology or benefits which form the basis of the society
* Broker party: this political party forms its membership from the upper and lower class of the society.
* Charismatic party: this political party is formed or led by individuals with charisma.

**Functions of political parties**

* Political mobilization
* Political education
* Political representation
* Interest aggregation
* Political stability
* Conflict management
* Organization of government
* Goal formation

**Political parties in Nigeria**

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements. The fulcrum for the emergence of parties’ formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. Clifford constitution provided 4 seats and Richard constitution of 1946 retained the 4 seats while macpherson constitution established regional executive councils. The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP which was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The Nigerian Youth Movement was formed in 1934 by a Ernest ikoli and some other notable Nigerians. The NCNC was the first political party organized to seek total independence for Nigeria with its president as Herbert Machulay and general secretary Nnamdi Azikwe. Between 1950 and 1951 two major parties, Action group and Northern peoples’ congress emerged. These parties emerged from cultural association. The Action group was formed for the yorubas by Egbe Omo Oduduwa in 1950 while NPC was formed by Dr Diko, Aminu Kano e.t.c in 1951.

It was during the preparation of the fourth republic in 1988 that 3 political parties registered their party in INEC among several political associations that struggled for registration as political parties. The names of the party were Allied for Democracy, All Nigeria Progressive Party and Peoples Democratic party. The PDP won presidential election in 1999 and maintained its stronghold on the presidency for 16 years

**Problems that confronted pre- independence political party**

* The political parties were without national outlook
* The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues
* Intra party and inter party conflicts in most cases polarized the political parties and thereby splitting them into factions
* Political party defection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era.