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**CHAPTER 7**

**A REVIEW ON POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA.**

In the modern age, political parties have become an essential feature of politics. They serve as an important link between the government and the people. It was first developed in the nineteenth century as a response to the appearance of elections involving a large number of voters. At that time, politicians developed the idea of a political party as a device to help themselves and like-minded friends get elected. However, it became useful in other aspects and thus became a universal feature of the modern politics. The United States of America was the first modern electoral democracy and was also were the first parties were established. By the 1820s, there were a number of well-organized parties such as the Democratic party which is the oldest political party in the world. Political parties emerged in Nigeria after the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements in the 1920s.

There are various definitions of political parties. R.G Gettel defined political party as 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. According to Agbaji [1999] “political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention, for as long as democratically feasible of government and its offices. A political party tends to perform numerous tasks in the political process thus making it difficult to obtain a single definition. In other words, a political party is a group of citizens, more or less organized having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTIES.

Some major characteristics of political parties includes;

* The major feature of a political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.
* Every political party must be national-minded.
* They should have manifestoes to guide their conduct after winning elections.
* They have a broad principle of public policy adopted by its organization.
* They are guided by party constitution in order to maintain the conduct of party officials and members within and outside the government.

TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES.

* MASS PARTIES: this type of party draws its membership from all sections of the society and they have wide membership and their manifestoes are aimed at alleviating the suffering of the masses.
* BROKER PARTY: this party is formed with its members drawn from the upper and lower classes of the society.
* ELITIST/CADRE PARTIES: this political party draws its members from the highest echelon of societal hierarchy in a country.
* CHARISMATIC OR PERSONALITY PARTY: this is the type of party formed or led by individuals with charisma.
* IDEOLOGICAL PARTY: this is the political party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.

FUNTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY.

* Political mobilization and recruitment
* Interest aggregation
* Organization of government
* Political stability
* Political representation

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA.

Political parties developed in Nigeria after the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements. According to Ikelegbe, nationalist agitators formed groups and associations to organize against colonial misrule. The fulcrum for the emergence of parties formation in Nigeria was constitutional development.

The Nigerian National Development Party [NNDP] was the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 which gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. This party was led by Herbert Macaulay and it was based in Lagos. The Nigerian Youth Movement [NYM] was formed in 1934 by a group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. J.C Vaughan. The National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon [NCNC] was formed in 1944 then renamed in 1960 to National Convention of Nigerian Citizen. In 2010 according to Ikelegbe, two major political parties emerged; Action Group and Nothern Peoples Congress. The Nigerian multi-party system of the first republic gave rise to the emergence of many political parties apart from the three major political parties.

Political parties before independence had some problems such as; they were without national outlook, they placed much emphasis on personalities than issues, they also weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era etc.