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CHAPTER 7

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are an important feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. Political parties are also an important link between government and the people.

There are as many definitions of Political party as the Political thinkers. According to Herman Fisher, Political party is defined as ‘an organised body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of Political Power’.

There are numerous characteristics of Political Party, a few are; Political parties have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections and finally, Political parties are guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

There are about five types of Political party; Elitist/Cadre parties, Mass parties, Ideological parties, Broker party and Charismatic or Personality party.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA: 1920-1950

The first Political Party to be formed in Nigeria is the Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP). The elective principal 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 Nationalism. The Nigerian Youth Movement 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 was found in 1944. This party was later re-named the National Convention of Nigeria Citizen in 1960 when some parts of Cameroon broke away from Nigeria.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA: 1950-1966

According to Ikelegbe, two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 951, these were the Action Group (AG) and the Northern People’s Congress (NPC).Some of the problems that confronted the Pre-Independence Political Parties are they were without national outlook, they placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues, their defection weakened.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC IN NIGERIA

The ban on politics was lifted in September, 1978. Following that, about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections. Five of these associations, were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission, Some were The National Party of Nigeria, The Nigerian People’s Party, The Great Nigerian People’s Party.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC

Gen. Ibrahim Babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties where registered. The two parties were the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

Three Political Parties were registered in preparation towards the Fourth Republic in 1998 by the Independent National Electoral Commission among several political associations that struggle for registration as political parties. The names of the parties are the Alliance for Democracy, All People’s Party which is now All Nigeria People’s Party and People’s Democratic Party.