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REVIEW ON POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA (CHAPTER 7)

A political party is a group of citizens, more or less organised having some agreement in broad principles or national policies with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means. According to Joseph Lapalombra, a political party is defined as "a formal organisation whose self-conscious, primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office persons who will control alone or in coalition, the machinery of the government. It is an invention that first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. The first modern electoral democracy was the United State of America, and it was here that the first parties developed.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments of nationalists movements in the 1920s.

Characteristics of Political party

1. The major or central feature of a political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.
2. Political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organisation, which is referred to as party ideology.
3. Every political party must be national-minded i.e in aims and functions.
4. Political parties should be an organised because it can only derive strength from an effective organisational structure.
5. Political parties has party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.
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 is a political party that draws its membership from the highest cohesion of social hierarchy in a country.

Mass parties: This is a political party that draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.

Ideological parties: This is a political party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the basis of the party.

Broker party: This is a political party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower class of the society.

Charismatic or personality party: This is political party formed or led by individuals with charisma.

FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

1. Political mobilization and recruitment
2. Political education
3. Political representation
4. Interest aggregation
5. Political stability.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and

segments and nationalist movements. The fulcrum for the emergence of parties formation in Nigeria was constitutional developments.

Early political parties 1920-1950

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

In 1934, Nigerian Youth Movement(NYM) was formed by group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr J.C Vaughan.

In 1944, National council of Nigerian and Cameroon(NCNC) which was the first political party to be organised to seek total independence for Nigeria was formed. In 1960, it was renamed to National convention of Nigerian Citizens after parts of Cameroon broke away from Nigeria.

Political parties in Nigeria: 1950-1966

The Action Group(AG) and the Northern People's Congress(NPC) were the two major political parties that emerged between 1950 and 1951. The main aim of the AG was to provide leadership to and capture political power in the western region. The main purpose of the NPC was combating ignorance, idleness, injustice in the northern region and control the government of the north.

Asides the three major political parties, many political parties emerged from the Nigerian multi-party system of the first republic.

Problems that confronted Pre-Independence Political parties includes:

1. The political parties were without national outlook.
2. They placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues.
3. Intra party and inter party conflicts in most cases polarised the political parties and thereby splitting them into factions.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC

In September 1978, the ban on politics was lifted. After that about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general election. The National Party of Nigeria(NPN), the Nigerian People's party(NPP), the Great Nigeria Peoples Party(GNPP), the Peoples Redemption Party(PRP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria(UPN) were five of these associations registered by the Federal Electoral Commission.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE THIRD RELUBLIC

The Social Democratic Party(SDP) and the National Republican Convention(NRC) were the two parties registered in accordance with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This was the first time Nigeria had a constitutional two party system.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

In the fourth republic, several political associations struggled for registration as political parties however, three political parties were registered in preparation towards the Fourth republic in 1998 by Independent National Electoral Commission(INEC). The names of the registered parties are the Alliance for Democracy(AD), All People's Party(APP) which changed its name to All Nigerian People's party in 2002 and People Democratic Party(PDP). These political parties contested in the 1998 and 1999 general elections.