GST 203

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Political parties first developed in Nigeria in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters, political parties are essential feature of politics in modern age of mass participation. Political parties are very important because they link the government and the people. In 1820’s the first parties were developed in the United States. They can be traced to the oldest parties in the world. In 1867, the parties were widespread in Britain. Nigeria developed the following growth of nationalist consciousness and movements in the 1920s.

There are many definition of political parties. A political party performs so many tasks in a political process that is why it’s difficult to establish only one definition. According to Agbaje (1999) a political party is a group of persons bounded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which essentially is the pursuit of government and its office. According to R.G Gettel political party as a group of citizens more or less organised, 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. Joseph LaPalombara defined political party as a formal organisation whose self-conscious, primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office person who will control alone or in a coalition, the machinery of government.

Political parties have different characteristics. They include;

1. They must be national-minded.
2. They should be an organised body in order to have an effective organisation.
3. They must be guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.
4. They capture governmental power through constitutional means.

Types of political parties include;

1. Cadre parties: this political parties draws its membership from the highest echelon of the social hierarchy in a country. They boost of their intellects. Members include the doctors etc.
2. Mass parties: parties draws its membership from all sections of the society and have a wide membership. Such parties include labour party.
3. Ideological parties: this parties are formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.
4. Broker party: Members are drawn from lower and upper class of the society. The basic aim is to reconcile the conflicting interest of the rich and the poor.
5. Charismatic party: this party is formed by individual with charisma.

Political parties help in political mobilization and recruitment, they help in political stability and interest aggregation, political parties manage conflicts and organise the government. They serve as political representation and compete for electoral competition and governance.

Political parties in Nigeria

**Early political parties 1920-1950:**

The Nigerian National Development party (NNDP) was regarded as the first political party. The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP. In 1923. NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay .it was in Lagos and it had no national colouration. It won elective seat in 1923, 2928 and 1933.

The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was formed in 1934 by Earnet ikoli, Samuel Akintola and Dr. J.C. Vaughan. The objectives of NYM are to achieve complete autonomy within the British Empire, promotion of Nigerian unity. They won election in 1938.

The National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC) was formed in 144. It was later re-named the National Convention of Nigerian Citizen in 1960. This was the first party to be organised to seek total independence for Nigeria. It campaigned against the Richards constitution of 1946 and 1948.

**Political parties in Nigeria: 1950-1966:**

The two major political parties were the Action Group (AG) and the Northern People’s Congress (NPC). The Action group emerged from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa. Egbe omo Oduduwa was formed in 1945. It was formally inaugurated in April 1951. It leader was Obafemi Awolowo. Their main aim was to provide leadership and to capture political power in the western region. The Northern People’s Congress emerged from the Jamiyya Mutanein Arewa. It was formed in 19949 by Dr Dikko, Aminu Kano and Abubakar Iman. The Arewa group instituted themselves to a political party in October, 1951. Their main purpose of forming a political party was to combat ignorance, injustice and idleness in the North and to control government in the North. The smaller political parties include Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) formed in 1950, United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) formed in 1955 and United National Independence Party which was a splinter party from NCNC.

The political parties that existed in pre-independence had problems. Some of them were without national outlook, they placed emphasis on personalities rather issues, defection weakened some political parties and it led to the collapse of the party.

**Political parties in the second republic in Nigeria:**

National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was launched in 1978 in Lagos. It was held by host of social clubs, tribal unions etc. their main goal was national unity the party won the presidential election and ruled the country for 4 years and 3 months. The party won 7 gubernatorial elections in 7 states.

The United Party of Nigeria (UPN) was offshoot of Action Group. UPN had four cardinal point programmes, which were free education, free health, full and gainful employment and rural development. They won gubernatorial elections in five states in 1979. They reduced the excesses of NPN.

Nigerian People’s Party (NPP). This party reincarnated from NCNC. It had main support from the Igbos. The aim of this political party was to work towards full employment for all Nigerians and to promote economic, social and equality for all Nigerians of the country. The party eon gubernatorial elections and controlled three states.

The Great Nigeria People’s Party (GNPP) was led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim. It controlled Brono and Gongola between 1979 and 1983. Other parties in the second republic include People’s Redemption Party (PRP) and Nigerian Advance Party (NAP).

**Political parties in the third republic in Nigeria:**

At first, Nigeria had two constitutional two party system. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Conventions (NRC) were established by government officials. The registration of SDP was approved by the Armed Forces Ruling Council with Chief Tony Anenih. The party programmed were aimed at favouring more public ownership and control of the economy. The party predicated its campaign of people’s welfare and change bad leadership, corruption and underdevelopment. They won 12 presidential elections.

The National Republican Convention (NRC) was also registered on the approval of the Armed Forces Ruling Council with Chief Tom Ikimi as its chairman. The program favoured more private initiatives and more state regulations. They paid less attention to free education and other social welfare policies.

**Political Parties in the Fourth Republic:**

Three parties were registered in the fourth republic by INEC. The first party was Alliance for Democracy contested for election throughout Nigeria during 1998 and 199 general elections. It gained political power in six states of the south-west of the federation. It also won several states assembly seats and local government elections. The All Peoples Party (APP) won nine gubernatorial elections. It won several States and National Assembly seats. It aligned with AD to present a joint candidate during its 1999 presidential elections. The People’s Democratic Party (PDP) has as its major aim maintaining and preserving the integrity of Nigeria. They won presidential seat in 1999 and maintained its stronghold on the presidency for sixteen years.

Since the inception of the fourth Republic, other parties have been registered by INEC include; All Nigeria People’s Party (ANPP), Action Alliance (AA), ALL Blending Party (ABP), Advanced Nigeria Democratic Party (ANDP), Grassroots Development Party of Nigeria (GPN), Justice Must Prevail Party(JMPP), People Democratic party (PDP) and many more.