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COURSE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

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ASSIGNMENT 1: Do a two-page review of chapter7” political parties in Nigeria” in salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are important features of politics in the modern age of mass participation, political parties serve as a link between government and the people an important one at that. In liberal democratic systems, they tend to keep the government accountable to public opinion and also in autocratic system they help the government maintain its hold on power. In the political process of a given political system, the party is an essential political agency. The political party cops up in all aspects of politics. This invention was first developed in the nineteenth century which was in response to the appearance of elections which involved large numbers of voters. The idea was developed by politicians as a device to help them and their like-minded friends get elected but the party proved useful in other aspects and went on to become an ubiquitous feature of modern politics.

The first parties were developed in the united states of America which was the first modern electoral democracy. By the 1820’s there were well organized parties and the democratic party{ which goes way back in time for it is the oldest political party in the world}. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness, sentiments and nationalist.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF THE IDEA OF POLITICAL PARTY

A political party performs so many tasks in the political process that it is quite difficult to establish a single definition Edmund burke in the year 1975 defines political party as a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interests upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed although according to Agbaje in the year 1999” a 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.

Dowse and Hughes {1972} see political parties as associations formally organized with the explicit and declare purpose of acquiring and maintaining legal control, either singly or in coalition with other similar associations over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or prospective state.

There are as many definitions of political parties as the political thinkers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTY

* The major or central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. But capturing power by some violent or unlawful means cannot be allowed in the arena of the political parties.
* Political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as party ideology.
* Every political party must be national-minded
* Political party should be an organized body, because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure.
* Political parties have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.
* 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 in membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country e.g. doctors.
* Mass parties: this a political that draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership e.g. labour party.
* Ideological party: this is a political party formed with political ideology or benefits which forms the bases of the party.
* Broker party: this is political party formed with its members draws from upper and lower classes of the society with the basic aim of reconciling the conflicting interest of the rich and poor by carrying out social justice in the interest of all.
* Charismatic or personality party: this is a political party formed or led by individuals with charisma.

FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY

* Political education
* Political representation
* Interest aggregation
* Political stability
* Conflict management and political integration etc.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness, sentiments and their movement according to ikelegbe (2010) national agitators formed groups and associations to organize against colonial misrule.

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 NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay known as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The party was exclusively based in Lagos and had no national coloration. A lot of political parties emerged thereafter.