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ASSIGNMENT

1. Do a two page review of Chapter 7, ‘Political Parties in Nigeria,’ in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics.

Review:

Political parties are an essential part of politics in the modern age of mass participation. They are an important link between the government and the people. They crop up in all aspects of politics. It was first developed in the 19th century in response to the appearance of elections involving large number of voters. The chapter aims at discussing the evolution of political parties in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification of the Idea of Political Party

There are as many definitions of politics as there are political thinkers. R. G. Gettel defines political parties as ‘a group of citizen more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political power aims at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies.’ However, Joseph LaPalombara defines political parties as ‘a formal organization whose self-conscious, primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office person who will control alone or in coalition, the machinery of government. Other political thinkers who have defined political parties are; Edmund Burke, Agbaje, Herman Finer, Dowse and Hughes, etc.

Characteristics of Political Party

1. To capture governmental power through constitutional means.
2. It has a broad set of principles which are referred to as party ideology..
3. It is national minded.
4. It is an organized body.
5. It has manifestoes which guide their conducts during and after elections.
6. It is guided by party constitution.

Types of Political Parties

1. Elitist/ Cadre parties.
2. Mass parties.
3. Ideological parties.
4. Broker parties.
5. Charismatic/Personality parties.

Functions of Political Party

1. Political stability.
2. Political aggregation.
3. Political representation.
4. Political education.
5. Goal formation.

Examples of political parties in Nigeria

1. Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP).
2. Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM).
3. National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC).

Political parties in the year 1950-1966

1. Action Group (AG).
2. Northern People’s Congress (NPC).
3. Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU). Etc.

Problems that Confronted Pre-Independence Political Parties

1. They were without national outlook. They had regional support and ethical loyalty.
2. They placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues.
3. Their defection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era.

Some Political Parties in Nigeria

1. Nigerian People’s Party (NPP).
2. Social Democratic Party (SDP)
3. Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
4. Youth Party (YP).

Conclusion

Nigeria’s political parties still face some challenges. High level of corruption which has made politics a competitive business. Most party leaders see their political party as a means to further their business interests. There is need to arrest this trend and make political parties directed to fostering cohesion among Nigerians and engendering the development of Nigeria.