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ASSIGNMENT

Do a two page review of Chapter 7 in the government textbook.

Answer

**Chapter 7: Political Parties in Nigeria**

The definitions of political parties vary accordingly to different political thinkers. In politics, a political party is an organized group of people who have the same ideology, or who otherwise have the same political positions, and who field candidates for elections, in an attempt to get them elected and thereby implement their agenda. Political parties are a defining element of representative democracy. A political party is best described as a **group with similar beliefs about government**. A political party may be defined as an organized group of people who often share views and gather in order to contest elections and hold power in the government. Political parties are very important characteristics of politics in today’s mass participation and elections. It is an important link between the government and the people. It was first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance to elections involving large numbers of voters.

The features of political parties include; capturing governmental powers through constitutional means, having a broad principle of public policy adopted by its organization which is known as party ideology, every political party must be national-minded which means that it must take the interest of nation into consideration, there should be an organized body due to the fact that its strength comes from an effective organizational structure, they have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after election, they are guided by a party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

Political parties are of various types. The Elitist or Cadre parties centres on its membership from the top echelon of social hierarchy in a country. Mass parties is seen as the mirror image of the élite party, in that political power precedes the formation of the élite party, while the mass party formation precedes the acquisition of power. Ideological parties involve Ideological parties hold major programmatic goals (e.g., egalitarianism, ethnic solidarity, Islamic fundamentalism) and are deeply committed to the implementation of these goals to achieve comprehensive changes in the sociopolitical order. Broker party is the political party formed with the members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society and it is basically aimed at reconciling the conflicting interest of the rich and the poor by carrying out policies of social justice for the interest of all. Lastly, the Charismatic political party is made of a class of people that is led by charisma.

Political parties have their functions as follows: to contest elections, to make laws, to run governments, to perform the role of opposition, to shape public opinion, to have access to government machinery and welfare schemes, etc.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements. According to Ikelegbe, nationalist agitators formed groups and associations, to organize against colonial misrule. Thus for this purpose, The National Congress of British West African Territories were formed in 1920, the West African Students Union in 1925 and the Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. Herbert Macaulay, H.O. Davies, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and others were precursors of political parties in Nigeria and were in the forefront of political activities and party formation in the 1920s and thereafter. The fulcrum for the emergence of parties, formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. The Clifford constitution of 1922 provided for four (4) elective seats in its legislative council, while the Richards constitution of 1946 retained the four (4) elective seats and established regional assemblies. The Macpherson’s constitution established regional executed councils, and provided for a system of indirect elections to the much largely Nigerian Legislative houses.

Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) is the first political party that was formulated in Nigeria. The Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) and Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) were formed as political parties after the introduction of the Clifford Constitution of 1922. They could not be said to be national parties. Their activities were mainly restricted to Lagos. However, at the end of Second World War, new political parties emerged and replaced the NNDP and NYM. Some of these new parties were in two groups which are the major and minor parties. Some of the major parties were the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC), Northern People’s Congress (NPC), Action Group (AG). Some of the minor parties were the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), Dynamic Party (DP), Bornu Youth Movement (BYM), etc. Most of these parties, if not all, were regional in outlook and based on ethnic sentiments and it can be said that none of them commanded nation-wide support. Some scholars, have argued that NCNC was more of a national party than others. However, they were formed mainly to awaken people’s consciousness towards the struggle for political independence.

In conclusion, Nigeria faces lots of challenges like, high level of corruption, insecurities, bad governance, etc. So, in other to get rid of all these, good governing should be promoted and new political parties should be established to enhance a better government and a better Nigeria. There is need to bring about all of these to get rid of the challenges that are being faced in Nigeria.