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REVIEW OF CHAPTER SEVEN: POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are important characteristics of the modern age of mass participation. In liberal-democratic system, they make sure that the government is accountable to public opinion. They also ensure that that the government maintains its hold on power in an autocratic system of government. They serve as an important link or mediator between the government and the people. The idea of political parties was developed by politicians in the nineteenth century as a device to help themselves and well as like-minded friends get elected, but the party proved to have many other uses and went on to become a ubiquitous feature of modern politics.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

* The main feature of political party is to get into government power using constitutional means.
* Political parties are expected to be an organized and structured body, because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure.
* Political parties have party ideology which is known as broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization.
* Political parties are always national-minded in aims, objectives and functions. They must at all times take into consideration the interest of the nation.
* Political parties have party manifestoes which guides their conduct during and after winning an election.
* Political parities are guided by party constitution which guide and direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside the government.

TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

There are various types of political parties which include;

* Charismatic party: This type of party is formed by individuals with charisma and revolves around the personality of the leader.
* Ideological party: This type is formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.
* Broker party: This type of party is formed with its members drawn from the upper and lower classes of the society and it aims at reconciling the conflicting interest of the rich and poor by carrying out policies of social justice for the interest of all.
* Mass party: This political party draws its membership from all sections of the society and has a wide membership.
* Elitist party: This type of political party draws its membership from the highest echelon of societal hierarchy. The members of the party are usually high intellectuals.

FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY

The functions of political parties are: political mobilization and recruitment, political education, political representation, political aggregation, political stability, conflict management and political integration, organization of government, provision of alternative government and policies, electoral competition and governance, goal formation and so on.

POLTICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements. The National Congress of British West Africa Territories was formed in 1920, the West African Student 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, were in the forefront of political activities and party formation in 1920s and thereafter.

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 in 1923. NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay who was regarded as the father of nationalism in Nigeria. The NNDP was exclusively based in Lagos. The party was formed mainly by its leaders and its political activities and campaigns were aided by a newspaper called Lagos Daily News launched in 1925.

The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was formed in 1934 by a group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. J.C. Vaughan. The objectives of the NYM were to promote Nigerian unity and national consciousness and also the achievement of complete autonomy within the British Empire. The party contested and won elections to the Nigerian Legislative Council and Lagos Town Council in 1938.

The National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC) was formed in 1944. It was later re-named the National Convention of Nigerian Citizen in 1960 when some parts Cameroons broke away from Nigeria. The NCNC was the first political party to be organized to seek total independence for Nigeria.