AKPOFURE TESE

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MEDICINE AND SURGERY

MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

GST 203- GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

**ASSIGNMENT**

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

**Introduction**

Political parties are essential features of present day politics and an important link between government and the people. They were first developed in the nineteenth century for proper representation during elections but they have several purposes now. The US had the first modern electoral democracy and by the 1820s, well organised parties were formed. The oldest political party, the Democratic Party began around this time. This led to a rise of several other political parties amongst nations across the years.

**What is a Political Party?**

There are many definitions of a political party from different political thinkers but we can draw from their opinions that a political party is a group of citizens, more or less organised, having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

**Characteristics of Political Party**

The following are characteristics of political parties:

* The main purpose of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means, and never violent means.
* They are guided by the party’s constitution which directs their conduct.
* Every political party must be national-minded.
* Political parties possess a formally organised structure.
* They adopt a party ideology.
* They have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.

**Types of Political Party**

The types of political parties present are **Elitist/Cadre Parties**, which draws membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy; **Mass Parties**, with wide membership unlike the former; **Ideological** **Parties**, which are based on political ideology or benefits; **Broker Parties**,with membership from high and low classes to enrich social justice for all and the **Charismatic or Personality Parties**, which is formed or led by individuals with charisma.

**Functions of Political Parties**

Political parties are responsible for political representation, political stability, political education, political mobilization and recruitment, interest aggregation, goal formation, electoral competition and governance, amongst others.

**Political Parties in Nigeria**

According to Ikelegbe, 2010, Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements. They were basically to organize against colonial rule. Thus, groups like The National Congress of British West Africa Territories was formed in 1920, the West African Students Union in 1925 and the Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. Some ppolitical parties emerged.

The Nigerian National Development Party(NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria in 1923 and led by Herbert Macaulay, the father of Nigerian nationalism. The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was formed in1934 by a group of young Nigerians, led by Ernest Ikoli and the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon was formed in 1944 and later re-named to the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens in 1960 after some parts of Cameroon broke away. It was the major party in Nigeria till 1950.

Between 1950 and 1951, two major parties known as the Action Group and the Northern People’s Congress emerged from cultural associations to combat issues like ignorance, idleness, injustice. The multi party system of the first republic gave rise to other smaller parties like the Northern Element Progressive Union and the United National Independent Party.

These early parties did well but they still had some challenges. They were without national outlook and had basically regional support and loyalty and they focused so much more on individuals rather than issues. Many of them split into factions because of conflicts and defection weakened such parties in this era.

Other political parties emerged during the second republic after the ban on politics was lifted and some are the Nigerian People’s Party, the Great Nigerian People’s Party, the People’s Redemption Party and the Unity Party of Nigeria. In the third republic, Nigeria had a constitutional two party system for the first time and then came the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention. The fourth republic began with three registered parties in reparation for elections and they are the Alliance for Democracy All (Nigeria) People’s Party and the People’s Democratic Party.

Since the inception of the fourth republic, however, other political parties have been registered by INEC. Some are the Justice Party, Labour Party, Green Party of Nigeria, Liberation Movement, Youth Party, Zenith Labour Party, just to mention a few.

In **conclusion**, political parties have faced several challenges like corruption, irregularities and others. It is important that such lapses are reduced to bring about cohesion in the country, sutainable growth and development.