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CHAPTER 7

An essential feature of politics in modern age of mass participation the political parties.

Political parties are and important link between government and the people. It was first invented in the nineteenth century, as a device to help themselves get elected, but the party proved to have many other uses as well and went on to become a prevalent feature of modern politics.

The political parties help to keep government accountable to public opinion, and they help the government maintain its hold on power. The first modern electoral democracy was the United State of America. In 1820s, there were well organised parties, and the democratic party which can trace the root back to that time, is the oldest political party in the world.

There are many definitions Of political parties as a political thinker. According to R.G. Gettel, Political party Political parties a group of citizen more or less learnings who as a political units And who better use of political power him at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies. Herman finer, on his parts, define political party as an organised body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in pursuit of political power. A political party perform so many tasks in the political process that it is difficult to establish a single definition high ever just safe define political Patsy as a former organisation who self conscious primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office person who will control in alone or in coalition the machinery of government.

The major or central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. But capturing pas by some violent or unlawful means cannot be allowed in the Arena of political parties. Dhimmis of capture in such pause must also be peacefully And lawful. Political parties always have you brought principles of public policy adopted by his organisation which is refer to As party ideology. The party ideology also serve as the basis for classified passes as either leftist, rightist, liberal, communists labour conservation. Political party has party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections. Political parties are guided by party constitutions which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

Elitist parties are political parties that draw its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country. Mass Parties are political parties That's draw its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership. Mass parties take such name as party labour, party people, workers party and their manifestoes are aimed at alleviating this offering of the masses. Ideological party Is a political party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the basis of the party. Broker party This is political party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society. Personality party is a political party formed or led by individuals with charisma. it revolves around to personal qualities of the leader.

Some functions of Political party; political mobilisation on recruitments, political education, political representation, interest aggregation, Political stability, conflict management and political integration, organisation of governments, goal formation, electoral competition on government, profession of alternative government and polices.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments. The national Congress of British West Africa territories was fined in 1920. The West African student Union in 1925 and Lagos youth movements in 1934. The fulcrum of emergence of parties formation in Nigeria was constitutional developments.

The Nigerian national development party was regarded as the 1st political party that was formed the Nigeria the elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. The party was exclusively based in Lagos and had no national coloration. It won all 3 seats a located to Lagos in the legislative council elections of 1923 1928 and 1933. Departure was reformed merely by its leaders and its political activities where aided by a newspaper called Lagos daily news launched in 1925.

Political parties before independence in Nigeria were not without some challenges, which are, the political parties were without national outlook, they had regional support and ethnic loyalty.

The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues. Intra party and inter party conflicts in most cases polarised the political parties and thereby splitting them into factions.

Three political parties were registered in preparation towards the fourth republic in 1997 by the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) among several political associations that struggled for registration as political parties.

Since the inception of the fourth republic, however, other political parties ha r been registered by INEC, some of them are; Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party(ANRP), Action Alliance(AA), Action Democratic Party(ADP), Advanced Congress of Democrats(ACD), Advanced Nigeria Democratic Party(ANDP), All Blending Party(ABP), All Progressive Congress(APC), Alliance for Democracy(AD).

Right now, Nigeria's political parties face some challenges. 1st there is an extremely high level of corruption which has made politics a competitive business. Secondly, the regulatory framework for the establishment of political parties should be changed so that new parties do not have to forge coalition of the wealthy as a basis for the registration. Moreover the aim of political project of most Nigerian parties has been to development of a national system for sharing the “National cake” as the system of patronage. This is why parties are established as coalition of various functions of regional and economic rent seekers. Mostly party leaders see their political party activities as a means to further their business interest. There is no need to arrest this trend and make political parties to be directed to fostering cohesion among Nigerians and endangering the development Nigeria.