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CHAPTER SEVEN

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

INTRODUCTION

Politics crops up in all aspects of politics. It is an essential features of politics in the modern age of mass participation. The first modern electoral democracy was the United state of America, and the first parties was developed here. Democratic party and well organized parties is the oldest political party in the world.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF THE IDEA OF POLITICAL PARTY

Political parties have many definitions by political thinkers. R.G Gettel defined political party as a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies. HERMAN FINER defined political party as an organized body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power.

A political party is a group of officials or would-be officials who are linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organizations. With all these opinions concerning political party, we can deduce that Political party is a group of citizens, more or less organized, having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTY

1. major feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. The means of capturing such powers must also be peaceful and lawful.
2. It always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as party ideology.
3. Every political party must be national-minded i.e in aims and functions. It must take into consideration the interest of the nation.
4. It should be an organized body.
5. It has party manifestos which guide their conduct during and after winning election.

TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

ELITIST/Cadre Parties: This is a political party that draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country.

Mass Parties: This is a political party that draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.

Ideological Party: This is a political party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.

Broker Party: This is a political party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society.

Charismatic or Personality Party: This is a political party formed or led by individuals with charisma. It revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.

FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY

1. Political mobilization and recruitment
2. Political education
3. Political representation
4. Political aggregation
5. Political stability
6. Organization of government
7. Goal formation
8. Electoral competition and governance

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

The fulcrum for the emergence of parties’ formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. The Nigerian national development party [NNDP] was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. 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 National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon [NCNC] was formed in 1944. It was later re-named the National Convention of Nigerian Citizen in 1960. The NCNC was the first political party to be organized to seek total independence for Nigeria.

Two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951. These were the Action Group[AG] and the Northern People’s Congress [NPC]. These parties emerged from cultural association. The AG emerged from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa. It was formed in 1945 as a pan Yoruba cultural society. The main aim was to provide leadership to and capture political power in the western region.

The Northern Peoples’ Congress [NPC] emerged from the Jam’iyya Mutanein Arewa. It was formed in 1949. The main purpose was combating ignorance, idleness, injustice in the northern region and control of the government in the north.

PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONTED PRE-INDEPENDENCE POLITICAL PARTIES

1. The political parties were without national outlook
2. The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities than issues.

Conclusively, there is an extremely high level of corruption which has made politics a competitive business. Also, the regulatory framework for the establishment of parties should be changed so as to ensure that new parties do not have to forge coalitions.