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CHAPTER 7:POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are an essential feature in the modern age of mass participation. Political parties are an important link between the government and the people in the sense that it crops all the aspect of politics.Political party is an invention that first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. It was first developed by politicians with the idea of getting friends with same goal get elected, but the party proved to have many more uses than the intended purpose.

There are many definitions of political parties such that a political party performs so many tasks in the political process that it is difficult to establish a single definition, however a political party is a group of officials or would be officials who re linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organisation .

There are some characteristic of politics,which are,to capture governmental power through constitutional means,party,ideology, national-minded,an organised body,manifestos that guide conduct and party constitution.

There are five types of political parties. They are;Elitist/cadre parties:which draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country, Mass parties:which draws membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership, Ideological party:which is formed from benefit or the ideology which form the bases of the party and lastly the Charismatic or personality party which is formed or led by individuals with charisma . There are various functions of a political party such as;Political education,goal formation, political stability,interest aggregation etc.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movement.

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 Richard’s constitution of 1946 retained the four (4) elective seats and established regional executive assemblies. The Macphersons constitution established regional executive councils and provided for a system of indirect elections to the much largely Nigerian legislative houses.

The first political party formed on Nigeria was the Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP). 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 associations because of the prospects of the 1951 elections following the Macpherson's constitution.

Before independence in Nigeria,certain problems confronted political parties,some of them are;Tgw political parties were without national outlook, The political party 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;political party deflection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era.

The ban of politics was lifted in September 1978 ,General Ibrahim Babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties were registered in accordance with the constitution in 1089. Three political parties were registered in preparation towards the Fourth Republic in 1998. In conclusion, Nigeria's political parties face some challenges.