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Assignment: Review of Chapter 7(Political parties in Nigeria)

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation, they help to keep government accountable to public opinion, political parties are an important link between government and the people. Political parties first developed in the nineteenth century, politicians developed the idea of political party to help themselves and like-minded friends get elected, the first parties developed in the first modern electoral democracy which took place in the United States of America. A political party is a group of officials who are linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organization to ensure that its officials attain or maintain power. Some characteristics of political parties include capturing governmental power through constitutional means which must be peaceful and lawful, political parties must take into consideration the interest of the nation, a political party should be an organized body, political parties have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections. The various types of political parties are; Elitist/Cadre parties, Mass parties, Ideological party, Broker party, Charismatic party.

Political parties perform the functions of political recruitment, political education, political representation, interest aggregation, political stability, conflict management and political integration, organisation of government, goal formation and so on. 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, it was led by Herbert Macaulay. Two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951, these were the Action Group (AG) which emerged from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and the Northern people's congress (NPC) which emerged from the Jam'iyya Mutanein Arewa. The Nigerian multi-party system of the first republic gave rise to the emergence of many political parties apart from the three major political parties. Some political parties before independence faced some challenges which are; 1. They were without national outlook, they had regional support and ethnic loyalty 2. The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues. The ban on politics was lifted in September 1978, after that about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections. Five of these associations were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission, these were the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigerian People's Party (NPP), The Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), the People's Redemption Party (PRP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

In 1989, for the first time Nigeria had a constitutional two party system. The constitutions, policies, objectives and programmes were set up by the military government. The two parties were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). Three political parties were registered in preparation towards the Fourth Republic in 1998

by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the names of the registered parties are the Alliance for Democracy (AD), All peoples party (APP) which in 2002 changed its name to All Nigeria's People's Party (ANPP) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). These parties contested the 1998 and 1999 general elections. Alliance for Democracy gained power in six states of the south-west of the federation between 1999 and 2003 by winning the governorship elections. All peoples party won nine gubernatorial elections in the north-west and middle belt zones in the 1999 elections. The People's Democratic Party has as its major aim maintaining and preserving the integrity, unity and sovereignty of Nigeria as one indivisible political entity. PDP won the presidential elections in 1999 and maintained its stronghold on the presidency for sixteen years.

Since the inception of the Fourth Republic, various political parties have been registered by INEC, for example; Alliance National Party (ANP), Change Advocacy Party (CAP), Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP), Congress of Patriots (COP), Democratic People's Party (DPP), Green Party of Nigeria (GPN), Hope Democratic Party (HDP), People's Coalition Party (PCP), Labour Party (LP) and so on. Nigeria's Political parties face some challenges; an extremely high level of corruption which has made politics a competitive business, most party leaders see their political party activity as a means to further their business interests. This trend needs to be arrested and political parties should be directed to fostering cohesion among Nigerians and enhancing the development of Nigeria.