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**CHAPTER 7: POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

Political parties are an important link between the government and the people. It was first developed in the nineteenth century. The first modern electoral democracy was the United States of America, and it was here the first parties developed. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalists’ movements in the 1920s.

A 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. Political party aim to capture power by constitutional means, using peaceful and lawful methods.
2. Political parties have principles of public policy captured by the organization, referred to as party ideology.
3. Every political party, in aims and function, must be in conformity with the interest of the nation.
4. Political party should be an organized body.
5. Political parties have manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.
6. Political parties have party constitution to guide the conduct of members.

**Types of Political Parties**

1. Elitists/Cadre party
2. Mass party
3. Ideological party
4. Broker party
5. Charismatic or personality party

**Functions of Political party**

1. Political mobilization and recruitment
2. Political education
3. Political representation
4. Interest aggregation
5. Political stability
6. Conflict management and political integration
7. Organisation of government
8. Provision of alternative government and policies
9. Electoral competition and governance
10. Goal formation

**Political Parties in Nigeria**

The purpose of formation of political parties; The National Congress of British West Africa Territories in 1920, the West African Student Union in 1925 and the Lagos Youth Movement in 1934, was to organise against colonial misrule. Herbert Macaulay, H. O. Davies, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, were the forefront of political activities and party formation in 1920s and thereafter.

The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP), formed in 1923, was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. It was led by Herbert Macaulay. 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 Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) was formed in 1944. It was later re-named National Convention of Nigerian Citizens in 1960 when some part of Cameroon broke away fom Nigeria.

Action Group (AG) and Northern People’s Congress (NPC) emerged between 1950 and 1951.

**Problems that confronted Pre-Independence Political Parties**

1. The parties were without national outlook.
2. The political parties emphasized on personalities rather issues.
3. Intra-party and inter-party conflict caused division.
4. Political party defection weakened or led to the collapse lf parties during this era.

***Some Political Parties in the Republic in Nigeria***

National Party of Nigeria (NPN), The Nigerian People’s Party (NPP), The Great Nigerian Peoples party (GNPP), The Social Democratic Party (SDP), National Republican Convention (NRC), Alliance for Democracy (AD), All People’s Party (APP), All Nigerian People’s Party (ANPP), People’s Democratic Party, All Progressives Congress (APC), Action Alliance (AA), Labour Party of Nigeria (LPN), United People’s Congress (UPC), Youth Party (YP).