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**REVIEW OF CHAPTER 7 “POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA”.**

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. In liberal-democratic systems, they help to keep governments accountable to public opinion; even in autocratic system of government, they help the government maintain its hold on power. Political parties are an important link between government and the people (Dickerson and Flanagan, 2002). The first modern electoral democracy was the United State of America, and it was here that the first parties developed. There are many definitions of political parties but the most accepted one is that 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. Some characteristics of political parties are:

1. To capture governmental power through constitutional means.
2. They must be an organized body because they can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure.
3. They have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.
4. They are guided by party constitutions which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

The various types of political parties are: Elitist/Cadre parties, Mass parties, Ideological party, Broker party, Charismatic or Personality party.

Functions of political party are: Political mobilization and recruitment, Political education, Political representation, Interest aggregation, Political stability, etc.

The early political parties in Nigeria are: Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP), The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) and The National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC).

The two major political parties were Action Group (AG) and Northern People’s Congress (NPC). The smaller parties include: Northern Elementary Progressive Union (NEPU), the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and the United National Independent Party (UNIP).

The political parties in the second republic in Nigeria were: the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), The Nigerian People’s Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

Nigeria’s political parties face some challenges like: An extremely high level of corruption which has made politics a competitive business, the regulatory framework for the establishment of parties should be changed so that new parties do not have to forge coalitions of the wealthy as a basis for their registration. The aim or political project of most Nigerian parties has been the development of a national system for sharing out the “national cake” as a system of patronage. This is why the parties are established as coalitions of various factions of regional and economic rent-seekers. Most party leaders see their political party activity as a means to further their business interests. There is need to arrest the trend and make political parties to be directed to fostering cohesions among Nigerians and engendering the development of the Nigeria.