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CHAPTER 7: POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties help the government maintain its hold on power. That means political parties are an important link between government and the people. The political party crops all aspects of politics. It is an invention that first developed in the 19th century in response to the appearance of election involving large numbers of voters. The first modern electorate was the united state of America and it was when the first parties developed. By the 1820s, there well organized parties, and the democratic party which can trace its roots back to time as the oldest party in the world. In Britain 1867 was the first year that there was reasonable amount of widespread votes. So this talks about the evolution of political parties in Nigeria.

There are many definitions of political parties an according to R.G Gettel, “ political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political power aim in controlling the government and the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies”. Political party was also defined by Herman Finer as “ an organized body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power”. There are other different definition of politics given by different people. There are different characteristics of a political party and they include; **Political parties capture governmental power through constitutional means i.e peaceful and lawful means. Political parties always have broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization which is referred to as the party ideology. Every political party must be national-minded in aims and functions. Political parties must be an organized body. Political parties have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.**

There are different types of political parties found in the word and they include;
Elitist/cadre parties: this political party draws its membership from the highest echelon of

social hierarchy in a country. **Mass parties:** this political party draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide range membership. **Ideological party:** this party is formed by political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party. There are other types of political parties which are; Broker party, Charismatic or personality party e.t.c The functions of political parties are for; political mobilization and recruitment, political education, political representation, political stability, conflict management e.t.c

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements. The national congress of British West Africa territorist was formed in 1920, the west African student union in 1925. The fulcrum for the emergence of parties formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. The Clifford constitution of 1922 provided for four elective seats in its legislative council, while the Richards constitution of 1949 retained the four elective seats and region assemblies. The Macphersons constitution established regional executive councils, and provided for a system of indirect elections to the much largely Nigerian legislative houses. The Nigerian national development party (NNDP) was regarded as the 1st political party that was formed in Nigeria. It was led by Herbert macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. Two major political parties emerged and they were Action Group (AG) and the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC).

The aim of or poitical project of most political parties has been the development of a national system for sharing out “the national cake” as a system of patronage. Most party leaders see their poitical party activity as a means to further their business interests.