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CHAPTER SEVEN: **POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. Political parties are an important link between government and the people. They play a part in all aspect of politics. A political party performs so many tasks in the political process that it is difficult to establish a single definition. The major or central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. They have broad principles on which they rely on and which is adopted by its organization. They are also guided by party constitution which directs the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

Types Of Political Parties

Elitist/Cadre Parties: Draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country of which includes business tycoons, lawyers, doctors, etc.

Mass Parties: Draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership and they aim at alleviating the suffering of the masses.

Ideological Party: A party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party

Broker Party: This is a party formed with members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society. Their main aim is to reconcile the conflicting interest of the rich and poor.

Charismatic or Personality Party: Formed or led by individuals with charisma. It revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.

Functions Of Political Party

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

Over the years, political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements. The main aim for the emergence of parties’ formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. Political parties has been slowly developed and formed with time and change in government. They also face challenges like the 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. There is need to arrest this trend and make political parties to be directed to fostering cohesion among Nigerians and endangering the development of the country.