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**SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 7 (Political parties in Nigeria)**

**INTRODUCTION**

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. In liberal democratic systems, they help to keep government accountable to public opinion; even in an autocratic system of government, they help government maintain its hold on power. Politicians develop the idea of political party at that time as a device to help themselves and like minded friends get elected, but the party proved to have many other uses as well and went on to become a ubiquitous feature of modern politics (Shively, 2008). The first modern electoral democracy was the United state of America, and it was here that the first parties developed.

**CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF THE IDEA OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

There are many definitions of political parties as the political thinkers. According to R.G. Getter, “political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political aim at controlling the government and carrying its general policies”. Hermetic Finer, defined it as an organized body with voluntary membership its concerts energy being employed in the pursuit of political power”. A political party is a group of officials or would be officials who are linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organization; a chief object of this organization is to ensure that it’s officials attain power or maintain power (Shively, 2008). From the above opinions we infer that a political party is a group of citizens, more or less organized, having some agreements in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

1) The central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.

2) They must be national minded.

3) They should have an organized body.

4) They have party manifestos which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.

**TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

A) Elitist/cadre parties: It draws its membership from the highest hierarchy in a country.

B) Mass parties: It draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.

C) Ideology party: They are formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.

D) Broker party: They are formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society.

E) Charismatic or Personality party: They are formed or led by individuals with charisma.

**FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

1) Political education

2) Political representation

3) Interest aggregation

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and the nationalist movements (Ikelegbe ,2010). According to Ikelegbe , nationalist agitators formed groups and associations to organize against colonial misrule. For this purpose, the national congress of British West Africa territories was formed in 1920, the West African Students Union in 1925, and the Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. Hebert Macaulay, H.O. Davies, Ernest Iloilo and others precursors of political parties in Nigeria were in the fore front of political activities and party formation in the 1920s and thereafter.

Early political parties (1920-1950): The Nigerian National Development Party ( NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed jn Nigeria. It was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The party was exclusively based in Lagos and had no national coloration. The National Youth Movement (NYM) was formed jn 1934 by a group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. J.C .Vaughan. The National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon was formed in 1944. It was later renamed the National Convention of Nigerian Citiizen in 1960 when some Cameroons broke away from Nigeria. It was the first political party to be organized to seek total independence for Nigeria.

Political parties in Nigeria(1950-1966): According to Ikelegbe 2010, two major political parties emerged between 1950- 1951. These were Action Group and Northern People Congress. The Action group emerged from Egbe Omo Oduduwa. It was started as the political being of Egbe Omoboduduwabin 1950. It was formally inaugurated in April ,1951.

The Northern People Congress emerged from Jam'iyya Mutanein Areas. It’s main purpose was combating ignorance, idleness, injustice in the northern region and control of the government non the north.

**Note**: There are political parties in the second, third and fourth republic in Nigeria

In conclusion, as things stand now, Nigeria’s political parties face some challenges. First, there is high level of corruption. Secondly, most party leaders see their political party activities as means to further their business interest. There is need to arrest this trend and make political parties to be directed to fostering cohesion among Nigerians and not endangering the development of the Nigeria.