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**Review of chapter 7: Political parties in Nigeria.**

Political parties are important aspects of politics, both in liberal democratic systems and even in an autocratic system. It is an important link between the government and the people. It was developed in the nineteenth century by politicians as a device to help themselves and like minded individuals get elected, the party proved to have other uses and soon became an important feature of modern democracy. 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. Some of the basic features of politics are:

1. To capture government power through constitutional means.
2. Every political party must be national minded in aims and functions, it must take into consideration the interest of the nation.
3. Political parties have manifestos right high guide their conduct during and after wining elections.
4. Political party must be an organized body because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure.
5. Political parties have broad principles of public policy, adopted by its organization which is referred to as party ideology.
6. Political parties are guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members outside and within the state.

There are various types of political parties which are:

1. Elitist/ Cadre parties: it is a political party that draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country.
2. Mass parties: it is a political party that draws its membership from all sections of the society and has wide membership
3. Ideological party: this is a party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.
4. Broker party: a political party with members drawn from upper and lower class of the society.
5. Charismatic/ Personality party: this is a political party formed or led by individuals with charisma.

Political parties have various functions which include; political mobilization, political education, political representation, interest aggregation, political stability, goal formation, organization of government, conflict management and political integration, electoral competition and governance and provision of alternative government and policies.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements. The fulcrum for the emergence of party formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923, which was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The National Youth Movement (NYM) was formed in 1934 by a group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya, and Dr J.C Vaughan whose objective was the promotion of Nigerian unity and national consciousness and achievement of complete autonomy within the British empire. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) was formed in 1944 and was later renamed National Convention of Nigerian Citizens in 1960 after Cameroon broke apart from Nigeria. It was the first political party to seek total independence, the first president and general secretary was Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikwe. The party was the major Nigerian party until 1950. Two major parties emerged between 1950 and 1951, these were the Action Group (AG) and the Northern People’s Congress (NPC). The AG emerged in 1945 from Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a pan Yoruba cultural society. The AG was the political wing and was formally inaugurated in April 1951, its leader was Obafemi Awolowo. The main aim of AG was to provide leadership and capture political power in the western region. The NPC emerged from the Jam’iyya Mutanein Arewa which was formed in 1949, NPC was formed in October 1951. It’s main aim was combating idleness, injustice in the northern region and control of government in the north. The Nigerian multi party system of the first republic gave birth to many political parties.

The ban on political parties was lifted in September 1978. Following this about 53 political associations sought to contest 1979 general election, five of which were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission. These were National Party of Nigeria (NPN) which was officially launched in 1978, it composed of host of trade unions, social clubs, former NPC leaders. The party’s main aim was national unity, with the slogan “one unity, one identity”. The Nigerian People’s Party (NPP) which reincarnated from NCNC. It’s members were largely old NCNC politicians, the aim of NPP was to work towards full employment for all Nigerians and promote equality. The Great Nigerian People’s Party (GNPP) was led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim. It’s ethnic base was Kanuri and it’s slogan “politicians without bitterness”. The Unity Party of Nigeria (NPN) was an offshoot of AG and it’s support base in Yorubaland. Their aim were free education, free health services and full employment for all and integrated rural development. The last party was the People’s Redemption Party (PRP). A sixth party, Nigerian Advance Party (NAP) was registered to contest in 1983. Nigeria had a two party system for the first time in the third republic. The parties were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) with Chief Tony Anenih as the chairman and the National Republican Convention (NRC) with Chief Tom Ikimi as National Chairman. Three parties were registered in preparation towards the fourth republic in 1998 by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The parties were Alliance for Democracy (AD), All People’s Party (APP) which changed in 2002 to All Nigerians People’s Party (ANPP) and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP)

Nigeria’s political system is corrupt, many now see politics as a way of gaining wealth and power. Most political leaders see their parties as a means of furthering their business pursuit. Regulatory bodies should be set up to curtail the establishment of political parties and checks and balances should be in place to ensure every political party fulfills their aim. There should also be a limit to how many political parties can be formed.