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**Do a two page review of chapter 7 “political parties in Nigeria” in Salient issues in Government and Nigeria’s politics**

CHAPTER7

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of a participation. In liberal-democratic systems, they help to keep governments accountable to public opinion; even in an autocratic system of government, they help the government maintain its hold on power. In either case political parties are said to be the link between the government and the people. The political party crops all aspect of politics. It is an invention that first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of election involving large numbers of voters. Politicians developed the idea of a political party at the 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.

The first modern electoral democracy was the united states of America and it was here that the first political party was developed. By 1820s there were well organised parties, and the democratic party, which we can trace its root back to that time, is the oldest political party in the world.

Conceptual clarification of the idea of political party

There are quite as many definition of political party as the political thinkers. According to R.G. Gettel, “political party is a group of citizen more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out general policies.” Herman Finer on his part defined political party as “an organised body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power”. Well from the various definitions available we infer that a political party is a group of citizens, more or less organised, having some agreement in broad principle of national policy with an effort to capture political by some constitutional means.

Characteristics of a political party

* The major or central feature of political is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.
* Every political party must be national-minded, i.e., in aims and functions, it must take into consideration the interest of the nation.
* Political parties has a party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.

These are just a few characteristics of a political party.

Types of political parties are; Elitist/ Cadre party, Mass parties, Ideological parties, Broker parties, Charismatic/Personality parties.

Functions of political party

* Political education
* Political representation
* Political stability
* Goal formation and so on and so forth

Political parties in Nigeria

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements.

The Nigerian National Developments Party (NNDP) was the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. The elective principle introduced by the Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to its formation. The Nigerian National Developments Party (NNDP) was led by Herbert Macaulay who was regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. Other parties formed in the pre-independence were Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) 1934, National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC) 1944, Action Group (AG) 1950-1966, Northern People Congress (NPC) 1950-1966.

Problems that confronted the pre-independence parties were;

* The political parties were without national outlook; they had regional support and ethnic loyalty
* The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues.

Apart from these political parties there were other political parties which can be categorized into the second, third, and fourth republic in Nigeria

In conclusion Nigeria’s present political parties faces different challenges in every aspect for example there is a high level of corruption in Nigeria which has helped in tagging politics as a dirty game.