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*A REVIEW OF CHAPTER 7 OF “SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS”.*

Political parties were first invented in the nineteenth century as a response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. At the time, politician develop the idea of these parties as a device to help themselves and their like-minded friends get elected. But over time political parties have proven to be useful in many other way and have become an inescapable feature of modern politics. In the modern age of mass participation, political parties are viewed as an essential feature of politics. Political parties are an important link between the people and their government. They are essential political agencies regardless of the kind of political system in any society. And join people together in a formally organized structure.

The first modern electoral democracy was in the United States of America, where political parties were first developed and by the 1820s there were well-organized political parties. As for Britain, the first time there was a reasonable widespread extension of votes was in 1867. In Nigeria, Political parties developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness and the Nationalist movement of the 1920s.

According to R. G. Gettel, A 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 at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies. The main objective of a political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. They also have a broad set of ideologies adopted by the organization. Every political party must be national-minded and take into consideration the interest of the nation. Every political party is expected to have a party manifesto which guides its conduct. They serve the function of mobilizing, recruiting, representing, and educating members of the society of the importance of politics and political participation. There are various types of political parties, some of them include:

**An Elitist or Cadre party** is a party that draw its members from the highest ranks of the social hierarchy.

**A Mass party** is a political party that draw membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.

**An Ideological party** is a political party formed with political ideas/benefits that form the base of the party.

**A Broker party** is any political party formed with its members drawn from both the upper and the lower classes of society.

Finally we have, **A Charismatic or Personality party** which refers to any political party formed or led by individuals with charisma.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the Nationalist Movement in the 1920s. The parties were formed to organize against colonial rule. The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM, 1934), the Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP, 1923), etc. were among the first political parties I British West Africa following the introduction of the elective principle by the Clifford Constitution. The NNDP was led by Sir. Herbert Macaulay and is regarded as the first political party in Nigeria, having won 3 seats in the legislative council.

Between 1950 and 1951, two major parties emerged, they were; the Action Group (AG, 1950) and the Northern People’s Congress (NPC, 1949). Both these parties emerged from cultural association. The AG starting as the political wing of the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*, while the NPC emerged from the *Jam’iyya Mutanein Arewa*. A major problem of all these parties (pre-independence) was that they all lacked national outlook and only held regional support and ethnic loyalty.

The multi-party system of the 1st Republic gave rise to many political parties. In the 2nd republic, following lifting of the political ban, 53 political sought to contest during the 1979 election, but only 5 were registered; the National Party of Nigeria, The Nigerian People’s Party, the Great Nigerian People’s Party, the People’s Redemption Party, and the Unity Party of Nigeria. During 3rd Republic under Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, two political parties were formed; the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention. Towards the 1998 election of the Fourth Republic, 3 political parties were registered by INEC. Since the inception of the 4th Republic, many other political parties have been registered by INEC.

Political parties in Nigeria face a good number of challenges such as, the high levels of corruption that makes politics so competitive. Many politicians see the activities of political parties as a means to further their business interest.