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REVIEW OF CHAPTER 7 ON POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

An important intermediary between the government and the people which ensures mass participation as well as accountability in government is the political party. It is however impossible to arrive at a definite standard definition of the concept of political party as there exists many views of the various political thinkers and the different roles played by the political parties.

Despite the different ways political parties may operate they possess common attributes that make them identifiable as political parties. One of such attributes is that they are an organised body. They also have party manifestos which serve as guideline for their conduct.

The main aim of political parties which serves as a key defining feature is their ability to obtain governmental powers constitutionally. Political parties also have various types depending on the kind of membership.

The mass parties draw in members from various and all sects of a society where the cadre parties consist of members from the highest echelon of society. The political party formed with individuals possessing charisma is the charismatic party and the ideological parties are formed based on the common ideologies of its members. Political parties are tasked with responsibilities such as government organisation, representation of individuals in government, mobilisation & recruitment, ensuring political stability and as well aggregating the interest of its members. These functions form the basis of their existence.

In Nigeria the growth and movement of various nationalists in the country formed a basis for the formation of political parties. Due to constitutional developments on going at the time the emergence of political parties was made easy. The first political party established in Nigeria was the NNDP. As a result of cultural associations between the period of 1950-1966 there were two major parties; AG and NPC. As a result of the constitutional stipulation put in place for a multi-party system, numerous political parties begun to emerge in the country.

The second republic in Nigeria saw the emergence of quite a number of political parties following the lifting of the ban on politics. One of these parties the NPN emerged victorious in the elections of 1983 and ruled the country. In this period there were just five registered parties.

During the third republic, Nigeria for the first time had a constitutionally approved two-party system. Hence this period saw two political parties set up by the military; SDP and NRC. The fourth republic which followed saw the registration of three main parties; AD, APP and PDP.

Following this there exist quite a number of political parties in the country. However, the system of political parties in the nation is quite unfavourable as they

forego all manifesto plans and ideologies and rather have a go at the national cake at the detriment of the interest of the citizens.