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**CHAPTER 7**

Political parties are an important link between the government and the people. The first and oldest political party is the democratic party which was developed in America. There are various definitions of political party as it performs so many tasks in the political process. The chief objective of a political party is to ensure that its officials attain power and maintain power for as long as democratically feasible. According to the definitions of political parties given it is inferred that a political party is a group of citizens more or less organized having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTY

1. The main feature of political parties is to obtain governmental power through constitutional means.
2. A political party must be national minded.
3. A political party must be organized as it derives strength from an effective organizational structure.
4. Political parties have broad principals of public policy adopted by its organization and its referred to as party idealogy.
5. Political parties must have party manifestos which must be used during and after the election.

TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTY

1. Elite party
2. Mass party
3. Ideological party
4. Brokers party: The main aim of this part is to reconcile the rich and the poor using policies of social justice for the interest of all.
5. Charismatic party.

FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY

1. Political mobilization and recruitment
2. Interest aggregation
3. Goal formation
4. Political stability
5. Political education
6. Organization of government
7. Political representation.

The fulcrum for the formation of parties in Nigeria was constitutional development. The Nigerian

National Development Party (NNDP) was the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. This

party was led by HERBERT MACAULAY. The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was formed in 1934.

According to Ikelegbe, 2010, two major political parties were formed between 1950 and 1951;

Action group (AG) and Northern People’s Congress (NPC). There have been a general continuous

increase in the emergence of other political parties from the first to the forth republic where other

political parties have been registered by the INEC.

As things stand now, Nigeria’s political parties face some challenges: high level of corruption, the

regulatory framework for the establishment of parties should be changed so that new parties do not

have to forge coalitions of the wealthy as a basis for their registration. Also, most party leaders see

political party activity as a means to further their business ventures. There is need to arrest this

trend and make political parties to be directed to fostering cohesion among Nigerians and

engendering the development of the Nigeria.

In conclusion, in order to have a good government political leaders should carry out their duties

effectively without any form of corruption. Most party leaders see political party activity as a means to further their business interests. There is

need to arrest this trend and make political parties to be directed to fostering cohesion among

Nigerians and engendering the development of the Nigeria.