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**QUESTION: READ AND REVIEW CHAPTERS SEVEN (7) AND EIGHT (8) OF THE BOOK “SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT”.**

**CHAPTER SEVEN**

Government is an essential part of every country; the way it functions can make or mar a country whether its people choose to be apathetic towards it or give their all to ensure it soars far above their expectations. In the same vein, political parties are very essential aspects of government. Chapter seven of “Salient Issues in Government” helps to enlighten us on just how crucial political parties are, and what the faith of a country is if it doesn’t function positively to its benefit, especially in Nigeria. Before we delve into that what exactly are political parties? Everything it entails will be explained, in details, in this review.

Several definitions have come up from several people about what a political party might mean. However, going by my favorite, “a political party is a group of citizens, more or less organized, having some agreement in board principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means. From this definition it is obvious that a political party consists of two or more people who agree on some political view, without this consensus the party cannot stand. Another key definition that I reckon with is by **Agbaje.** According to him, “a political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and in opinion in support of a general political cause, which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention, for as long as democratically feasible, of governments and its offices.

Each country of the world has a different method its government operates by, even though some countries operate the same system there are always subtle differences in the way their government is handled. However, political parties all over the world have similar characteristics. One particular similarity amongst almost all political parties around the world is that they aim to capture governmental power through constitutional means. This simply means that unlike pressure groups who only aim to influence the decisions of the government, political parties actually intend to take the position of the government. They do not intend to be at the side lines like pressure groups but aim to be at the fore front.

Just like organizations function with rules, laws that guide their operations, so do political parties. They are guided by party constitution. This is one very striking characteristics of political parties. They don’t just wing their operations but actually have processes, guidelines that they follow – or are expected to follow – when it comes to the running of a country. In Nigeria however, that is not always the case. Leaders presented by political parties have shown over the years to have personal interests that do not outline with that of the nation they were chosen to govern and represent; they in most cases, if not all, deviate from the manifestos they read during their campaigns and focus on self-interested goals.

There are several types of political parties that exist today, some of which include: Elitist/Cadre party, Mass party, Ideological party, Broker party, Charismatic or personality party amongst others. Looking at each briefly, an Elitist/Cadre party is one that draws its members from the highest echelon of social hierarchy hence the name “elitist” while Mass party on the other hand draws its members from all sections of the society. Ideological party is formed on political ideology, broker party draws its members from both the upper and lower class of the society and charismatic or personal party is formed or led by individuals with charisma.

Some of the main functions of political parties include political mobilizing and recruiting, political education, political representation etc. Onto the main discuss of this review which is **Political Parties in Nigeria.** The fulcrum for the emergence of parties’ formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movement. Herbert Macaulay, H.O. Davies, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and others were precursors of political parties in Nigeria.

Some important political parties that kickstarted the emergence of several more political parties in Nigeria include The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) formed in 1923 was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. It was led by Herbert Macaulay who is regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. There was also the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) formed in 1934 and led by Ernest Ikoli. Its major objective was promotion of Nigerian unity/national consciousness and the achievement of complete autonomy within the British Empire.

The National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon later changed to National Convention of Nigerian Citizens in 1960 was among the first political parties in Nigeria. It was the first political party to be organized to seek total independence. There are many more political parties that have come and gone in Nigeria however, with these few talked above, the importance of political parties cannot be emphasized, not just its existence but its positive contribution to the society.