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**Chapter 7: Political Parties in Nigeria**

Political parties are an essential feature of politics because it is an important link between the people and the government. Political parties in liberal-democratic and autocratic systems respectively play important roles in each of the system’s politics. Political parties was first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. The first parties developed in the first modern electoral democracy in the United State of America, by the 1820s, there were well-organised parties. As time moved by Britain and other countries around Europe started their various political parties.

A political party performs so many task in the political process that it is difficult to establish a single definition. There have been different definitions by political thinkers, According to R.G. Gettel “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” and also from Dowse and Hughes who sees “political parties as association formally organised with the explicit and declare purpose of acquiring and maintaining legal control,either singly or in coalition with other similar associations, over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or prospective state.” Various definitions has been made as years have gone by but from the various definition created, it was inferred that a political party is a group of citizens, more or less organised, having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

**Characteristics of Political Parties**

Political parties have various characteristics which defines there features in a political system. These are; Firstly, the major or central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means, but capturing power by some violent or unlawful means cannot be allowed in the arena of political parties, the means of capturing such powers must also be peaceful and lawful. Secondly, every political party must be national-minded, i.e. in aims and functions, it must take into consideration the interest of the nation, a party which falls short of national character and represents only a sectarian outlook cannot be a political party. Thirdly, they have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.

**Kinds of Political Parties**

1. Elitist/Cadre Parties: This is apolitical party that draws up participation from the most elevated echelon of social progressive system in a country.

2. Mass Parties: This is apolitical party that draws its participation from all areas of the general public and have wide enrollment.

3. Philosophical Party: This is apolitical party shaped with political philosophy or advantages which structure the bases of the gathering.

4. Specialist Party: This is apolitical party framed with its individuals drawn from upper and lower classes of the general public.

5. Alluring or Personality Party: This is apolitical party shaped or driven by people with magnetism.

Elements of Political Party are very broad but these are just the few of the elements of political party; Political activation and enlistment, Political instruction, Political portrayal, Interest conglomeration, Political soundness, organization of government, Provision of elective government and arrangements.

**Political party in Nigeria**

Political party in Nigeria created following the development of the patriot awareness and assessments, and patriot developments (Ikelegbe, 2010).

As per Ikelegbe, patriot’s instigators shaped gatherings and relationship, to sort out against provincial mismanagement. Along these lines for this reason, The National Congress of British West Africa Territories was shaped in 1920, the West African Students Union in 1925 and the Lagos Youth Movement in1934. Herbert Macaulay, H.O. Davies, Ernest Ikoli, NnamdiAzikiwe, ObafemiAwolowo and others were antecedents of political party in Nigeria, where in the cutting edge of political exercises and gathering development during the 1920s and from that point.

The support for the rise of gatherings arrangement in Nigeria was sacred turn of events. The Clifford Constitution of 1922 gave four elective seats in its administrative gathering, while the Richards constitution of 1946 held four elective seats and set up territorial congregations. The Macpherson's constitution set up local chief committees, and accommodated an arrangement of roundabout decisions to the much generally Nigerian Legislative houses.