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**COURSE:**

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**Assignment**

Do a two page review of Chapter 7, “Political Parties in Nigeria,” In “Salient issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics”.

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. The first modern electoral democracy was the United States of America and it was here that the first political parties developed. There are as many definitions of political parties as there are political thinkers. A political party is a group of officials or would-be officials who are linked with a sizable group into an organisation; a chief objective of this organisation is to ensure that its officials attain power or maintain power.

Political parties have many characteristics. The major or central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. Every political party must be national-minded, i.e., in aims and functions, it must take into consideration the interest of the nation. Political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organisation. A political party should be an organised body. Political parties has party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections. Political parties are guided by party constitutions which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

There are many types of political parties; elitist/cadre parties, mass parties, ideological party, broker party and charismatic or personality party. The functions of political parties include; political mobilisation and recruitment; political education; political representation; political aggregation; political stability; conflict management and political integration; organisation of government; provision of alternative government and policies; electoral competition and governance; as well as goal formation.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements. The fulcrum for the emergence of parties’ formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of the NNDP in 1923. Pre-independence political parties in Nigeria experienced many challenges. They were without national outlook, they placed more emphasis on personalities rather than issues, they had numerous intra- and inter-party conflicts which led to them breaking up and they faced political party defection. The ban on politics was lifted in 1978 and more political parties emerged since then. Political parties of today have various challenges. The high level of corruption, the regulatory framework for the establishment of parties and the misguided aim of most political parties in Nigeria.