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**QUESTION**

**DO A TWO PAGE REVIEW 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. Political parties help serve as an important link between government and the people. In any political process of any given political system, the party is an essential political agency. The political party crops up in all aspects of politics. It is an invention that first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. The first modern electoral democracy was the United State of America, and it was here that the first parties developed; the Democratic Party is the oldest political party in the world. In Britain, 1867 was the first year in which there was a reasonably widespread extension of the votes.

There are many definitions of political parties as the political thinkers. A political party performs so many tasks in the political process that it is difficult to establish a single definition. 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.” Herman Finer, on his part, defined political party as “an organized body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of Political Power.” The characteristics of political parties are: its central feature is to capture government power through constitutional means, Political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization, Political parties have party manifestos which guide the conduct during and after winning election, Every political party must be narrow minded by taking the consideration of the interests of the nation, Political parties should be an organized body because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure and Political parties are guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government etc.

**THE TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES ARE:**

1. Elitist/Cadre parties: a political party that draws its memberships from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country. Members of intellectuals like lawyers, doctors, or business tycoons.
2. Mass parties: a political party that draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership. Mass parties takes such name as people’s party, labour party etc.
3. Ideological party: a political party formed with political ideology or benefits of the party.
4. Broker party: a political party formed with its members from upper and lower classes of the society.
5. Charismatic or Personality party: a political party formed or led by individuals with charisma.

**FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY**

Political parties perform the following functions: political mobilization and recruitment, political education, political representation, interest aggregation, political stability, conflict management and political integration, organization of government, provision of alternative government and policies, electoral competition and governance, goal formation etc.

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and national movements. According to Ikelegbe, national agitators formed groups and associations, to organize against colonial rule. The National Congress of British West Africa Territories was formed in 1920, the West African Students Union in 1925, and the Lagos Youth Movement in 1934.

Herbert Macaulay, H.O. Davies, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikwe, Obafemi Awolowo and others were precursors of political parties in Nigeria, were in the forefront of political activities and party formation in the 1920s and thereafter. The central point for the emergence of parties’ formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. The Clifford constitution of 1922 provided for four(4) elective seats in its legislative council, the Richards constitution of 1946 retained the four(4) elective seats and established regional assemblies. The Macpherson’s constitution established regional executive councils, and provided for a system of indirect elections to the much largely Nigerian legislative houses.

**EARLY POLITICAL PARTIES 1920-1950**

The Nigerian National Development Party{NNDP} was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria through the introduction of elective principle that gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923 led by Herbert Macaulay who is also regarded as the **Father of Nigerian Nationalism.**

**POLITICAL PARTIES 1950-1966**

Two major political partiesemerged between 1950 and 1951; the Action Group{AG} to provide leadership and to capture political power in the Western Region and the Northern People’s Congress{NPC}to combat ignorance, injustice etc. in the northern region

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

The ban on party politics was lifted on September, 1978. Following that, about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections. Only five of these associations were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission and they were the National Party of Nigeria{NPN}, the Nigeria People’s Party{NPP}, the Great Nigeria People’s Party{GNPP}, the People’s Redemption Party{PRP}, and the Unity Party of Nigeria{UPN}.

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

In the 3rd Republic, General Ibrahim Babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties were registered in accordance with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1989.

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

Since the inception of the Fourth Republic, some parties have been registered by INEC. Some parties are: Action Democratic party{ADP}, Action People’s Party{APP}, All Progressive Grand Alliance{APGA}, Alliance for Democracy{AD}, Congress of Patriots{COP}, Democratic People’s Party{DPP}, Liberation Movement{LM}, National Interest Party{NIP}, Nigeria Elements Progressive Party{NEPP}, Peoples Democratic Party{PDP}, We The People Nigeria{WTPN}, Youth Party{YP} and many more.

**CONCLUSION**

As things stand now, Nigeria’s politics face some barriers like the extreme high level of corruption which has made politics very competitive, the rate at which the political project has become a national cake for all and sundry in the political system, the furthering of personal interests from the political activities. To be able to control this challenges, there is need to make political parties to be directed to fostering cohesion among Nigerians and engendering the development of the Nigeria.