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**QUESTIONS**

Do a two page review of chapter 7, “Political parties in Nigeria”, in salient issues in Government and Nigeria’s politics

**ANSWER**

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. The political party crops up in all aspects of politics. The first modern electoral democracy was the United States of America, and it was here that the first parties developed.

Conceptual clarification of the idea of political party

There are as many definitions of political parties as the 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.” According to Agbaje (1999) , “ a political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its offices. Edmund Burke defines political party as a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interests upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed (Burke1975).

Types of Political Parties

Ideological Party: This is a political party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.

Charismatic or Personality Party: This is political party formed or led by individuals with charisma. It revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.

Functions of Political Party

* Political mobilization and recruitment
* Political education
* Interest aggregation
* Political stability
* Goal formation

Political Parties in Nigeria

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 Macpherson’s constitutional established regional executive councils, and provided for a system of indirect elections to the much largely Nigerian Legislative houses.

Political parties in the second republic in Nigeria

The NPN was officially launched in September, 1978 in Lagos after lifting of ban on party politics by the military government, NPN was comprised and held by a host of social clubs, tribal unions, and associations, committees of friends, former NPC leaders and ex-public officials. The party’s main goal was national unity, with the slogan “one nation, one destiny.” Their major programmers were those of provision of food, shelter and qualitative education. The party won the presidential election and ruled the country for 4 years and 3 months.

Political parties in the fourth Republic

Alliance for Democracy sponsored and contested election throughout Nigeria during 1998 and 1999 general elections. It gained political power in six states of the south-west of the federation between 1999 and 2003 by winning the governorship elections. The All Peoples Party (APP) won nine (9) gubernational elections in the north-west and the middle-belt zones during the 1999 elections.

2. Do a two page review of chapter 8, citizen’s role in a democracy, in salient issues in Government and Nigeria’s politics.

They have a collective right to choose their governmental, political and electoral systems as part of self-determination. The authority of government likewise derives from the will of the people in their choice of these systems, and the people have a right to take part in their government, including through genuine elections to determine who will legitimately occupy governmental offices. Barriers to citizen participation are multiple in every country. They are subtle and obvious, small and formidable, and based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age or another status. If not, universal and equal suffrage is essentially denied, and governmental credibility is undermined. They need knowledge to make decisions about policy choices and the proper use of authority, along with the skills to voice their concerns, act collectively and hold public officials accountable.

Citizenship can be perceived to be made up of, or be divided into civil citizenship, political citizenship, and social citizenship. Civil citizenship refers to the rights necessary to protect individual liberty e.g. freedom of speech, political citizenship is associated with participation in the democratic exercise of political community e.g. voter, or as an individual elected by the members of such a community; and social citizenship embodies the claim that citizens ought to have access to those resources that allow them to live a civilized existence in accordance with the standards prevailing in society. However, there are broader definitions and perceptions of citizenship as well, as shown by Glover 2004 who argues that there are three dimensions of active citizenship; ethnical citizenship, integrative citizenship, and educative citizenship. Ethnical citizenship understands active participation in a collective strive towards the public good as an essential feature of citizenship. The personal sacrifices that are made aid some public benefit and are hence ultimately also enjoyed by the person who sacrifices. Integrative citizenship needs engagement in a wide sphere of participation that can go beyond formal political practices and institutions.

Individual’s rights and liberties are the groundwork of the state since it exits to enable men to live and develop fully. In order to let the citizen have a share in the running of his/her government, a group of rights is very essential. These rights are not absolute sine they are limited by the rights of other citizens in the state.

Democracy, like many other political concepts first originated from Ancient Greece where in the city states, citizens were free to meet frequently in assemblies which had the power laws. In these assemblies, citizens were free to discuss state affairs, take decisions and exercise their political rights. Every citizen was expected to participate in the running of government. This is what Johnston classified as a direct democracy, a system that enables people exercise authority themselves. These ideas and institutions spread from country to country in the western world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, indirect government is associated with the free discussion of political views, the right to differ concerning them and the settlement of differences by counting of votes. Moreover, it is a way of determining who shall govern and to what ends they shall rule.

Duties and Responsibilities of citizens is a Democracy

They recognize that democracy requires an investment of time and hard work. A government of the people demands constant vigilance and support by the people. Democratic citizens know that they must bear the burden of responsibility for their society if they are to benefit from its protection of their rights. Democracy is a system of governmental where the citizens directly elect the government by voting. It is also defined as the system of government by the people, of the people and for the people.