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**QUESTION:**

A two-page review of chapter 7, “Political Parties in Nigeria” in Sailent issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics

**ANSWER:**

Political parties are necessities of politics. They ensure the government is accountable to the public for all of their actions. The first ever modern electoral democracy was in the United States of America, by the 1820s, there were well-organized parties and the Democratic Party, which can trace its roots back to that time, is the oldest political party in the world. There are several definitions of political parties, therefore there is no single definition of a political party. According to R.G. Gettle, “political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who acts as a political unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies.” Another scholar, Herman Finer defined politics as “an organized body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of Political Power”. Some major characteristics of political parties are that political parties capture governmental powers through constitutional means, political parties always have a broad principle of public policy adopted by its organizations, every political party must be national-minded, and so on. There are five different types of political parties, they are; elitist parties, mass parties, ideological parties, broker party and charismatic or personality party. Some functions of political parties are; political education, political representation, interest aggregation, political stability, goal formation, electoral competition and governance, organization of government and so on.

The development of political parties in Nigeria started in the early 1920-1950 with the Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) in 1923, which won all the major seats in 1923, 1928, 1933. The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was then formed in 1934 by a group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. J.C. Vaughan. According to Ikelegbe in 2010, two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951 namely; Action Group (AG) and Northern People’s Congress (NPC). There were also some problems that confronted pre-independence political parties like the fact that they were without national outlook, the political parties placed too much emphasis on personalities rather than issues. Later on, there was a ban on politics but it was later lifted in September, 1978. Following the lifting of the ban, about fifty-three political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections. Five of these associations were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission, these were, The National Party of Nigeria (NPN), The Nigerian People’s Party (NPP), The Great Nigerian People’s Party (GNPP), The People’s Redemption Party (PRP), and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). In the third 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. Then in the fourth republic, three political parties were registered in preparation towards the Fourth Republic in 1998 by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Among several political associations that struggled for registration as political parties. Since the inception of the fourth republic however, other political parties have been registered by INEC so Nigeria has a wholesome of poitical parties. Politics especially in Nigeria has a lot of challenges it faces like the high level of corruption, coalition of parties and a lot more, efforts have been made and is still made to tackle these challenges.