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Summarize chapter seven of Salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics.

 Political Parties in Nigeria: Political parties are important link between the government and the people according to Dickerson and Flanagan (2002). Political Parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. Political parties have various definitions by different scholars. According to R.G Gettel, “political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who acts as a political unit and who by the use of political unit and who by the use political power aim at controlling the government and carry out its general policies.” Herman Fishers defined political party as “an organized body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of “political part”. According to Shively (2008) A political party is a group of officials who are linked with a sizeable group of citizens into an organization; a chief object of this organization is to ensure that its officials attains power or maintains power.

**Characteristics** **of political parties**

1.Political parties have party manifestoes that guides their conduct during and after winning elections.

2.Political parties are guided by party constitution which directs the conduct of party officials and members within and outside the government.

3.A party should be an organized body because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure.

4. The major feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.

5. Political powers has a broad principle of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as party ideology.

6. A political party must be nation minded.

Functions of Political Party.

1. Political stability
2. Political education
3. Political mobilization and recruitment
4. Interest aggregation
5. Conflict management and political integration

The Political Parties in Nigeria: According to Ikelegbe, nationalists’ agitators formed groups and associations to organize against colonial misrule for this purpose, The National Congress of British West Africa Territories was formed in 1920, the West African Student Union was formed 1925 and lastly, The Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Ernest Okoli and many others were precursors of political parties in Nigeria, were in the forefront of political activities and party formation in the 1920’s.

 The Clifford constitution of 1922 provided four elective seats in its legislative council. The Richard constitution retained four elective seats in 1946, The Macphersons constitution established regional executive councils and provided for a system of indirect elections to much largely Nigerian Legislative houses.

Early Political Parties 1920-1950: The first political party that was formed in Nigeria was Nigerian National Development Party in 1923. The party was regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The party was based in Lagos and had no national coloration. This party was mainly formed by its leaders and its political activities were aided by a newspaper called Lagos Daily News launched in 1925. The Nigerian Youth Movement was formed was formed by Ernest ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. Vaughan in order to promote Nigeria’s unity and national consciousness. The party won elections to the National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon in 1938 though the NCNC was formed in 1944 which was the first political party to be organized to seek total independence for Nigeria.

Political Parties in Nigeria: 1950-1966: The two major political parties in this period according to Ikelegbe 2010 were the Action Group and the Northern Peoples Congress in 1951. The aim of the AG which was formed by the “Egbe Omo Oduduwa” was to provide leadership and to also capture political power in the Western region. While the NPC was formed in 1949 by Dr Dikko, Yahaya Gusau, Aminu Kano and Abubakar Imam the aim of this party was combating ignorance, idleness, injustice in the northern region.

Political Parties in the second republic: After the ban on politics was lifted in 1978 five associations were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission one of which was the. Nigeria’s People Party which was launched in Lagos in 1978. The party’s aim was national unity with the slogan “one nation, one destiny”. Another party which is the Action Group had its main support from the Yorubaland. The third which is the Unity Party of Nigeria, were embodied in four cardinal points programs which were: free education, health cares. Integrated rural development and lastly gainful employment. The third party which is the Nigeria’s People Party rein carted from the NCNC which had the main support from the Igbo people. Their aim was to provide full employment for all Nigerians and to provide equality in all sections of the country that is economically, socially and politically. Lastly the Great Nigeria People’s Party (GNPP) was led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, its ethnic base was Kanuri. It controlled two states between 1979 and 1983.

Political Parties in the Third Republic: Gen Ibrahim Babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties where registered in accordance with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. For the first time Nigeria had a constitutional two party system. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) which had its registered offices at the Federal Capital Territory. The party’s program was a little to the left in terms of favoring more public ownership and control of the economy. The second party which Is the National Republican of Convention (NRC); the party’s program favored more private initiatives and more state regulations. It paid less attention to free education and other social welfare policies.

Political Parties in the Fourth Republic: Three political parties were registered in preparation towards the fourth republic in 1988. The names of the registered parties include: Alliance of Democracy sponsored and contested elections in 1988-1999. It gained political power in six states of the south-west of the federation between 1999-2003 by winning the governorship elections. The second which is All Peoples Party won nine gubernatorial elections in the north west and middle belt zones during the 1999 elections. The third party which is the Peoples Democratic Party: It has its major aim in maintaining and preserving integrity unity and sovereignty of Nigeria as one visible political entity. PDP won presidential elections in 1999 and has maintained its stronghold on the presidency for sixteen years.