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International Relations and Diplomacy

Chapter 1

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. Political parties are an important link between government and the people.

Characteristics of political party.

1. Political parties has party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.
2. The major or central feature of political party is to capture government power through constitutional means. But capturing power by some violent or unlawful means cannot be allowed in the arena of political power parties.
3. Political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organisation, which is referred to as party ideology.

Types of political parties.

1. Elitist / Cadre parties:
2. Mass Parties
3. Ideological party
4. Broker party
5. Charismatic or personality party.

Function of political party.

1. Political mobilisation and recruitment.

- 2 Political education
- 3 Political representation
- 4 Interest aggregation
- 5 Political stability
- 6 Conflict management and political integration
- 7 Organisation of Government
- 8 Goal formation
- 9 Provision of alternative government and policies
- 10 Electoral competition and governance.

Political Parties in Nigeria

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements.

According to Helegbe, nationalists agitators formed groups and associations, to organise against colonial misrule. Thus for this purpose, The National Congress of British West Africa Territories was formed in 1920, The West African Students Union in 1925 and the Lagos Youth Movement 1934.

Early Political Parties: 1920-1950. The Nigeria National Development Party (NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. The elective principle introduced by Clifford Constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian Nationalism.

Political Parties in Nigeria 1950-1966

According to Helegbe 2010 the major political parties emerged between 1950-1966. These were the Action Group (AG) and the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC).