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### **Political Parties in Nigeria**

Political party is an organized group of people who come together to control government power or the state. In liberal democratic systems they help keep government accountable to public opinion and in an autocratic government they help government maintain its hold on power.

The first political party developed in the USA. The Democratic party traces its roots back to that time and it is the oldest political party in the world. However in Nigeria political parties developed due to the growth of nationalist consciousness, sentiments and movements in 1920. Political parties have certain characteristics that separate them from other government bodies;

- They capture governmental power through lawful or constitutional means
- They have party ideology (broad principles of public policy adopted).
- Their interests are geared towards the benefit of the nation in the long run.
- They are an organised body ,wherein their strength lies.
- They follow a party constitution to guide the members of their political party.

Political parties come in different types some examples are the

1. Cadre parties: They draw membership from the highest station in the society. They boast of well educated members ,usually intellectuals.
2. Mass parties take membership from all sections of the society and they have a wide membership.
3. Ideological parties form with the basis of political ideology.
4. Broker parties are formed with members from the upper and lower class of the society.
5. Charismatic parties are formed by individuals with charisma.

They perform many functions in the state such as political ;mobilisation and recruitment, education ,representation, stability and goal formation etc.

### **Political parties in Nigeria**

The forefront political parties were the National Congress Of British West Africa in 1920 ,the west Africa Students Union in 1925 and Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. Herbert Macaulay, HO Davies , Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo and others were the precursors of political parties in Nigeria.

### **Early Political parties**

The NNDP was the first political party in Nigeria. The Nigerian National Democratic Party was formed in 1923. It was led by Herbert Macaulay and formed due to the Clifford's Constitution elective principle. He is seen as the father of nationalism. The party was exclusive to Lagos and had no national colouration. This party win all elections of 1923,1928,1933. This party was aided by Lagos Daily News launched in 1925. The NYM was formed in 1934 by a group of Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli and company. The party contested and won election in 1938. The NCNC was formed in 1944 and renamed National Convention

of Nigerian Citizens in 1960 and it was the first party to seek total independence for Nigeria. Its first president and secretary general respectively are Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe.

### **1950- 1966**

Two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951 and they were the Action Group and The Northern People's Congress. AG was formed in 1945 as a part of Yoruba Cultural Society. Its leader was Obafemi Awolowo and general secretary was Egbe Omo Oduduwa. Its main aim was to provide leadership and capture political power in the west. The Northern People's Congress was formed in 1949 by Dr. Dikko, Aminu Kano, and Abubakar Imam. The main purpose was to combat ignorance, idleness, injustice in the North and Control of Government in the north. The Nigeria multi party system gave rise to more political parties e.g. NEPU in August 1950 was democratic and radical. The UMBC founded in 1955 and the UNIP. Pre independence political parties had some problems; they are without national outlook, emphasis on personality rather than issues, The defection of political party weakened.

### **Second Republic Political Parties**

The ban on political parties was lifted in September 1978 following that 53 political associations sought to contest in the 1979 general election. Five of these associations registered with the Federal Electoral Commission;

- National Party of Nigeria (NPN), The Nigerian People's Party (NPP), The Great Nigeria People's Party and the People's Redemption Party (PRP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria. The sixth party was registered to contest in 1983.
- The NPN was launched in September 1978 in Lagos and their major programmes were provision of shelter, food and qualitative education.
- The Unity Party of Nigeria was an offshoot of Action Group and it had 4 major aims; free education at all levels, free health services, full and gainful employment for able bodied and integrated rural development.
- The NNPP was reincarnated from the NCNC and its main aim was to work towards full employment for all citizens, promote economic, social and political equality of all sections of the country.

### **THIRD REPUBLIC PARTIES**

This was under Gen Ibrahim Babangida and all political parties were registered under the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. For the first time Nigeria had a two party system. They were the Social Democratic Party and National Republican Convention. The SDP favoured more public ownership and economy control. The party was purported to have won the annulled presidential election of June 12<sup>th</sup> 1993 and controlled both Senate and House of Representatives in the aborted third republics. The NRC was registered with the Armed Forces under Chief Tom Ikimi as national chairman. Their party programmes favoured more private initiatives and state regulations.

### **FOURTH REPUBLIC POLITICAL PARTIES**

Three were registered in 1997 by INEC among the several that wanted. They are Alliance for Democracy, All Peoples Party (later All Nigerians Peoples Party) and Peoples Democratic Party. They contested for 1988 to 1999 general elections. The AD gained political power in 6 states of south west federation 1999 to 2003. APP won 9 gubernatorial elections in north west and middle belt during 1999 election. The PDP has its major aim in maintaining and preserving integrity, unity and sovereignty of Nigeria as an indivisible entity. PDP won presidential election in 1999 and maintained presidency for sixteen years. Political parties nowadays are very corrupt, and they seek to further their own selfish interests. Thanks.