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**POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

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. It crops up in all aspect of politics. It developed in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters.

Clarification of the idea of political parties explains that political parties have many definitions brought up by many people. These people are; R.G Gettel, Herman Finer, Joseph La Palombora, Agbaje Edmund Burke,etc. From all their definitions, political party could be refered to as a group of citizens more or less organized having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

Characteristics of a political party are;

1. They capture government power through constitutional means.
2. Political parties always possess party ideology.
3. Political parties must be national minded which means it must always consider the interest of the nation.
4. Political party should be an organized body.
5. Political parties are guided by party constitutions.

Political parties has various types which are ; Elitist parties, Mass parties, Ideological parties , Broker party, Charismatic or personality party

Functions of political party

1. Poitical education
2. Political representation
3. Interest aggregation
4. Political stability, etc.

Political parties in Nigeria

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movement. The fulcrum for the emergence of parties formation in Nigeria was constitutional development. They are many political parties that emerged in different era and years. They was the early political party from 1920-1950, political parties from 1950-1966, political parties in the second republic in Nigeria, political parties in the third republic of Nigeria and the political parties in the fourth republic .

The Nigerian national development party was the first political party formed in Nigeria . the elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922gave rise to NNDP in 1923, followed by the Nigerian Youth Movement in 1934, then the National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon in 1944 later renamed as the National convention of Nigeria citizen in 1960.

Political parties from 1950-1966 started from the Action Group and the Northern peoples congress from between 1950 and 1951. The Northern Peoples Congress emerged from the Jam ‘Iyya Mutanein Arewa in October 1951. Other emerged like the Northern Element Progressive Union and the United Middle Belt Congress. Due to the pre independence political parties few problems arose that challenged political parties before independence.

Afterwards, other political parties emerged from different years and republics.

Examples of these political parties are;

1. The Nigerian national development party (NNDP) -1922
2. The Action Group (AG) between 1950 and 1951
3. The Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU)
4. The Nigerian Peoples Party(NPP)
5. The Social Democratic Party (SDP)
6. The peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

In conclusion, political parties in Nigeria are come with challenges but also benefits the nation in different ways.