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**Political parties in Nigeria**

**Political parties are an essential feature of politics In the modern age of mass participation .In liberal democratic systems , they help to keep government accountable to the public opinion, even on autocratic system of government , they help the government maintain in hold on power . political parties are an important link between government and the people. In the political process of a given political system, the party is an essential political agency. Political party crops up in all politics. It brought response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters .politician developed the idea of political party at that time as a device to help themselves and like-minded friends get elected but the party proved to have many other users as well and went on to be one a ubiquitous feature of modern politics**

**The first modern electoral democracy was the United States of America, and it was here that the first parties developed. By the 1820s, there were well organized parties, the democratic party , which can trace it’s roots back to that time ,the oldest democratic party in the world.In Britain,1867 was the first year in which there was a reasonable widespread extension of the votes.**

**Conceptual clarification of the idea of political party**

**These are as many definition of political parties as the political thinkers. According to R.G Gettel, political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out it’s general politics.**

**Herman Finer, on his part ,defined political party as an organized body with voluntary membership, it’s concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power. A political party performs so many tasks in the political process that is difficult to establish a single definition.**

**Joseph Lapalombara defined political party as a formal organization whose self-conscious, primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office person who will control alone or in coalition the machinery of government. Agbaje (1999) a political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in pursuit , capture and retention, for as long as democratically feasible, of government and it’s offices. Edmund Burke defines political party as a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interests upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed . A political party is a group of officials or would be officials who are linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organization, a chief object of this organization is to ensure that it’s officials attain power of maintain power.**

**Characteristics of political party**

**-The major or central feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means**

**-Political parties always have a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization, which is referred to as public ideology.**

**-Every political party must be national-minded i.e in aims and functions, it must take into consideration the interest of the nation .**

**- Political party should be an organized body, because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure.**

**-Political parties has party manifestos which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.**

**-Political parties are guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and members within and outside government.**

**Types of political parties**

**Elitist/cadre parties : this is a political party that draws it’s membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country .the party boasts of members who are intellectual like doctors, lawyers**

**Mass parties : this is political party that draws it’s membership from all sections of the society and wide membership. Mass parties takes such name as , people’s party, labour party**

**Ideological party : this is a political party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.**

**Broker party : this is political party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society . The basic aim of this type of political party is to reconcile the conflicting interest of the rich and the poor by carrying out policies of social justice for the interest of all.**

**Charismatic or personality party : this is political party formed or led by individuals with charisma. It revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.**

**Features of political party**

**Political party perform the functions listed below**

**-Political mobilisation and recruitment**

**-Political education**

**-Political representation**

**-interest aggregation**

**- Political stability**

**-conflict management and political integration**

**-Organisation of government**

**- Provision of alternative government and policies**

**-Electoral competition and governance**

**--Goal formation**

**Political parties in Nigeria**

**Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist movement**

* **Early political parties 1920-1050**
* **Political parties 1950-1966**

**Problems that confronted pre-independence political parties**

**1)the political parties were without national outlook. They had regional support and ethnic loyalty.**

**2) the political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather issues**

**3) intra-party and inter-party conflicts in most cases polarised the political parties and thereby splitting them into fractions.**

**4) political party defection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era.**

**Political parties in the second republic in Nigeria ,the ban on politics was lifted in September, 1978.**

**Political parties in the third republic in Nigeria ,in 1989**

**Political parties in fourth republic in Nigeria**

**Conclusion**

**As things stand now , Nigeria’s politics parties face challenges**

**Corruption**

**Regulatory framework for establishment of parties should be changed**