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POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are an important link between government and the people. The political parties crops up in all aspect of politics which is an invention that first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. There are as many definitions of political parties as the political thinkers. Political party is a group of citizens more or less organized who act as political unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general politics.

A political party is a group of officials or would-officials who are linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organization; a

chief object of this organization is to ensure that its officials attain power or maintain power.

The characteristics of political party are;

- The major feature of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means and must be truthful and lawful.

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

Types of political party are;

- Elitist/cadre party, mass party, ideological party and charismatic party.

Functions of political parties are;

- Political education, representation, interest aggregation, political stability, mobilization.

Early political parties happened in 1920-1950 when the Nigeria National Development party (NNDP) was regarded as the first

political party that was formed in Nigeria. It was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigeria Nationalism. The problems that confronted pre-independence political parties is the political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues.

Political parties happened in second, third and fourth Republic of Nigeria. Nigeria's political parties face some challenges which there is high level of corruption and most party leaders see their political party activity as a means to further their business interests.