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POLITICICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties can be said to be the back bone of politics. In a liberal democratic system, political parties help to keep government accountable to public opinion, even in autocratic system of government they help the government maintain its hold on power. The first modern electoral democracy was the united states of America and it was the first parties developed. By the 1820s there were well organized parties. In Britain 1867 was the first time a lot of citizens participated in electoral voting between political parties. Political parties in Nigeria developed following growing nationalist consciousness and sentiments and national movement in 1920.

Due to the many roles political parties play in politics and society it cannot be pined to one definition. Various definitions of politics have been coined by powerful political thinkers e.g

* R.G Gettel defines political party as a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as political units and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies.
* Herman finer defines political party as an organized body body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power
* Agbaje(1999) sees political party as a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of the general political cause which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention political causes.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTY

* The general purpose of a political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.
* Political parties have a broad principal of public policy and public administration adopted by its parties, association or organization referred to as party ideology.
* Political parties must aim for goals that drives the nation to its best potential
* Political parties have party manifestation which guide their conduct during and after winning election.

Types of political parties

* Elitist /cadre party
* Mass party
* Ideological party
* Broker party
* Charismatic party

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

* Political party development in Nigeria was through growth of nationalist movement. It developed and began to emerge as a form of revolt against the british oppressors. From 1920 groups and association began to emerge proving that pressure groups can create an open ear to make government listen. Some groups like WASU (west African student union), Lagos youth movement, National congress of the British west Africa etc were emerging around different regions in the nation. The first political party formed in Nigeria was Nigerian national development party and it was led by sir Herbert Macaulay. The NNDP operated only in Lagos and it won three seats allocated to Lagos. The tales of their position, success and acceptability it sustained from the citizens gave birth to more political parties and groups like Nigerian youth movement was formed in 1934 by young Nigerian youths, NCNC was established in 1960 and is referred to be the first political party to be organized to seek total independence for Nigeria, the party brought forward the first president of Nigeria and first general secretary.

The evolution of political parties in Nigeria can be divided into five:

* Pre independence / first republic
* Second republic
* Third republic
* Fourth republic
* Fifth republic

Nigeria and political parties face some challenges like, systemic high level of corruption, regulatory framework for establishment of parties should be changed in other to prevent coalition of the wealthy as a basis for registration, most parties see their political party activities as a means to further their business interest.