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POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation, an important link between government and the people. The political party crops up in all aspects of politics. It is an invention that first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters.

A political party is a group of officials or would-be officials who are linked with a sizeable group of citizens into an organization and the chief object of this organization is to ensure that its officials attain and maintain power.

Characteristics of political parties

They are; they have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections, they are guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government and they must be national minded(the political party must take into consideration the interest of the nation).

Types of political parties

Elitist/cadre parties: this draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country.it consists of doctors, business tycoons,lawyers,traditional rulers,etc.

Mass parties: this draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership. The mass party takes the names like ;peoples party,labour party,etc.

Ideological party: it is a political party formed with political ideology and benefits which form the bases of the party.

Functions of political party

1. Political mobilisation
2. Political representation
3. Political aggregation
4. Organisation of government
5. Electoral competition and governance

Political Parties in Nigeria

Political party in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements. The national congress of British west Africa territories was formed in 1920,the west African students union was formed 1925 and the Lagos youth movement in 1934.the Clifford constitution of 1922 provided for four elective seats in its legislative council, while the Richard constitution of 1946 retained the four elective seats and established regional assemblies while the MacPherson constitution established regional executive councils and provided for a system of indirect election to the largely Nigerian legislative houses.

EARLY POLITICAL PARTIES(1920-1950)

The Nigerian national development party(NNDP)was formed in 1923 and is regarded as the first political party formed in Nigeria. The party was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of nationalism. The Nigerian youth movement(NYM) was formed in 1934, the national council of Nigerian and

Cameroon(NCNC)was formed 1944 and was later re-named the national convention of Nigerian citizen in 1960.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA (1950-1966)

The action group was formed in 1945 but was formally inaugurated in april,1951,and the leader was obafemi awolowo. The northern peoples'congress(NPC)was formed in 1949 and was contituted into a political party by jam'iyya mutanein arewa in october 1951,the northern element progressive union(NEPU) was formed august 1950 and the united middle belt congress(UMBC) was formed in 1955.

PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONTED PRE INDEPENDENCE

POLITICAL PARTIES

They were without national outlook.they had regional support and ethnic loyalty,they placed more emphasis on personalities rather than issues and 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 and five political associations were registered by the federal electoral commission and they were the national party of nigeria(NPN),the nigerian people's party(NPP),the great nigeria peoples party(GNPP),the peoples redemption party(PRP)and the unity party of nigeria(UPN).the NPN was officialy launched in september,1978 in lagos after lifting the ban on party politics by the millitary government,the main goal was national unity,with the slogan,**one nation,one destiny**.the nigerian peoples' party(NPP)was reincarnated from NCNC.the aim of the NPP is to work towards full employment for all nigerians and to promote economic,social and political equalityof all sections of the country.the party won three gubernational elections and controlled three states,the great nigeria people's party(GNPP)

was led by alhaji waziri ibrahim, the slogan was **politicians without bitterness**. it controlled two states, borno and gongola between 1979 and 1983.

Political parties in the third republic in Nigeria

general ibrahim babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties were registered in accordance with the constitution of the federal republic of nigeria 1989, thus the first time nigeria had a constitutional two party system. The two parties were, the social democratic party (SDP) and the national republican convention (NRC), the registration of SDP was approved by the armed forces ruling council with chief tony Anenih as its national chairman, it had its registered offices at the federal capital territory, abuja, the party programmes, were favouring more public ownership and control of the economy. The NRC on the other hand, was registered through the approval of the armed forces ruling council with chief Tom Ikimi as its national chairman, the party's programmes favoured more private initiatives and more state regulations. it paid less attention to free education and other social welfare policies.

Politics parties in the fourth republic

Three political parties were registered in preparation towards the fourth republic in 1988 by the independent national electoral commission (INEC) among several political associations that struggled for registration as political parties. the names of the registered parties are the alliance of democracy (AD), all peoples party (APP) which in 2002 changed its name to all nigeria people's party (ANPP) and the people's democratic party (PDP). alliance for democracy sponsored and contested elections throughout nigeria during 1998 and 1999. the all peoples party (APP) won nine gubernatorial elections in the

north-west and middle belt during the 1999 elections. the third peoples' democratic party (PDP) has its major aim which is maintaining and preserving the integrity, unity and sovereignty of Nigeria as one indivisible political entity.

Since the inception of the fourth republic, however other political parties have been registered by INEC. So Nigeria has the following political parties; action alliance (AA), all progressive grand alliance (APGA), all progressive party (APC), labour party (LP), peoples democratic party (PDP), and so on.