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SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA'S POLITICS.**

There are many definitions of political parties as the political thinkers. According to Agbaje, a political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention for as

long as democratically feasible of government and its offices. **Some of the political thinkers who defined political party are R.G Gettel, Herman Finer, and the rest of them all.**

**Some characteristics of political parties are:**

- Political party capture governmental power through constitutional means which must be peaceful and lawful.
- They have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.
- They are guided by part constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.
- They must be national-minded.
- They should be an organized body.

**Types of political parties are:**

- **Cadre parties:** This type of political party draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country e.g. doctors, lawyers, lecturers etc.
- **Mass parties:** This type of political party draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.
- **Ideological party:** This type of political party is formed with political ideology
- **Broker party:** This type of political party is formed with members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society.
- **Charismatic party:** This type of political part is formed by individuals with charisma.

**Functions of political party are:**

- Political mobilization.
- Political education.
- Political stability.
- Organization of government.
- Goal formation.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements. The National congress of British West African territories was formed in 1920,the

West African students Union in 1925 and the Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. Herbert Macaulay, H.O Davies, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and others are precursors of political parties in Nigeria, were in the forefront of political activities and party formation in the 1920s and thereafter. **We have the Clifford constitution of 1922, the Richard constitution of 1946, the Macpherson constitution of 1956 and the rest of them all.**

### **Early political parties 1920-1950.**

The Nigeria Development (Party NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923, NNDP was led by Herbert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The party was formed mainly by its leaders and its political activities and campaigns were aided by a newspaper called Lagos Daily News launched in 1925. NCNC was formed in 1944. It was later re-named the National Convention of Nigeria citizen in 1960 when some parts Cameroons broke away from Nigeria.

### **Political parties in Nigeria 1950-1966.**

Two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951. These are the Action Group (AG) and the Northern people's Congress (NPC). The AG emerged from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa which was formed in 1945 and had its leader in the person of Obafemi Awolowo and the main reason of AG was to provide leadership to and capital political power in the Western region. The Northern people's congress emerged from the jam'iyya Mutanein Arewa of which its main purpose was combating ignorance, idleness, injustice in the northern region and control of the government in the North.

### **Challenges of pre-independence political parties**

- The political parties were without national outlook.
- They placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues.
- Political party defection was weakened etc.

### **Political parties in the second republic in Nigeria**

The unity party was an offshoot of the Action Group and the aims of the UPN were embodied in its four cardinal point programmes which were free education at all levels, free health services for all the able-bodied and citizens full and gainful employment for all the able bodied and integrated rural development. Another party was that of Nigeria people's Party (NPP) which recarnated from NCNC. Their aim is to work is to work towards full employment for all Nigerians and to promote economic, social and political equality of all sections of the country, the party won three gubernatorial election and controlled three states

namely Imo, Anambra and Plateau.

### **Political parties in the third Republic 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. Examples of the parties are Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican convention (NRC).

### **Political party in the Fourth Republic.**

Examples of political parties are Action Alliance (AA), All Grand Alliance Party (AGAP), All progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) Alliance for Democracy (AD) Green Party of Nigeria (GPN)

In conclusion, Nigeria is faced with political parties problem of which the level corruption is very high which made politics a competitive business alongside with the aim or political project of most Nigerian parties has been the development of "national cake" as a system of patronage. However there is need to curb this trend in order for the good of our country, Nigeria.