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**POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA ( CHAPTER 7)**

Political parties are important link between government and the people and they assist in keeping governments accountable to public opinion. Political was created in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. Following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements in the 1920s, political parties in Nigeria developed

There are many definitions of political party but we will just pick a few and their clarifications. According to R.G Gettel, political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies. From the definition of political party, we can deduce that a political party is somewhat an organized group of citizens, with some agreement on the basic principles of national policy with the aim of capturing political power by some constitutional means.

**Political parties are characterized by;**

* The major central feature of political party whose aim is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. This has to be peaceful and lawful.
* Political parties have party manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.
* Political parties are guided by party constitution which directs the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.
* Political parties should be an organized body so as to establish rapport with the masses.
* Political parties should always put the nation interest into consideration.

**There are 5 types of political parties** **namely:**

1. Ideological party: It is a political party formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.
2. Elitist: It political party draws its membership from the highest level of social hierarchy in a country.
3. The mass parties: These political parties draw it membership from all sections of the society and them manifestoes are aimed at alleviating the suffering of the masses.
4. Broker party: This political party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society. The aim is to reconcile the conflicting interest of the elite and the poor by carrying out policies of social justice for the benefit of all.
5. Charismatic or personality party: this political party is formed or led by individuals with charisma. It revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.

**Political parties perform the following function:**

Political education Political representation Political stability

Interest aggregation Organization of government Goal formation.

**Political parties in Nigeria**

Political parties in Nigeria 1950-1966. According to ikelegbe, two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951. These were the Action Group (AG) and the northern people congress (NPC). These parties emerged from cultural associations because of the prospects of the 1951 elections. The Action Group (AG) emerged from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, it started as the political wing of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa in 1950. It was formally inaugurated in April; the aim of AG was to provide leadership and to capture political power in the western region. The (NPC) emerge from the Jam’iyya Mutanin Arewa.

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

1. The political parties where without national perspective. They had regional support and ethnic allegiance
2. The political parties focused more on personalities rather than issues at hand.
3. Intra party and inter party conflicts amongst political parties there by splitting them into factions.
4. Political party defection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era.

**In the second republic** in Nigeria, the ban on politics was lifted in September, 1978, following that about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections five of these associations, were registered by the federal electoral commission. These were the: National Party of Nigeria (NPN,) the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria People Party (GNPP) The People Redemption Party (PRP) and The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

**In the third republic**, 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. Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC).

**In the fourth republic**, since the inception of the fourth republic, however, other political parties have been registered by INEC. So, Nigeria now has lots of political parties some of which are listed below. All blending party (ABP), Democratic People Party (DPP), Fresh Democratic Party (FRESH), Democratic people’s Congress (DPC). In all of this, political party should be focused on nurturing unity among Nigerians and creating the development of Nigeria.