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POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

The essence of political parties is to ensure the participation of a large amount of people. Political parties ensure the government is accountable for all actions taken. Public opinion is required in such a system. The rise of political parties is due to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters.

The United States of America was the first modern electoral democracy and political parties started arising. The oldest political party in the world is the Democratic Party.

In Nigeria, political parties started due to the country’s tumultuous political history in 1920s. Political parties are critical to democratic governance linking citizens and government acting as a platform for citizens to influence government. In colonial Nigeria, political parties provided an avenue through which to mobilize and educate citizens and grow the independence movement. The reason for the emergence of parties’ formation in Nigeria was constitutional development.

There are different types of political parties; elitist, mass, ideological, broker and charismatic party. These political parties have different styles of practice and have different beliefs. The most practiced one in Nigeria is the mass party.

In Nigeria, political parties tend to be organized along ethnic, religious or geographic lines rather than around ideological issues. Political aspirants must be sponsored by a political party to run for any office, resulting in a system in which parties sell nomination forms at exorbitant prices because candidates are forced to pay. Wealthy Nigerian political and social elites use money and influence to wield political power by sponsoring godsons who use their political position to advance their mentors’ interest.

Nigeria’s political parties face some challenges like high level of corruption, the regulatory frame work for the establishment of parties should be changed so that new parties do not have to forge coalition of the wealthy. The point of a political project has provided a platform for sharing out the “national cake” as a system of patronage. This trend needs to stop so as to let political parties be directed to fostering cooperation among Nigerians.