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POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

One of the essential features of a politics in the modern age of mass participation, is political parties. They are designed to keep government accountable to the public opinion in a liberal democratic system, in other words they help the government maintain its hold on power. These political parties crops in all aspect of politics and it was first developed in the 19th century in response to the large number of voters.

First modern electoral democracy was in the united states of America and that was when the first party came into being. By the 1820s they were all organized parties. The oldest political party in the world is Democratic party. Political parties in Nigeria developed following national growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalists movements in the 1920s.

There are various definitions of political parties as political thinkers may definer them. 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.

A political party is a group of officials or would be officials who are linked with a sizable group of people/citizens into an organization its objectives is to ensure that its officials attain power or maintain power (shively,2008).

Characteristics of a political party

1. It captures governmental power through constitutional means
2. It has a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization, refered to as political ideology.
3. It must be national minded.
4. It should be an organized body
5. They have manifestoes which guides their conducts
6. They have a party constitution which guides the conducts of its officials .

Types of political parties

1. Elitist/ cadre parties: it draws its membership from the highest echenlon of social hierarchy in a country.
2. Mass parties: it draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership.
3. Ideological party: it is formed from the ideology or benefits which form the basis of the party.
4. Broker party: it is formed from, the upper and lower classes of the society.
5. Charismatic or personality party: it is led by individuals with charisma, in other terms posses the qualities of a leader.

Functions of political parties

1. Political mobilisation and recruitment
2. Political education
3. Political representation
4. Political aggregation
5. Political stability
6. Political integration
7. Organization of government.

Political parties in Nigeria

The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) was regarded as the first political party in Nigeria its elective principles introduced by cliffords constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. The political party was led by Herbert Macaulay who is regarded as the father of Nigeria Nationalism.

In 1950 to 1951, two political parties emerged known as the AG action group and the NPC northern peoples congress.

After the formation of these political parties more political parties where formed, till date.

In conclusion, Nigeria political parties, face some challenges, which includes the high level of corruption, the change in its regulatory frame work, and amongst others, most political party leaders see it as way to build their business.