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POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Political parties are liberal-democratic systems, they help to keep government accountable to public opinion, even in an autocratic system of government, they help the government maintain its hold on power. In either case, political parties are an important link between government and the people.

The first modern electoral democracy was the United States of America and it was here that the first parties developed. By the 1820s, there were well-organised parties and the Democratic party, which can trace its roots back to time, which is the oldest ~~part~~ political party in the world. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of national consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements in the 1900s.

There are as many definitions of political parties as the political thinkers. According to R.G. Cothel, "Political party is a group of citizens more or less organised 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".

Herman Finer on his part defined political party as "an organised body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power".

Here are some characteristics of political party:

- The major or central features of political parties is to capture government power through constitutional means.
- Political parties always have a broad principle of public policy ideology.
- Every political party must be national-minded. i.e. in aims and functions.
- It must take into consideration the interest of the nation.

We have different types of political parties, these ~~are~~ include cadre parties, mass parties, ideology parties and broker parties. Political parties perform some certain functions which include personal mobilisation and recruitment, political education, political representation, political stability, political aggression and organisation of government.

According to Hoegbe 2010, two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951. These were the action group (AG) and the Northern people's congress (NPC). These parties emerged from cultural association because of the prospects of the 1951 elections, following the Macpherson's constitution.

Political parties before independence ~~were~~ ^{not} without some challenges. Some of them are
the political parties were without national outlook. They had regional support and ethnic loyalty,
the political parties ~~were~~ without national outlook had placed much emphasis on personalities
rather than issues and finally intra-party and inter-party conflict in most cases polarised
the political parties and nearly splitting them into factions.