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POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA.

Political parties are essential features of politics in the modern age of mass participation. In liberal-democratic system’s, they help to keep governments accountable to public opinion. Political parties are an important link between government and the people.

Political parties is an invention that was first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters.

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalists consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements in the 1920s. According to ikelegbe, nationalist agitators formed groups and associations, to organise against colonial misrule. For this purpose, the national Congress of British west Africa territories was formed in 1920 and also the west African students union in 1925 and the Lagos youth movements in 1934. Herbert Macaulay, H.o Davies, Ernest ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and the others were in the fore front of political activities and party formation in the 1920s and there after.

The Nigerian National Development party(NNDP) was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. The elective principles introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923. NNDP was led by Hebert Macaulay regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The party was exclusively based in lagos and had no national colouration. It won all the three seats allocated to lagos in the legislature council in the elections of 1923, 1928 and 1933.

From 1950-1951, they were two major political parties that emerged, these were, the Action group (AG) and the nothern people’s Congress (NPC). These parties emerged from cultural associations because of the prospects of the 1951 elections, following the macphersons constitution.

The Nigerian multi-party system of the first republic gave rise to the emergence of many political parties apart from the three major political parties. Some of these smaller parties were splinter political parties formed as a result of disagreement that arose in the major parties. Those smaller parties include, Northern element progressive union (NEPU), United middle belt congress(UMBC) and the United National independent party(UNIP).

After Nigeria gained their independence, they faced a lot of problems, this problems include, The political parties were without national outlook, The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues, intra-party and inter party conflicts in most cases polarised the political parties and thereby splitting them into factions.

Nigeria’s political parties face some changes, but it doesn’t exclude the fact that Nigeria politics and political parties are deep rooted in corruption, and is designed to exploit the people of Nigeria for their own benefits.