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Political parties are an essential features of politics, they help to keep the government accountable to popular opinions, they help the government to maintain its hold on power. They are an important link between the government and the people. The political party crops up in all aspects of politics . The first modern electoral democracy was The United States of America, and it was here that the first parties were developed. By the 1820s, there were well organised parties and the Democratic party, which can trace its roots back to that time. Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalists movement in the 1920s. 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 it’s general politics. A political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which is essentially the pursuit, capture and retention for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its offices. Political parties are associations formally organised with the explicit and declare purpose of acquiring and maintaining legal control, either singly or in coalition with other similar associations, over the personnel and policy of the government of an actual or prospective state. A political party is a group of officials or would-be officials who are linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organisation, a chief objective of this organisation is to ensure that it’s officials attain power or maintain power.

Characteristics of a political party include:

They have party manifestos which guide their conduct during and after winning elections.

They are guided by a party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside the government.

They have broad principles of public policy adopted by their organisation , which is referred to as party ideology. The party ideology also serves as the basis for classifying parties as either leftist, rightist, liberal, communist, labour, conservative.

Types of political parties

Elitist/Cadre parties

Mass parties

Ideological party

Broker party

Charismatic/ Personality parties

Functions of political parties: political education, political representation, political stability, conflict management and political integration.

Problems confronted by Pre-independence political parties

The political parties were without national outlook, they had regional support and ethnic loyalty

The political party placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues

Political party defection weakened or ked to the collapse of political parties during this era.