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MATRIC NO: 19/MHSO2/119

DEPARTMENT: NURSING

COURSE CODE: GST 203

Political parties in Nigeria

A political party is a group of persons organized to acquire and exercise political power, they are essential institutions of democracy.

Political parties help to keep government accountable to public opinion, they help the government maintain its hold on power.

In general, the various definitions of political parties show that a political party is a group of citizens, that have some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

The characteristics of a political party are;

- They capture government power through constitutional means on a peaceful and lawful manner.
- Political parties possess a party ideology which are broad principles of public policy adopted by its organization.
- It must be national minded.
- It should be an organized body.
- It must have party manifestoes.

The types of political parties

- Elitist/cadre parties – Draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country.
- Mass parties – Draws its memberships from sections of the society.
- Ideological party – Formed with ideology
- Broker party – Draws its memberships from upper and lower classes of the society.
- Charismatic/Personality party – Formed/led by individuals with charisma.

The functions of political party are;

- Political stability
- Interest aggregation
- Organization of aggregation
- Political representation
- Political education

Political parties in Nigeria

The first political party formed in Nigeria was **The Nigerian National Development Party [NNDP]**. It was led by Herbert Macaulay [Father of Nigerian Nationalism] based in Lagos.

After NNDP, the NYM [Nigerian Youth Movement] was formed by the **NCNC [National council of Nigerian and Cameroon]**

The two major political parties between 1950 and 1951 was the action group [AG] **and Northern People's Congress [NPC]**.

The problems that confronted pre-independence political parties were;

- The political parties were without national outlook
- The political parties placed much emphasis on personalities rather than issues
- Political party defection led to the collapse of political parties during this era.

The political parties based in the second republic in Nigeria;

- Nigerian's People's Party [NPN]
- The Great Nigerian People's Party [GNPP]
- People's Redemption Party [PRP]
- Unity Party of Nigeria[UPN]
- Nigerian Advance Party [NAP]

The Political parties based in the third republic in Nigeria

- Social Democratic Party [SDP]
- National Republican convention[NRC]

The political parties based in the fourth republic in Nigeria

- Alliance for democracy [AD]
- All people's party[APP]
- People's democratic party[PDP]