**Ofotoku Doreen.**

**19/MHS06/023.**

**GOVERNMENT ASSIGNMENT.**

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA.**

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. They help to keep governments accountable to public opinion in autocratic and liberal-democratic systems. Political parties were important links and party is an essential political agency. Political parties developed at first as a response to large numbers of voters and was used as a device to help politicians and their friends get elected. Political parties first appeared in America and similarly all over Europe and therefore political parties in Nigeria developed and following the growth of nationalists consciousness and sentiments and nationalists movements.

The definition of political parties are many, differ and is defined by numerous persons who have different ideas of what political party is, but according to R.G Gettel it 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 party joins people together in a formally organized structure.

**CHRACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTIES.**

1. The major characteristic is to capture governmental power through constitutional means.
2. Political parties always have broad principles of public policies adopted by its organization, which is referred to as ideology.
3. Every political party must be national minded [ i.e. in aims and functions ].
4. Political parties should be an organized body, because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure.
5. Political parties are guided by party officials and members within and outside government.

**TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES.**

1. Elitist/Cadre Parties: This is a political party that draws its membership from the highest echelon of the social hierarchy in a country.
2. Mass Parties: This is a political party that draws its membership from all sections of the society and has wide membership.
3. Ideological Party: This is a political party formed with the political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party.
4. Broker Party: This is a political party formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society.
5. Charismatic or Personality Party: This is a political party formed or led by individuals with charisma.

**FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES.**

1. Political mobilization and recruitment.
2. Political education.
3. Political representation.
4. Interest aggregation.
5. Political stability.
6. Conflict management and political integration.
7. Organization of government.
8. Provision of alternative government and policies.
9. Electoral competition and governance.
10. Goal formation.

**POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA.**

Political parties in Nigeria developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness and sentiments, and nationalist movements. The fulcrum for emergence of parties formation in Nigeria was constitutional development.

**Early Political Parties 1920-1950.**

The Nigerian National Development Party [NNDP] led by Herbert Macaulay [who is regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism] was regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria. There was also The Nigerian Youth Movement [NYM] formed in 1934 by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. J.C. Vaughan which aimed at the promotion of Nigerian unity and national consciousness and t6he achievement of complete autonomy within the British empire. Another political party included National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon [NCNC].

**Political Parties in Nigeria: 1950-1966.**

Two major political parties emerged between 1950 and 1951 which where the Action Group [AG] and the Northern Peoples’ Congress [NPC]. Smaller parties like Northern Element Progressive Union [NEPU], United Middle Belt Congress [UMBC] and United National Independent Party [UNIP] were formed as a result of disagreement that arose from the major parties.

**PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONTED PRE-INDEPENDENCE POLITICAL PARTIES.**

1. The political parties were without national outlook.
2. They placed so much emphasis on personalities rather than issues.
3. Intra party and inter party conflicts in most cases polarized the political parties and therby splitting them into factions.
4. Their defection weakened or led to the collapse of political parties during this era.

**Political Parties in the Second Republic In Nigeria.**

* The National Party of Nigeria [NPN].
* The Nigerian People’s Party [NPP].
* The Great Nigeria Peoples Party [GNPP]
* The Peoples Redemption Party [PRP]
* The Unity Party of Nigeria [UPN] etc.

**Political Parties in the Third Republic in Nigeria.**

* The Social Democratic Party [SDP].
* The National Republican Convection [NRC].

**Political Parties in the Fourth Republic in Nigeria.**

* Action Democratic Party [ADP].
* Change Advocacy Party [CAP].
* Democratic Peoples Party [DPP].
* Kowa Party [KP].
* Liberation Movement [LM].
* Peoples Democratic Party [PDP] etc

These parties were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC].

Nigeria’s political parties currently face some challenges which include: high level of corruption, many party leaders see their political parties as a means of making profits and many other challenges.