NAME: AKPARANTA AMARACHI PEACE

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Summary of chapter 7 (Political party in Nigeria)

Political parties are an essential features of politics in today’s world for mass participation. In liberal-democratic systems, they help to keep government accountable to public opinion, also in autocratic system of government, they help the government maintenance its hold on power, this means that political parties are an important link between the government and its people. Politicians developed the idea of political party at that time as a device to help themselves and like-minded friends get elected. The first modern electoral democracy was held by United state of America.

 Political party according to R.G Gettle is a group of citizens more or less organised, who act as a political unit and who by the political power aims at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies, while Herman define political party as organised body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power. Joseph also define political party as a formal organisation whose self-conscious, primary purpose is to place and maintain in public person who will control the machinery of government. According to Agbaje political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause which capture the democratically feasible of government and its offices.

 Edmund defines political party as a body of men united for promoting the national interest upon some particular interest while Dowse and Hughes sees political party as association formally organized with the explicit and purpose of acquiring and maintaining legal control either singly or coalition with other similar associations. A political party is a group of officials who are linked with a sizeable groups of citizens into an organisation to ensure its officials attain or maintain power. From the above we can agree that a political party is a group of citizens, more or less organised, having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional mean.

The main characteristics of political party is to capture governmental power through constitutional means, others include; having a broad principles of public policy adopted by its organisation, i.e. party ideology which serve as a basis for classifying parties as either leftist, rightist, liberal, communist, labour and conservative etc. Political party must also be national-minded i.e. it should take into consideration the interest of the nation. Political party should be an organised body because it can derive strength from an effective organisational structure, political party have party manifestoes to guide their conduct during and after winning elections. They are also guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

There are also various types of political parties which includes: The Elitist/Cadre parties draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country, the Mass parties draws its membership from all section of the society and have wide membership, while the Ideological party is formed with political ideology or benefits which form the bases of the party. The Broker party is formed with its members drawn from upper and lower classes of the society, it aim at reconciling the conflict interest of the rich and poor and lastly the Charismatic or personality party. This is formed or led by individuals with charisma i.e. the personal qualities of the leader.

Functions of political party include: political mobilisation and recruitment, political education, political representation, interest aggregation, political stability, conflict management and political integration, organisation of government, provision of alternative government and policies, electoral competition and governance, goal formation. The elective principle introduced by Clifford constitution of 1922 gave rise to the formation of NNDP in 1923 which was led by Herbert Macaulay and was aided by Lagos Daily news which was launched in 1925. The NYM which was formed by young Nigerians in 1934 was led by Ernest Ikoli.

The NCNC which was formed in 1944 was later renamed and was the first party to be organised to seek total independence for Nigeria which Nnamdi Azikiwe became the first president And Herbert Macaulay was his general secretary. AG and NPC were the two major parties emerged between 1950 and 1951, the main aim of the AG was to provide leadership to capture political power in the western region while the purpose of NPC was combating ignorance, idleness, injustice in the Northern region and control government in the North. There are some problems which confronted pre-independence political parties which includes: the political party are without national outlook, they place emphasis on personalities rather than issues and political parties split intra and inter party conflicts into factions. The defection of political party lead to the collapse of political parties during this era.

The ban on politics was lifted in September 1978 which was the second political parties in the second republic of Nigeria and it registered five association which includes NPN, NPP, GNPP, PRP and UPN. NPN was officially launched by the military government after the ban has been lifted, UPN was an offshoot of AG and it main support base was in Yorubaland. NPP on the other hand was reincarnated from NCNC and its main support base was the Igbo, it aim to work toward full employment for all Nigerians and promote economic, social and political equality for all section of the country.

GNPP was led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim and its base was Kanuri. SDP and NRC were established by the government in the third republic of Nigeria, SDP was approved by the Armed forces ruling council and was registered at FCT, Abuja. It was controlled by both senate and house of Representatives. AD, ANPP formerly APP and PDP was registered in the fourth republic of Nigeria in 1998 by INEC. These parties are organised and administered at ward and have registered offices at all levels.