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Summary of Chapter 7 (Political Parties in Nigeria)

According to R.G. Gettel, a political party 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 parties. A political party according to Shively in 2008 is defined as a group of officials or would-beofficials who are linked with a sizeable group of citizens into \n organization who's chief objective is to ensure that its officials gain or maintain power.

Political parties are an essential feature of politics which serve as a link between the government and the people, while helping to keep the government accountable to public opinion in democratic systems while helping autocratic systems to hold on to power.

The idea of political parties was developed and implemented in the nineteenth century as a response to the emergence/appearance of elections which involved large numbers of people. Politicians came up with the idea of political parties a device to help themselves and their like-minded friends get elected, but it grew into something much more useful than that as it contained/touched every aspect of politics, eventually becoming an important and indispensable part of modern-daypolitics.

There are several characteristics which distinguish a political party from any other government organization or private organization. The first of these characteristics is that every political party has the core goal of capturing governmental power through constitutional means which are both peaceful and legal. They also have a set of principles of public polices which is known as their ideology and is used to classify parties.

All political parties are nation minded. This means that the endgame of all their goals is to push the nation as a whole to the next level. If this cannot be attained within their ruling period due to failing sectors of the nation, they are to focus on fixing and stabilizing those sectors first before focusing on the nation. A practical example of this is when a political party decides to focus its attention on developing the educational sector of the nation which is lacking, rather than putting efforts into already stabilized or properly functional sectors.

Political parties also need to be an organized body in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness, as well as preventing infighting among themselves. They also need manifestoes which guide their conduct both before and after winning elections, so that the masses have knowledge on what the party's goals are and are able to protest when the party steps out of line or ignores their promises to the people.

Despite the fact that all political parties have the same end goal, there are different types of political parties which cater to people of different social standings and beliefs. Elitist/cadre parties are one of the various types of political parties which exist. This type of political party draws membership from those that are high up in society. This includes intellectuals like doctors, lawyer, business tycoons etc. There are other types of parties such as the mass parties which as their name suggests caters to the masses and the workers which make up this class. The broker parties which cater to all classes of society, the personality parties which is made up by individual with charisma, the ideological party which is formed with political ideology as it basis.

Political parties not only have the main function of connecting the government to the people, they also provide a form of political stability, manage conflict between different political candidates, acts as a group of like-minded people with the same interest and end goal as well as allowing electoral competition to exist which makes it hard for

a dictatorship to emerge. Political parties also play a very crucial role in keeping a government and its elections and politicians organized.

According to Ikelegbe, political parties in Nigeria were developed following the growth of the nationalist consciousness,sentiments and nationalist movements. Groups and associations were originally formed in Nigeria in order to organize the citizens against colonial misrule. In order to accomplish this, The National Congress of British West Africa Terrorists was formed in 1920, the West African Students Union in 1925 as well as the Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. These various groups and associations formed the foundations for various political parties in Nigeria, and constitutional development in Nigeria was the final ingredient required for political parties to germinate. The Clifford constitution of 1922 provided four electoral seats in the legislative council. This provided an electoral system in Nigeria, but it was limited to adult males who earned a certain amount of money. The Richards constitution of 1946 retained the four seats and established regional assemblies. The Macpherson's constitution established regional executive councils and provided a system of indirect elections.

The first political party formed in Nigeria was the Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) which was formed in 1923, based in Lagos and led by Herbert Macaulay. The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) soon followed after and was made in 1934 by a group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. J.C Vaughan. This party was followed by the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) which was formed in 1944 and renamed the National Convention of Nigerian Citizen in 1960 when parts of Cameroon broke away from Nigeria. It was the first political party organized to seek total independence for Nigeria. Its first president was Herbert Macaulay while its general secretary was Nnamdi Azikiwe. The party was the first major Nigerian party until 1950 and Nnamdi Azikiwe took over as president of the party when Herbert died.

Between 1950 and 1951, two major political parties emerged; the Action Group (AG) and the Northen's People's Congress (NPC). The AG emerged from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a pan Yoruba cultural society with the aim to capture political power in the western region, while the NPC emerged with the purpose to combat ignorance, idleness and injustice in the northern region and control of the government in the north.

The pre-independence political parties faced several problems such as the fact that they didn't have any national outlook. Each political party was loyal to their ethnicity and relied on regional support. The parties placed emphasis on personality, rather than the issues that plagued the community. There was a lot of political party defection, which destabilized, weakened or even led to the collapse of various political parties.

With the ban on politics lifted in September 1978 in the second republic of Nigeria, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and four other parties were launched. The NPN was comprised and held by a host of social clubs, tribal unions, committees of friends, etc.

In the third republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida started the shift to civil rule in 1989, which led to Nigeria having two political parties which had their programs, constitution, objectives and policies set up by the military, and thus the two parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) were established.

In the fourth republic, three political parties were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in 1998. The parties were the Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) which was later changed to the All-NigeriaPeople's Party (ANPP) in 2002 and lastly the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In the recent years, several more parties have been added throughout the years.

Nigeria's political parties face several challenges such as the high levels of corruption which has led to politics being viewed as a dirty and overly competitive business. The regulatory framework of the parties should be changed so that new and upcoming parties won't have to resort to bribing and serving larger, richer and

already well-established parties in order to get a piece of the proverbial pie. Most party leaders see their political activities and parties as a means to further their own business agenda. This trend needs to be stopped and those that practice it need to be apprehended so that the trend/cycle ends with them in order to foster the relationship between the citizens and the government as well as to allow us to develop further as a country.