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ASSIGNMENT

In about 2-page review chapter 15 an overview of the idea of pressure Group in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria Politics page 194-200.

A pressure group is a formal or organized body with common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the aim or goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. A pressure group promotes its interest regarding an issue, it seeks to influence government decision and policies.

Anifowose(1999) described pressure groups as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. Pressure group came into existence to complement enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups the purpose of pressure groups is to ensure that government does their biddings and with some pressure through the right channels and means, pressure groups are able to make government listen to them, in addition to that, these groups influence both public policy, administration and even go a long way to determine political structure of the society and forms of government. Some examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are; Academic Staff Union for University (ASUU), Afenifere, Oodua People’s Congress (Representing the Yoruba tribe), Arewa Consultative Forum, Arewa People’s Congress (Representing the Hausa tribe), Nigeria Bar Association of Nigeria(NBA), Christian Association of Nigeria(CAN), Nigeria labour Congress( NLC). Pressure group and political Parties activities may sometimes appear similar but they are different from each other. However, this differences do not point out the fact that they have nothing in common they do because they relate with each other to achieve certain changes.

Furthermore, pressure groups existence is to checkmate and make democracy better to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society, also to treat the gap in the democratic process, to inform debates among ourselves to encourage participation, and to enhance good accountability in our daily society, however, while pressure groups are acknowledge as potentially beneficial to a democratic society problems can arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific groups. In this situation the voice of a small groups of people with narrow interest can become overly influential.

Types of Pressure Groups

The types of pressure Groups which are as follows; Interest Groups, Cause Groups, Insider Groups and Outsider Groups, Anomic Groups, Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups.

Interest groups: This type of group can be seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society, for example, the trade units for instance, Confederation of British Industry (CBI) known as the voice of business in the country and in Nigeria, convention on business integration.

Cause Pressure Groups; This group are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes, for example, charities and environmental groups. For instance, we can see the Amnesty International which campaign for the need to end human right abuse.

Insider Groups and Outsider Groups; Insider can be said to be regularly consulted by government, they have regular access to minsters or legislators, the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) is an example of such groups. Furthermore, an insider may be high or low in profit nevertheless the intend to have influence on government mission and vision. while an Outsider groups have no access or link to the government and its machineries. Example this set of groups are the Animal Liberation Front which argues for rights to earth exploitation and destruction.

Atomic Groups: This type of groups have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society, also the are not guided by appropriate behavioral style or rule and the may sometimes act violently.

Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups; Associational Groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country, the also have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. While Non-Associational Groups are pressure group without a formal organization.

Functions of pressure groups are:

Serve as sources of Information to Government; One of the function of pressure groups is that they serve as source of information to the government. Promotion of the Interest of the Minority; Pressure groups champion the right of the privileged especially promotional pressure groups, as they go about their activities they ensure that the interest of minority groups are not trampled upon by the government, which is to say pressure groups act as a watch dogs on the government. Link Government to the People; The main function of pressure groups is that it serves as a link between the government of the day and the people its governs. Pressure groups stay up to date on relevant information and are able to sensitise the people on such matter and at the same time relate to the government what the question of the people is? Promote Participation in Government; Another function of pressure groups is that it promote public participation in the activities of government of the day. Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies; Criticism of government policies curtail and dictatorial tendency government may have. Also, the activities of pressure groups ensure that government do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into a dictatorship.