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AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEAS OF PRESSURE GROUP,’’ IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’s POLITICS.

Pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental goals of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage.

Pressure means to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something.

According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as ‘’interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. Pressure group come into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups (Oyeleye, 1998).

Pressure groups and political parties’ activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. The first distinction is that political parties seek to gain government powers, while on the other hand, pressure groups do seek to gain power. Rather their aim is to influence political decisions. Second political parties have a wide range of political policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Also pressure groups are not accountable for their actions, while political parties do account for their actions. For instance when you vote for a political party during election period that is to make them accountable.

Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. While pressure groups are acknowledged as potentially beneficial to a democratic society, problems can arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific groups.

Pressure group have their important place in the scheme of things in a nation, there is some downside. Sometimes due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions, while not considering government’s limited resources. For example when some professional bodies go on strike, citizens suffer and government might be incapacitated due to shortage of funds to meet the requirement of these association.

Types of pressure groups

1. Interest Groups:

This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society.

1. Cause Group:

These group are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. Example charities and environmental groups.

1. Insider Groups and outsider Groups:

These group are regularly consulted by the government. The NBA is an example of this group.an insider group may be high or low in profile, nevertheless they intend to have influence on government’s mission and vision.

1. Anomic Groups:

These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style or rule, and may sometimes act violently.

1. Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups:

These groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country.

Functions of pressure groups

1. Curtailing of dictatorial Tendencies :

Criticism of government policies curtail any dictatorial tendency government may have.

1. Promotes participation in Government:

Pressure group promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day.

1. Influencing Legislation:

They are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefit of citizens.