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REVIEW OF CHAPTER 15

AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. This makes a pressure group a formal or organised body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government decisions and policies. According to Anifowose(1999) pressure group is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups”. Pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups. 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 have their importance 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.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

***1) Interest Groups:*** This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, the trade units.

***2) Cause Groups:*** These groups 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 abuses.

***3) Insider Groups and Outsider Groups:***  Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. The Nigeria Bar Association(NBA) is an example of such groups.

***4) Anomic Groups:*** Groups here have unpredictable actions and behaviour as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioural style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently. Protest, rioting, strikes, and sometime revolution, are some of the means through which they mount pressure.

***5) Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups:*** : associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country, also, these groups have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. On other hand, non- associational groups are pressure group without a formal organisation.

FUNCTION OF PRESSURE GROUPS

***1) Links Government to the People:*** One of the functions 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 opinion of the people is.

***2) Promotes Participation in Government:*** Some pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government. The activities of pressure groups therefore, promotes political participation and carries the citizenry along.

***3) Serving as Sources of Information to Government:*** As the pressure groups lobby government on various fronts, the interaction offers the government valuable information on aspects of issues they may not even be aware of.

***4) Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies:*** The activities of pressure groups ensures that government do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into a dictatorship.

***5) Promotion of the Interest of the Minority:*** Its champion the rights of under-privileged, especially promotional pressure groups. As they go about their activities, they ensure that the interests of minority groups are not trampled upon by the government. Thus, pressure group act as watchdogs on the government.

***6) Influencing Legislation:*** Pressure groups is that they are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefit of citizens. Pressure groups put pressure on government to influence its policy, change a policy direction, withdraw entirely a particular policy that does not favour their members or the citizenry.

Pressure Groups’ Lobbying

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action for example organised protests. Some pressure groups exert more influence than others. The degree to which such groups are able to achieve their goals may depend on their ability to be recognised as legitimate by the population, media, and by those in power.Pressure Groups lobbying in so many ways. They lobby with governmental official directly. For example, they lobby legislators, ministers and other government machineries. Also, pressure groups may sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills.