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COURSE CODE: GST 203

In about two pages review chapter 15: ‘An overview of the idea of pressure group’ in Salient Issues in Government and Nigerian’s politics, Pg. 194-200.

A formal or organised body with a common interest, whose fundamental interest or aim is to mount pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its advantages a Pressure Group.

It is an association of groups of persons with a common interest, who try to achieve their aim by influencing the government. They can also be referred to as ‘The Fundamental Representative’. The group is created with respect to various sectors, occupations and profession in the country or state; an example is the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSU).

Pressure group according to Anifonose (1999) is described as interest groups, lobby or protest groups. Oyeleye (1998) stated that pressure groups came into existence to enhance and protect the interest of their members. Pressure groups influence public policy, administration and sometimes the political structures of the society and forms of government. The activities of pressure groups and political parties most of the time appear to be similar.

The presence of pressure group helps to check mate and make democracy better. It also helps to treat the gaps in the democratic process, to inform debates among everyone in the society, encourage participation and enhance accountability in our daily society.

Types of Pressure Groups

1. Interest Group: This group is seen as a sectional group representing people in the society; an example is the trade union like, Convention on Business Integration (CBI).
2. Anomic Group: These groups have unpredictable actions and behaviours, their actions are mostly based on the situation of the society at that moment. These groups are not guided by any appropriate behavioural style or conduct. They mostly resort to violence if their needs are not met. Rioting, strikes, revolutions, etc. are some of the methods they use to mount pressure.
3. Cause Group: These groups are promotion groups and their aim is mostly to promote a particular cause or problem and achieve a particular objective. They are mostly charitable and Environmental groups. These groups mainly champion social movement, an example is the Amnesty International.
4. Insider and Outsider Group: These groups are mainly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. The insider group may have a high or low profile but they aim at having an influence on the government’s decisions. Outsider group don’t have direct access to the government so they use other means to influence the government’s actions and decisions. These groups are mainly radical in nature and they change from time to time based on the governing party or power at that time.
5. Associational and Non-associational Groups: These groups are usually registered with the authority in a state or country. Associational groups have their own registered offices and constitution. Non-associational groups are without formal organisations. The arrangement is by virtue of social or religious traditions, tribal or race afflictions, etc. Examples are ethnic-racial groups, religious bodies, etc.

Functions of Pressure Groups

1. Pressure groups criticize the government policies to help curtail any dictatorial tendencies.
2. They also help to promote the interest of the minority group, hence they act as watch dogs of the government.
3. They pressure the government so as to ensure that the policies that are beneficial to the citizens are implemented.
4. The pressure groups also serve as information distributors/carries to the government.
5. Pressure groups also help to promote the participation of the public in the activities of the government.