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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’s politics

An Overview of the idea of Pressure group

Understanding Pressure Group

A pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. Pressure groups aim at ensuring that the government does their biddings and with pressure through the right means, they will be able to make government listen to them. Pressure groups are referred to as The Functional Representative. These groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic or social. Some examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are Academic Staff Union for University (ASUU), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and a lot more.

There is a difference between pressure groups and political parties. Firstly, political parties seek to get government powers while pressure groups don’t. Secondly, political parties have a wide range of policies while pressure groups narrow their goals. Thirdly, political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups. However, with all these differences, they relate together to achieve certain social changes.

Pressure group however has some disadvantages. 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 ASUU go on strike, they make citizens suffer and hold other stakeholders to ransom and insist that government accommodate their requests.

Types of pressure groups

* Interest groups- They are known as sectional groups representing the people in the society. For example, in Nigeria, there is a Convention on Business Integration (CBI).
* Cause groups- They are promotion groups which aim at promoting particular causes like charities and environmental groups.
* Insider groups and Outsider groups- Insider groups intend to have influence on government’s mission and visions and are regularly consulted by the government like the Nigerian Bar Association. On the other hand, outsider groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries like the Animal Liberation Front. However, the insider and outsider group changes from time to time based on the party or government in power.
* Anomic groups- These groups’ actions are unpredictable and are usually violent through protests, rioting or strikes.
* Associational groups and non-associational groups- Associational groups are registered with appropriate authorities and have a formal organization. On the other hand, non-associational groups have no formal organization and are mostly by virtue of kinship or family or social traditions.

Functions of pressure groups

Firstly, pressure groups serve as a link between the government and the people. Secondly, they serve as a source of information to the government and they also promote public participation in the activities of government of the day. In addition, they help promote the interest of the minority and curtail any dictatorial tendency a government may have. Also, pressure groups influence legislation by pressurizing the government to implement policies that will benefit the citizens