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ASSIGNMENT

In about 2 pages, review chapter 15, an overview of the idea of pressure group, in salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics, pages 194-200.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF THE PRESSURE GROUPS.

A pressure group promotes its interest regarding an issue; it seeks to influence government decisions and policies. The pressure group is referred to as “the functional representative”. According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. These groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic or social, among others. Some examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are: Academic staff union for university (ASUU), Nigeria bar association (NBA), Nigeria labour congress (NLC), Christian association of Nigeria (CAN). Political groups and political parties’ activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. Also, pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions, while political parties do account for their actions.

In the democratic process, there is a need for compromise in order to reach consensus regarding the common good. If pressure groups remain rigid and refuse to compromise on specific issues, they can potentially monopolize the democratic process by focusing public debate on a few specific issues. While pressure groups have their importance 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 governments’ 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 requirements of these associations.

There are several types of pressure groups: Interest groups, cause groups, Insider and outsider groups, Anomic groups, Associational groups and Non-associational groups.

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

Cause groups: These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes .For example, charities and environmental groups.

Insider groups and outsider groups: Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. An example is Nigeria bar association (NBA). On the other hand, outsider groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to use other ways to have impact. An example is the animal liberation front, which champions rights for animals. However, the insider and outsider group changes from time to time based on the party or government in power.

Anomic groups: Groups here have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently.

Associational and Non- associational groups: Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. On the other hand, non- associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization.

There are different functions of pressure groups. They are as follows: Promotes participation in government, serving as sources of information to government, curtailing of dictatorial tendencies, pressure groups champion the rights of the under- privileged especially promotional pressure groups, another function of 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 group also serves as a link between the government of the day and the people it governs. Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. Pressure groups lobby in so many ways. They lobby with government officials directly. Also, pressure groups may sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills.