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Government and political institution (GST 203)

A review of chapter fifteen (15)”an overview on the idea of pressure group” in “Salient issues in government and Nigeria’s Politics.

To amount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. This makes interest groups a formal and 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 it’s own advantage. Personally, I see Pressure Group as a group or set of people with a common ideology and philosophy in seeing things the same way and are brought together by their common interest. Pressure Group could be referred to as “The Functional Representative”. This is the idea that various pressure groups represents various sectors of the society based on professions. For example, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) represents the lawyers and solicitors while the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) are representatives of those in the medical field. There also the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which champions the interest of academics and conditions of learning in Nigerian Universities; mostly the federal and state universities in Nigeria. This pressure groups seem to be the most populous among others in Nigeria, most times when the government is not treating them right u hear of an ASUU strike just like the one that happened earlier this year 2020. The first ASUU strike   
occurred after the end of the military era in 1999, Nigerians ushered in democracy and a government that promised to be people oriented. But it didn't take long for Nigerian students to experience a disruption in their academic pursuit. Few months after the Obasanjo-Atiku administration was sworn-in, ASUU embarked on a nationwide strike and it lasted for five months.

According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as “intrest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups”. Pressure groups came into existence to compliment, enhance or even to protect the interest of their group and members (Oyeleye 1988). What pressure group seeks to achieve is to make the government carry out their bid and with pressure through the right means or channel, the government will listen to them. Pressure Groups too influence public policy, administration and even go a long way to determining the political structure of the society and forms of government. These groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic or social among others. There are many pressure groups in Nigeria namely thus Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Area People’s Congress (Representing the Yoruba’s), and so on.

Political parties activities may sometimes appear to be similar but it is no firstly because the aim of political party or entity is to gain power and control governance in a state but pressure groups don’t seek power but rather the seek to influence political decisions. Secondly, political parties have a wide range of policies but pressure groups narrow their goals. Thirdly, political parties actions are accounted for but this is not in the case of pressure groups because they are not being voted for. Political parties are organized groups unlike pressure groups. These do not point to the fact the both don’t have anything in common. They do infact, they could relate together to achieve societal changes and they might align their interests with that of political parties that are believed to possess the capability to further their interests. Pressure groups existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. Also, to treat the gap in the democratic process to inform debates among ourselves, to encourage participation and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. Most times, Pressure groups have their short comings or downside, due to their selfish interest pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decision while not considering government limited resources e.g. When professional bodies go on strike, citizens suffer and government might be incapacitated due to shortage of funds to meet the requirements of these association.

Types of groups, The Interest groups are seen as the voice of the society representing the people and are also seen as sectional groups. For example trade units like CBI (Confederation of British Industry).

The cause groups are promotional groups which seek to promote particular causes For example Charities and environmental groups

The Anomic group have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work base on moment and situations in the society. They are not guided by appropriate behavioral style or rule and mist times act violently; riot, protest, strikes and sometimes revolutionary forms in which they amount pressure.

Associational groups and non-associational groups: The associational groups are formal and recognized in a state. They are registered even with their location known but the non-associational group in the other hand arise as a virtue of kinship or family, social tradition, tribal or even race affliction, just to mention a few.

Insider groups and outsider groups: An insider group like the NBA have access to government and it’s machinery however they could be low profiting but they seek to influence government policy and the outsider groups have no link to the government or legislation like Rights for Animal, Earth liberation and so on. They are radical because they are denied by government. However, both groups changes from time to time based on the government in power.

Functions of pressure groups are as follows: linking the government to the people, pressure groups stay up to date on relevant information and sensitize the people and also relate to the government what the people think

Promotes participation in government: Pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government their activities therefore promotes political participation and carries the citizens along.

Serving as a source of information to the government: As the pressure groups lobby government on various fronts, the interaction offers the government available information on aspect or issues they might have no knowledge of.

Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies: Criticism of government policies curtail any Dictatorial tendency government may have. Also pressure groups ensures that government do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby thrilling in dictatorship

Other functions of pressure groups include promotion of the minority interest, influencing legislation and lobbying among others.

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A review of chapter two (2)”an historical analysis of the evolution of the Nigerian State in “Salient issues in government and Nigeria’s Politics.

The Nigerian historical background of government and politics involves both the pre-colonial and the colonial period. The Nigerian State is a colonial creation. It is a product of of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with it’s eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. The Nigerian pre-colonial comprised of different independent Chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires, these among others include the Borno Empire, the Hausa states and the Sokoto caliphate in the North; the Igbo segmentary societies in the east; Benin kingdom and the Oyo Empire in the west and several ethnic identities.

The time when man lived in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidence from different parts of Nigeria which pointed to the fact that man had settled in the region long ago since the Palacolithic period 500,000-9000BC.The artifacts, mostly stone tools which further confirmed that Nigerians tool part in the Stone Age civilization that lasted from 3,000,000-5000BC. The excavation of a Stone Age skeleton at Iwo Eleru near Akure in Ondo state.

Men lived in remote areas like Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin known as ancientCivilisation. Terracotta was discovered in Nok in 1936, Nok culture is believed tohave existed due to the transitional civilisation between Stone Age and Iron Age. Nok culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century BC. Ife is known for its Terracotta. Quartz was used to make stool. Art historians believed that Ife art was gotten from Nok culture because of their similarities in bead making also believed it’s from Ife that Benin learnt bronze sculpture. In Nigeria we have three major ethnic groups which are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani. The Yoruba is one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria we can trace theorigin to Oduduwa who is the founder of the Yoruba kingdom. Oke Oramfe in Ile-Ife is believed to be the centre from which the world was created. Oduduwa became the ruler and was from that state. The Yoruba structure had an ’Oba’ who was theruler that lived in the palace called Aafin. The Oba is both the spiritual and political head he has limitations to his power known as Eewo to curb tyranny and despotism on the part of the king. If he violated it death would be his punishment. He has other rulers who assist him with governing the people like the Baale and the Oloja. Each town was divided into units or wards watched over by ward head known as Ijoye. The pattern of administration was hierarchical. The Oyo Empire is an example of the pre-colonial of the Yorubaland, the people were ruled by the Alaafin, and he is regarded as the companion of the gods known as Ekeji Orisa. The Oyomesi had the power to remove the Alaafin when he is dictatorial. The head of the army is known as the Aare –Ona – Kankanfo.

The Igbo people were acephalous in nature they were divided into five group the Igbo of eastern Nigeria, Igbo of south eastern Nigeria, Igbo of north eastern Nigeria, western Igbo and northern Igbo. The ancestor of Igbo according to Nri came from the sky and arrived at Aguleri as their population increased their migrated to other parts of Igbo land to establish settlements. In Igbo land there was no centralized government they practiced democracy some socio political institution existed in each village to perform the legislative functions institutions were created like the council of elders, age grade, family and secret societies. The family was the smallest unit which was headed by an Ofo title holder one of them was the senior known as the

Okpara who presided over council meetings. Oha-na-eze is a form of general assembly which consisted the male adult members, the age grade were people born at a particular time. The secret societies consisted of the diviners’ masquerades, ubinuknabi they played significant roles they performed rituals to ward off evil or appease the gods The Igbo believed in re-incarnation their religious lives were surrounded by mysticism and superstitions.

The Hausa land is located in the northern part of Nigeria, it was made of fourteen states divided into two groups which are Hausa bakwai and Hausa banzu. Oral tradition originated from a man known as Bayajidda who killed a snake that oppressed the people which he later married the queen. Islam was introduced to Hausa in the fourteen century the Jihad war of 1804 strengthened it. Emirs were put in place to rule at Sokoto and Gwandu to hold allegiance to Dan Fodio the emirs had title holders who helped in ruling the sarkin fada, galadima, magaji, waziri, yari. They followed a sharia law.The British have been given credit for the creation of Nigeria but the Portuguese were the first to arrive Nigeria through Bini kingdom. The Atlantic slave trade was the trade carried on across the Atlantic Ocean between Europeans and Africa it made more importance in the 15th century. The trans-Atlantic slave trade was the unfortunate channel that first put the British in contact with Nigeria, they later abolished it through British West African Squadron. In 1900 Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British colonial office. The first amalgamation in 1906 into Lagos colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation was in 1914 the British amalgamated northern and southern Nigeria, British governed Nigeria by Indirect rule which means by using Local rulers of the society they left their way of life behind with us which we have been following.

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