NAME: WARIOWEI PRECIOUS ONYEDIKACHUKWU

LEVEL: 200 L

DEPARTMENT: LAW

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QUESTION:

Summarize chapter 15

An Overview of the idea of pressure group

To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something.

A pressure group is a formal or organized body with common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its advantages. The Pressure group is referred to as “The Functional Representative”. This is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions and it is usually done through their occupations or professions e.g. the Nigerian Bar association (NBA), represents the lawyers and solicitors e.t.c.

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 protect the interest of their members or groups (Oyeleye, 1998). Pressure groups seeks to achieve ensure the government does their biddings and make the government listen to them.

Pressure groups may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. The differences include

1. Political parties seek to gain government powers while pressure groups do not seek to gain power, rather their aim is to influence political decisions.
2. Secondly, pressure groups narrow their goals and not organized while on the other hand political parties have wide range of policies and are organized.

Political parties and pressure groups have similarities which is; they relate together to achieve certain social changes. Pressure groups may align their interest with that of certain political parties to further their goals.

The benefits of pressure group are to checkmate and make democracy better and 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.

While pressure group have their benefits, there is some downsides. Sometimes, due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to change the direction of government decisions, while not considering the government’s limited resources. For example, when professional bodies goon strike, citizens suffer and government might be incapacitated due to shortage of funds to meet the requirements of these associations. ASUU and NMA may indeed have genuine reasons to goon strike, but when they goon strike, they hold other stake holder as ransom and insist that government fulfil their request.

The functions of pressure group are to serve as a link between the government and the people, to promote participation in government activities there by promoting political participation and carry citizens along, to serve as source of information to the government by providing the government within information the authorities are not aware of and finally to promote interest of minority which includes- rights of the under privileged and ensure its not trampled upon by those in power.

There are many types of pressure groups are but I will mention some;(a) the anomic groups which are not guided by any rule or behavioral style, (b) the insider group which are regularly consulted by the government and have regular access to ministers and legislators, and (bii)the outsider group that have no link to the government, (c) the associational group which are registered under the state or country e.t.c.

In conclusion, the chapter talks about pressure group as a whole, benefits, functions and its types and how they perform their duties as members of a group. It is also considered as an indispensable and helpful element of the democratic process. Thus, it is very essential for the government to consult these organized groups at the time of policy formulation and implementation in different fields of life. 