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SUBJECT CODE: GST 203 LEVEL: 200.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN (15) – AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP.

A pressure group promotes its interest regarding an issue; it seeks to influence government decisions and policies. It is often referred to as “The Functional Representative.” This is so because the pressure groups perform various functions in the society which is usually done through their occupations or professions.

According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is defined as “interest groups, lobby groups or even lobby groups”. The achievements of pressure groups are as follows; to ensure that government does their bidding, they also influence both public policy, administration and determine political structure of the society and forms of government. Examples of pressure groups include; ASUU (Academic Staff Union for University), Oodua People’s Congress, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) etc.

The discussion between political parties and pressure groups will be discussed because often a lot of people misinterpret them the two concepts. Firstly, political parties seek to gain government powers, while pressure groups do not to seek to gain power. Again, political parties have a wide range of policies meanwhile pressure groups narrow their goals, Furthermore, pressure groups are not accountable for their actions, while political parties are accountable for their actions. Although, the differences between political parties and pressure groups have been highlighted they have a similarity which is they relate together to achieve certain social changes.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS,

1. Interest groups: It is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society.
2. Cause groups: They seek to promote physical change in the society. Example, charities and environmental groups and also protesting for expansion of seaports, airports, railways etc.
3. Insider groups and Outsider groups: Insider groups are regularly consulted by government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. An example is NBA (Nigeria Bar Association). They intend to influence government decisions. The outsider groups have no access to the government and its machineries.
4. Anomic groups: This group works based on the moment and situation in the society. They are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style. They make use of stikes, protest and revolution.
5. Associated groups and non- associated groups: Associated groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state. Non- associational groups do not have a formal organization.

FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS.

1. Link government to the people: It serves as a link between the people and the government by informing the people about relevant information.
2. Promotes participation in government: Pressure groups helps to enhance active participation in government which in turn promotes political participation.
3. Serving as sources of information to government: The pressure groups inform the government on various issues they may not be aware of.
4. Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies: The pressure groups ensure that the government do not abuse their power.
5. Promotion of the interest of the minority: The pressure group serve as watchdog for the society by ensuring that the minority groups are not trampled upon by the government.
6. Influencing legislation: The pressure groups are important because they help to put pressure on the government which makes them become effective.
7. Pressure groups’ lobbying: The pressure groups makes use of different strategies like lobbying officials, media advocacy and direct political action, Groups are able to achieve their goals depending on their recognized legitimacy by the media, population and those in power. They lobby through government officials, friends, families, relatives etc.