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Assignment: In about a 2 page review Chapter 15 “AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP"

A pressure group is a form or organised 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 and political parties' activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. The first distinction is that political parties seek to gain government powers. While on the other hand, pressure groups do not seek to gain power. Rather, their aim is to influence decisions. Political parties have wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions, while political parties do account for their actions.

Pressure groups' existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of the people in the society. Also, to treat the gaps in the democratic process, to inform debates among ourselves, to encourage participations, and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. However, while pressure groups are acknowledged as potentially beneficial to a democratic society, problems can arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific groups.

While pressure groups have their importance place 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 the government’s decisions, while not considering government’s limited resources.

There are numerous types of pressure groups; Interest groups, Cause groups, Insider and Outsider groups, Anomic groups, Associational and Non-Associational groups and many others

* Interest groups: This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society.
* Cause groups: These groups seek to promote particular causes
* Insider and Outsider groups: Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. Outsider groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to use other ways to impact.
* Anomic groups: These groups have unpredictable actions and behaviour as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioural 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. Also, these groups have their own registered offices, constitution and so on. Non-Associational groups are peessure groups without a formal organisation. Their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, social traditions, tribal or even race afflictions.

The pressure groups have quite a number of functions they play in the modern society some of which are:

* It serves as a link between the government and the people it governs.
* It promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day.
* They serve as sources of information to the government on issues they are not aware of
* They ensure the government does not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into a dictatorship.
* They champion the rights of the under-privileged especially promotional pressure groups.
* They are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on the government so that it can implement policies to the benefit of the citizens.

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goal, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. The degree to which such groups are able to achieve their goals may depend on their ability to be recognized as legitimate by the population, media and by those in power. Pressure groups lobby with governmental officials directly.