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ASSIGNMENT: IN ABOUT TWO PAGES REVIEW CHAPTER 15, “AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP,” IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS.

UNDERSTANDING PRESSURE GROUPS

To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. Pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the aim of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. The pressure group is referred to as “The Functional Representative“. For example, the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) represents the Lawyers and Solicitors. According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups”. These groups influence both public policy, administration, and even go a long way to determine and political structures of the society and forms of government. Some examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are; Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) etc.… 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 Pressure Groups do not seek to gain power but they rather their aim to influence political decisions. Also political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Pressure groups and Political parties relate together to achieve certain social changes.

Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. However, while pressure groups are acknowledged as potentially beneficial to a democratic society, problems can arise when the democratic processes becomes dominated by a few specific groups. In this situation, the voice of small group of people with narrow interest can become overly influential. While pressure groups have their important place in the scheme of things in their 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 government limited resources.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

INTEREST GROUPS: this group is seen as sectional group, representing the people in the society.e.g. The trade units for instance the Convention on Business Integration (CBI) in Nigeria. CAUSE GROUPS: these are the promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example charities and environmental groups for instance the Amnesty International which campaign for the need to end human right abuses. INSIDER GROUPS AND OUTSIDER GROUPS: these groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) is an example of such groups. However an insider group may be high or low in profile, nevertheless they intend to have influence on government’s mission and visions. While the Outside groups has no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to make use of other ways to impact. Examples are; Animal Liberation Front which champions rights for animals etc. ANOMIC GROUPS: these groups have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. Protesting, rioting, strikes and sometimes revolution, are some of the means through which they mount pressure. ASSOCIARTIONAL GROUPS AND NON-ASSOCIATIONAL GROUPS: associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. While non-associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization.

FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

-Links government to the people -Promotes Participation in Government -Serves as Source of Information to the Government -Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies -Promotion of the Interest of the Minority -Influencing Legislation

TECNIQUES OR STRATEGIES USED BY PRESSURE GROUPS: The Lobbying and Striking Techniques

LOBBYING: pressure groups mostly influence their action through inner actors of the government bodies to execute. Examples, they lobby legislators, ministers and other governmental machineries. STRIKING: pressure groups always know the best time to strike the government decisions and policies to get ordinance or attention from the people or government.