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SMS: ACCOUNTING

CHAPTER 15: AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

Understanding Pressure Group

A pressure group is referred to as the functional representative. It is a formal body with a common interest with the aim of putting pressure on governmental institution to influence their policies and decisions. Various pressure groups represent diverse sectors of the society.

According to Anifowose, pressure group is explained as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. They came into existence to complement the interest of their members or groups. Pressure group seek to ensure that the government does their biddings. These groups could be religious, business- like, educational, social and others. Examples in Nigeria include; ASUU, Afenifere, Nigerian Bar Association of Nigeria, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). The activities of pressure groups and political parties are similar, yet different. Firstly, political parties seek governmental powers whereas pressure groups do not seek power but have the aim of influencing government’s decisions.

Secondly, political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Thirdly, political parties account for their actions while pressure groups do not. In addition to that, political parties are more formal than pressure groups. However, this doesn’t mean they both have nothing in common, they in fact relate together in achieving certain common goals. Pressure groups may align their interest with that of a political party. Pressure groups serve as a checkmate, they bridge the gaps in democratic process, encourage participations and enhance accountability. Problem may arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific groups. There is need for compromise in the democratic process to achieve a common good. Without this, they may monopolize the democratic process focusing on specific issues. Sometimes due to their selfish interests, pressure is mounted to change the direction of government decision. For example when they go on strike, citizens suffer and government may be short- handed in terms of funds to meet their requirements. They may have genuine agitations but when they go on strike, they hold other stakeholders to ransom.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

INTEREST GROUPS: This is seen as a sectional group, acting on behalf of the people in a society, e.g. trade units, Confederation of British Industry (CBI) known as the voice of business in the country, and in Nigeria.

CAUSE GROUPS: These are promotion groups that seek to promote particular causes e.g. charities and environmental groups, for instance, the amnesty international that campaign for human rights. Any group that leads social movement is also known as a cause group which are aimed at achieving a single objective.

INSIDER AND OUTSIDER GROUPS

These are regularly consulted by the government. They have access to ministers and legislators, the NBA is an example. An insider group may be high or low profile but they intend on influencing government’s missions and visions whereas outside groups have no access or links to the government. Examples include Animal Liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front which champions rights for animals, argues for rights to earth exploitation. These are mostly radical in nature because they are mostly denied by the government.

ANOMIC GROUPS

Groups here are unpredictable as they work based on the moment and situation of the society. They are not guided by an appropriate style and may sometimes act violently. Protests, riots are some of the ways by which they mount pressure.

ASSOCIATIONAL GROUPS AND NON-ASSOCIATIONAL GROUPS

Associational groups are registered with appropriate authorities in a society. They have their registered offices, constitutions etc. Non-associational groups are without formal organization. Their arrangement is by virtue of kinship, social traditions, tribal or race afflictions.

FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

Links Government to the People:

Pressure groups serves as an intermediary between the government and the people. They stay up to date on relevant information and sensitize people.

Promotes Participation in Government

This promotes public participation in the activities of government. They engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government.

Serving as Sources of Information to Government

As the pressure groups lobby government, the interaction offers the government valuable information.

Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies

Activities of pressure groups ensures the government does not drift to dictatorship.

Promoting of the Interest of the Minority

They champion the rights of the under-privilege

Others include:

Influencing Legislation

Pressure Groups’ Lobbying