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QUESTION: In about 2- page review chapter 15, “An overview of the idea of Pressure Group” in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics, pages 194-200.

Answer

To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. According to Anifowose (1999) Pressure Group is described as “interest groups or even protest groups”. Pressure group came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or group (1998).

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 political decisions. Second, Political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas Pressure groups narrow their goals. Also Pressure Groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions, while political parties do not account for their actions.

Political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups. However, these differences do not point to the fact that pressure groups and political parties have nothing in common. They do, infact, pressure groups and political parties relate together to achieve certain social changes. Pressure groups may align their interest with that of certain political parties that are believed to possess the capability to further their interests.

Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of 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. There are types of pressure groups, interest groups is seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, the trade units, for instance CBI (Confederation of British Industry) known as the voice of business in the country, and in Nigeria, Convention on Business Integration (CBI).

Cause groups are promotion groups which seek to promote particular causes. For example, charities and environmental groups for instance, we can see the Amnesty International, which campaign for the need to end human right abuses. It is always aimed at achieving a single objective, like protesting about the expansion of airports, seaports, railways etc.

Insider and Outsider 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. On the other hand, outsider groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries.

Anomic groups have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. Associated groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. Also, these groups have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. On the other hand, non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organization. Their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even race afflictions.

Some of the functions of pressure groups include; link government to the people, promotes participation in government, influencing legislation, promotion of the interest of the military and so on