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ASSINMENT

CHAPTER 15

AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

UNDERSTANDING PRESSURE GROUP

To establish pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. This makes a pressure group a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any government institution with the goals of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. A pressure group promotes its interest regarding issue, influences government decision and policies. Pressure group is referred to as “THE FUNCTIONAL REPRESENTATIVE”. This is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. Which is usually done through their occupations or professions.

Anifowose (1999) defined pressure group as an interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups, oyeleye (1998) also gave his view on pressure group. What pressure groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government does their biddings, government are able to listen to them. Pressure group influence both public policy, administration, determines political structures of the society and forms of government. In nature, this groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic or social among others. Some examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are: ASUU, Afenifere, Oodua people’s congress, Arewa

consultative forum, NBA, CAN, NLC.

Pressure groups and political parties may appear similar but they are different from each other. The differences are political parties seek to gain government powers while pressure group doesn’t but aim to influence political decisions. Political parties have a wide range of politics whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Political parties account for their actions while pressure group doesn’t. political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups. Political parties and pressure group only similarity is they relate together to achieve certain social changes.

Pressure groups existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to treat the gap in the democratic process, to inform debates among ourselves, to encourage participant and to enhance good accountability in our daily society while pressure group are acknowledged as potentially beneficial to a democratic society that is why if pressure group remains rigid and refuse to compromise on specific issues, they can potentially monopolize the democratic process by focusing public debates on a few specific issues. Pressure group also has some downside because sometimes due to their selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions, while not considering government’s limited and resources.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

* Interest group: is seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. E.g. the trade units.
* Cause groups: these groups are promoting groups, which seek to promote particular causes. E.g. charities and environmental groups.
* Insider groups and outsider groups: insider groups are regularly consulted by the government, have regular access to ministers or legislator e.g. NBA. Outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries e.g. the animal liberation front. The insider and outsider group changes from time to time based on the party or the government in charge.
* Anomic groups: this group has unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society.
* Associational groups and non-associational: associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. Non-associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization.

FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

* Links government to the people.
* Promotes participation in government.
* Serving as sources of information to government.
* Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies.
* Promotion of the interest of the minority.
* Influencing legislation.

PRESSURE GROUPS’ LOBBYING

Pressure group may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals. Pressure group lobby in so many ways they lobby with government officials directly.