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Chapter 15: An Overview Of The Idea Of Pressure Group

Understanding Pressure Group

A pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any government institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage.

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 conform debates among ourselves, to encourage participations and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. However, while pressure groups are acknowledge as potentially beneficial to a democratic society, problems can arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific groups.

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. While pressure groups have their important place in the scheme of things in a nation, there is some downside. Sometime, due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions while not considering government’s limited resources

Types Of Pressure Groups

Interest Groups

This group is also seen sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example CBI (Confederation of British Industry)

Cause Groups

These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example, charities and environmental groups. Any group that champions social movement is also seen as “cause group”, even though the group lacks formal structure. It s always aimed at achieving a single objective, like protesting about the expansion of airports, unrightfully killings of citizens, etc.

Insider Groups and Outsider Groups

Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers and legislators. Example is the Nigerian Bar Association(NBA). However, outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to use other ways to have impact. However, the Insider and Outsider group changes from time to time based on the party or government in power.

Anomic Groups

Groups here have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. Protest, rioting, strikes, and sometime revolution are some of the means through which they mount pressure.

Functions Of Pressure Groups

1. Links government to people
2. Promotes participation in government
3. Serving as sources of information to government
4. Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies
5. Promotion of the interest of the minority
6. Influencing Legislation