AKPOFURE TESE

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MEDICINE AND SURGERY

MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

GST 203- GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

**ASSIGNMENT**

In about 2 pages, review Chapter 15, ‘An Overview of the Idea of Pressure Group’, in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics, pages 194-200.

**Introduction – Understanding Pressure Group**

Pressure is mounted when one wants to persuade someone or coerce a person to do something. This is the essence of the pressure groups. A pressure group is in existence to promote its interest regarding an issue and seek to influence the government’s decisions and policies. This is why pressure groups are seen as ‘Functional Representative’. Pressure group is best described as ‘interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups’ according to Anifowose (1999) and they are in existence to complement, enhance or even protect the interests of their members or group at large. They do these by influencing government through the right channels. They influence different categories of organizations and governmental decisions. Common examples are: Nigerian Medical and Dental Association, Nigerian Bar Association, Academic Staff Union of Universities etc

Though pressure groups and political parties tend to be similar, they are different. Unlike political parties that seek to gain power, pressure groups seek to influence governmental decisions. Also, the goals of pressure groups are more streamlined and defined unlike those of political parties. We also see that pressure groups do not necessarily account for their actions, which is not the case for political parties. When their differences are put aside, pressure groups and political parties sometimes work together to achieve social change. Pressure groups team with political parties that are capable of furthering their interests.

Pressure groups are also present to checkmate and make democracy better. They seek for better participation of the masses and properly organized democratic processes. Sometimes a problem may arise here and pressure groups can become overly influential and may monopolize specific issues over the others. This can pose a great problem which can greatly affect not only the government but also the masses.

**Types of Pressure Group**

There are several types of pressure groups in existence and they include:

(i) Interest Groups: This groups are like sectional groups and they represent people in the society e.g. Convention on Business Integration.

(ii) Cause Groups: These groups seek to promote particular causes and they champion social movement. An example is a protest group on the expansion of airports.

(iii) Insider Groups and Outsider Groups: Insider groups are usually consulted by the government as they are closely linked. This is opposite for Outsider groups An example of the insider group is the Nigerian Bar Association while that of the outsider group is Animal Liberation Front.

(iv) Anomic Groups: These groups arise as a result of a particular situation ongoing and they are very unpredictable. A good example is the EndSARS protest group.

(v) Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups: Associational groups are registered groups, usually bearing a constitution and are recognized by necessary authorities. This is the opposite of Non-associational groups, which might be organized by a family, kindred, but basically, informally.

**Functions of Pressure Groups**

Pressure groups are very essential in the society as they serve as a link to the government, promote public participation in governance, and provide information to the government. They also seek to curtail any form of dictatorial tendencies, promote the interest of the minority and influence legislation. These and many more are the functions of pressure groups.

**Pressure Groups’ Lobbying**

In order to achieve their goals, pressure groups adopt different strategies which include lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and political action. The influence of a pressure group can arise over the other, due to recognition, acceptance or better connections. They can even go as far as sponsoring bills to achieve their goals. These strategies are most times very effective and timely.