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*Chapter 15: AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP*

To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. This makes a pressure group a formal or organised body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. A pressure group promotes it's interest regarding an issue; it seeks to influence government decisions and policies. The 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.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

*Interest Groups*

This group is also 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)

*Cause Groups*

These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example, charities and environmental groups.

*Insider Groups and Outsider Groups*

Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. The Nigeria 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.

*Anomic Groups*

Groups here have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently. Protest, rioting, strikes, and sometime revolution, are some of the means through which they mount pressure.

*Associational Groups and non-associational groups*

Associational 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.

*Functions of Pressure Groups*

• Linking the Government to the people: One of the functions of pressure groups is that it serves as a link between the government of the day and the people it governs.

• Promotes Participation in Government: Another function of pressure groups is that it promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day.

•Serving as sources of information to Government: Pressure Groups serve as sources of information to the government.

•Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies: Criticism of government policies curtail any Dictatorial tendency government may have.

•Promotion of the interest of the minority: They champion the rights of the under-priviledged, especially promotional pressure groups.

•Influencing Legislation: They are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefit of citizens.

PRESSURE GROUPS' LOBBYING

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct Political action. Clearly some pressure groups exert more influence than others. The degree to which such groups are able to achieve their goals may depend on their ability to be recognized as legitimate nu the population, media and by those in power. For example, civil rights groups, trade unions, and professional associations are more widely recognized and accepted than newly formed pressure groups or single-issue pressure group. Pressure groups lobby with government officials directly and they sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills.