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**19/LAW01/004**

**200L, LAW**

 **AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP**

 A pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental interest is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. It is referred to as ‘The Functional Representative’. It is also described as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. It came into existence to protect the interest of their members. In nature, these groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic, social among others.

 Pressure groups and political parties’ activities may sometime appear similar but they are different from each other. The first distinction is that political parties seek to gain government powers while pressure groups are out to influence governmental decisions or policies. Second, political parties have a wide range of policies while pressure groups narrow their goals. Also, political parties are accountable for their actions while pressure groups are not actually accountable. Political parties are also more organized than pressure groups. However, they still have things in common. Political parties and pressure groups relate together to achieve social changes.

Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of the majority of people in the society. Also to treat the gaps in the democratic process, however problems can arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific groups. While pressure groups have their importance place in the scheme of things in a nation, there is some downside. Sometimes due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions while not considering government limited resources.

**Types of Pressure Group**

**Interest Groups:** They are also known as sectional groups, representing the people in the society.

**Cause Groups**: They are also called promotion 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. E.g NBA. However, an insider group may be high or low on profile. Outsider groups on the other hand have no access or links to the government and its machineries, they use other ways. They are radical in nature because they are mostly denied by government.

**Anomic Groups:** They have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. They are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style.

**Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups:** they are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country with their own registered offices, constitution and so on. While non-associational groups do not have a formal organization.

**Functions of Pressure Groups**

It serves as a link between the government of the day and the people it governs.

It promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day.

They are sources of information to the government.

Criticisms of government policies curtails any dictatorial tendency government may have.

They champion the rights of the under-privileged especially promotional pressure groups.

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

**Pressure Groups’ Lobbying**

 Pressure groups may adopt varieties of strategies to achieve their goals including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. Pressure groups lobby in so many ways. They lobby with government officials directly or through people close to them. They may also sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills.