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**CHAPTER 15**

**PRESSURE GROUP:**

A pressure group is referred to as **“The Functional Representative”**. According to **Anifowose (1999)** pressure group is described as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. Pressure groups came into existence to protect the interest of their members or groups. They influence both public policy administration, and even go a long way to determine political structures of the society and forms of government.

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. Secondly, political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Thirdly political parties do account for their actions, while pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions. Political parties are formally organised than pressure groups.

Pressure groups exist to checkmate and make democracy better to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society and they treat the gaps in the democratic process to inform debates among ourselves to encourage participations, and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. Some 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

**Types of pressure groups are:**

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

Cause groups: They are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. Thus any group that champions social movement is also seen as “cause group” even though the group lacks formal structure. Its aim is to achieve a single objective which is to protest about the expansion of airports etc.

Insider groups and outsider groups: Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. Nigeria Bar Association is an example of such group. Outsider groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. An example is the Animal liberation Front. Thus the insider and the outsider group changes from time to time based on the party or government in power

Anomic groups: They have unpredictable actions and behaviour as they work based on the moment and situation in the society

Associational Groups and Non- Associational Groups: Associational groups are registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. They have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on while non- associational groups are pressure group without formal organization.

**Functions of pressure groups**:

They serve as a source of information to Government: They serve as sources of information to the government thus offering the government valuable information on aspects of issues they may not even be aware of.

They curtail dictatorial tendencies: They ensure that the government do not perpetuate themselves in power which may lead to dictatorship.

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

They promote the interest of the minority: They ensure that the interests of the minority groups are not trampled upon by the government. They act as watchdogs on the government.

They promote participation in government: They promote public participation in the activities of the government of the day which includes promoting political participation and carrying the citizens along.

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

Pressure Groups’ lobbying: They adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goal including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. Hence they lobby in so many ways including lobbying with government officials directly.