Name : Ganiyu Omotolani Zainab

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**Chapter 15: an overview of the idea of pressure group**

To apply pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. A pressure group can be defined as a formal or organised body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institutions with the goal of influencing governmental policies and laws to its own advantage. The pressure group is referred to as “the functional representative”. Different pressure groups represent different areas of the society based on their functions for example, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) represents the lawyers and solicitors, while the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) represents the doctor’s interests and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) champions the interests of academics and condition of learning in Nigeria’s universities.

The aim of a pressure group is to influence governmental policies to its own interest. It is a functional representative. The ways/strategies in which pressure groups mount pressure in order to achieve their goals include:

* Protest,
* Rioting,
* Lobbying elected officials,
* Media advocacy
* Strikes,
* Revolution, etc.

There are different types of pressure groups which include

Interest groups: they are sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, the trade units, CBI (confederation of British industry) known as the voice of business in the country, an in Nigeria, Convention of Business Integration (CBI)

Cause groups: these groups exist for the promotion of a particular cause. It is always aimed at a single objective. An example is the End-Sars protest group formed by the youths to advocate against bad governance in the country.

Anomic groups: these groups 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 or rule and may sometimes become violent.

Associational Groups and Non-Associational groups: associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country in which the groups have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. Non-associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization. They might just be related by tribe, family or kinship.

Pressure groups are very important in a society that wants to work, the advantages of pressure groups are helpful to the society at large. They are the link through which government hear the cries of their people. They connect the government together with the people. Other functions of pressure groups include:

* Linking the government to the people: pressure groups serve as a link between the government of the day and the people it governs. Pressure groups are very aware of happenings in the society and then sensitize the people on the matter and then relay to the government what the opinions of the people are.
* Restricting tendencies of dictatorial leadership: criticisms of government policies help to curtail any dictatorial tendency government might have.
* Promotes participation in government: by sensitizing the people, pressure groups are carrying the members of the public along with whatever is happening in government.
* Promotion of interest of the minority: pressure groups champion the rights of the under privileged in the society. They make sure that the interests of the minority are not trampled by the government.
* Serves as sources of information to the government: they are sources of information to the government. They share the opinions of the people with the government thereby making the government aware of what the people think