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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 organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government and politics and laws to its own advantage. Pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. This is usually done through their occupations or professions. Examples of pressure groups are Nigeria Bar Association which represents the Lawyers and Solicitors, while Nigeria Medical Association represent the doctor’s interests.

Pressure groups and Political parties’ activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. The first distinction is the political parties seek to gain government powers, while on the other hand, pressure groups do not seek to gain power but rather aim to influence political decisions. Another difference is that political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups. Irrespective of these differences, Pressure groups and Political parties have some things in common. Pressure groups and Political Parties relate together to achieve certain social changes. There are numerous types of pressure groups. They are; Interest groups, Cause Groups, Insider Groups and Outsider Groups, Anomic Groups, Associational Groups and Non- Associational Groups. The Interest Groups is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. The Cause Groups are promotion groups which seek to promote particular causes. The Insider Groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. The Outsider groups on the other hand have no access or links to the government and its machineries. The Anomic Groups have unpredictable actions and behaviors as they work baaed on the moment and situation in the society, The Associational Groups and Non- Associational Groups are usually registered with the appropriate authorities in a state or country. Also, they have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. Non-associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization.

There are numerous functions of pressure groups such as;

1. Links Government to the people.
2. Promotes Participation in Government.
3. Serving as Sources of Information to Government.
4. Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies.

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. The degree to which pressure groups are able to achieve their goals may depend on their ability to be recognized as legitimate by the population, media and by those in power.