

**01<sup>st</sup> December,2020**

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**19/MHS11/036**

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**GST 203- GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

### **AN OVER VIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP**

To exercise pressure means to persuade someone or a person into doing something. A pressure group is 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..

Functional Representative- This is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. This is usually done through their occupations or profession. For Example, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) represents Lawyers, while Nigeria Medical Association( NMA) represents doctors interest..

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. Rather, their aim is to influence political decisions.
- Political parties have wide range of policies, whereas Pressure groups narrow their goals.
- Pressure groups are not accountable for any of their actions while political parties do account for their actions.

Pressure group's existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. Also, to treat the gaps in the democratic process, to inform debates among ourselves, to encourage participation and to enhance good accountability in our daily society.

### **TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

1. **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 on Business Integration ).
2. **CAUSE GROUPS**: These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For Example, charities and environmental groups.

Any group that champions social movement is also seen as “cause group”, even though the group lacks formal structure. It is always aimed at achieving a single objective, like protesting about the expansion of airports, seaports, railways e.t.c

3. **INSIDER GROUPS OR OUTSIDER GROUPS:** Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. The Nigerian Bar Association is an example of such groups. On the other hand, outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to use other ways to impact. An example is the Animal Liberation Front.
4. **ANOMIC GROUPS:** Groups here have unpredictable actions and behaviours as they work based on moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioural style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently. Protest, rioting, strikes and sometimes revolution are some of the means in which they mount pressure.

### **FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

1. **Links 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.

2. **Promotes Participation in Government:** Another function of pressure groups is that it promotes public participation in the activities of the government of the day. The activities of pressure groups therefore, promote political participation and carries the citizenry along

3. **Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies:** The activities of the Pressure group ensures that the government do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drafting into a dictatorship.

4. **Serving a Sources of Information to Government :** As the pressure groups lobby government on various fronts, the Interaction offers the government valuable information on aspects of issues they may not even be aware of.

5. **Promotion of Interest of the Minority:** The pressure groups champion the rights of the under-privileged, especially promotional pressure group. As they go about their activities, they ensure that the interests of minority groups are not trampled upon by the government. Thus, pressure groups act as watchdogs on the government.

Pressure groups also help in Influencing Legislation and Lobbying.