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GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

**Chapter 15**

**An Overview of the Idea of Pressure Group**

A pressure group a formal or organized body we take common interests whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage.

This means that a pressure groups aim is to promote its interests regarding an issues, speak influence in governmental decisions and policies and to fight for whatever they feel is right.

The pressure group is referred to as the functional representative as represents the interests of the people. This is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions and what the stand for. This is usually done through there occupation or profession. Examples of pressure groups in Examples of pressure groups in Nigeria include; Nigeria Bar association, Nigeria Medical Association, Academic Staff Union of Universities and so on

According to Anifowose, pressure group is described as an interest group, lobby groups, or even protest groups. Pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interests of their members or groups. The main thing pressure groups want is fir the government to do their biddings and this can be achieved by applying pressure through the right channels and means. This pressure group are able to make the government listen to them.

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. Second, political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Also pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions, while political parties do account for their actions.

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's limited resources.

There are several types of pressure groups; Interest Groups, Insider Groups and Outsider Groups Cause Groups, Anomic Groups, Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups.

An interest group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, the trade units, for instance, CBI (Confederation of British Industry) known as the voice of business in the country, and in Nigeria, Convention on Business Integration (CBI).

Cause groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example, charities and environmental groups. for instance, we can see the Amnesty International, which campaign need to end human right abuses.

Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. The Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) is an example of such groups.

Anomic groups here have unpredictable actions and behaviour as they work based on the 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 sometime revolution, are some of the means through which they mount pressure.

Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities a state or country. On the other hand, non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organisation.

Pressure groups all share certain functions;

For one, they link government to the people. It serves as a link or intermediary between the government and the public or people it covers. To do this, they stay up to date on relevant information and are able to sensitive the people on such matter and at the same time, relate to the government what the opinion of the people is.

Secondly, it promotes participation in governmental activities of the day. Some pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government. The activities of pressure groups therefore promote political participation and carries the citizenry along.

Another function of pressure groups is that they as sources of information to the 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.

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action (e.g., organised protests). Clearly, some pressure groups exert more influence than others. The degree to which such groups are able to achieve their goals may depend on their ability to be recognised as legitimate by the population, media, and by those in power.