***ODUKWE KELVIN***

***19/SMS05/004***

***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 policies and laws to its own advantage. A pressure group promotes its interest regarding an issues; it seeks to influence government decisions and policies. According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. Pressure group came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups. Pressure groups and political parties’ activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. Pressure groups existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society .Pressure groups have their importance place in the scheme of things in a nation, there is downside. Sometime due to selfish interest, pressure is monitored to alter the direction of government decision, while not considering government’s limited resources.

**Types of Pressure Group**

Interest Groups: This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, 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: These 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 for the need to end human right abuses.

Insider Groups and Outsider Groups: Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. However, an insider group may be high or low in profile; nevertheless they intend to have influence on government’s mission and visions. On the other hand, outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. However, the Insider and Outsider group changes from time to time based on the party or government in power.

Anomic Groups: 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 behavioral style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently.

*Association Groups and Non- Associational Groups:* Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. Also, these groups have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. On the other hand, Non- Associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization. Their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kingship or even family attachment, social traditions, tribal or even race afflictions, just to mention few.

**Functions of Pressure Groups:**

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.

Serving as Sources of Information to Government: Another function of pressure group is that they as sources of information to the government. As the group lobby government on various fronts, the interaction offers the government valuable information on aspects of issues they may not even be aware of.

Promotes Participation of Government: Another function of pressure is that it promotes public participation in the activities of the government. Some pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government.

Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies: Criticism of government policies curtail any dictatorial tendency government may have. Also, the activities of pressure groups ensure that governments do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into dictatorship.

Promotion of the Interest of the Minority: Again, pressure groups champion the right of the under-privileged, especially promotional pressure groups. As they go about their activities, they ensure that the interests of minority groups are not trampled upon by the government.

Influencing Legislative: Another function of pressure groups is that they are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on the government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefits of citizens.

**Pressure Groups’ Lobbying**

 Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goal, including lobbying elected officials. Media advocacy and direct political action. Pressure Group lobby in so many ways. They lobby with governmental officials directly. Also, pressure groups may sponsor bills in legislative house and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills.