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CHAPTER 15

*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 it’s own advantage. The pressure group is referred to as “The Functional Representative”. This is usually done through their occupations or professions. For example, the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA),represents the Lawyers and Solicitors, while Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) represents doctor’s interest (ASUU) which champions the interest of academics and condition of learning in Nigeria’s universities.*

*According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as “ interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups”. 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 goal. In addition, political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups. However, these differences do not point to the fact that pressure groups and political parties have nothing in common. They do. In fact, pressure groups and political parties relate together to achieve certain social changes. Pressure groups may align their interest with that of certain political parties that are believed to possess the capability to further their interests.*

*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 participations, and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. However, while pressure groups are acknowledged as potentially beneficial to a democratic society, problems can arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific groups. In this situation, the voice of a small group of people with narrow interest can become overly influential. Moreover, in the democratic process, there is a need for compromise in order to reach consensus regarding the common good. If pressure groups remain rigid and refuse to compromise on specific issues, they can potentially monopolise the democratic process by focusing public debate on a few specific issues.*

*They’re various pressure Groups which include*

***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 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. 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, etc. Just to mention few.*

***INSIDER GROUPS AND OUTSIDER GROUPS:*** *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. 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. They have to use other ways to have impact.*

***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 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 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 group without a formal organisational. Their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, social traditions, tribal or even race afflictions, just to mention few.*

*They are various functions of pressure groups which are:*

***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 t people it governs.*

***PROMOTES PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT:*** *Another function of pressure groups is that it promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day.*

***SERVING AS SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO GOVERNMENT:*** *Another function of pressure groups is that they as sources of information to the government.*

***CURTAILING OF DICTATORIAL TENDENCIES:*** *Criticism of government policies curtail any dictatorial tendency government may have.*

***PROMOTION OF THE INTEREST OF THE MINORITY:*** *Again, pressure groups champion the rights of the under- privileged, especially promotional pressure groups.*

***INFLUENCING LEGISLATION:*** *Another function of pressure groups is that they are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefit of citizens.*

***PRESSURE GROUPS LOBBYING:*** *pressure groups may adopt variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action (e.g, organized protests).*