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**ANATOMY**

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## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

### **AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP**

#### **Understanding Pressure Group**

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. The pressure group is referred to as “The Functional Representative”. What pressure groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government does their biddings. And with some pressure through the right channels and means, pressure groups are able to make government listen to them. In nature, these groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic, or social, among others.

Pressure Groups and Political parties’ activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. 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.

#### **Types of Pressure Groups**

##### **Interest Groups**

This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, the trade units.

## **Cause Groups**

These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For examples, charities and environmental groups.

## **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. On the other hand, outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. Example this set of groups are the Animal Liberation Front, the Earth Liberation Front. Groups in this category are radical in nature because they are mostly denied by the government. 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 behaviours as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioural styles 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. They also have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. On the other hand, non-associational groups are pressure groups without formal organisation.

## **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.

## **Promotes Participation in Government**

Another function is that it promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day. It promotes political participation and carries the citizenry along.

## **Serving as sources of information to government**

They serve as sources 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.

## **Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies**

Criticism of government policies curtail any dictatorial tendency government may have.

## **Promotion of the interest of the minority**

They champion the rights of the under-privileged especially promotional pressure groups.

## **Influencing Legislation**

They are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefit of citizens.

## **Pressure Group's Lobbying**

Pressure Groups lobby in so many ways. They lobby with governmental officials directly. They sometimes lobby these government officials through friends, spouses, children and other relatives.