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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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 body with organized body with a common interest. The pressure group is referred to as the functional representative because it represents different sectors. For example, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) represents Lawyers and Solicitors while the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) represents Doctors interests.

According to Anifowose in 1999 pressure group is described as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. Examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are ASUU (Academic Staff Union for University), Afinere, Oodua People’s Congress (representing the Yoruba tribe), Arewa Consecutive Forum, Arewa People’s Congress (representing the Hausa tribe) and so on.

Pressure group and political parties activities may seem alike but they are different from each other. The first distinction is that political parties seek political parties while the aim of pressure groups is to influence political decisions.

Pressure groups existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for tyranny of majority of people in the society.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

Interest groups; this is also seen as seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example CBI (Confederation of British Industry).

Cause groups; these are promotion groups which seek to promote particular causes like charity and environmental groups. Any group that champions social movement is also seen as cause group. They do things like protesting for expansion of airports etc.

Insider and outsider groups; insider groups are usually consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. They may be high or low profile. Outsider groups have no link to the government and its machineries so they use other ways to impact.

Anomic groups; these groups have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. They are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style or rule.

Associational groups and Non-Associational groups; associational groups are normally registered with people and appropriate authorities and they have registered offices. Non-Associational groups are without formal organization.

FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

Links government to the people

Promotes participation in government

Serving as sources of information to the government

Curtailing of doctoral tendencies

Promotion of interest of the minority

Influencing legislation

Pressure groups lobbying