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 **AN OVERVIEW ON 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. Pressure groups influence both public policy, administration, and even go a long way to determine political structures of the society and forms of government.

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 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. In addition political parties are more formally organised than pressure groups. Pressure groups 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.

There are different 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, for instance, Confederation of British Industry known as the voice of business in the country.

**CAUSE GROUPS:** These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example, charities and environmental groups.

**INSIDER GROUPS AND OUTSIDER GROUPS:** Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to legislators or ministers. On the other hand, outside groups have no links or access to the government and its machineries. They are mostly denied by the government e.g. Animal Liberation Front

**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.

**ASSOCIATIONAL GROUPS AND NONASSOCIATIONAL GROUPS:** Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. They also have their own registered offices and so on. On the other hand, non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organisation. Their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment.

Pressure groups also have various functions which include:

**Links Government to the people:** It serves as a link between the government of the day and the people it governs.

**Promotes participation in government:** It promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day

**Serving as Sources of Information to 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:** Pressure groups champion the rights of the under-privileged, especially promotional pressure groups.

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

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action. Pressure groups lobby in so many ways. They lobby with governmental officials directly.