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GOVERNMENT

 CHAPTER 15

Pressure can be seen as a means of persuading one to do something. A pressure group is a formal or organized body with common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to their own advantage. They promote interests regarding an issue, it seeks to influence government policies and decisions. It is also known as “functional representative”.

EXAMPLES OF PRESSURE GROUPS IN NIGERIA

1. NBA – Nigerian Bar Association
2. NMA – Nigerian Medical Association
3. ASUU – Academic Staff Union Of Universities

Anifowose defined pressure group as interest groups, lobby groups, or even protest group. According to Oyeleye, what pressure groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government does their building. The main aim of pressure groups is to influence the decisions of the government. With pressure through the right channels, they are able to convince government to accept their point of view. These groups influence public policies and administration. These groups could be religious, ethics oriented, business like, educational, Gender sensitive or social. Political parties and pressure groups my seem similar but are very much different. Political parties seek to gain governmental powers while pressure groups aim to influence political decisions. They checkmate the government and make democracy better.

**TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

INTEREST GROUP: 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]

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 GROUP: 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.

ANOMIC GROUPS: Groups here have unpredictable actions and behavior 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.

ASSOCIATED GROUPS AND NON-ASSOCIATIONAL GROUPS: Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. On the other hand, non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organization.

**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. Pressure groups stay up to date on relevant information and are able to sensitize the person on such matter.

PROMOTES PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT: Another function of pressure group is that it promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day. Some pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government.

SERVING AS SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO GOVERNMENT: Another function of 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: Also, the activities of pressure groups ensures that governments do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into a 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 LEGISLATION: Another function of pressure group 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 may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action. [e.g, organized protests]. Pressure groups lobby in so many ways. They lobby with governmental officials directly. Also, pressure groups may sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills.