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AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP IN NIGERIA

Pressure can be defined as the ability to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. Pressure group can be defined as a group of people who come together with common interest whose fundamental aim is to pressure or put pressure on government institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. “Pressure groups came into existence to complement enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups (Oyeleye, 1998). In nature, these groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic oriented gender sensitive, economic or social, among others. Some examples include; ASUU (Academic Staff Union for University),

Afenifere, Oodua people's Congress (representing the Yoruba tribe), arewa consultative forum, Arewa people's Congress (representing the Hausa tribe), Nigerian bar association (NBA), Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and many more.

Pressure group and political parties may appear similar though but they are different. The first distinction is that political parties seek to gain government powers while pressure group does not seek to gain power. Pressure groups are accountable for any action taken while political parties are not accountable for their action. It is not like pressure group 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. Sometimes due to the government selfish interest of owing the workers or not having the workers interest at heart they often go on a break known as **strike** and insist that government accommodate their interest.

There are different types of pressure groups

1. **Interest groups (sectional groups):** They are in charge of representing the people of the society e.g. Convention on Business Integration (CBI)
2. **Cause groups:** they seek to promote particular causes, for example charities and environmental groups for instance, amnesty international, which campaigns for the end of human right abuses.
3. **Insider groups and outsider groups:** insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. However, it changes from time to time based on the party or government in power.
4. **Anomic groups:** Groups here have unpredictable actions and behavior as the work based on moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioural style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently.

5. 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, constitution and so on.

There are also different functions of pressure groups which include; links government to the people which serves as link between the government of the day and the people it governs.

Promote participation in government which promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day. Some pressure groups engage in demonstration and other measure to put their views across to the government. 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 the activities of pressure groups ensures that government do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into a dictatorship. Influencing legislation is that they are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefit of citizen. Pressure group lobby legislators, ministers and other government machineries.