CHAPTER 15

The pressure group is referred to as ‘The Functional Representative’. This is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. This usually done through their occupations or professions. For example, the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), represents the Lawyers and Solicitors, while Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) represents doctor’s interests. There is also the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which champions the interest of academics and condition of learning in Nigeria’s universities. According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as ‘interest 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). What pressure groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government does their biddings. Pressure groups and political parties’ activities may sometimes appear similar, but they’re different from each other. The first distinction is that political parties seek to gain government powers, while on the other hand, pressure groups do not seek to gain power. In addition, political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups.

 Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for tyranny of majority of people in the society. There are different types of Pressure Groups which are;

1. Interest groups: This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society e.g the trade units, CBI (Confederation of British Industry).
2. Cause groups: These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example charities and environmental groups.
3. Insider Groups and Outsider Groups: This groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legisltors. The Nigeria Bar Association is an example of such groups.
4. 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, Protest, rioting, strikes and sometimes revolution
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, constitutions and so on. On the other hand, non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organisation.

Functions of Pressure Groups

1. 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.
2. Promotes Participation in Government: Another function of pressure groups is that it promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day.
3. Serving as sources of information to Government: Another function of pressure groups is that they as sources of information 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.
4. Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies: Criticism of government policies curtail any dictatorial tendency government may have.
5. Promotion of the