

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

A pressure group could be viewed as a formal or organized body with a common interest which applies pressure on any governmental institution with the aim to influence government policies and laws to its own advantage. Pressure group is most times referred to as a **functional representative** thus various groups like the Nigerian Bar Association(NBA), Nigerian Medical Association and various other bodies alike protect the interest of lawyers and medical doctors respectively.

Anifowose (1998) defined pressure group as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups”. Oyeleye (1999) rightly stated that pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups. The major aim of pressure groups is to ensure that while government does their biddings by applying some pressures through the right channels. With this, they influence public policy, administration and political structures of the society and forms of government.

#### **Differences between the activities of a Pressure Group and a Political Party.**

- a) political parties seek to gain power while pressure groups don't seek political power rather they influence political decisions
- b) Political parties have wide range of policies while pressure groups have a well-defined and narrowed down goals
- c) Political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups
- d) Political parties are accountable for their actions

Notwithstanding all these differences, there exists some correlations in the activities of both groups' I.e. **political parties and pressure groups**

- a) Both achieve certain social changes by aligning towards each other, for example a pressure group might align towards a political party to further its interest to further their individual interests.
- b) Pressure groups checkmate and make democracy better by nullifying any form of perceived tyranny against the members in the society.
- c) Pressure groups bridge the gaps in the democratic process through informed debates among members encouraging political participation and promotion of accountability amongst government.

#### **Disadvantages of pressure groups activities**

- a) Pressure group might be hind sighted while making demands by not considering the resources available to the government.
- b) Pressure groups most times might be selfish in their demands thus altering the direction of governance.

#### **Types of Pressure Groups**

**Interest groups:** they are sectional groups that represent people in the society, a typical example is Convention on Business Integration (CBI). They are the voice of business in Nigeria.

**Cause groups:** this type of pressure group seek to promote particular causes like charities, human rights abuses and environment. Example is Amnesty International

Anomic groups: this pressure group are unpredictable in their actions as they are not guided by any behavioral code, they might resort to protest, riots, strikes and sometimes revolutions to make sure that voice are heard and goal achieved.

**Insider groups and outsider groups:** insider group are high or low profile pressure groups that may have an influence over the mission and vision of the government. Example is Nigerian Bar Association (NBA). The Outsider group have no access to the government and its machinery thus use other means to make an impact e.g. is the Animal Liberation Front that fights for the right of animals.

### **Associated groups and non-associated groups**

The associated groups are registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country while non-associated groups have no formal organization and their attachments may be based on tradition, kinship, family or race afflictions.

### **Functions of pressure groups**

- a) Linking of government to the people
- b) Promotion of participation in government
- c) They serve as information sources to the government
- d) They curtail the excesses of governments that tend to dictatorship
- e) They influence legislations in the government
- f) Pressure groups are the voices of the minority in the society

**Note:** pressure groups achieve majority of its goals by **lobbying** the media, government machineries and this very act defines their success levels.