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CHAPTER 15

Pressure group is a formal group or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. A pressure group promotes its interest regarding an issue; it seeks to influence government decisions and policies. 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 is 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 interests of academics and condition of learning in Nigeria’s universities.

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).What pressure groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government does their biddings and with some pressure through the right channels and means, pressure groups are able to make government listen to them. In addition to that, these groups influence both public policy, administration and even go a long way to determine political structures of the society and forms of government. In nature, these groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic, or social, among others. Some examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are: ASUU (Academic staff Union for university), Afenifere, Oodua people’s congress (representing the Yoruba tribe), Arewa people’s Congress (representing the Hausa tribe).Nigeria bar association of Nigeria (NBA), Christian association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

INTEREST GROUPS: this group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example; convention on business integration (CBI) in Nigeria.

CAUSE GROUPS: these are promotion groups, seeks to promote particular causes.Eg charities and environmental groups.

INSIDER GROUPS AND OUTSIDER GROUPS: insider groups are groups regularly consulted by the government .they have regular access to ministers or legislators .egOutside groups’ .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.

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 organization.

FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

Links government to the people: it is 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 Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies, Promotion of the interest of the minority.

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action.