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***CHAPTER 15***

Pressure group is a formal or fundamental body whose main aim is to put pressure on government agencies and influence government policies to satisfy their interests. The main goal of a pressure group is to satisfy its interest by influencing government policies. Pressure group can be defined as “The functional Representative “ this is because the represent their members based on the function that they perform. They could be occupational, academic, religious, economic or gender sensitive in nature. Anifowose describes pressure groups as interest , lobby or protest groups. Olaleye describes pressure groups as a body that complement, enhance or protect the interest of their members. From this descriptions it can be derived that pressure groups protects their interest by persuading or influencing government laws and policies. Pressure groups and political parties appear similar in terms of their activities but they are not the same . Some of these similarities that make them appear the same are: Pressure groups and political parties work hand in hand to ensure social change and also pressure group can partner with political parties when they feel that it can advance their interests . Amidst these similarities, they have differences. Political parties aim for political power/position. Pressure groups do not. They only influence government policies to achieve their goals. Political parties have wide range of policies but pressure groups have a small range of goals. Political parties can be held accountable and they are more formal but pressure groups can be held accountable.

Pressure groups are beneficial to the society. They check for any inefficiency in democracy, they act as the voice of the people, they ensure popular participation among citizens. However, pressure groups can also be hazardous to democracy. This can happen when a group become more influential than the rest. This can make their interest become superior to the others. Also, pressure groups need to compromise with the government but when they refuse to do that, it can cause limitations in terms of government resources. There are several types of pressure groups . They include: interest groups, cause groups, insider group and outsider group, anomic group, associational groups and non associational groups.

Interest groups is also known as sectional groups they represent the voice of certain people in the society. Example is convention on business integration(CBI). Cause groups they are promotion groups. They promote particular causes or events within the society. Example includes charity groups. A group that champions social movement is a charity group even though it lacks formal structures. Insider and outsider groups. They are dynamic in nature. They change from time to time depending on the government in power. The insider group are regularly contacted by the government. They have access to ministers or legislators. They may be high or low in produce but they can still influence government policy. The outsider group have no access to government thus, they make little impact. They are mostly denied by government. Example of the insider group is the Nigerian Bar association (NBA). Example of the outsider group is the animal liberation front; they fight for the rights of animals. The anomic groups are unpredictable. They act based of the present situation and environment. They can be violent as they do not act according to certain morals or rules. They mount pressure through protest , riots strikes and even revolution. Associational and non- Non- associational groups. Associational groups are registered by the appropriate authorities. And they have a registered office and even constitution. They are always formal in nature. The non- associational groups are less formal in nature and they are based on kinship, tribal or social traditions.

Pressure groups serve many functions in the society. They act as a link between the people and the government. They help the people to relay their problems and interests to the government. They stay up to date on information going on in the government and they relay it to the citizens as well. They also encourage participation among citizens. They try to get attention of the government by protest and other means , thereby engaging the citizens and causing them to act as well. Pressure groups give information to the government. They communicate their interests to the government and in so doing they give government information about the citizens. The pressure groups helps to curb any dictatorial tendencies . As a result of their activities and constant engagement with government , there’s prevention of dictatorship. The pressure groups acts as a voice for the less privileged. They ensure that their rights are not trampled upon. As a result of the amount of pressure on the government, they are able to influence government policies and decisions. They can change a policy direction if it does no favour their members.