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### **REVIEW ON AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP.**

A Pressure Group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim to put pressure on any governmental institution with the purpose of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. Pressure group is also referred to as '**The Functional Representative**' because they represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. Examples are Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) which represent doctor's interest, Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) which represents Lawyers and Solicitors, Oodua People's Congress representing the Yoruba tribe, Nigeria Labour Congress(NLC) etc.

According to Anifowose (1999), pressure group is described as 'interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups'. These groups go a long way in influencing public policy, administration political structure and forms of government.

The activities of pressure groups and political parties' sometimes appear similar but they are not. Here are some differences:

- I. Political parties seek to gain government powers while pressure groups aim at influencing government decisions.
- II. Political parties have a wide range of policies while the goals of pressure groups are narrow.
- III. Political parties are accountable for their decisions while pressure groups are not accountable for any decision they make.
- IV. Political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups.

There are types of pressure groups and they include the following:

- a) Interest Groups: These groups are also known as sectional groups. Their main aim is to represent the people in the society. An example is the trade unit, CBI(Confederation of British Industry).
- b) Cause Groups: These groups are also known as promotion groups. Such groups lack a formal structure but they always seek to promote a particular cause or achieved a

particular objective. For example, Amnesty International campaigns for the need to stop human right abuses.

- c) Insider Groups and Outsider Groups: These groups are usually consulted by the government. They have a regular access to the ministers or legislators thereby having the power to influence government's mission and vision. An example is Nigeria Bar Association (NBA). Outsider Groups have no access or link to the government or its machineries. These groups are said to be radical in nature because they are mostly denied by the government. An example is Animal Liberation Front, which champions rights for animals.
- d) Anomic Groups: These groups are known to not be guided by an appropriate behavioural style or rule as they have unpredictable actions and they work based on the current situation happening at a given time in a country.
- e) Associational and Non-associational Groups: Associational groups are registered with appropriate authorities in a society or country and they have their own registered offices and constitutions. Non-associational groups are usually without formal organization. Most times, their arrangement is by family attachment or social traditions.

Pressure groups have significant functions. They are:

- i. They link the government to the people by giving government relevant information on the needs of the people and also sensitizing the people to participate in government activities such as voting.
- ii. They act as watchdogs on government by making sure the rights of the minority are not trampled upon.
- iii. They mount pressure on the government to implement policies and change policies that are not in favour of the people
- iv. They help to checkmate and make democracy better to compensate for the tyranny of majority of the people.
- v. Pressure groups ensure that government do not misuse their power and drift into dictatorship.

In conclusion, as important as the pressure groups are to the society they also have their downside. Sometimes, due to their own selfish interest, they mount pressure to alter the direction of government decisions, while not considering government's limited resources.