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AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. This makes pressure group a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. It seeks to influence government policies and decisions; pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. Examples, The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSUU).

Anifowose (1999) described pressure groups as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups, they complement, enhance or even to protect interest of their members or group. These groups ensure government do their biddings. These group could be relating to any aspect of the human life i.e. religion, ethnic, education, occupation etc.

Pressure groups and political parties' activities may sometimes appear similar, but they differ. Political parties are power seeking with a wide range of policies, properly and formally organized and accountable for their actions while pressure groups seek to influence political decisions with narrow goals, not accountable and not as organized as political parties.

While pressure groups have their important place in the scheme of things in a nation, there is a downside. Sometimes, due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions, while not considering governments limited resources.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

- Interest groups: this group is also seen as a sectional group, representing the people in the society. For example, the trade units, CBI

(Confederation of British Industry) known as the voice of business in the country and in Nigeria, Convention on Business Integration (CBI).

- Cause group: these are groups that seek to promote causes like human rights violation, it is usually to achieve one objectivity.
- Insider groups and outside groups: insider groups are regularly consulted by the government, they have regular access to ministers or legislators, e.g. The Nigeria Bar Association (BAR). They are maybe high or low but have the intent of influencing government policies and decisions. Outer groups have no access or link to the government and its machineries. They must use other ways to make an impact. These groups change from time to time depending on the political party in power.
- Anomic group: these groups are unpredictable as they work based on the moment and situation on ground e.g. protests, riots, strikes etc.
- Associational groups and non-associational groups: Associational groups are groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. While non-association are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, social traditions etc.

FUNTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

- Links government to the people.
- Promotes participation in government.
- Serving as sources of information to government
- Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies
- Promotion of the interest of the minority
- Influencing legislation

PRESSURE GROUPS' LOBBYING

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political actions. The ability of a group to be recognized as legitimate gives that group a higher chance of achieving their goal. Pressure groups lobby in many ways. They lobby with governmental officials directly.