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**A REVIEW ON CHAPTER FIFTEEN; AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP**

To pressure is to persuade a person into doing something. A pressure group is an 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. A pressure group that seeks to influence government decisions and policies are called “The Functional Representative”. This is done through occupation or professions, for example; the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) etc. According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups.” With some pressure through the right means and channels, pressure groups are able to make the government listen to them. In nature, these groups can be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic or social, among others.

 Pressure group and political parties’ activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. Some **differences** are:

* Pressure groups do not seek to gain power, political parties seek governmental power.
* Pressure groups narrow their goals while political parties have a wide range of policies.
* Pressure groups do not account for their actions but political parties do.
* Political parties are more organized than pressure groups.

Some **similarities** are:

* Pressure groups and political parties relate together to achieve certain social changes.
* They align their interest with that of certain political parties that are believed to possess the capability to further their interests. Some **benefits** of pressure groups are:
* Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better.
* To treat the gaps in the democratic process., to inform debate among ourselves
* To encourage participations and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. In a democratic process, there is a need for compromise in order to reach consensus regarding the common good. Meanwhile, some **demerits** are:
* Due to their selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions, while not considering government’s limited resources.
* They can potentially monopolize the democratic process by focusing public debate on a few specific issues.

**Types of pressure groups**

**Interest groups**: This group is seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example; the trade units, for instance, CBI (Confederation of British Industry) known as the voice of business in the country and in Nigeria.

**Cause groups**: These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example, charities and environmental groups, for instance, we can see the Amnesty International, which campaign for the need to end human right abuses.

**Insider Groups and Outsider Groups:** Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers and legislators. The NBA is an example. An insider group may be high or low in profile. Outsider groups have no access to the government and its machineries. Example is the Earth Liberation Front, which argues for rights to earth exploitation and destruction. The insider and outsider groups change depending on the party in power.

**Atomic groups**: Groups here have predictable actions and behaviors as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. They sometimes act violently by rioting, protesting to mount pressure.

**Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups**: Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. They have their own offices, constitution and so on. Non-associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship and so on.

**Functions of pressure groups**

**Links Government to the People**: One of the functions of pressure groups is that it 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 and carries the citizenry along.

**Serving as Sources of Information to Government**: They are sources of information to the government offering them valuable information on issues they may not be aware of.

**Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies**: Criticism of Government policies curtail any dictatorial tendency government may have and do not perpetuate themselves in power.

**Promotion of the Interest of the Minority**: Pressure groups champion the rights of the under privileged (minority) especially promotional pressure groups.

**Influencing Legislation**: They are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that it can implement policies that are of benefit to citizens.

**Pressure Groups’ Lobbying**

Pressure groups adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action s (e.g. organized protests). Civil rights groups are accepted than newly formed or single unit pressure groups.