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CHAPTER 15 REVIEWS

Pressure involves inputting on something or someone in order to invoke a result. Pressure groups are a group of individuals with common interest who come together in order to input force on the government with the goal of influencing governmental policies and laws to its own advantage. A common characteristic of pressure groups is that it holds its own interest in high importance. Another characteristic is that it works to satisfy its members only. The pressure group is also referred to as the functional representative because it represents one area of the society or the other. An example is Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which works in the interest of academics and conditions for learning in Nigeria. Anifowose in 1999 described pressure groups as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups.

Pressure groups and political parties may appear similar however they are very distinct from each other. Political parties seek to gain governmental powers however pressure groups seek to bend governmental powers to their favor rather than seeking for it. Political parties consist of a large range of policies and goals however pressure groups consist of few goals. Pressure groups do not always account for their actions however political parties always account for their actions.

With all these differences, pressure groups are similar in some areas. They both put their interest first before any other thing. They both exist to cause changes in the pattern of governance to the form that best suits their interest and also have the capability to further interest.

Pressure groups mount pressure on the government using various methods and some of these measures may lead to great societal problems. For example in a country with limited doctors, there will be a huge health crisis if the association of the doctors decides to go on strike due to insufficient salary. In such a situation, the society will suffer greatly as the sick individuals are left to die without care. Another example is in the case of ASUU who went on strike leaving thousands of students stranded in their various educational fields just to gain funds from the government.

There are various types of pressure groups. One is interest groups. These are sectional groups which represent the society. An example of this is the Convention on Business Integration (CBI) which is the voice of business in Nigeria.

Another type is known as cause groups. These are groups which seek to promote a particular cause. They usually lack formal structure and aim at achieving a single objective. An example is the Amnesty International which deals with the need to end human right abuses.

Insider groups are also known as pressure groups. These groups usually have access to governmental officials and may be on the low or high profile. They aim at influencing governmental visions. An example of the insider group is the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA). The opposite of insider groups is outsider groups who do not have access to the government but they use other means to implement their force. The outsider groups are mostly denied by government hence they are radical in nature.

Another type of pressure group is the atomic group. These groups usually have unpredictable actions and work based on the situation of the society. These groups have no guiding rule or principles and use any means to implement their force even if it means being violent or destructive.

Another group is the associational group. These groups are usually registered with authorities of a state or country. They have their own registered offices. The opposite of this group is called non-association group who are without a formal organization. These groups are usually arranged by virtue of a reference ranking like family attachment, social traditions, etc.

Pressure groups function to act as a link between the government and the people. That is they help relay some of the common needs of the people to the government as well as the responses of the government to the people. Pressure groups also help to encourage public participation in government affairs. This is done by the way these pressure groups pass on their views to the government. Pressure groups serve as means of information to the government in order to keep the government up to date with the various daily arising needs of the people. They also ensure for the prevention of the misuse of political power on the part of the government. The pressure groups both directly and indirectly cater for the minority in a state or nation by forcing the government to work harder in providing the minorities needs. For example, in a country where the doctors go on strike, the government will try its best to provide healthcare services for its citizens. Thus, pressure groups help improve the citizen-to-government relationship.