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Chapter 15

Understanding pressure group

To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. This makes a pressure group a formal or organised body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with goal of influencing government policies.

According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as "interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups." Pressure groups come into existence to complement, enhance or even to even to protect the groups.

Pressure groups and political parties activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. The first distinction is that political parties seek to gain government powers while on the other hand, pressure groups do not seek to gain power.

Pressure group's existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. Also, to track the gaps in the democratic process to inform debates among ourselves, to encourage participations and to enhance good accountability in our daily society.

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

Types of pressure groups include;

Interest group

Cause groups

Insider groups and outsider groups

Anomic groups

Associational groups and Non-associational groups

Functions of pressure groups

* Links government to the people

One of the functions of pressure groups is that it serves as between the government of the day and the people it governs.

* Promotes participation in government.

Another function of pressure groups is that it promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day. Some pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other.

* Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies

Criticism of government policies curtail any dictatorial tendency government may have. Also, the activities of pressure groups ensures that government do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into a dictatorship

* Promotion of the interest of minority.