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Chapter fifteen

AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

A pressure group is an organised body with a specific group whose main aim is to mount pressure on governmental institution with the goal of influencing government rules to its own benefit. To persuade someone is to coerce a person into doing something. A pressure group promotes its own interest regardless of any circumstance. Various pressure group represents different sectors of a society hence can be seen as a functional representative.

Aniwose describes pressure group as an interest group , hobby group or even a protest group. Pressure group is just on the bid to protect the interest of their members. With pressure through the right means pressure group can make the government listen to them. Example of pressure group in Nigeria are ASUU ,Arewa peoples congress, Christian association of Nigeria, Nigeria labour congress. Pressure group can determine political structure of the society and forms of government.

The activities of pressure group and political parties are different though seem to be similar. The first reason is that pressure group does not seem to gain government power while political party do. The second reason is that pressure do group has a specific goal while political party has lots of policies. Also, political parties give account of their actions while pressure group does not give account of their actions. Pressure group are not formally arranged while political parties are.

Irrespective of the differences between pressure group and political parties, they do share certain things in common. Pressure groups also align their interest to political parties that are likely to foster them. Pressure group enhances good accountability in our daily society. If pressure group remain rigid and refuse to compromise on specific issues, they can focus public debate on a few specific issue.

Despite the numerous importance of pressure group to a nation, they also have their disadvantages. Due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the directions of government decisions, while not considering government limited resources. ASUU and NMA may indeed have geniue agigitations, they hold other stake holders to ransom and insist that government accommodates their request.

There are different types of pressure groups which include;

1. Interest groups; These group is also seen as sectional group, represents the people in the society.
2. Cause groups; These groups are promotional group which seek to promote particular causes. It is aimed at achieving a particular objective like protesting about the expansion of airports, seaports and railways.
3. Anomic group; Groups here have unpredictable actions and behaviours as the walk based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are guided by a particular behavioural style and they sometimes act violently.

There are different functions of pressure group. They include;

1. Links government to people; One of the functions of pressure group is that it serves as a link between the government of the day and the people it is governing.
2. Promotes participation in government; Another function of pressure group is that it promotes public participation in the activities of the government of the day.
3. Serves as source of information to the government; Pressure groups serve as source of information to the government.