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CHAPTER 15: AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

A pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any government institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. The pressure group is referred to as “The Functional Representative”. This is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. Which is usually done through their professions. For example, the Nigerian bar association (NBA), represents the lawyers and solicitors, while Nigerian medical association (NMA) represents doctors interest etc.

According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups.” What pressure groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government does their biddings. In nature, these groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic or social, among others. Pressure groups existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

1. Interest Groups: This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, the trade units, for instance, CBI.
2. Cause Groups: These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular cause. For example, charities and environmental groups.
3. Insider Groups and outsider groups: insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. Outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries.
4. Anomic Groups: Groups here have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society.
5. Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups: Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country.

FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

1. Links Government to the people
2. Promotes participation in government
3. Serving as source of information to government
4. Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies
5. Promotion of the interest of the minority
6. Influencing legislation
7. Pressure groups lobbying