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**AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP (CHAPTER 15)**

 This chapter explains the concept of pressure group and the whole idea about it. From the word “pressure”, we see it as the act of persuading someone to do something. Therefore a pressure group is defined as a formal or organized body established 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. The pressure group is known as “The Functional Representative”. Examples are, the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) representing the Lawyers and Solicitors and Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) representing doctor’s interests. Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) champions the interests of academics and learning conditions in Nigerian Universities. Pressure groups are mainly established mostly to ensure that the government does their biddings and does what they are supposed to or have promised to do.

 We also talk about the difference between pressure groups and political parties. These two groups appear to be similar but actually vary. Political parties seek to gain government powers but pressure groups do not even seek to gain power instead they aim at influencing political decisions. Also, political parties have a wide range of policies while political parties have more narrow goals and they do not account for any of their actions while political parties account for their actions. Like it was said earlier, pressure groups and political parties have similarities and strive to achieve certain social changes. Although these pressure groups help to checkmate the government and its decisions, they sometimes try to alter the direction of the government decisions due to some selfish interest without considering the limited resources of the government. The ASUU (Academic Staff Union of Universities) is a good example as although they may have genuine reasons to be angry, they do not hesitate to go on strike and hold other stakeholders to ransom.

 Pressure groups are of different types. There is the Interest Groups. The interest groups represent the people in the society, example is the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) and they are known as the voice of business in the country.

We also have the Cause Groups and they are promotion groups that promote particular causes. The charities and environmental groups are good examples. These groups champion social movement although they might lack a formal structure. They equally hold protests to ensure their voices are heard.

Next is the Insider and Outsider Groups. The government usually consult the Insider groups and they have regular access to ministers and legislators and a good example is The Nigerian Bar Association. Outsider groups do not have access to the government and its machineries and they are radical in nature because they are most times denied by the government.

 The Anomic Groups have actions that are unpredictable because they work based on the situation in the society. They sometimes act violently as they are not necessarily guided by an appropriate rule or behavioral style. They mostly mount pressure through protest, rioting, strikes and sometimes revolution.

 Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups are another type. While associational groups are registered with appropriate authorities, non-associational groups are without a formal organization.

 These pressure groups have their various functions. Pressure groups link the government to the people and stay up to date on important information. Also, pressure groups promote participation in government by engaging in demonstrations and other measures to air their views to the government and they carry the citizens along while doing all these.

 Also, pressure groups serve as sources of information to the government and give them information that they may not have been aware of. They curtail dictatorial tendencies as they ensure that government do not show signs of abusing power which may lead to a form of dictatorship. Pressure groups promote the interest of the minority and underprivileged and ensure that these interests are not trampled upon by the government.

 Pressure groups influence legislation and influence the government policies, change its direction or even withdraw a particular policy that may not be in favor of their members or citizenry. Pressure groups may lobby in many ways as they lobby with governmental official directly. This lobbying can also be done through friends, spouses, children or other relatives. Sometimes these pressure groups may even sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills. Lobbying is one of the ways through which pressure groups achieve their goals.

 In conclusion, pressure groups influence government policies and help to ensure that the government does not mistreat its citizens and their requests are considered. They air their opinions in different ways through protests, strikes or sometimes violence as the case may be and various strategies are put in place to ensure that their opinions are heard and implemented.