**NAME**: VICTORY-OPUTA FIDENCE DAUDOO

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**CHAPTER 15**

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP**

**UNDERSTANDING PRESSURE GROUP**

Pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to pressure on any government institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. According to Oyeleye “pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups. The pressure group is referred to as “The Functional Representative.” This pressure groups represents different sectors of the society based on their functions, this is usually done through their professions or occupation. For example, the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), represents the lawyers and solicitors, The Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) represents doctors, there is also the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which champions the interest of academics and condition of learning in Nigeria’s public universities. While some of these pressure groups could be religious, ethnic-oriented, economic or social, such as, Oodua People’s Congress (representing the Yoruba tribe), Arewa’s People’s Congress (representing the Hausa tribe), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). 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 government power. Rather, their aim is to influence political influence. 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 treat the gaps in the democratic process. While pressure groups have their important place in the scheme of things in a nation, there is the downside. ASUU and NMA may indeed have genuine agitations, but when they go on strike, they hold other stakeholders to ransom and insist that government accommodate their requests.

**Types of Pressure Groups**

**Interest Groups:** This is seen as sectional group, representing the people in the society, for example the trade units, for instance, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) known as the voice of business in the country, and in Nigeria, Convention on Business Integration (CBI).

**Cause Groups:** these are promotion groups, which seek to promote a particular cause. For example, charities and environmental groups, just like the Amnesty International, which campaign for the need to end human right abuse.

**Insider Groups and Outsider Groups:** Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have access to ministers or legislators. The Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) is an example of such groups. On the other hand, outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have other ways to show their impact, for example the Animal Liberation Front, which champions rights for animals, Earth Liberation Front, which argues for rights to earth exploitation and destruction.

**Anomic Groups:** these groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioural style or rule, and they sometimes act violently. Protest, rioting, strikes, and sometime revolution are some of the ways they use to mount pressure.

**Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups:** The associational groups have registered authorities in a state or country, they also have their own registered offices and constitutions. While non-associational groups are groups without formal organizations. Their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, social traditions, tribal or even race afflictions.

**Functions of Pressure Groups:**

* Links Government to the people
* Promotes Participation in Government
* Serving as Sources of Information to Government
* Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies
* Promotion of the interest of the Minority
* Influencing Legislation
* Pressure Groups’ lobbying