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**CHAPTER 15**

**UNDERSTANDING PRESSURE GROUP**

To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce the person into doing something. This makes a pressure group a formal or organized body 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. A pressure group promotes its interest regarding an issue; it seeks to influence government policies and decisions. For example, the Nigerian Bar Association represent the lawyers and solicitors, while Nigerian Medical Association represents doctors’ interests. There is also the Academic Staff Union of Universities which champion the interest of academics and conditions of learning in Nigeria universities. Some other examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are: Afenifere, Oodua People’s Congress (representing the Yoruba tribe), the Arewa Consultative Forum, Arewa People’s Congress. (representing the Hausa tribe), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Labor Congress, etc.

**TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

1**- Interest groups**: This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society e.g. CBI ( Confederation of British industry).

2- **Cause groups**: These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example, Amnesty international which campaigns for the need to end human rights abuse .

3- **Anomic groups**: Groups here have unpredictable actions and behaviors as they work based in the moment and situation in the society.

4- **Associational and Non-associational**: they are usually registered appropriate authorities in a state or country. Also, these groups have their own registered office’s, constitutions and so on.

**FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

1- Links government to the people: one of the functions of pressure groups is that it serves as a link between the government of the day and people it governs.

2- Promotes participation in government: Another function of pressure group is that it promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day.

3- Promotion of interest on the minority: Again, pressure groups champion the rights of the under privileged, especially promotionally pressure groups.

4- Serving as sources of information to the government: Another function of pressure group is that they as sources of information to the government. As they lobby government on various fronts.

5- Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies: Criticism of government policies curtail any dictorial tendency government may have .

**PRESSURE GROUPS LOBBYING**

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. Clearly, some pressure groups exert more influence than others. The degree to which such groups are able to achieve their goals may depend on their ability to be recognized as legitimate by their population, media and by those in power. For example, civil rights groups, trade unions and professional associations are more widely recognized and accepted than newly formed pressure groups or single issued pressure groups.

Lobbying is the attempt by business, charities, political action committees, individuals and pressure groups to influence politicians in the legislative, or justices in the judicial, to create certain pieces of legislation, loosen regulation, or to rule a certain way in a judicial process.

Lobbying is typically done on behalf of other clients such as businesses or charities, by firms who specialize in lobbying. Most of these firms will have offices in legislative capitals across the United States including Washington DC and State Capitals. In Washington the lobby firms are known as K Street, named after the street in which most lobbying forms have their offices. Lobby firms will routinely recruit former politicians to make use of their contacts that they obtained over their political careers. The movement of former politicians to the lobby firms is part of the revolving door process in US Politics.

Lobbyists will seek to persuade politicians to enact legislation that will be favorable to them or to their clients. This can be done through any number of methods including gifts, meals out, politician donations or by seeking to influence a politician’s constituents to demand a change.