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CHAPTER 15

Pressure is to persuade or coerce a person into doing something. Pressure group therefore is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the aim of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. The pressure group is called the Functional Representative. Different sectors of the society are represented by various pressure groups based on their functions.

Anifowse (1999) described pressure group as interest groups, lobby groups or protest groups. According to Oyeleye, pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance or protect the interest of their members or groups. Pressure groups seek to ensure that government does their biddings. These groups influence both the public policy, administration and it determines political structures of the society and forms of government.

Pressure groups and political parties are different even though sometimes they may appear alike. Political parties seek to gain government powers while pressure groups do not seek to gain powers. Political parties have a wide range of policies while pressure groups narrow their goals. pressure groups are not accountable for their actions while political parties account for their actions. Political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups.

Pressure groups and political parties have things in common despite the differences. They relate together to achieve certain social changes.

The existence of pressure groups is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. Pressure groups are seen as beneficial to a democratic society. When a democratic process is dominated by specific groups, problems can arise.

Pressure groups have their downside. Due to selfish interests, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions while not considering government’s limited resources.

**Types of pressure groups**

* Interest groups
* Cause groups
* Insider groups and outsider groups
* Anomic groups
* Associational groups and non-associational groups

**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**

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies o achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. Pressure groups lobby with government officials directly.