

OLADAPO JIMISOLA EMMANUEL
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MBBS
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CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY OF AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

A pressure group is seen as an organised group of people or body that possess a common interest whose basic aim is to pressure governmental institutions in order to influence government policies and laws to its own benefit. It is referred to 'the functional representative' which addresses the fact that there are several groups existing to represent various areas of the society with each having their own specialised function.

These pressure groups exist majorly to represent and protect the interest of its members. Most times there exist a lot of similarities between pressure groups and political parties but they are very distinct. For instance, the aim of political parties is to gain political power whereas pressure groups don't. However, both groups sometimes work hand in hand to achieve social developmental changes.

Majorly pressure groups exist in order to put checks on the government and improve democracy for the benefit of the masses.

There exist various classes of pressure groups:

- ✓ Interest groups; sectional groups that represent individuals in the society.
- ✓ Cause groups: these groups exist to promote a target cause. They are seen as groups that champion social movements.
- ✓ Insider and Outsider groups
- ✓ Anomic groups; work based on moments or situations that arise in society.
- ✓ Associated and Non-associated groups; formally organized that are most times registered with the appropriate authorities are called associational groups. Those lacking in formal organization are non-associated groups.

Pressure groups also have functions which they perform. Some of which include:

- ✓ They link the government to the people.
- ✓ They serve as information sources in government.
- ✓ They help to curtail dictatorial tendencies.
- ✓ They promote people participation in government.
- ✓ They promote and protect the interest of the minority.
- ✓ They influence legislation.

An activity in which pressure groups involve themselves in is lobbying. This is a strategy they make use of for the purpose of achieving their goals.