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**UNDERSTANDING PRESSURE GROUP**

To pressure means to persuade or coerce someone, from this, we can define pressure group as 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. The pressure group can be referred to as “the functional representative.” Pressure groups and political parties’ activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. For example, while political parties seek to gain government power and are accountable for their actions, pressure groups do not. However, their being different does not mean they have nothing in common. In fact, they relate together to achieve certain social changes and pressure groups may align their interest with that of certain political parties that are believed to possess the capability to further their interests.

Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society, but while they have their important place in the scheme of things, there is some downside. If they put their selfish interest first and pursue it while not considering the government’s limited resources, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government’s decisions. For example, some professional bodies like ASUU and NMA may have genuine agitations and go on strike, but then, their stake holders are held to ransom and they insist that government accommodate their requests. There are different types of pressure groups.

1. Interest groups: Confederation of British Industry (CBI)- the voice of business in the country and in Nigeria.
2. Cause groups: Charities and environmental groups
3. Insider groups and outsider groups: The Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Animal Liberation Front.
4. Anomic groups: Protest, rioting, strikes, sometimes revolution.
5. Associational and non associational groups

Seen above are the types of pressure groups with some examples and activities. But of course, these pressure groups perform certain functions which are listed below.

1. They link government with the people
2. They promote participation in government
3. They serve as sources of information to the government
4. They curtail dictatorial tendencies
5. They promote the interest of the minority
6. They influence legislation and;
7. They pressure group’s lobbying