An overview of the idea of pressure group

 The act of persuading or coercing a person into something can be called pressure. This makes a pressure group a formal or organized body with 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 is referred to as “The Functional Representative”. Some examples of pressure of group are: the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), represents the lawyers and solicitors, while Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) represents doctors interest and also there is Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), which champions the interests of academic and condition of learning in Nigeria’s universities.

According to Anifowose pressure group is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups”. Pressure groups came into existence to compliment, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups. What pressure group seeks to achieve is the governments to their bidding and with the right channels and means pressure groups can make government listen to them. Pressure groups influence both public, administration and even go a long way to determine political structures and forms of government. The difference between political parties and pressure group is that, they seeks to gain powers while pressure group seeks to influence government decisions. Political parties operate from a larger scope while pressure group narrows their goals. Political parties are more organized than pressure groups. They have in common the goal of relating together to achieve social change. The existence of pressure group is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. Due to their own selfish interest, pressure is amounted to alter the direction of government decisions while not considering governments limited resources. This becomes the down side of pressure group.

*Types of pressure groups*

Interest Groups:

This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society.

Cause Groups

These groups are promotion groups which seek to produce particular causes. Any group that champions social movement is also seen as “cause group”. It is always aimed at achieving a single objective, like protesting about expansion of airports, seaports, railways,etc.

Insider Groups and Outside Groups

Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. The Nigerian Bar Association is an example of such groups. However they maybe high or low in profile, nevertheless they intend to influence on governments mission and vision. Outside groups on the other hand have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have other way to have impact. Examples are the Animal Liberation Front, which champions rights for animals. This two groups changes from time to time based on the party or government in power.

Anomic Groups

Groups here have unpredictable actions as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guidwd by an appropriate behavioural style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently.

Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups

Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. These groups have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. Non-Associational groups are pressure groups without formal organization. Their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, social traditions, tribal or even race afflictions.

*Functions of pressure group*

Links Government to the people

Pressure group serves as a link between the government and the people it governs. It stays to up to date on relevant information’s and are able to sensitize the people on such matters.

Promotes participation in government

Some pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government. The activities of pressure groups is to promote political participation and carries the citizenry along

Serving as sources of information to government

As the pressure groups lobby government on various fronts, the interaction offers the government valuable information on aspects of issues they may not even be aware of.

Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies

The activities of pressure groups ensures that government do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into dictatorship.

Promotion of the interest of the majority

Pressure groups also champion the rights of the under-privileged especially promotional pressure groups.

Influencing Legislation

They are instruments of mounting pressure on government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefit of citizens.

Pressure Groups lobbying

They may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action. Example, civil rights groups, trade unions and professional associations are more widely recognized and accepted than newly formed pressure groups or single-issue pressure group. They have different ways of lobbying. They lobby with governmental officials directly. For example, they lobby legislators, ministers and other government machineries.