

NAME: IBEM BLESSING ONYEKACHI

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DEPARTMENT: NURSING DEPARTMENT

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CHAPTER 15

To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a 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. The pressure group is referred to as “the functional representative”. This is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. This is usually done through their occupations or professions.

According to Anifowse(1999) pressure group is described as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. What pressure groups seeks to achieve is to ensure that government does their bidding. Pressure groups and political parties activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. The first distinction is that political parties seek to gain government powers while on the other hand, pressure groups do not seek to gain powers, Rather their aim is to influence political decisions. Political parties have a wide range of policies whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions, while political parties do account for their actions. Political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups.

Pressure group existence is to checkmate and make democracy better to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. Also to treat the gaps in the democratic process to inform debates among ourselves, to encourage participations and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. If pressure groups remain rigid and refuse to compromise on specific issues, they can potentially monopolise the democratic process by focusing public debate on a few specific issues.

There are types of pressure groups and they include; interest groups and it is seen as a sectional groups, representing the people in the society. Cause groups are promotion groups which seek to promote particular causes. Any group that champions social movement is also seen as “cause groups” even though the group lacks formal structure.

Insider groups and outsider groups these groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. Outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to use other ways to have impact. The insider and outsider group changes from time to time based on the party or government in power.

Anomic groups these groups have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society.

Associational groups and non-associational groups these groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. Also, these groups have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. Non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organization.

Pressure groups serves as link between the government of the day and the people it governs.

It promotes participation in government

Pressure groups serves as a source of information to the government. The interaction offers the government valuable information on aspects of issues they may not even be aware of.

Pressure groups deals with criticism of government policies curtailing any dictatorial tendency government may have. Pressure groups acts as watchdogs on the government.

Pressure groups influence legislation i.e they are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on the government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefit of citizens.

pressure groups lobby elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action.

The degree to which such groups are able to achieve their goals may depend on their ability to be recognized as legitimate by the population, media, and by those in power.