

NAME : Nwoga Thelma Ozichukwu
MATRICULATION NUMBER; 19/MHS01/265
DEPARTMENT; MEDICINE AND SURGERY
GST 203

Write on an Overview of the Idea of Pressure Group
Understanding Pressure Group

A pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any government institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. The pressure group is referred to as ‘ ‘The Functional Representative’ ’. Various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on functions. According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as ‘ ‘interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups. These groups could be religious, business-like, educational economic among others.

Examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are: ASUU (Academic Staff Union for University), Afenifere, Nigeria’s Labour congress (NLC), Arewa Consultative Forum, etc.

There are five types of pressure groups mentioned classified based on the structure of exerting pressure and also by its purposes. They are as follows:

Interest Groups; these sort of groups are also called sectional groups, representing the society in itself e.g. trade units for instance such as the Convention on Business Integration (CBI).

Cause Groups: these groups are also known as promotional groups. They seek to promote particular causes. For example the Amnesty International which campaigns of the need to end human right abuses, any group which champion social movement and is aimed at achieving at a single objective, even if it lacks formal structure is also seen as a cause group.

Insider and Outsider groups: insider groups are regularly consulted by the government, and they have regular access to ministers and legislators. The Nigerian Bar Association is an example of these sort of groups. While on the other hand, outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to use other ways to impact on the government. Examples are the Animal Liberation front which fights for the rights of animals amongst others. These groups are usually radical in nature because they are mostly denied by the government.

There are other types mentioned in the book such as Anomic groups, the Associational groups and Non-Associational groups

Functions of pressure group

- Helps link government to the people,
- Promotes participation in government
- Helps to curtail dictatorial tendencies
- Promotes interests of the minority
- - Serves as sources of information to government
- Helps to influence legislation amongst others.
- Acts as a checkmate to make democracy better

- Treats the gaps in the democratic process
- Informs debates among citizens and
- Enhances good accountability in our society.

There also known benefits of this organization along with its disadvantages. For instance in the situation where pressure groups remain rigid thereby refusing to compromise, they risk a potential monopoly of the democratic process by focusing public debate on just a specific set of issues. Also in the case whereby a pressure group has selfish interests, it can mount pressure on the change of government policies not minding its limited resources.

Pressure groups are often said to be very similar and basically be the same thing as Political parties but this book has highlighted some differences in both organizations as well as a few similarities. The differences between pressure groups and political parties lie in the activities of each organization such as; political parties seek to control government while pressure groups seek to influence the decisions of the government.

Pressure groups use a range of strategies to achieve their goals, but the book focuses on the use of lobbying. This is the practice of actively trying to influence the legislation in one's favour. Pressure groups can all find one way or another to exert pressure but obviously some pressure groups exert more pressure than the other one. This might be because of the legitimacy attached to such pressure groups by the people, media, and by those in power. For example civil rights group, trade unions and professional associations are more widely recognized and accepted by newer groups or single-issue pressure group. These groups lobby in different ways. They lobby with government officials directly. They could lobby these government authorities through their spouses, friends, children etc.