OSAGIE VICTORIA 19/MHS01/361 DENTISTRY GST 203 ASSIGNMENT

A pressure group is 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 las to its on advantage. A pressure group promotes its interest regarding an issue, it seeks to influence government decisions and policies. 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. Some examples of pressure groups are Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and so on. A pressure group is also described as interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups according to Anifoswose (1999). What these groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government does their bidings, and with some pressure through the right channels, and means, pressure groups can make the government listen to them. Political parties and pressure groups activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES AND PRESSURE GROUPS**

The first distinction is that political parties seek to gain government powers while on the other hand, pressure groups do not seek government powers but influence political decisions. Second, political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Pressure groups are also not accountable for their actions unlike political parties. In fact they both relate together to achieve certain social changes. Pressure groups exist to checkmate democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. In addition, Political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups.

Regardless of these differences, they have some things in common. These include; they relate together to achieve certain social changes. Pressure group interest may align with that of a certain political party that are believed to possess the capability to further their interest.

If pressure groups remain rigid and refuse to compromise on specific issues, they can potentially monopolize the democratic process by focusing public debate. Sometimes, due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions, while not considering government’s limited resources.

**The types of pressure groups are:**

* Interest groups which are also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example the trade units, CBI (Confederation of British Industry) known as the voice of business in the country and in Nigeria, Convention on Business Integration.
* Insider groups and Outsider 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. They may be low profile but intend to have influence on government decisions. Outsider groups have no links to the government and its machineries.
* Anomic groups have unpredictable actions and behaviors as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently. Protests, rioting, and other acts are means through which they mount pressure.
* Associational groups and non- associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. Also, these groups without a formal organization. Their arrangement and gathering by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, social traditions, tribal or even race afflictions, just to mention few.
* Cause groups are promotion groups which seek to promote particular causes such as charities and environmental groups. Any group that champions social movement is a cause group even though they may lack formal structure. It is aimed at achieving a single objective.

Some functions of pressure groups include; Links the government to the people. It serves as a link between the public and the government of the day and the people it governs. Promotes participation in government in which some pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government. They serve as a source of information to the government. They curtail dictational tendencies which are to avoid government dictatorship in the country. They also promote the interest of the minority. And lastly, they influence legislation. They put pressure on the government so that it can implement policies that benefit the people.

In pressure group lobbying, they may adopt various strategies to achieve their goals including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. They lobby with governmental officials directly. They might sometimes lobby these government officials through friends, spouses etc.