NAME: ESE-EJAKPOVI UYOYOGHENE

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LEVEL: 200L B

AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

Pressure, means to coerce or force someone to do something. A pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest that has a goal which is to put pressure on any governmental institution, and a fundamental aim to influence government policies or laws to its advantage. A pressure group seeks to represent members of the public on how to relay their worries or goals by putting pressure on the government. They seek to enhance, complement and promote the interest of the people they represent, they are formed or they carry out their activities based on their occupations or professions. They are known as THE FUNCTIONAL REPRESENTATIVE.

The pressure group, determines the administration, public policy and even most times the political society of the country and political parties. The pressure group, can be social, ethnic-related, gender sensitive, economic, religious and environmental, among others. Examples of pressure groups are ASUU (Academic staff union for universities), NMA (Nigeria medical association), CAN (Christian association of Nigeria), Arewa consultative forum, Afenifere, NLC (Nigeria labor congress) etc.

It is said that pressure groups are the same as that of political parties, but it is not the same. Various distinctions can be made on why they are not similar, which includes;

1. Pressure groups are not accountable for their actions, where as political parties are accountable for their actions through voting and election.
2. Political parties have a lot of policies, while pressure groups seek to narrow their goals.
3. Political parties are power seeking, while pressure groups do not seek for power.

Pressure groups are related to political parties, in as much as they influence governmental policies. There might be various downslides in pressure groups, which includes;

1. For their own self-interest.
2. Due to the pressure placed on governmental institutions to influence their policies or laws, while not considering the scarce resources of the government.

Compromises can be made to meet the consensus of goals, when pressure groups fail to compromise they link up with people in the society on how to relate their goals.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

1. Interest groups
2. Cause groups
3. Association and non-association groups
4. Insider and outsider groups
5. Anomic groups.

FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

1. They serve as a link between the government and the people
2. They encourage participation
3. Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies
4. Influencing legislation
5. They represent and protect the interest of the minority.
6. They serve as a source of information to the government.

PRESSURE GROUPS LOBBYING

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action (e.g. organized protests). Pressure groups lobby in so many ways, they lobby with government officials directly.