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AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

A pressure group tries to influence the public policy in the interest of a particular cause. These groups are like vital link between the government and the community, especially in between elections. They are able to use their expertise to provide the government with important information. 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 occupation or profession. Just like the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) represents the lawyers and solicitors, while Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) represents doctor’s interests. (ASUU) Academic Staff Union of Universities represents the interests of academics and condition of learning in Nigeria’s Universities.

According to Anifowose (1999) pressure 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 (oyeleye, 1998). What pressure group seek is to ensure that government does their biddings. Some pressure through the right channels and means, pressure groups are able to make government listen to them. These groups influence both public policy, administration and even go a long way to determine political structures of the society and forms of government. 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 power. Rather, their aim is to influence political decisions. Second, political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Also pressure groups are not accountable for any of their actions while political parties do account for their actions. When you vote for a political party during election period that is to make them accountable.

In addition, political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups. They relate together to achieve certain social changes. Pressure groups may align their interest with that of certain political parties that are believed to possess the capability to further their interests. There are various types of pressure groups which includes; interest groups, cause groups, insider groups and outsider groups, anomic groups, associational groups and non-associational groups.

Functions of pressure groups; links government to the people, promotes participation in government, serving as source of information to government, promotion of the interest of the minority.