NAME: OWOLABI OLUWANIFEMI MOPELOLA

DEPARTMENT: MEDICINE AND SURGERY

MATRIC NO: 19/MHS01/370

COURSE CODE: GST203

**The Idea of Pressure Group**

A pressure group is any formal or organised body with the 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. It is also referred to as “The Functional Representative” based on the fact that different pressure groups represent different sectors of the economy based on heir functions. They seek to ensure that the government does their bidding. They influence public policy, administration, determine political structure and forms of government.

These groups can be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic or social in nature. Pressure groups may seem similar to political parties but they differ in the fact that unlike political parties, they don’t seek to gain political power but to influence political decisions. Also, political parties usually have a wide range of policies but pressure groups narrow down their ideas in order to have a common aim. Pressure groups and political parties are also similar in some ways. For example, they relate together to achieve certain societal aims, and they might themselves with a certain political party that they believe share their interests.

Pressure groups exist to checkmate the government and make democracy beneficial to everyone. It also exist to prevent tyranny against the minority by the majority. They encourage participation in government for the betterment of society. Even though they are very beneficial, they can also be harmful when they are dominated by a certain group of people. This causes the voices of the smaller groups with narrow-minded interest to be more influential in decision making. Usually there is a need for pressure groups to compromise in order to ensure the common good of the people. In a situation where the group becomes rigid and refuses to compromise, they monopolise the democratic process.

One of the downside of pressure groups is when their selfish interest come into play and they mount pressure on the government to swing decisions their way without considering the limited resources of the government. For example, when professional groups go on strike until the government meets their demands.

There are various types of pressure groups which are based on the function they serve. First is the interest group which represent the people in the society, the cause groups which seek to promote particular causes for example charity organisations, insider and outsider groups which have direct access to the government and don’t have access respectively,the anomic groups which work based on the situation in the society. Lastly, the associational groups which are registered with appropriate authorities in the state and the non-associational groups which do not have a formal organisation.

Pressure groups serve several functions within the state including linking the government to the people , promoting participation of the citizens in government, providing information to the government, curtailing dictatorship within the government, promoting the interest of the minority and influencing legislation.

Pressure groups use different ways to achieve their goals such as lobbying, media advocacy, protests and so on. The ability of a pressure group to achieve its goals depends on their ability to be recognised as legitimate by the people, media and the government. They lobby the government in various ways either through legislators and government machineries. They might also sponsor bills and ensure that certain bills are passed.