**PRESSURE GROUPS**

Pressure groups are organised associations which seek to influence government decisions and policies without attempting to contest elections to take over government. They put actual or potential pressure on the decision makers in other for the realisation of group and collective interest. Pressure groups are also called interest groups. Examples of pressure groups include Bring Back our Girls (BBOG)

**TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

*1. Economic pressure Groups:* They comprise mostly of producers and manufacturers. Their main goal is to protect the interest of their members and the businesses they are involved in. Examples of Such include: manufacturers Association of Nigeria(MAN)

*2. Professional Or Occupational Groups :* These can also be called associational pressure groups and it comprises of workers of the same occupation or professional interest e.g. Nigerian Medical association (NMA), Nigerian union of Teachers (NUT), Academic staff union of secondary schools (ASUSS), Nigerian Union of Road Transport workers (NURTW).

3. Religious Pressure Groups: These are pressure groups of people that belong to the same religion and wish to influence government decisions in favour of their belief. E.g. Supreme council of Islamic Affairs (SCAN), and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

4. Promotional Pressure Groups :These groups promote some causes which may not directly benefit their Members e.g. Red Cross, and National Centres for Environmental Information (NCEI) Which is Involved in gathering weather data and advising on weather related issues.

5. Anomic Pressure Groups :This type of interest groups use violent demonstrations, arson, assassinations, strikes and the likes in expressing their aims and objectives. They are mob groups, street demonstrations and student riot groups not well organised but they may be interested in same common goals.

6. Institutional Pressure Groups: These exist in order to protect the interest of certain important institutions within the society E.g. Nigerian army, Nigerian police, Ministries and commissions etc.

7. Non Associational Pressure Groups :These are tribal groups which people become members merely by accident of birth e.g. Hausa, Igbo, Efik, Yoruba e.t.c. However, in the inevitable struggle for resources of the nation, individuals behave consciously or unconsciously as members of such groups.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

1. Pressure groups depend on contributions from members through levies, donations, and dues including support from other sources who appreciate their

cause to carry out their activities.

2. Their membership is limited by profession, location, religion or other common

interest and does not recruit Members

3. They are well organised and they have their branches coordinated from The

headquarters by effective leadership.

4. it protects the common interest of their members and not to take over

governance as political parties do.

FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

1. The interest of their members is well protected and promoted by the group.

2. They help educate their members and the whole society on their fundamental

human rights and political rights on some governmental policies.

3. Economic stability of the country is promoted through their useful advice to

government on economic policies.

4. They promote certain general welfare services.

PROBLEMS OF PRESSURE GROUPS

1. Insufficient funding

2. Problem of ineffective leadership

3. poor organisation

4. instability of government

These are some of the problems faced by pressure groups especially when the leadership is ineffective and inexperienced.

PUBLIC OPINION

Public opinion is what the members of the public feel and think about government

policies, plans or actions. It is a guide for democratic governments and it can determine who wins elections, what actions or inactions, the government takes e.t.c. for example, public opinion was what made former president Goodluck Jonathan to reverse the removal of fuel subsidy in January 2012. it also created the #EndSARS protest which led to the dissolution of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) during President Buhari’ government in 2020. Public opinion is a dynamic and constant part of governance.

FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION

1. Mass Media

Mass media includes Radio, television, film, newspapers, magazines etc. The mass

media can help create and form the opinion of the people. They can frame or portray the news the way they want in order to persuade voters to vote a particular person or give a certain impression and perspective to situations. Social media is

another form of mass media that can shape public opinion. People can form opinions

based on what they believe and can see as the prevalent opinion of the social media

group they identify with for example on facebook, tiktok or Instagram. This in some

cases can create a false vision where the perceived truth can actually be very far from the actual truth.

2. Pressure Groups

These organised social groups employ direct and different methods in trying to

influence public opinion and government policies. This can be through religious

pressure groups creating an opinion for its members, institutional pressure groups,

promotional pressure groups e.t.c. An example is the Bring Back Our Girls group

(BBOG) Who have contributed greatly in giving people awareness of the kidnapping of the Chibok girls.

3. Political Parties

Using the guidelines and plans in their manifestos, Political parties have formed public opinions through rallies, adverts and media campaigns etc.

Other ways of formation of public opinion includes opinion leaders, Gossips, rumors,

Social background, lectures, symposiums, e.t.c.

MEASUREMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION

a. Election: Having a free and fair election and having people coming out to vote shows how the public opinion of the people is. It shows that the people are well aware and what choices they want to choose.

b. Opinion Polls :This is a method where sections of the public are selected to respond to questions on an important issue. It can be through questionnaires, and online surveys through social media channels. Buharimeter is an example of a tool used to measure public opinion.

c. Public Demonstration : Members of the public Sometimes respond to government policies and actions by mass demonstrations with posters and placards showing what they feel or think. Example is the #EndSARS protest where there were mass demonstrations nationwide.

Other ways of measuring public opinion include ways of Measuring government

agencies, pressure groups, Opinion leaders, mass media and press, e.t.c.

IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION

1. Public opinion is a very good channel of communication between rulers and the

ruled. It is very essential in the modern day political process.

1. The desires and wishes of the people can be expressed and heard by the government.
2. It stimulates and encourages easy execution of government policies.

4. It creates a balance in governance to avoid tyranny in government it gives room for healthy opposition in government

5. Public opinion can be an effective way of Strengthening or weakening societal

institutions or practices.

ELECTION

Election is the process of choosing candidates who will represent the people in various leadership positions of government.

PURPOSES OF ELECTIONS

1. Elections help to ascertain and reveal the preferences and opinions of the electorates.

2. Elections create the opportunity for the people to choose leaders in government.

3. Elections create a situation where those elected are accountable to the

government. It makes elected leaders accountable and responsible in running the

affairs of government.

4. Elections are supposed to ensure the best are elected into public office

FEATURES OF ELECTION

1. Absence of compulsion through the use of force, Intimidation or breaks at any

stage in the electoral process .

1. Impartiality on the part of those charged with the administration and conduct of elections.
2. The acceptance of the principle of one man, one vote so that one individual's vote

doesn't count more than others.

4. Neutrality and fairness on the part of the incumbent government or administration.

STAGES OF ELECTION

1. setting up of the electoral Commission.

2. Electoral acts: Rules and regulations to govern the conduct of elections.

3. Registration of political parties.

4. Planning and logistics

5. Registration of voters

6. Display of voters lists

7. launching of Political campaigns

8. conduct of elections

9. filling of election petitions.

10. Election result