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 QUESTION.

In about 2-Page review Chapter 15, ‘An Overview of the idea of Pressure Group’, in salient issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics, pages 194-200.

 ANSWER.

 According to Anifowose ( 1999) pressure group can be defined as ‘‘interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups’’. Pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups. Pressure group seek to achieve that the government listen to their pleas that’s why the pressure group is the right channel due the much influence they will have on the government. The pressure group influence both the public policy, administration, and even further to determine political structures of the society and forms of government. Prepare groups can either be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic, or social in nature.

 Pressure Groups and Political Parties are similar in some activities but they are still different from each other. Some of the distinctions is that;

* Political parties seeks to gain government powers, while pressure group do not seek to gain powers but rather, their aim is to influence political decisions.
* Political parties have a wide range of politics, while pressure groups narrow their goals.
* Political parties do not account for their action while pressure groups are accountable for their actions.

 Pressure groups and political parties are related as they but 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.

 Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. And also, to treat or fill in the gaps in the democratic process, to inform debates among ourselves, to encourage participations, and to enhance good accountability in our daily society.

 Pressure groups are acknowledged as potentially beneficial to a democratic society, problems can arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific groups. In this situation, the voice of a small group of people with narrow interest can become overly influential. In democratic process, there is a need for compromise in order to reach consensus regarding the common good. If pressure groups remain rigid and refuse to compromise specific issues, they can potentially monopolise the democratic process by focusing public debate on few specific issues. While pressure groups have their important place in the scheme of things in a nation, there is always some downside. Sometimes, due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions while not considering government’s limited resources.

 Types of Pressure Groups.

 The types of pressure groups are as follows;

1. Interest Groups: this group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, trade unit.
2. Cause Groups: these groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example, charities and environmental groups. Cause group[s are any group that champions social movement even though it lacks a formal structure. Its aim is to achieve a single objective, like protesting about the expansion of airports, seaports, railways e.t.c.
3. Insider Groups and Outsider Groups: insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. Example, NBA. While the outsider groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to use other ways to have impact. Example, the Animal Liberation Front. The insider and outsider group changes from time to time based on the party or government in power.
4. Anomic Groups: these groups have unpredictable actions and behaviour as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioural style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently. Examples are; protests, riots, strikes and revolution.
5. Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups: associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. While non-asso ciational groups are pressure group without a formal organisation. Their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, tribal and even race afflictions.

 Some of the functions of pressure groups are;

1. They serve as the link government to the people.
2. It promotes participation in government.
3. They serve as sources of information to the government.
4. It helps in the curtailing of doctoral tendencies.
5. It promotes the influence of the minority.
6. It helps in influencing the legislation.

 Some of the techniques used by the pressure group inn manipulating government policies are;

LOBBYING AND STRIKING.

 Examples of pressure groups are;

1. Trade unions.
2. Labour unions.
3. Business and family associations
4. Churches and mosques
5. Ethnic groups.
6. Pensioners group.
7. Women or civil cases association.