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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**

## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP**

To amount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something, in this regard, a pressure group can be defined as a formal or organised body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. According to anifowose, pressure group is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups.” In nature, these groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic, or social, among others, examples are; Academic Staff Union for University, Afenifere, Oodua People’s Congress, Nigeria Labour Congress, Christian Association of Nigeria, and so on.

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 occupations or professions. For example, the Nigeria Bar Association represents the lawyers and solicitors. pressure group came into existence to complement, enhance or even protect the interest of their members or groups. Through the right channel and means, pressure groups ensure that the government does their biddings, they influence both public policy, administration, and even go a long way to determine the political structure of the society and forms of government, for instance, The Nigeria Labour Congress.

Although, pressure groups and political parties relate together to achieve certain social change, by aligning their interest with that of certain political parties that are believed to possess the capability to further their interests, however, the difference between political parties and pressure groups remains. While political parties seek to gain governmental power, pressure groups do not seek to gain political power, but rather, they aim at influencing political decisions. Secondly, political parties have a wide range of policies, while pressure group policies are narrow. Also, pressure groups are not actually accountable for their actions, whereas political parties give account of their actions.

However, pressure groups can be divided into four types; interest groups which are also seen as sectional groups and one type of pressure group representing the people in the society. Examples of these groups are; confederation of British Industry, known as the voice of business in the country, and in Nigeria, Convention on Business Integration (CBI). Another type of pressure group is the cause group which are also promotion groups. They seek to promote a particular cause, in other words, any group that champions social movement is also

seen as a “cause group” even though it lacks formal structure. An example is charities and environmental groups. Also, insider groups and outsider groups are another type of pressure group. Where the insider groups are regularly consulted by the government and have regular access to ministers or legislators, for instance, the Nigeria Bar Association, the outsider groups on the other hand have no access or links to the government and its machineries, and they have to use other ways to impact. Example of this type of group is the Animal Liberation Front. The third of the types of pressure groups is the Anomic Groups which have unpredictable actions and behaviour as they would base on the moment and situation in the society. If these groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioural style or rules, they sometimes act violently. Finally, the association and non-associational groups. The associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country, they have their own registered offices, constitution and so on. While the non-associational pressure groups are pressure groups without a formal organisation. Arrangement and gathering in a non-associational pressure group is usually by kinship or even families attachments, social traditions, and so on.

Moreover, the functions of pressure groups include; linking government to the people. pressure group serves as a link between the government and the governed. Pressure groups promote political participation by engaging in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government. Another important function of the pressure group is that they serve as a source of information, as the pressure groups lobby the government on various fronts, the interaction offers the government valuable information on issues they may not even be aware of. Pressure groups also curtail any dictatorial tendency by its criticism of government policies, so that governments do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into a dictatorship. And most importantly, pressure groups promote the interest of minorities. Through their various activities, they make sure that the interests of the minority groups are not trampled upon by the government, thus pressure groups act as watchdogs on the government. Nevertheless, pressure groups are also instrumental in mounting pressure on the government to implement policies that can benefit the citizens. Pressure groups acquire different means to make the government adhere to their demands. One of the strategies used by pressure groups is lobbying. They lobby elected officials, media advocacy, through protest and so on.

