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**MATRIC NO: 19/LAW01/104**

**COURSE CODE: GST 203**

**COURSE TITLE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

**QUESTION;**

**In about 2 pages, review chapter 15 of “ An overview of the idea of pressure group” in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics, pages 194- 200**

By virtue of introduction, to mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. In order to make this happen, a pressure group of a formal or organized 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. The pressure group is referred to as “The Fundamental 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 Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), represents the lawyers and solicitors.

The activities of Pressure Groups and political parties may 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, and rather, their aim is to influence political decisions. Second, political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals.

The existence of pressure group is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. Also, to treat the gaps in the democratic process, to inform debates among ourselves, to encourage participations, and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. However, while 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.

**TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

**Interest Groups**

This group is also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For example, the trade units, for instance, CBI ( Confederation of British Industry) known as the voice of business in the country and in Nigeria, Convention on Business Integration (CBI)

**Cause Groups**

These groups are promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. For example, charities and environmental groups. For example, we can see the Amnesty International, which campaign for the need to end human right abuses.

**Insider Groups and Outsider Groups**

Insider groups are the regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. The Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) is an example of such groups. However, an insider group may be high or low in profile; nevertheless they intend to have influence on government’s mission and visions. On the other hand, outside groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to use other ways to have impact. Example this set of groups are the Animal Liberation Front, which champions rights for animals.

**Anomic Groups**

Groups here have unpredictable actions and behaviors as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently. Protest, rioting, strikes and sometime revolution, are some of the means through which they mount pressure.

**Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups**

Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country, Also, these groups have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. On the other hand, non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organization. Their arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, social traditions, tribal or even race afflictions, just to mention few.

**Functions of Pressure Groups**

1. Links government to the people.
2. Promotes participation in government.
3. Serving as sources of information to government.
4. Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies.
5. Promotion of the interest of the minority.
6. Influencing legislation.
7. Pressure groups’ lobbying.