**NAME:** Olufemi Oluwatobiloba Daniella

**MATRICULATION NUMBER:** 19/LAW01/208

**COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT:** Law

**COURSE TITLE:** Government and Political Institute of Nigeria

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**QUESTION:** In about 2-page, review chapter fifteen “An Overview of the Idea of Pressure Group”, in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics, pages 194-200.

**CHAPTER FIFTEEN.**

Pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose main aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws. A pressure group promotes its interest and seeks to influence the decisions and policies of government. Various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. For example: the Nigeria Bar Association(NBA) represents the lawyers and solicitors, the Nigeria Medical Association(NMA) represents doctor’s interests and the Academic Staff Union of Universities(ASUU) which represents the interests of academics in universities.

The activities of pressure groups and political parties appear the same but they’re not. The first difference is that political parties seek to gain powers of government while pressure groups do not seek to gain governmental powers but rather to influence government’s decisions. Secondly, political parties have a wide range of policies, while pressure groups have specific goals. Thirdly, political parties are accountable for their actions while pressure groups aren’t accountable for any action they take. Most times, when professional bodies go on strike, it is to the detriment of the citizens because the citizens suffer and government may not be able to meet the requests of these associations due to insufficient funds and scarcity of resources.

There are five types of pressure groups, namely;

1. Interest Groups.
2. Cause Groups.
3. Insider Groups and Outsider Groups.
4. Anomic Groups.
5. Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups.

Interest Groups are also known as sectional groups which represent the people in society. For example; trade units, Confederation of British Industry (CBI), etc.

Cause Groups are promotion groups that seek to promote certain causes. For example, charities and environmental groups. Any group that champions social movement is also a cause group.

Insider Groups and Outsider Groups – Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have access to ministers. An example of this group is NBA. Outsider groups have no access to government or its machineries. An example of this group is Earth Liberation Front. However, these groups (Insider and Outsider) can change from time to time based on the government in power.

Anomic groups are unpredictable in their actions and behaviour as they operate based on the moment or situation in the country. They can mount pressure through protests, rioting and strikes.

Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups – Associational groups are usually registered with the appropriate authorities in a state. Non-associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization or structure. They gather by virtue of kinship, social traditions, etc.

There are also various functions of pressure groups.

1. Links Government to the People – Pressure groups serve as a link between the government and the people. They also tell the government what the opinion of the people is.
2. Promotes Participation in Government – Pressure groups promote public participation from the people in the affairs of the government.
3. Serving as Sources of Information to Government – Pressure groups also provide the government with information on what is happening in the country.
4. Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies – Pressure groups ensure that the leadership of the government does not lead to dictatorship.
5. Promotion of the Interest of the Minority – Pressure groups make sure that the interests of the people are taken care of and are not trampled upon.
6. Influencing Legislation – Pressure groups ensure that the government implements policies that are beneficial to the citizens.

Pressure groups also use different strategies to achieve their objectives such as lobbying, advocacy and political action.