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**COLLEGE: SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE**

**DEPARTMENT: MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION**

**COURSE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL**

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 **ASSIGNMENT: Do a review of Chapter 15 of ‘Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics’.**

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 15;

Chapter 15 of ‘Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics’ is a piece that talks about an ‘Overview of the Idea of Pressure Group’. One needs to understand the concept of ‘Pressure’ to understand the meaning, idea and functions of a pressure group. To mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. A pressure group is 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 to its own advantage. A Peer Group is seen as a ‘Functional Representatives’ it is based on the idea that different groups represent different sects of society through their functions i.e., the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), represent Lawyers’ and Solicitors’, Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) represents the doctors’ interests, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which champions the interests of academics and academic conditions of learning in Nigeria’s Universities.

According to Anifowose (1999) Pressure groups can be described as ‘interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups’. According to Oyeleye (1998) ‘Pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups’. Pressure groups maybe religious in nature, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, economic or social, among others. Some examples of Pressure groups in Nigeria include; Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Afenire, Oodua People’s Congress (representing the Yoruba tribe), Arewa Consultative Forum, Arewas Peoples Congress (representing the Hausa tribe), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC).

The activities of Pressure groups and political parties may sometimes appear similar but they are different. Firstly, a political party seek to gain government powers while a pressure group does not seek to gain power but influence political decisions. Secondly, Political parties have a wide range of policies whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Also, Pressure groups are not accountable for their actions whereas political parties are. In addition to, political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups. But this does not mean that Pressure groups and Political parties have nothing in common, they both do as they exist to influence and capture interest. Pressure groups also exist to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for tyranny of majority of the people in the society. There is also a disadvantage of pressure groups most times and that can due to their own selfish interest which can also alter the turn of a government.

There are different types of Pressure Groups namely;

The Interest Groups; also seen as a sectional group representing different people in society, for example Confederation of British Industry (CBI) known as the voice of business in the country, Convention on Business Integration (CBI).

Cause Groups; which seek to promote particular causes. It is always aimed at achieving a single objective i.e. protesting, airports, seaports, railways etc.

Insider and Outsider Groups; Insider groups are always consulted by the government and have access to ministers and legislators i.e., the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA). Outsider groups have no links to the government and its machineries i.e. the Animal Liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front etc.

Anomic Groups; these groups have unpredictable actions and behaviour as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. They are not guided by appropriate behavioural style and may sometimes act violently i.e. protesting, rioting, strikes and sometimes revolution.

Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups; Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. They also have registered offices and constitutions etc. Non-Associational are pressure groups without a formal organization.

Functions of Pressure Groups

Links Government to the People; One of the functions of pressure groups is that it serves as a link between the government of the day and the people it governs.

Promotes Participation in Government; Pressure groups promote public participation in the activities of the government of the day.

Serving as sources of information to Government; they serve as sources of information to government through their interaction with society.

Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies; Criticisms of government tendencies curtail and dictatorial tendencies of the leaders in government.

Promotion of the interest of the Minority; Pressure groups champion the rights of the under-privileged and minorities as they go about their activities and ensure that the rights of the minorities are not trampled upon.

Influencing Legislation; Pressure groups are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that it can implement policies that benefit it citizens.

Pressure Groups may adopt various strategies to achieve their goals including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. The degrees to which such groups are able to achieve their goals depend on their ability to be recognized by the population, media and government. Pressure groups lobby in many ways. For example, they lobby with government officials directly; ministers, legislators and other government machineries. They can also sometimes lobby government through friends, spouses, children and other relatives.