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**QUESTION: IN ABOUT 2 PAGES, REVIEW CHAPTER 15, “AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP” IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS, PAGES 194-200.**

**CHAPTER 15**

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

This chapter explains the concept of pressure groups. Pressure groups are formal and organised bodies 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, they are referred to as the “The functional representative” chiefly because they represent different sectors of the societies based on their functions these groups could be religious, business like, educational, ethnic-oriented etc. examples of pressure groups are The Nigerian Bar Association, The Academic Staff Union of Universities.

With some pressure through the right channels and means, pressure groups are able to make government listen to them also; these groups influence both public policy, administration, and even go a long way to determine political structures of the society and forms of government. Although they appear similar in the sense that they relate together to achieve certain social changes and collaborate to further their interests, pressure groups and political parties differ in a number of ways, political parties seek to gain political power while pressure groups seek to influence political decisions, political parties have a wide range of policies while pressure groups narrow their goals, pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions while political parties account for their actions finally, political parties are more formally organised than pressure groups.

The existence of pressure groups is potentially beneficial to a democratic society; problems can however arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a few specific groups. If pressure groups remain rigid and refuse to compromise on specific issues, they can potentially monopolise the democratic process by focusing public debate on a few specific issues. Pressure groups are however sometimes let their selfish interest into the agenda when altering the decisions of the government.

There are five types of pressure groups they are;

1. Interest groups which are also seen as sectional groups, representing the people e.g. the trade units, for instance, Convention on Business Integration (CBI).

2. Cause Groups, which are promotion groups which seek to promote particular causes, it is always aimed at achieving a single objective e.g. Amnesty International.

3. Insider Groups and Outsider Groups, insider groups they are regularly consulted by the government and intend to have influence on government’s missions and visions. E.g. The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA). Outsider groups however have no access to the government and use other ways to have an impact e.g. Earth Liberation Front.

4. Anomic groups, they do not have an appropriate behavioural style, they sometimes act violently.

5. Associational Groups and Non-associational Groups, associational groups are usually registered formally with appropriate authorities while non-associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organisation, their arrangement and gathering are as a result of some form of attachment.

Pressure groups promote participation in government, they serve as sources of information to government, they curtail dictatorial tendencies, they promote the interest of the majority and they influence the legislation amongst others.

Lobbying is a method adopted by pressure groups to achieve their goal. Some pressure groups exert more influence than others and the degree to which such groups are able to achieve their goals depends on their ability to be legitimately recognised. These groups lobby in a variety of ways, they lobby with government officials directly or indirectly through friends, spouses, children etc. pressure groups may also sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills.

**REFERENCE(S)**

Oladipo, T.D. & Olaleye, I.O. (Eds.). *Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics*. Ibadan: Hope, 2019.