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**COURSE: GOVERNMENT AND POLTICAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA**

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.

It was highlighted that to mount pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. A pressure group is therefore 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 advantages. A pressure group promotes its interest regarding an issue. A pressure group is referred to as “the functional representative” which means that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. This is usually done through their occupations or professions.

Pressure groups seek to ensure that government does their biddings. This objective is achieved through the right channels. These groups also influence public policy, administration and even determine political structures and forms of government in the society. Pressure groups can be religious, occupational, educational, ethnic-oriented, gender-sensitive, business-like, economic, social among others.

Some examples of pressure groups are the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) which represents the lawyers and solicitors, Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) which represents the interests of doctors, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which champions the condition of learning and interests of learning in Nigeria’s universities, Afenifere, Oodua People’s Congress which represents the Yoruba tribe, Arewa People’s Congress which represents the Hausa tribe, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Labour Congress ( NLC) among others.

The activities of a pressure group and a political party may appear similar but differences exist between these two bodies. They relate together to achieve certain social changes. Pressure groups on occasion align with political parties that are believed to possess the capability to further their interests. The first difference is that political parties seek to gain governmental powers while pressure groups on the other hand aim at influencing political decisions. Second, political parties have a wide range of policies while pressure groups narrow their goals. Also pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions while political parties are accountable for their actions. Political parties are also more formerly organised than pressure groups.

The types of pressure groups are interest groups, cause groups, insider and outside groups, anomic groups, associational and non-associational groups. Pressure groups perform many functions such as; linking the government to the people, promoting participation in government, serving as sources of information to government, curtailing dictatorial tendencies, promoting the interest of the minority, influencing legislation. Pressure groups apply various methods to achieve their goals and they include lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action.