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ASSIGNMENT

Summarize chapter 15 of “Salient Issues in Politics”

**CHAPTER 15: AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP**

A pressure group is a body or association whose aim is to mount pressure on the government decisions and policies and laws to their own advantage. The pressure group is referred to as “The Functional Representative as they represent each sector or domain of the society based on their function. For example; the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) who represents the interest of lawyers, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) who represents the interest of medical doctors, and the Academic Staff Union (ASUU) who represents the interest of academics and university institutions.

The major aim of any pressure group is to ensure that the government does their work based on the interest of the citizens. These groups influence public policies which could go a long way to determine the structure of the government. They serve as a checkmate to the democratic ideology practiced by the government and to prevent the rise of an authoritarian government. They also encourage participation in political activities by the citizenry and foster accountability in the society. However, the objectives that the pressure groups seek to attain may not always be for the betterment of all individuals in the society, but could be to attain their own selfish interests.

Pressure groups occur in many forms. They could be in form of Interest Groups. Here, they are seen as a group representing the interests of a section of the society, which could be trade. For example the Confederation of British Industry. Pressure group could be in the form of a Cause Group. These groups aim to promote a particular cause, a singular objective. An example is the Amnesty International which champions the importance of Human Rights and does not tolerate infringement of human rights. They could take the form of an Insider Groups and Outsider Group. The former have regular access to the ministers, and other important government personnels, thereby using this medium to influence government policies. For example the Nigerian Bar Association (BAR). The latter have no access to the government machinery or officials and have to look for other ways to influence government decisions. For example the Animal Liberation Force which seeks to promote the rights of animals. Another type of pressure group is the Anomic Group. The behaviour of this group cannot be predicted as they act based on the situation in the society. They are not guided by any behavioural pattern as they could be violent in their actions or non-violent. Another form of pressure groups are the Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups. For the former, they have their own registered offices and constitutions. Whereas the latter is without their own formal organization.

Pressure Groups perform the following duties. They serve as a link or intermediary between the government and the people. They encourage involvement in political activities through the public demonstrations they organize. They serve as a source of information to the government by creating awareness on the issues of discomfort amongst the citizens. They prevent the tendency of an authoritarian ruler from rising to power. They seek to promote the interest of the minority in the society. They mount pressure on the legislature to make policies that are beneficial to the citizens.

Pressure Groups use various strategies to mount pressure on the government. This could be through lobbying, the use of media, or direct political actions such as public demonstrations. A pressure group will be able to achieve its goals if the people have been accepted by the citizens, the media and the government officials.