NAME: DARAMOLA OLUWADAMILOLA OREOLUWA

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CHAPTER 15: AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP

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| A pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to put pressure on any governmental institutions with the aim of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. It is also referred to as The functional Representative. Different pressure groups represent different sectors of the society. For example: NBA, NMA, ASUU etc.Pressure groups came into existence to complement, enhance and protect the interests of the members of the group. They ensure that government does their bidding. They influence both political policy, administration and even go a long way to determine the political structures of the society and forms of government.There are different types of pressure groups. They can be religious, business like, educational, ethnic oriented, gender sensitive etc.There is a difference between political party and pressure group. Political parties seek to gain governmental powers while pressure groups do not. Secondly, political parties have a wide range of policies while pressure groups narrow their goals. Thirdly, pressure groups are not accountable for their actions while political parties are. Lastly, political parties are more formally organized.Pressure groups help to treat the gaps in the democratic process, to encourage participation, and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. Problems can arise when democratic process is dominated by a few specific groups and so the use of pressure groups becomes very influential.They have their advantages and also have their disadvantages. Due to their selfish interests, they can alter the direction of government decisions without considering government limited resources.Types of pressure groupsThere are different types of pressure groups.1. Interest groups: these are groups that represent the people in the society. They are also called sectional groups. Example: trade units.2. Cause groups: also known as promotion groups. Thry seek to promote a particular cause. Example: cahrities and environmental groups. It is aimed at achieving a single objective.3. Insider groups and Outsider groups: Insiders groups are readily consulted by government. They have access to the ministers and legislators. Example is NBA.Outsider groups do not have access to the government but have other ways to impact. Example: Earth liberation Front.4. Anomic groups: Groups here don't have unpredictable action because they work based on the situation in the country. They sometimes act violently.5. Associational Groups and non-associational groups: Associational Groups are registered with appropriate authorities in a country or state. While non associational are without formal organization.Functions of Pressure groups.1. They serve as links between the government and citizens of the country.2. They promote and encourage citizens to participate in government.3. They serve as sources of information to the government. They inform the government on issues they may not be aware of.4. They keep the government in check and prevent them from entering dictatorship.5. They promote the interest of the minority group. They ensure that the government looks into the interests of the minority group.6. They mount pressure on the government to implement laws and policies that are beneficial to the citizens of the country. They can also ensure that the government eradicates a policy that does not support the citizens.Pressure groups adopt various ways to achieve their goals like lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political actions. The degree to which pressure groups achieve their goals is due to the media, their level of influence and the person in power.  |  |  |