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DEPARTMENT: MEDICINE AND SURGERY

COURSE TITLE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

QUESTION: IN ABOUT TWO PAGES DO A REVIEW OF CHAPTER FIFTEEN OF THE BOOK SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS, AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP.

**An Overview of the Idea of Pressure Group**

A pressure group can be defined simply as 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 it’s own advantage. A pressure group can be referred to as the *functional representative* this is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions and this is usually don’t through their occupations or professions. Examples include the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) and the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA). Pressure groups can also be described as interest groups, lobby groups and even protest groups. The aim pressure groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government do their bidding.

Pressure groups sometimes seem very similar to political parties but they have various differences. The first difference is that while political parties are out to gain political power pressure groups do not seek political powers. Secondly while political parties are equipped with various policies on various topics, pressure group arrow their goals to limited few aims. Thirdly, pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions and political parties are accountable for their actions. Lastly political parties are more formally organised than pressure groups. Pressure groups though are in some ways similar to political parties and they sometimes work together to achieve a certain goal. Also, some pressure groups can align their goals with that of a political party to further their interests.

Some advantages of pressure groups is that they help to checkmate and make democracy better. They also serve to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society. They help treat gaps in the democratic process, to inform debates among ourselves, to encourage participation and to enhance good accountability in our daily society. Despite its many advantages pressure groups have some disadvantage such as when the democratic process of a society becomes dictated by a few specific groups. Also as compromise is necessary in any democratic society when Pressure groups don’t compromise it can lead to a monopoly of the democratic process and focusing the public debate on only a few issues. . Lastly, sometimes pressure groups don’t consider the limited resources of the government and make unreasonable demands due to their own selfishness.

**Types of Pressure Groups**

* Interest Groups

This group is also seen as sectional groups. For example the trade unit for instance the convention of business Integration (CBI)

* Cause Groups

These groups seek to promote particular causes. They may lack formal structure but they champion social causes, examples include charities and environmental groups

* Insider Groups and Outsider Groups

Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government as have regular access to government officials an example is the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA). Outside groups have no access to government to government and its machineries and use other methods to have an impact on the government, they are usually radical in nature an example is the Animal Liberation Front.

* Anomic Group

These groups are unpredictable in actions and behaviour as they work based in the moment and situation in the society. They can be violent and have no restrictions on behaviour. Example #EndSARS

* Associational and Non-Associational Groups

Associational groups are those that are registered with the appropriate authorities in the state or country. Non-associational groups exist without formal organisation and membership can be based on almost anything.

**Functions of pressure groups**

Pressure groups exist to carry our the functions below

1. They serve as links between the government and the people they govern.
2. They help to promote public participation in government activities
3. Pressure groups serve as sources of information to the government and provide valuable information on issues that the government may not be aware of.
4. They help to curtail dictatorial tendencies by the government
5. Pressure groups promote the interest of minority in the society and ensure their rights are not trampled upon by the government.
6. Pressure groups are instrumental in mounting pressure on the government to implement policies that are favourable to the people thus influencing the legislature.
7. Pressure groups lobby in many different ways to ensure that their needs are met by the government in ways such as strikes, protests, media advocacy to name a few.