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**Assignment**

Summarize chapter 15 of “SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIAN POLITICS”

**An overview on the idea of pressure groups**

To put pressure is to persuade someone or force an individual into doing something. This makes a pressure group a formal body with the same interest whose aim is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. The pressure group is known as “the functional representatives”, this is an idea where various groups represent different sectors of the society and it’s usually based on their occupations. For example, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) represents lawyers and solicitors, Academic Staff Union OF Universities (ASSU), etc.

According to Oyeleye in 1998, pressure groups came into existence to complement, protect the interest of their members or group. Pressure groups are there to ensure that government does their biddings. And with pressure groups going to right means, they are able to make the government listen to them; these groups generally influence the public policy, administration, and even go as far as determining political structures of the society and forms of government.

Pressure groups can be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic-oriented, economic, social, etc. pressure groups and political parties activities may sometimes appear similar, but are quite different from one another. Firstly, political parties seek to gain government powers, while on the other hand, pressure groups do not seek to gain power, they rather want to influence political decisions. Secondly, political parties have a wide range of policies but pressure groups narrow their goals. Then again, pressure groups are not accountable for their actions but political parties are.

Pressure groups are basically there to checkmate and make democracy better. While pressure groups have their important place in the scheme of things in a nation, there is some downside. Sometimes, due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions, while not considering government’s limited resources. E.g. when professional bodies like ASSU go on strike, the citizens suffer and government might not have the capacity due to shortage of funds to meet the requirements of these associations.

**Types of Pressure Groups**

Interest Groups: this group is seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. Examples are the trade units like Convention of Business Integration (CBI).

Cause Groups: these groups are promotion groups, seeking to promote specific causes. E.g. charities and environmental groups like the amnesty international that campaigns for the need to end human rights abuse.

Insider and outsider groups: insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers or legislators. Example is the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA). Outsider groups have no link or access to the government. They have to use other ways to have impact. Example of this is the Animal liberation front that champions for the rights of animals. Note that Insider and Outsider groups change from time based on the party or government in power.

Anomic groups: groups here have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style or rule.

Associational Groups and Non-Associational Groups: Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. These groups also have their registered offices, constitution and so on. Non-Associational groups on the other hand, non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organization.

**Functions of pressure groups**

Links government to people

Promotes participation in government

Serving as sources of information to government

Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies

Promotion of the interest of minority

Influencing legislation

**Pressure Groups Lobbying**

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action (e.g. organized protests) pressure groups lobby in so many ways. They lobby with government officials directly, for example they lobby legislators ministers and other government machineries.