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**Assignment**

In about 2-page review Chapter 15, “An Overview of the Idea of Pressure Group”, in salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics, pages 194-200.

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA OF PRESSURE GROUP**

Pressure group is a formal / 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 advantage. Pressure group seeks to enhance, promote and protect the interest of its members, it seeks to influence the decision of the government in its favour and that of the general public. It is known as “The Functional Representative”, this is because it represents diverse sectors of the society on the basis of their functions.

Pressure group as opined by Anifowose (1999) is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even” protest groups. Pressure groups are able to divert the will of the government towards doing their biddings with some pressure through the right channels and means. Pressure groups have the power to influence public policy, administration, and even determine political structures of the society and forms of government. Pressure groups are created to checkmate and make democracy better, close the loopholes in the democratic process, inform debates among themselves, encourage participation and enhance good accountability in our society.

The nature of pressure groups could be religious, business-like, educational, ethnic oriented, gender-sensitive, economic or social and so on. Pressure groups in Nigeria include: Nigerian Bar Association (NBA)-representing lawyers and solicitors, Nigeria Medical Association (NMA)-representing doctor’s interests, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Oodua .People’s Congress (representing the Yoruba tribe) etc. Pressure group is different from political party in that: Political parties seek to gain governmental powers whereas pressure groups seek only to influence government decisions; Political parties covers a wide range of policies while pressure groups are narrow in scope; Pressure groups are not held accountable for their actions whereas political parties are held accountable by the citizens who thus voted for their candidates; Political parties have a more formal organization when compared to that of pressure groups. Despites their differences they have similarities: pressure groups may align their interest with that of certain political parties that are believed to possess the capacity to further their interests. There some downsides to pressure groups, in a bid to make their will prevail, pressure is applied to alter the decision of the government without any consideration given to the government’s limited resources.

**Types of pressure groups**

*Interest group:* They are also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. Example: trade unions, CBI (Confederation of British Industry)

*Cause group:* They are promotion groups which seek to promote particular causes e.g. charities, environmental groups, amnesty intentional,

*Insider groups and outsider groups:* Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have regular access to ministers and legislators. This includes-Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), they are regulated by the government; outsider groups have no access to government or its machinery. This includes-Animal Liberation Front, have no link nine access to the government.

*Associational groups and non-associational groups:* The former is registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. The latter is without a forms organisation, it is done by virtue of kinship or family attachment, social tradition etc.

*Anomic groups:* They have unpredictable actions and behaviours as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. Protest, riot, strikes and sometimes revolution are means they use to mount pressure.

**Functions of pressure groups**

Links government to the people by relating to the government thru opinion of the people.

Promotes participation in government due to its various activities thus carrying the citizenry along.

Serving as sources of information to government this due to lobbying of the government.

Curtailing of dictatorial tendencies, they criticize government policies

Promotion of the interest of the minority.

They act as watchdogs on the government

They are instrumental in mounting of pressure on government so it can implement policies that are to benefit its citizens and they influence legislation.

Political groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action. The degree to which such groups are able to achieve their goals may depend on their ability to be recognized as legitimate by the population, media and those in power. For example, civil rights groups, trade unions and professional associations are more widely recognized and accepted than newly formed pressure groups or single pressure groups. They lobby with government directly. They might sometimes lobby these government officials through friends, spouses, children and other relatives. Also, pressure groups may sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills.