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A Summary of Chapter 15 (Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria's Politics)

A pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental aim is to pressure on governmental institutions with the intention of influencing government policies and laws to its own advantage. Pressure groups are also referred to as **The Functional Representative**. The various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions, this is done through their professions and occupations. To explain this further; the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) represents the lawyers, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) represents the interest of the doctors. According to Anifowose, pressure groups can also be described as interest groups, lobby groups or protest groups. Pressure groups could be religious, educational, business-like, gender based, etc. Examples of pressure groups are Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Oodua People's Congress (representing the Yoruba people), etc.

Political parties and pressure groups may sometimes appear similar, but they do have a lot of differences. The first being that political parties seek to gain government power, whereas pressure groups do not, they rather try to influence political decisions. Secondly, Political parties are accountable for their actions while pressure groups are not. Furthermore, political parties have a wide range of policies, whereas pressure groups narrow their goals. Despite all the differences given above, there are still some similarities between pressure groups and political parties. Pressure groups and political parties could work together to achieve social change. Pressure groups can also cause some problems in the society due to their selfish interest.

There are different types of pressure groups, namely; The interest groups which are also seen as sectional groups which represent the people in the society. An example of this is Convention on Business Integration (CBI) which is known as the voice of business in Nigeria; The cause groups which are promotion groups that seek to promote particular causes. Examples are charities and environmental groups like the amnesty international which campaigns against human right abuse; Insider and Outsider groups, the insider groups have regular access to the government, while the outsider groups do not.

An example of insider and outsider groups are the Nigerian Bar Association and the Animal Liberation Fund respectively; Associational and Non-associational groups, associational groups are registered with appropriate authorities in the state. They have their own registered offices, constitutions, etc. Whereas, Non-associational are pressure groups without a formal organization.

There are various functions of pressure groups in the society. Firstly, pressure groups link the government to the people. Secondly, pressure groups help to the peoples promote participation in government. Thirdly, pressure groups promote the interest of the minority. They help to curtail dictatorial tendencies from the government. They influence legislation. They serve as a source of information to the government. Etc.