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**QUESTION:** In about 2-pages review chapter 15, ‘An overview of the idea of pressure group’, in salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics pages 194-200.

**Understanding pressure Group:**

Pressure is to persuade someone or coerce a person into doing something. This makes a pressure group a formal or organized 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. A pressure group seeks to influence government decisions and policies. According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups”. They came into existence to complement, enhance or even to protect the interest of their members or groups. Pressure group’s existence is to checkmate and make democracy better, to compensate for the tyranny of majority of people in the society.

The pressure group is referred to as ‘the functional representative’. This is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. This is usually done through their occupations or professions. For example, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) represents the lawyer and solicitors, while Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), represents doctor’s interests.

While pressure groups have their importance 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.

 ***TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS*.**

1. **Interest groups**: this group represents the people in the society. It is also known as sectional groups. Eg; trade units for instance, CBI (Confederation of British Industry) known as the voice of business in the country, and in Nigeria, convention on business integration (CBI).
2. **Cause groups:** this is promotion groups, which seek to promote particular causes. Eg; charities and environmental groups.
3. **Insider groups and outsider groups:** Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. They have access to ministers or legislators. Eg; NBA. The outsider groups have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They have to use other ways to have impact. Eg; the animal liberation front which champions rights for animals.
4. **Anomic groups:** These groups have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society. These groups are not guided by an appropriate behavioral style or rule, and they may sometimes act violently. Protest, rioting, strikes, and sometime revolution, are some of the means through which they mount pressure
5. **Associational and non-associational groups:** Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country. They also have their own registered offices and constitutions. Non-associational groups are pressure groups without a formal organization. There arrangement and gathering are by virtue of kinship or even family attachment, social traditions, tribal or even race applications.

**FUNCTIONS OF PRESSURE GROUPS.**

1. ***Promotes participation in government***: Some pressure groups engage in demonstrations and other measures to put their views across to the government. The activity of pressure groups therefore, promotes political participation and carries the citizenry along.
2. ***Links government to the people***: One of the functions of pressure groups is that it serves as a link between the government of the day and the people it governs. Pressure groups stay up to date on relevant information and are able to sensitize the people on such matter and at the same time relate to the government what the opinion of the people is.
3. ***Serving as sources of information to government***: As the pressure groups lobby government on various fronts, the interaction offers the government valuable information on aspects of issues they may not even be aware of.
4. ***Promotion of the interest of the minority***: Its champion the rights of under-privileged, especially promotional pressure groups. As they go about their activities, they ensure that the interests of minority groups are not trampled upon by the government. Thus, pressure groups act as watchdogs on the government.
5. ***Influencing legislation***: Pressure groups are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that it can implement policies that are to the benefit of citizens. Pressure groups put pressure on government to influence its policy, change a policy direction, and withdraw entirely a particular policy that does not favor their members or the citizenry.
6. ***Curtailing of Dictatorial Tendencies:*** The activities of pressure groups ensure that government do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into a dictatorship.

**PRESSURE GROUP’S LOBBYING:**

Pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action (e.g.; organized protest). Some pressure groups exert more influence than others. 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 by those in power. Pressure groups lobby in so many ways. They lobby with governmental officials directly. For example, they lobby legislators, ministers and other 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.