**GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (GST 203)**

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**REVIEW OF CHAPTER 15**

**Pressure groups**

Pressure is the application of force on someone to persuade a person into doing something. A pressure group may be defined as any group bound together by some common interest or profession who engage in some activities to influence government policies or decisions to their own advantage. Pressure group is referred the 'Functional Representative'. This idea present that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. What pressure groups seek to achieve is to make sure government does their biddings. These groups could be religious, business-like or social. Some examples of pressure groups include: The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), Market Women Association, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), etc.

 Pressure groups and political parties sometimes appear similar but they are different from each other. Unlike political parties, pressure groups are not interested in direct governance or in contesting elections. What pressure groups seek to achieve is to make sure government does their biddings. Another difference between pressure groups and political parties is that pressure groups narrow their goals while political parties have a wide range of policies. Another distinction is that pressure groups are not actually accountable for any of their actions while political parties account for their actions. Political parties are more formally organized than pressure groups. These distinctions do not mean they do not have things in common. They have a lot in common and sometimes they relate together to achieve certain social changes.

**Types of pressure groups**

There are types of Pressure Groups. They Include:

• Interest Groups also known as sectional groups is any association of individuals or organizations formally organized on the basis of one or more shared concerns, attempts to influence public policy in its favour. It is seen as sectional groups representing the people in the society. All interest groups share a desire to affect government policy to benefit themselves or their cause. An example is the trade units.

• Cause Groups: These are promotion groups, they seek to promote a particular cause or value as opposed to the interests of a section of a society. They seek a broader membership than sectional pressure group/ interest groups. For example, charities and environmental groups. It is always aimed at achieving a single objective.

• Inside Groups and Outsider groups: Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government. An example is the Nigerian Bar Association. An insider group may be high or low in profile, nevertheless, they intend to have influence on government missions and visions. Outsider groups are not regularly consulted by government. They have no access or links to the government and its machineries. They use other ways to have impact. Examples of this group include Animal liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front etc.

• Anomic groups are generally spontaneous groups. They have unpredictable action and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation of the society.

• Associational Groups and Non-associational Groups: Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authority in a state or country; they also have their own registered offices, constitutions and so on. Non-associational groups are pressure groups without formal organization. Their arrangements and gatherings are by virtue of kinship, or even family attachment, social traditions etc.

**Functions of Pressure Groups include:**

1. It serves as a link between the government and the people. They 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.
2. It promotes public participation in government activities. They promote political participation and carries the citizens along.
3. It serves as source of information to government. They offer the government valuable information on aspects of tissues they may not be aware of.
4. Their activities ensure that the minority groups are not trampled upon by the government. They act as watchdogs on the government.
5. They are instrumental in the mounting of pressure on government so that they can implement policies to the benefit of citizens.

**Influencing Legislation**

 In other to influence legislation, pressure groups may adopt variety of strategies to achieve their goals and aim. The strategies include lobbying elected officials, media advocacy and direct political action (organized protest). Pressure groups lobby in so many ways to ensure that they are heard or listened to. They may lobby with government officials directly.