

# **SOS POLITICAL SCIENCE ANDPUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**M.A.POL.SC.204**

**SUBJECT NAME : COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

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## **UNIT-IV**

### **TOPIC NAME : PRESSURE GROUPS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

A pressure group is a group of people who are organized actively for promoting and defending their common interest. It is called so, as it attempts to bring a change in public policy by exerting pressure on the government. It acts as a liaison between the government and its members. The pressure groups are also called interest groups or vested groups. They are different from the political parties, as they neither contest elections nor try to capture political power. They are concerned with specific programmes and issues and their activities are confined to the protection and promotion of the interests of their members by influencing the government. The pressure groups influence the policy-making and policy implementation in the government through legal and legitimate methods like lobbying, correspondence, publicity, propagandizing, petitioning, public debating, maintaining contacts with their legislators and so forth.

#### **TECHNIQUES USED BY PRESSURE GROUPS**

Pressure groups resort to three different techniques in securing their purposes. Electioneering: Placing in public office persons who are favorably disposed towards the interests the concerned pressure group seeks to promote. Lobbying: Persuading public officers, whether they are initially favorably disposed toward them or not, to adopt and enforce the policies that they think will prove most beneficial to their interests. Propagandizing: Influencing public opinion and thereby gaining an indirect influence over government, since the government in a democracy is substantially affected by public opinion.

#### **PRESSURE GROUPS IN INDIA**

The term 'pressure group' originated from in the USA. A pressure group is a group of people who are organized actively for promoting and defending their common

interest. They are a vital link between the government and the governed. They keep governments more responsive to the wishes of the community, especially in between elections. They are different from the political parties in that they neither contest elections nor try to capture political power but their activism influence the public policy (Government Decision). These groups promote a specific issue and raise it up the political agenda or may have more general political and ideological objectives in mind while campaigning. These groups make efforts to bring government into the podium of accountability.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

1. Pressure groups may operate at local, regional, national or even international level, depending upon the cause and notice.
2. All interest groups share a desire to affect government policy to benefit themselves or their causes.
3. They are usually non-profit and volunteer organization
4. They seek to influence political or corporate decision makers to achieve a declared objective.
5. Pressure groups are collections of individuals who hold a similar set of values and beliefs on the basis of ethnicity, religion, political philosophy, or a common goal.
6. Pressure groups often represent viewpoints of people who are dissatisfied with the current conditions in society.
7. These are a natural outgrowth of the communities of interest that exist in all societies.
8. They never form government or contest election but influence the decision of Government or public policy. They seek to create change by being elected to public office, while pressure groups attempt to influence political parties. Pressure groups may be better able to focus on specialized issues, whereas political parties tend to address a wide range of issues.
9. Pressure groups are widely recognized as an important part of the democratic process.

### **TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS IN INDIA**

A large number of pressure group exists in India but unfortunately they are not developed as compare to the Western Countries like England, France and USA. It can be classified into following categories.

## **Business Groups**

The Business group is one of the most important, influential and organized pressure groups in India. Examples of business groups- Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and industry (FICCI), Associated Chamber of Commerce (ASSOCHAM) – major constituents are the Bengal Chamber of Commerce Calcutta and Central commercial organization of Delhi.

## **Trade Unions**

Trade unions cater to the demand of workers and labours of the industries. Alternatively, they are also known as labor groups. In India, different trade unions represent different political parties. Examples- The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), All India Trade Union Congress (Communist Party of India)

## **Agrarian Groups**

These groups represent the farmer community of India and works for their well-being. Example- Bhartiya Kisan Sangh, Hind Kisan Panchayat (control of socialist).

## **Professional Association**

Such association, raise the concern of working professional in India ranging from lawyers and doctors, journalists and teachers. Examples include Association of Engineers, Bar Council of India (BCI), and Dental Council of India.

## **Student Organisations**

There are various organizations present to represent the causes and grievances of students in India. Examples are National Students Union of India (Congress), All Assam Students Union (Asom Gan Parishad), Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Samiti (Aam Admi Party).

## **Religious Organizations**

The organizations based on religion have come to play an important role in Indian Politics. They represent the narrow perspective and are often termed as anti-secular. Examples of these organizations are Rashtriya Swyam Sevak Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Brahma Samaj.

## **Caste Groups**

Caste has been one of the salient features of Indian Society. However, it has always been one of the ideologies discouraging the aspiration of people and constitution of India. The caste factor is always prevalent in elections of India. Examples of caste groups are Marwari Association, Harijan Sewak Sangh.

## **Tribal Organisation**

Tribal in India are prominent in Central India and North East India, and are also active in Central Indian Tribal belt and in north east India. These organizations

include National Socialist Council of Nagaland, All-India Jharkhand, and Tribal Sangh of Assam

### **Linguistic Groups**

There are 22 scheduled languages in India. However, there have been many groups and movements working for the welfare of languages in India. For example- Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and Tamil Sangh etc.

### **Ideology Based Group**

Ideology based groups have been recently formed. Some examples of these groups include Environment Protection Groups like Narmada Bachao Andolan and Chipko movement, Democratic rights organization, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Woman rights organization, Civil liberties associations.

### **Anomic Groups**

Anomic pressure groups refer to those spontaneous groups which are formed with a collective response through riots, demonstrations, assassinations, etc. The Indian government and bureaucratic elite overwhelmed by the problem of economic development and scarcity of resources available to them, inevitably acquires a technocratic and anti-political frame of mind, particularistic demands of whatever kinds are denied legitimacy. As a consequence, pressure groups are alienated from the political system. Some of the anomic pressure groups are- Naxalite groups, United Liberation Front of Assam, All Assam Student's Union, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.

## **FUNCTIONS, ROLE & IMPORTANCE OF PRESSURE GROUPS**

**Interest Articulation:** Pressure Groups bring the demands and needs of the people to the notice of the decision-makers. The process by which the claims of the people get crystallized and articulated is called interest articulation. **Agents of Political Socialization:** Pressure groups are agents of political socialization in so far as they influence the orientations of the people towards the political process. These groups play a vital role as two-way communication links between the people and the government. Pressure groups play a vital role in the legislative process, not only as important structures of interest articulation, but also as active agencies engaged in lobbying with the legislators for securing desired laws or amendments in laws and policies of the government. Right from the time of preparation of election manifestos of various political parties to the passing of laws by the legislators, the pressure groups remain associated with the process of rule-making. **Pressure Groups and Administration:** Pressure Groups are actively involved with the process of administration. Through lobbying with the

bureaucracy, the pressure groups are usually in a position to influence the process of policy implementation. Role in Judicial Administration: Pressure Groups try to use the judicial system for securing and safeguarding their interests. Interest groups often seek access to the court for redressal of their grievances against the government as well as for getting declared a particular decision or policy as unconstitutional. Pressure groups play a leading role in the formulation of public opinion. Each pressure group is continuously engaged in evaluating all such laws, rules, decisions and policies which have a direct or indirect bearing on the interests it represents. It always places the pros and cons not only before its members but also before the general public for eliciting popular support as well as for catching the attention of the government. They try to gain public support and sympathy for their goals and their activity by carrying out information campaigns, organizing meetings, file petitions, etc. Most of these groups try to influence the media into giving attention to these issues. Pressure groups help in improving the quality of government. Consultation with affected groups is the rational way to make decisions in a free society. It makes government more efficient by enhancing the quality of the decision making process – the information and advice provided by these groups helps to improve the quality of government policy and legislation. Freely operating pressure groups are essential to the effective functioning of liberal democracy. They serve as a vital intermediary institutions between government and society; They assist in the dispersal of political power; They provide important counterweights to balance the concentration of power. Pressure groups enable new concerns and issues to reach the political agenda, thereby facilitating social progress and preventing social stagnation. For example, the women's and environmentalist movements. Pressure groups increase social cohesion and political stability by providing a 'safety-valve' outlet for individual and collective grievances and demands. Pressure groups complement the work of opposition political parties by exposing the bad policies and wrongdoings of the government. Pressure groups thereby improve the accountability of decision makers to electorates.

Pressure groups help to educate people, compile data and provide specific information to policy makers, thus they work as an informal source of information. Active constructive participation of numerous groups in polity helps to reconcile general interest with individual group interests.

## **CONCLUSION**

Pressure groups are now considered as an indispensable and helpful element of the democratic process. The society has become highly complex and individuals cannot pursue their interests on their own. They need the support of other fellow beings in order to gain greater bargaining power; this gives rise to pressure groups based on common interests. Democratic politics has to be politics through consultation, through negotiation and some amount of bargaining is also involved. Thus, it is very essential for the government to consult these organized groups at the time of policy formulation and implementation.