

PRESSURE GROUPS

For semester 2 students of P.G. Political
Science, Patna University, Patna by
Professor(DR) Shefali Roy
Head, Department of Political Science
Patna University, Patna.

INTRODUCTION

- Democracy is a system of government where decisions are arrived at with majoritarian principles with representatives elected at periodic elections.
- In a pluralist model of Democracy, pressure groups play an essential role. Political parties cannot provide adequate representation to the diverse interests and opinions so pressure groups aggregate the interests into a coherent political entity capable of governing the country.

DEFINITION

Arthur Bentley wrote a book *The Process of Government* in 1908 and David B. Truman made a significant improvement in his book *The Government Process* in 1936, however V.O. Key Jr. in his Book *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups* in 1945 made a monumental contribution in the direction of pressure groups. It is much discussed in western democracies and is highly active in Indian Politics.

PRESSURE GROUP

Political party and pressure groups are different however are associated with power.

Political party is more or less organised group of citizens who act together as a political unit.

It also contests elections and seek control over government.

Political parties are decision making bodies of homogenous whole.

Pressure groups are associations to influence the decision making of political party in power.

Pressure groups don't contest elections and are heterogeneous groups.

UTILITY OF PRESSURE GROUPS

- It serves the interests of various sections of the society and thus contribute to their happiness
- It is essential in a democratic set up as they balance the national interests and sectional interests.
- Pressure groups are also helpful in making statistical data available to the government in determining the policy.
- The theory of welfare state, socialism and positivism have increased the need of pressure groups to work as a shield against government's misuse of power.

TECHNIQUES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

It acts like a lobby trying to develop contacts with politicians, ministers and other senior officials who decide the policy matters.

Lobbyists have three functions to perform

1. Communicating information
2. Defending the interests of employees
3. And defining the political implications of legislative matters.

Pressure group influence public opinion through propaganda, pamphlets radios, T.V.

They also sometimes use violent techniques as employed by anomic groups which has no legitimacy.

TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

Gabriel Almond and Powell talks about four types of pressure Groups

*Institutional
pressure
groups*

*Associational
Pressure
Groups*

*Non
Associational
Pressure
Groups*

*Anomic
Pressure
groups*

JEAN BLONDEL'S CLASSIFICATION



MAURICE DUVERGER'S CLASSIFICATION

- According to the nature of functioning he divides groups into four
 1. Exclusive groups which puts only pressure
 2. Partial groups are promoters of interests
 3. Private groups which is found in USA where private institutions put pressure and
 4. Public Groups are include official groups who secretly align themselves with one or more pressure groups.
- In addition to it, he also talks about pseudo pressure groups which includes Mass Media.

INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURE GROUPS

- It is found within Political Parties, legislatures, Bureaucracies and Armies.
- These are formal organizations with designated political and social functions other than interest articulation.
- These groups articulate their own interests and also represent the interests of other groups in the society.
- Examples are like The Congress Working Committee, The Congress Parliamentary Board, The Central Election Committee, The Bureaucracy ,The Army

ASSOCIATIONAL PRESSURE GROUPS

- These groups are specialized structures for interest articulation.
- In India there are two types of associational pressure Groups

1. Occupational

2. Community

Trade union is a classical example of occupational groups and students' organization groups as community groups.

Religious denominations, Civilian groups also plays a vital role in the Indian politics

NON ASSOCIATIONAL PRESSURE GROUPS

- These groups function in a latent manner and informal way.
- They are also called traditional groups.
- The examples can be communal and religious groups.
- Caste groups can also be included in it.
- Language groups, syndicate, the ideological left and the young turks are some of its examples
- It is based on ethnic and kinship bond.

ANOMIC PRESSURE GROUPS

- It is usually found in developing countries.
- It is a spontaneous breakthrough into the political system in forms of riots, insurgencies, assassinations, terrorism and is devoid of human values.
- The immediate Sikh riots of 1984 after the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi by Sikh body guards can be cited as an example of anomic action and the body involved in it is regarded as anomic group.

ROLE OF PRESSURE GROUPS

- Pressure groups are vital link between government and the governed.
- They are able to express the views of minorities in the community who might not otherwise receive a hearing
- They are able to use their expertise to provide government with relevant information
- They offer an alternative source of advice to the government
- They generally promote opportunities for political participation for citizens, without a need to join a political party
- Above all they allow democratic rights of the people.

CONCLUSION

- Pressure groups are significant in parliamentary democracies as they reflect the concerns of the society in which they operate.
- whatever pattern is followed in a political system, it is clear that pressure groups despite being independent of political parties, still maintain contacts with them and try to influence legislation and decision making process through these contacts.

SUGGESTED READINGS & QUESTIONS FOR EXERCISE

- Indian Political System by A P Awasthi
 - Political Theory by Eddy Asirvatham
 - Political Theory by R.C. Agarwal
 - Questions for exercise
1. Discuss the relationship between Political Parties and Pressure Groups.
 2. Highlight the role of Pressure Groups in a Parliamentary Democracy.
 3. Define Pressure Groups and discuss its functions.
 4. Discuss the meaning and classification of Pressure Groups.