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### *Introduction*

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Pressure groups have become a very important part of an administrative system. These groups try to pressurise the administrative and political system of a country either to ensure that their interests are promoted or to see that at least their interests are not relegated to the background. No system can function effectively without taking their viewpoint into consideration.

In developing countries like India where there is a scarcity of various resources on the one hand and acute poverty and deprivation on the other, the pressure on administrative system is bound to be very heavy. The pressure groups arise in different forms in different walks of life. They provide a stabilising mechanism and form a crucial component of the structural equilibrium which means that they perform the system maintenance function. There can be another side of the phenomenon where the pressure on the system may reach a breakdown point.

The term 'Pressure Groups' originated in the USA which means a group of people who are organised actively for promoting and defending their own interest. Their activism influences public policy. In India, the pressure groups have been active even during the colonial period. The All-India Trade Union Congress was the first pressure group of India.

#### ***Role of Pressure Group***

The role of the pressure groups is very important for the administrative, legislative, executive, bureaucratic, and political system. They are like a living public behind the parties. Their role is indirect yet effective. The various roles of pressure groups are as follows:

- Pressure groups play as a vital link between the government and the governed. They keep governments more inclined towards their interest.
- Pressure groups help in expressing the views and needs of the minority communities who otherwise

may remain unheard.

- Pressure groups provide expertise to the government with various information which might be applicable to issues such as indigenous reconciliation.
- Pressure groups promote opportunities for political participation without joining a political party.

#### ***Advantages of Pressure Groups***

##### ***Promotion of authentic freedom of expression***

- By joining an interest group as an individual, one can add his/her ideas to the collective expression of everyone who shares the same opinion. It is like joining a worker's union. This advantage gives one an opportunity to make changes that will impact one's life in some way.

##### ***Exploration of new perspectives***

- Interest groups give all of us the chance to look at new thoughts and perspectives which makes it easier for us to see beyond our echo chambers. When legislation goes through the preparation process, the drafters look at the impact on any specific and identifiable group. Then, there is the consideration of what will happen with the population as a whole. When one is a part of this process, one gets to see what others think about these specific subjects.

##### ***Balancing the impact of governance***

- By coming together to speak with a collective voice, one gets the chance to hold the powerful few in the positions of authority to be accountable for their actions. The interest groups serve a system of checks and balances. One gets the chance to limit their governance by speaking to them about issues and even vote them out of office if they aren't satisfactory enough.

##### ***Usable platforms that facilitate change***

- One along with the like-minded people around can create opportunities to put enough pressure in the decision-makers in society to do something in one's

interest. Policies, rules, regulations can be moulded if a group of voices speak about it because it is pretty challenging to ignore a group of voices with the same voice rather than a single person who is trying hard to be heard.

### ***Emphasis on fairness at the local level***

- Fairness can be seen as a difficult concept to balance an on-ground reality. There are chronic problems of poverty, illness, food scarcity, corruption and many more which affect people seriously. This deprives them of having a chance at all the opportunities fairly. By the time they can do something about it, their chances are long gone.
- Interest groups work toward equalizing income opportunities in society. They support each member to create a platform where everyone can start working towards a similar goal.

### ***Creates opportunities for becoming community leaders***

- Interest groups promote leadership in a community by influencing people to become part of an organized movement that can communicate the need for specific changes required. In modern times, one doesn't have to get out of their home and contribute to it. Sharing information on social media and making a few phone calls can also do the work.

### ***Access to more information***

- When one joins an interest group, then one has access to their resources which might lead one to get a chance to speak with elected officials directly instead of sending them a letter.

### ***Lobbying for new legislation anytime***

- Interest groups play an important role in spreading information. With all the data, they make efforts to turn it into usable laws, rules, or regulations. Every interest group tries to influence elected officials to move toward desired legislative changes.

### ***Disadvantages of Pressure Group***

#### ***Loudest voices usually win***

- One thing about interest groups is that size doesn't matter. The ones who are more active usually generate more attention and get to play a part in modern politics. One can say that money speaks loudly in this arena, so there may be advantages to

those who are wealthy.

- Both sides in Indian politics tend to blame each other for the ills of society. Any group can assimilate a small number of people and sound like the majority which can come under the banner of disadvantage.

### ***Offensive views***

- There is a democratic right to freedom of speech and expression. Some pressure groups still have unsecular and offensive views which stir up communal tensions. These groups whether small or large in number, tend to get a disproportionate amount of attention from the media.
- E.g. RSS, Bajrang Dal etc.

### ***Opposition***

- There can be direct opposition between pressure groups which can probably lead to some serious civil disruptions.
- An example can be taken from the incident of clashes between ABVP and JNU Students Union.

### ***Disobedience***

- Pressure groups can sometimes become aggressive and get involved in militancy to get their demands heard. They can pull out publicity stunts and protests for attention which can disrupt public life and property.
- E.g., JKLf and ULFA

### ***Governing systems can change***

- When an interest group grows large enough, then their activities can alter the way a nation governs itself. This disadvantage is problematic because it forces everyone outside that core group to either conform to the "new normal" or risk the consequences of being on the outside.

### ***Unstable***

- Pressure groups lack stability and commitment. This might result in their loyalties changing according to changing political situations.

### ***Non-legitimate power-***

- Leaders of pressure-groups are not elected like conventional politicians; therefore, they can't be held publicly accountable. The influence they exert is not democratically legitimate. Very few pressure groups work on the basis of internal democracy.
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There has been a trend for pressure groups to be dominated by a small number of senior professionals.

### ***Famous Pressure Groups in India***

There are pressure groups in every country with India being no exception. They influence decision making in the order of their interest. India has a number of pressure groups who carry different aims and objectives.

#### ***Business Groups***

- This category includes pressure groups which are formed by the employees of a particular occupation for the protection of their interests. Big business houses always have the most organized and powerful pressure groups at their command. This has to do with their vast outlay of resources, personnel, close links with elite groups in government, media, administration and opposition parties.
- Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Federation of All India Food-grain Dealers Association (FAIFDA), etc

#### ***Trade Unions***

- The trade unions voice the demands of the industrial workers. They are also known as labour groups. A peculiar feature of trade unions in India is that they are associated either directly or indirectly with different political parties.
- All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)

#### ***Professional Groups***

- These are associations that raise the concerns and demands of doctors, lawyers, journalists and teachers. Despite various restrictions, these associations pressurise the government by various methods including agitations for the improvement of their service conditions.
- Indian Medical Association (IMA), Bar Council of India (BCI), All India Federation of University and College Teachers (AIFUCT)

#### ***Agrarian Groups***

- The agrarian groups represent the farmers and the agricultural labour class.

- All India Kisan Sabha, Bhartiya Kisan Union, etc

#### ***Student's Organisations***

- Various unions have been formed to represent the student community. However, these unions, like the trade unions, are also affiliated to various political parties.
- Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), All India Students Federation (AISF), National Students Union of India (NSUI)

#### ***Religious Groups***

- The organisations based on religion have come to play an important role in Indian politics. They represent the narrow communal interest.
- Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Jamaat-e-Islami, etc.

#### ***Caste Groups***

- Like religion, caste has been an important factor in Indian politics. The competitive politics in many states of the Indian Union is in fact the politics of caste rivalries: Brahmin versus Non-Brahmin in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, Rajput versus Jat in Rajasthan, Kamma versus Reddy in Andhra, Ahir versus Jat in Haryana, Baniya Brahmin versus Patidar in Gujarat. Kayastha versus Rajput in Bihar, Nair versus Ezhava in Kerala and Lingayat versus Okkaliga in Karnataka
- Some of the caste-based organisations are Harijan Sevak Sangh, Nadar Caste Association, etc

#### ***Linguistic Groups***

- Language has been so important factor in Indian politics that it became the main basis for the reorganisation of states. The language along with caste, religion and tribe have been responsible for the emergence of political parties as well as pressure groups.
- Tamil Sangh, Andhra Maha Sabha, etc

#### ***Tribal Groups***

- The tribal organisations are active in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and the North Eastern States of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and so on. Their demands range from reforms to that of secession from India and some of them are involved in insurgency activities.
  - National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN),
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Tribal National Volunteers (TNU) in Tripura, United Mizo federal org, Tribal League of Assam, etc.

### ***Ideology based Groups***

- In more recent times, the pressure groups are formed to pursue a particular ideology, i.e., a cause, a principle or a programme.
- These groups include: Narmada Bachao Andolan, Chipko Movement, Women's Rights Organisation, India against Corruption etc.

### ***Anomic Groups***

- Anomic pressure groups mean groups having more or less a spontaneous breakthrough into the political system from the society such as riots, demonstrations, assassinations and the like. 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, interest groups are alienated from the political system.
- Naxalite Groups, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), Dal Khalsa, etc.

### ***Socio-Cultural Pressure Groups***

- These pressure groups are concerned with community service and the promotion of interests of the community including language and religion.
- Examples of this type of community are Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Marathi Sangh, Ramkrishna Mission etc.

### ***Institutional Pressure Groups***

- These types of pressure groups influence the government without directly getting involved in the political system, yet they remain active.
- E.g., Civil Services Association, Police Welfare Association, Army Officers Association, Indian Red Cross, Gazetted Officers Association, Defence Personnel Association, etc. These groups mainly influence matters such as transfer-leave rules, allocation of duties, etc.

### ***Ad-hoc pressure groups***

- Some pressure groups are short-termed which come into existence only for the fulfilment of some particular demand. Their objective is to pressurize the government for specific demand.
  - E.g., Orissa Relief Organisation, Kaveri Water Distribution Association, Gujrat Relief Association, etc.
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