

9. Pressure Group(Nature&Role)

For
B.A. (Pol.Sc.(Hons.)
Degree Part-I, Paper-I

By
G K Jha
Asst. Prof.
Deptt. Of Pol. Sc.
Marwari College,Darbhanga

Origin and growth of Pressure Group

- Group is a natural phenomenon of society. It exists at various levels. The Universal group is family.
- In urban areas with the development of society number of groups come into existence catering to various needs, such as civic amenities or the need for daily minimum requirements of life.
- Not all societies are evenly developed. Every society has a political organization, the natural and needed groups of society tend to acquire a political complexion or they tend to impact upon decision-making.
- The origin of pressure group normally lies in shared needs and sympathies of individuals. For e.g. The environmentalists of India.

Growth of Pressure Group

- This particular trend had its basis, somewhat in rejection of the Austinian theory of Sovereignty and growing importance of Pluralism in the late 19th and 20th Centuries.
- It is from this pluralism that the group theory of modern times derives its intellectual roots.
- It was for the first time advocated by Bentley in 1888, revived in the late 50s and 60s by Truman, Robert Dahl and others in USA.
- Bentley begins with the idea that the raw material for politics is not the man himself rather the many members together. These groups are not closed group in the sense men can participate in many groups simultaneously.

Origin of Pressure Groups in USA

- As of now, in the US it started with the third house of Congress composed of lobby members and embracing men who had filled almost the highest legislative and executive offices.
- They played an important role in the passage of Bill of any hues in the legislature.
- The landlords lobby converged together to defeat the passage of land-ceiling Bill by inserting escape clauses to sabotage the bill. Though its functioning in India is different from the USA.

Nature of Pressure Group

- Truman writes that society is a sort of ***mosaic*** (mixture) of groups.
- Later on the group theories confronts with the question of ***boundary, size, territoriality*** and ***forms of integration***.
- While it has not clearly been established, the group theories offered a definition as a process-seeking agency exhibiting the phenomena of ***Overlapping*** and ***Cross-cutting***.
- At decisional level, the Interest group acts like a ***lobby, which*** are thousands in the American system. The examples are aplenty such as labour union, trade union or reform groups.

Nature of Pressure Groups

- They actively work in tandem with the Political Party, and hence they do not oppose the existence of political Party.
- In developing countries they supplement the role of Political Parties and sometimes they get absorbed into the political party.
- Politicians in USA have free in dealing with these groups and sometimes bargain with them. Their Utility becomes more important in heterogeneous and individual centric countries like the USA.
- In India a large number of intermediaries or the ***pairvikaars*** have emerged on political scene particularly at the implementational level of welfare programmes in order to influence the government policies.

Characteristics of Pressure Group

- Based on certain Interests
- Use of modern as well as traditional means
- Articulate demands and exert pressures on the govt.
- Represent changing consciousness
- Inadequacies of political parties.

Examples of Pressure Group in India are-Business groups such ASSOCHAM, FICCI, INTUC, BMS, NBA etc. pursuing various kind of interests.

Pressure Group Vs. Political Party

- Parties unlike interest or pressure groups open their membership to everybody who is prepared to support them.
- Political Parties contest elections whereas Pressure groups believe in influencing the opinion.
- Pressure groups are primarily a consequence of inadequacies of the political parties.
- The party reflects broad spectrum of ideologies where as Group are confined to the conveyance of particular set of interests.

Types of pressure groups

- ***Institutional Interest/pressure groups***- formally organized groups of professionally employed person, that may include the armies, bureaucracies etc.
- **Associational Interest Groups**- Organised specialized groups formed for interest articulation to pursue limited goals. For e.g. Trade Union, Labour Union etc.
- ***Non-associational Interest Groups***- The kinship and lineage groups and ethnic, regional, status and class groups that articulate interests on the basis of individuals, family and religious heads.
- ***Anomic Interest Groups***- a spontaneous breakthrough into the political system from the society such as riots, demonstrations, assassinations etc.

Role and Function of Pressure Group

- ***Interest Articulation***-Like Political Parties, Interest groups also indulge actively in articulating the inchoate demands, of course, for a group not for the entire citizenry.
- ***Play vital role in Legislative Process***-In countries like USA and France, Pressure groups lobby with the legislators to bring out desirable laws that subserve them.
- ***Agents of Political Socialization***-They actively engage themselves in bringing transformation of the attitudes of common people towards the political process and it has always been a two way structure or even vice-versa.

Function and role....

- ***Formulation of public opinion***-one of the important role assigned to the pressure groups in a democracy is to popularize public opinion on vital issues.
- They try to gain public support and sympathy for their goals and their activity by carrying out information campaigns, organising meetings, file petitions, etc. Most of these groups try to influence the media into giving attention to these issues.
- Improving quality of governance-

Techniques used by Pressure Groups

- **Lobbying**-the most commonly used method to influence the decision making process. Some writers hold the view that the techniques and objectives of the lobbies have changed and the lobby has grown into a full-fledged pressure group. It gives the amount of legitimacy while broadening the purview of social organization.
- **Propaganda**-prevailing over the people to change their opinion in order to change the Bill.
- **Electioneering**-Placing in public office persons who are favourably disposed towards the interests the concerned pressure group seeks to promote.

Techniques of Pressure Groups

- **Public Relations**-They attempt to swamp the representatives of legislature with their cause just by the weight of logic, information and the press.
- Well organized-In the United States, the Pressure Groups are so well organized that they claim large membership lists, a large number of agents who are skilled in the art of persuasion and public relations.
- In all modern nations the groups are free to combine as business, labour, farm and reform pressure groups. Examples of religious groups or nationalities group etc.

Changing techniques

- To existing techniques, were added the materialistic weapons of the individual and the primitive lobbying-the speculative collusion, the bribe, lavish gifts and entertainment and solicitation in an atmosphere of intimidation.
- In India we see the spurt in hiring retired government officials and bureaucrats becoming liaison officers. These pressure groups cleverly manage to convey the message to the legislators that the interests they represent will benefit a large number of society in the best interest of nation.
- Vigorous recruitment Exercise-in order to impress upon the politicians and people with popular demands.

Evaluation

- Group theory has reduced the politics as banal or side stepping it. They are contemptuous of ideas, feelings, character of the people, general will, general welfare and justice. They regard all of them as vague.
- They are interested in action, pressure, force and tension.
- Of late, they resorted to concept like latent groups, organized interests, rules of the game, consensus, equilibrium etc.
- Group theory, thus reduced everything to the working of group while leaving both individual and society out fro consideration.