

# Representation of Pressure Groups in India: An Overview

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## ABSTRACT

**Pressure Groups are organized groups that directly or indirectly influence politics and government. This paper represents a relationship of people who have common interests and try to attain their interests by pressure the government. This paper focuses on the role in determining the policies and decisions inside a democratic structure. Pressure groups are controlled bodies that look for the control of government policies and judgments without the purpose of acquiring political power. Pressure groups play a serious role in assembling public opinion.**

**Keywords: Pressure, groups, policies, decision, public, interests, associations, and organizations**

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## INTRODUCTION

Pressure Groups or Interest Groups exist in the background voluntarily organized groups of modern governments. They are which influence various aspects of government such as staffing public policy, administration and adjudication in order to realize their own objectives. They play a very significant role in modern political systems. Socio-economic, regional and cultural diversity has been largely responsible for the establishment of large number of pressure groups in India. "Organized groups possessing both formal structure and real common interests in so far as they influence the decisions of public bodies" (W.J.M.Mackenzie)

The following are active pressure groups in India:

The types of pressure groups: There are many active pressure groups operating in India. According to G.A. Almond and G.B. Powell the following four categories of pressure groups are functioning

- 1) Institutional Pressure Groups,
- 2) Associational Pressure Groups.
- 3) Non-Associational Pressure Groups and
- 4) Anomic Pressure Groups.

**1) Institutional Pressure Groups:** In the words of Almond and Powell. "Institutional interest groups are found within such organizations as political parties, legislatures, armies, churches and bureaucracies. These are formal organizations, composed of professionally employed personnel, with designated political and social functions other than interest articulations. But, either as corporate bodies or as small groups within these bodies, these groups may articulate their own interests or represent the interests of other groups in the society. The important pressure groups of this type are: The Congress Working Committee. The Congress Parliamentary Board, The Chief Minister's Club The Central Election Committee, The Bureaucracy and the Army. He defined these groups as "social aggregates with some level of chosen and shared aims which attempt to influence the political decision-making process"(Alan R Ball 1994: 103)

**2) Associational Pressure Groups:** According Almond and Powell. "Associational pressure groups are specialized structure for interest articulation, e.g. trade unions, organization of businessmen or industrialists associations, organized by religious denominations an civilian groups. Their particular characteristics are exploring representation of the interests of a particular group, a time professional staff and orderly procedure for the formulation of interest and demands". In India, there are two types of Associational pressure groups, viz., occupational and community groups. Specific occupational and community based associational pressure groups in Indian politics are Trade Unions, Business Organizations Peasant Organizations, Student Organizations, Government Employee's Association, Associational group of Community. "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” (Pressure Groups in India by Jagranjosh )

**3) Non-Associational Pressure Group:** Non- Associational pressure groups are kinship ethnic, regional, religious and caste groups which articulate interest informally through individuals, family and religious heads and the like. The main feature of such groups is that the structure of interest articulations is latent and often informal. They are active in Indian politics from the beginning and they are known as traditional groups. Some such groups Communal and religious groups, Caste groups. Language groups, the Syndicate and the Ideological Left and Young Turks.

**4) Anomic Pressure Groups:** Anomic pressure groups are seen in developing countries and are not a two phenomenon in Indian politics. In the words of Ramand and Powell, "By anomic pressure groups we mean more or less a spontaneous break-through into the political system from the society such as riots, demonstrations assassinations and the like" (Ramand and Powell ) . Thus, use of violence and some radical extra-constitutional means by the organized groups is known as anomic behaviour.

We may give a detailed list of such groups. "There are as many as 50 or more different forms of anomic protests and direct actions .... They include small public meetings, postering, submitting memoranda, press statements, street corner meetings, long marches on foot mass rallies, processions, hartals, strikes, picketing. satyagraha, dharna, fasting, uprooting of railway tracks, dislocating telephone and telegraph wires, burning of governmental buildings, go slow or work-to-rule, mass casual leave, looting of public or private property, etc."( Ramand and Powell ) To this we may add a few more forms of public protests .... E.g. walk-out from the legislature, general strike, people's curfew organizing morchas and sending Jathas, threats, burning of effigies and organizing senas.

#### Various Types of Pressure Group:

**1) Big-business interest groups:** This category of groups comprises commercial, industrial and financial interests and its rise and growth stands linked up with the expansion of commercial, industrial and financial interests. Business groups are among the largest and most powerful of all India pressure associations. These include a large number of business associations, regional associations and All India organizations connected with trade and commerce. Most important of these have been the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM), All India Manufacturers Organization and All India Exporters Organizations. "Interests" groups to refer to the whole range of groups that strive for a specific interest in society. Whether they are called interest groups, attitude groups, or pressure groups, they exist to serve their respective group's interests and all of them in one way or the other exert some pressure on the government" (Watts 2007: 6).

**2) Trade Unions:** A very large number of trade unions are present in the Indian political system. Some of these stand sponsored by the political parties, while others have come to develop naturally for protecting the interests of the workers. Active among these have been All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), the Indian National Trade Union Congress, the Hindu Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)), the United Trade Union Congress (UTUC), The Hind Indian bank Employees Association, the National Federation of Railway men and the National Federation of Post and Telegraph workers.

**3) Peasant Organizations:** With nearly 75% available Indian work force engaged in agriculture, it is but natural for the agricultural groups, associations, unions and organizations to play an important role in the process of politics. All India Kisan Sabha, Hind Kisan Panchayat, United Kisan Sabha, Workers and Peasants Party, Bharatiya Kisan Union, Bharatiya Kisan and Kamgar Union are se important peasant organizations which have been active in the Indian political system.

**4) Caste Groups:** Of all the groups based upon the traditional structure of Indian society, the caste groups are the most politically significant groups. Caste continues to be the most important political force in India. Caste continues to be a determinant of electoral behaviour and voting behaviour. The caste organizations like Scheduled Caste Federations, Vanniyakul Kshatriya Sangam, Jat Sabha, Agarwal Sabha, Gujjar Sabha, Qujjarat Kshatriya Sabha have been active actors in Indian politics.

**5) Religious Groups:** India is a land of several religions. Multi -religious character of the society has been instrumental in giving rise to several religious pressure groups and organizations. Anglo-Indian Christ has been Association, Jamaat-e-Islami, Hindu Maha Sabha. The Chief Khalsa Diwan, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and others at religious pressure groups.

**6) Student Associations:** Since 1928, when a student organization was formed in Punjab by Lala Lajpa Rai, several student groups and organizations have been active in India. In contemporary times several -such organizations National Students

Union of India Students Federation, Akhila Bharatiya Vidhyarti Parishad Progressive Students Union, Janata Yuva Morcha Federation Jamaat-e-Tulba and several others are actively involved the political processes,

**7) Linguistic Pressure Groups:** Several pressure groups in India have been mainly organized for furthering the development of a particular language. The Tamil Sangh, the Anjuman Urdu Taraqqul, the Hindi Protection Parishad, the Punjabi Sahit Sabhas, the Sahitya Sammelan, etc. are linguistic pressure groups.

**8) Women's Organizations:** The need to secure the emancipation of women in India has given rise to the organization of several women conferences, organizations and sabhas. The Anti-dowry Council, Women Welfare Sabhas, Mari Sudhar Sabhas, Mahila Mandals, Council for the Protection of Rights of Women, Women Liberation Organisations, Sathins, etc., can be characterized as women pressure/Interest groups that are engaged in the process of securing the rights and liberties of women. They also stand for creating a healthy environment committed to encourage the process of women uplift in India.

**9) Professional Groups:** Several professional interest groups like All India Bar Associations, All India Medical Council, All India Federation of University and College Teachers, etc., are also active interest groups in India

**10) Tribal/Regional Groups:** With a view to securing the development of their regions and the satisfaction of their regional interests, several tribal Interest groups have been active in the Indian political system. United Mizo Federal Organization, Tribal Sangh of Assam, Tribal League of Assam, Naga National Council, Jharkhand Mukthi Morcha GNLFF, All Bodo Students Union, etc., are examples of tribal/regional pressure groups in India.

**The nature and role of pressure groups in India can be discussed as under:**

**1) Lack of alignment with any one party:** Pressure groups in India are functioning in an environment characterized by a multi-party system. While developing relations with a particular party they also try to maintain relations with other parties. Multi-party system and the new era of coalition politics have together made it essential for the interest groups in India to keep their relations with the political parties without aligning with any one of them. "Democracy thrives on the participation of various groups that seek to influence government policies and decisions. These groups, known as pressure groups, come in different forms and operate through diverse mechanisms to make their voices heard. Understanding how pressure groups are classified helps us comprehend the complex web of political influence that shapes our democratic processes" (polsci.institute/political) .

**2) Pressure groups always try to use political parties for influencing the government:** The operation of Parliamentary system in India compels the pressure groups to seek the satisfaction of their interests mostly through the political parties. They try to use their connections with the parties for securing their Interests. As Rajni Kothari observes: "The pressure groups in India do not enjoy direct political influence and their role in politics is not appreciated. These are expected to secure their interests through the political parties"( Rajni Kothari) .

**3) Presence of both traditional and modern pressure groups:** Pressure groups in India represent modernity when they use such modern developed techniques like lobbying funding of political parties, Including of favourable persons in the legislatures and executive departments, and cultivation of connections with the bureaucracy. However along with it they continue to maintain their own loyalties religious loyalties, etc. Most of the big business houses in caste loyalties family links. India are controlled by families who belong to small groups of castes and whose traditional occupation has been trade. "The views which pressure groups convey are legitimate interests...Modern democracy would not exist without pressure groups. As a channel of representation, they are as legitimate as the ballot box.... They can mediate between the government and the governed" (Baggott, 1995).

**4) Use of pressure groups by political parties:** Indian political parties always try to organize their own interest groups in various trades, professional business and industries The Congress has created the Youth Congress. The Communist party has been maintaining the Students Federation of India. Akhila Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad enjoys the patronage of Bharatiya Janata Party; the Akali Dal in Punjab has always tried to use the platform of All India Sikh Federation or other Sikh Youth Organizations.

**5) Presence of Caste, Family and Religion-based Groups:** Several pressure/interest groups have been organized in India for protecting caste and religious Interests. All India Rajput Sabha, Jat Grganization, Jain Sabhas, Brahmin Sabhas, Shiv Sena Suraksha Samitis, etc... are examples of such interests groups. All these have been engaged in the process of protecting their caste/religious interests. The Kammas and Reddys have been actively involved in Andhra politics.

**6) Popularity of Direct Action means:** Pressure groups in India depend more on methods of direct action like Strikes, Bandhs, Gheraos and less upon techniques like lobbying and propaganda, for securing their interests. These often try to create law and order problem for the government with a view to pressurizing it for accepting their demands.

**7) More active at the executive level:** Pressure groups in India, opines Dr. Finer, are less actively concerned with the process of rule-making. These are more interested in influencing the rule-application process for securing their interests. “organizations trying to influence the policy of public bodies in their own chosen direction, though never themselves prepared to undertake the direct Government of the country” (Samuel Finer 1958)

**8) System of adhoc pressure groups:** Another important feature of the Indian pressure groups system has been that several pressure groups keep on emerging on the scene and getting dissolved after sometime - either after accomplishing their particular objectives for which these had come into existence or after a lapse of time these become Inactive. Action committees are formed for running spontaneously organized strikes. Anti-sati groups and anti-dowry groups are organized after every incident of crime against women.

### CONCLUSION

Indian democracy is portrayed by its pluralistic character. Pressure groups, by characterized different sections of society, it is presenting to this pluralism. Groups with more financial assets or political relations can exercise unbalanced influence, leading to disparate demonstration in the decision-making process. Pressure groups operate as a significant link among the government and the public, approaching for exact welfare and manipulate policymaking without contesting elections.

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