



Mains Practice Question

Q. Pressure groups, unlike political parties, are formed to address their immediate problems. Discuss the different methods adopted by the pressure groups to realise their goals. (150 words)

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Approach

- Briefly define pressure groups.
- Highlight how pressure groups are different from political parties.
- Enumerate the different methods used by the pressure groups to meet their demand.

Introduction

Pressure groups are forms of organisations, which exert pressure on the political or administrative system of a country to extract benefits out of it and to advance their own interests. They play an important role in governance as their aim is to see that laws or the government's actions are favorable to their interests. As for instance, when Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) in Gujarat, was likely to affect the interest of a section and region, pressure groups attempted to promote environmental awareness by providing the necessary information to the concerned people.

Body

The pressure groups, unlike the political parties, are formed to solve their immediate problems. They are relatively more temporary than political parties. They have far greater flexibility compared to political parties as they do not go to people and stake their claims for power. Pressure groups do not necessarily have political ideologies and they usually influence the government in power to meet their demands. For instance, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has influenced the government to improve its policies on the rights of women workers. Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan led the people's movement which got the government to bring about the law on 'Right to Information'.

They pursue their interests by adopting different methods such as

- Cordial rapport with the political party in power: Through this, pressure groups influence the legislators for making specific provisions or deleting some provisions in legislation.
- Financing the political parties: The pressure groups finance the political parties during the election time and sometimes even during the non-election times. They also ensure that the candidates of this party hold executive jobs in the government.
- **Close rapport with the bureaucratic machinery:** Pressure groups also keep bureaucracy and top high officials in good humour to convince them of their viewpoints.
- The pressure groups try to have their representatives in various committees which are set up by the government from time to time, particularly when their interests are involved.
- Pressure groups such as Trade unions adopt the methods of strikes, demonstrations, gheraos, etc. to get their demands met.
- **Financing caste and religious organisations:** The pressure groups, in order to protect their interests, also employ traditional means of exploiting caste, creed and religion and in their name try to win their cooperation. They finance caste and religious organisations, bodies and donate

money at public meetings to become popular with them.

Conclusion

Pressure groups are an essential dimension of any democracy, yet they can endanger democracy if sectional groups undermine the public interest or if the methods, they use are corrupt or intimidating.

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