

Pressure Groups

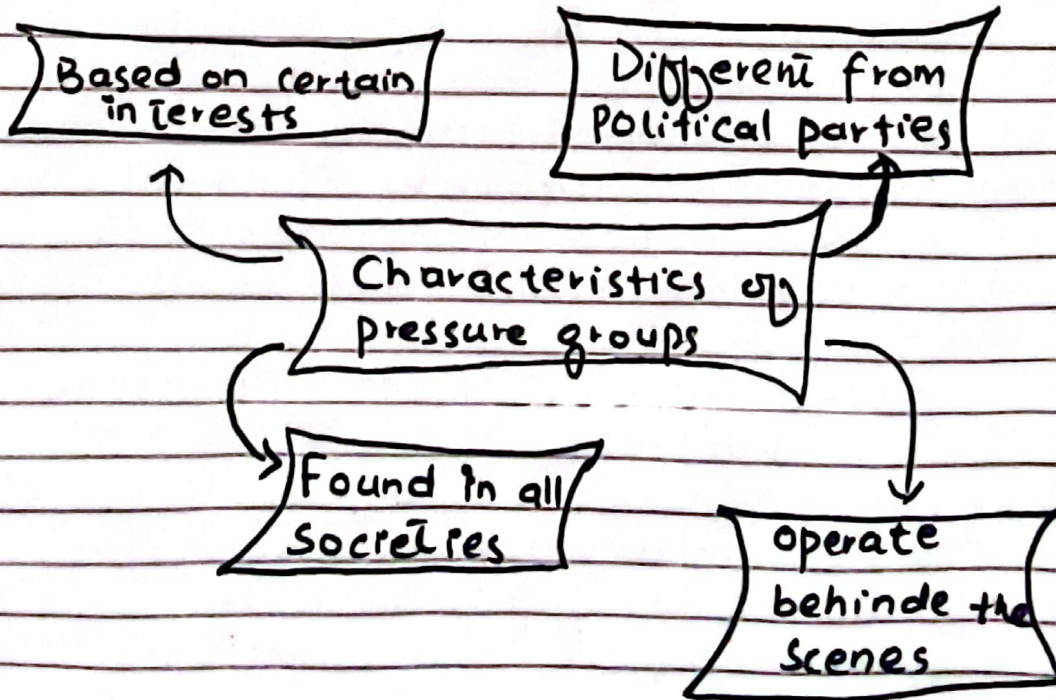
1- Introduction

In modern societies, along with political parties, pressure groups play significant role in political system. These groups are found in every political system and work behind the curtain. They have specific interests and use tactics to pressurise the government to protect it.

Definition:

According to H. Ziegler:
"Pressure group is an organized aggregate which seeks to influence the content of the government decisions without attempting to place its members in normal govt. capacities."

2- Characteristics



I- Based on certain interests

The primary feature of pressure

group is that its members have some common interests. Their sole aim is the protection of their interests. Unless there are no common interest, no pressure group can be formed.

ii- Found in all societies;

One of the feature of pressure group is that, they are now found in all societies irrespective of the form of the government, but their role may be different. For instance, in representative government they are allowed to function freely whereas in totalitarian government their main function is to legitimize the actions of the government of the day.

iii- Operate behind the scenes;

Pressure groups have indirect control over the conduct of the government. They do not claim their political interests openly/publicly nor they convert themselves into political parties. In fact, these groups are in between political parties and non-political groups.

iv- Different from political parties;

Pressure groups are different from political parties and that is there another feature. Political parties do not function from behind. Political parties aim to attain political power in the government while pressure groups aim to influence decision of those in

Political power. Also, political parties have clear policies and programmes and mobilise public opinion in favour of these programmes.

How pressure groups operates

<sup>Influencing
legislative
executive
judiciary.</sup>
work

In democracies pressure groups ^{pol parties} near & leaders and directly or indirectly try to maintain contacts. During election phase pressure groups provide financial support for a party's candidates who are likely to protect their interests. These candidates when elected become part of law-making process and a source of policy formulation organs.

The candidate is consulted by the group leaders before his candidature. In this way they indirectly recruit candidates for political parties. But in all this these groups do not come to the front and remain behind the curtain.

Pressure groups also exert pressure on the executive through legislature.

Their supported members are asked to put questions and move adjournment motions in a parliamentary set up. Also, their ^{obtained} members can be at government giving them extreme leverage to influence the decision of government.

Pressure groups try to influence judiciary as well. This is not easy, as independence of judiciary is an accepted principle of modern democracies. However, they try

that only committed judges to their view point are nominated by the executive. If that is not possible they try to propagate in a particular way either with the help of press or otherwise, for getting favourable decisions on a matter lying before the judiciary for decisions. They can also create a lobby which influences decisions making the pronouncement of ^{impartial} judgement very difficult.

Examples of pressure Groups:

In Pakistan these groups include: Corporate Sector, Feudal class, High net worth individuals, Large traders and students etc.

There are many pressure groups operating in the US, but the most prominent one is American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) which is a pro-Israel lobbying pressure group.