

(Question)

What are pressure groups? Discuss their role in decision-making in democracy in Pakistan.

Pressure Groups:-

Pressure groups are organized groups of individuals that seek to influence public policies and decision-making without directly seeking political office. They advocate for specific interests, causes, or sections of society and aim to represent their agendas to policymakers, governments or the public. These groups are vital part of any democratic society, acting as a link between the government and the people.

ROLE OF Pressure Groups in Democracy:-

Pressure groups play an integral role in strengthening democracy by ensuring diverse voices are heard in the policymaking process. Their contributions include:

(a) Representation of Interests:

Pressure groups highlight the concerns of minority groups or specialized communities that are otherwise constantly ignored by the mainstream political parties. For instance, Labour unions represent workers rights, while business associations advocate for industrial interests.

(b) Policy Advocacy:-

These pressure groups provide policymakers with valuable information so they can formulate policy according to the facts and figures. They also provide expert opinions and recommendations on specific issues. This helps the government to make informed decisions and policies that are effective.

(c) Promoting Accountability:

They promote accountability by scrutinizing government policies and actions. They ensure transparency by keeping a strict check on the actions of government institutions. Moreover, these pressure groups hold decision-makers accountable to the general public.

(d) Encouraging Public Participation:

Pressure groups not only consists of small number of people but they engage citizens in this democratic process. They are popular in the common people and they mobilize general public through different ways like awareness campaigns, protests and petitions etc.

(e) Balancing Power:

These pressure groups serve as a counterweight to the influence of powerful political parties. This ensures that no single entity dominates in decision-making process and the policy is beneficial for all the segments of society not just a few number of people.

ROLE IN Pakistan:-

In Pakistan, pressure groups play a crucial role in shaping public policies and influencing government decisions. However, their effectiveness is influenced by the country's socio-political environment, including military influence, political instability and limited civic education.

(a) Representation of Marginalized Communities

Pressure groups in Pakistan represent the interests of specific sections of society, such as farmers, workers, and other minority groups.

These pressure groups serve as the voice for those who are always marginalized in the political system. For instance, the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF), advocates for the rights of fishermen and works to address their issues.

(b) Influencing Public Policy:-

These pressure groups raise awareness and lobby for laws that are beneficial for Pakistan. They constantly put pressure on governments that are ~~be~~ to make policies that are useful in uplifting the country. For example, The Pakistan Business Council (PBC) has played

a crucial role in shaping economic policies by advocating for reforms in taxation and trade.

(c) Ensure Accountability:

These groups keep a strict check on the actions of Pakistani government and public officials.

They raise awareness and stage protests against corruption, mismanagement and violation of rights.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) highlights human rights violation and pressures the government to take corrective actions.

(d) Maximum Public Participation:

They ensure maximum public participation by mobilizing them and encouraging them to take part in democratic processes.

This is useful in strengthening

democracy by engaging the public in debates on important issues.

(e) Acting as Check on Power:

Governments in Pakistan sometimes make laws that are against the democratic principles so these pressure groups act as watchdogs and ensure that the state respects the democratic principles and constitutional rights.

For instance, lawyers movements such as the one in 2007 led by the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), successfully opposed unconstitutional actions by the government.

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(Question)

What are theories and factors of social change?

Social Change:-

It refers to the transformation of cultural, social, political, or economic structures within a society over time. This change can occur gradually or rapidly and is influenced by various factors and explained through different theoretical frameworks.

THEORIES OF Social Change:-

(a) Evolutionary Theory:-

This theory posits that social change occurs as societies evolve from simpler to more complex forms. It draws parallels with biological evolution, suggesting that societal development is a natural and inevitable process. The key thinkers of this theory are Herbert Spencer and Auguste Comte.

(b) Functionalist Theory:

This theory views society as a system of interdependent parts. Social change occurs when one part of the system is not working properly so there is a need of adjustments to maintain that balance. The key thinker of functionalist perspective is Emile Durkheim.

(c) Conflict Theory:

This theory suggests that social change arises from conflict between opposing groups, such as classes, genders, or even ethnicities. This change often results from the struggle for power and resources. For instance, the industrial revolution brought about significant changes in class structures and labor systems due to class struggles.

FACTORS OF SOCIAL CHANGE:-

(a) Technological Advancements:

It is one of the biggest factor of social change as it transforms communication, transportation, and production processes, leading to profound changes in societal norms and economic structures.

Example: The internet revolutionized global ~~change~~ communication, enabling social movements like the Arab Spring.

(b) Cultural Factors:

Changes in cultural values, beliefs, and practices can influence societal norms.

We adopt different values and norms from other cultures which triggers social change.

Example :- The feminist movement brought significant change in gender roles and equality.

(c) Political Factors:

Political ideologies, policies, and leadership play a crucial role in shaping the direction of societal change.

Example: The abolition of apartheid in South Africa led to significant social and political reforms.

(d) Economic Factors:

It is one of the biggest factor of social change as economic growth, industrialization and globalization can shift power structures and lifestyles within a society.

Example: The shift from agrarian economies to industrial economies during the industrial revolution.

(e) Demographic Changes:

Changes in population size, composition, or migration patterns can influence social structures.

Example: Urbanization due to rural-to-urban migration has transformed traditional lifestyles.

(f) Environmental factors:

Natural disasters, climate change and resource depletion can drive societal changes, often forcing communities to adapt with these changes.

Example: The effects of climate change have prompted global movements for sustainable living.