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Q6(c)

Examine the dynamics of pressure group in multi-party political system

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Politics and Society

Politics and Society: Sociological theories of power; Power elite, bureaucracy, pressure groups, and political parties; Nation, state, citizenship, democracy, civil society, ideology; Protest, agitation, social movements, collective action, revolution.

Core demand of the question

- Examine the dynamics of pressure groups in a multi-party political system
- Keep the examination within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Pressure groups influence without taking office.

Multi-party coalitions multiply access points.

Pluralist balance is limited by biased organisation.

- **India:** caste, farmer, and business groups in a federal party maze.

Informal labour remains weakly grouped.

Introduction

Pressure groups seek to influence policy without themselves forming the government. In a multi-party system they find several doors: coalition partners, standing committees, and rival channels of patronage. Dynamics are access, competition, and capture.

Body

Dynamics of access

- David **Truman** and later pluralists pictured groups as a balance. C. Wright **Mills** and Marxist critics pictured biased access for business.
- Multi-party coalitions raise the value of small allies and of street veto.

Indian multi-party field

- **Caste associations**, farmer unions, chambers of commerce, and professional bodies bargain with regional parties.
- **Federalism multiplies venues:** state capital and Centre.
- Identity groups may become parties, so the border with a pressure group is leaky.

Risks

- Clientelism and veto by organised minorities of the well-off.
- Unorganised informal labour has weak group voice, which PLFS informality already suggests.

Flow diagram

Pressure groups -> Multi-party doors
Multi-party doors -> Coalition bargaining
Pressure groups -> Organised bias
Unorganised labour -> Weak voice

Conclusion

In multi-party systems, pressure groups shop among parties and levels of government. The dynamic is more doors and more bias toward those already organised. India shows caste, farm, and business groups using that maze.

Facts & figures

Truman

Classic pluralist account of group politics in a liberal system.

Mills

Power elite: some groups sit far closer to decisions than others.

Coalition politics

Raises the bargaining power of small organised interests.

Caste associations

Indian groups that pressure parties and sometimes become parties.

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