



A New Profile of Pressure Group Politics in Third World Democracy

KEYWORDS

Planned economy, Dual role, External pressure, Public sector

Pratick Mallick

Guest-Lecturer Of Political Science, Polba Mahavidyalaya, Polba, Hooghly (W.b.)

ABSTRACT *The pressure group politics is a vast topic of research. It is varied in nature. It acts as a means to the political parties whose success depends on the former. It is important to reflect light upon three models of the pressure group politics; it is, therefore, interesting to highlight as to how and why the political parties can become able to retain power or shift to power. Furthering the relational quotient between the pressure groups of different circles, a minute observation points to how a political party in Opposition takes to power by capitalizing the negative feedbacks of the pressure groups of the circle-in-power. The management of pressure groups seems to be a challenge to the retention of democracy even by the democratic essentials like political parties.*

INTRODUCTION

The term 'democracy' grew in attention with the evolution from the erstwhile royalist absolutism. However, the type of democracy that the world was familiar with at the very outset of opposition to the monarchy is not similar to what it is today. Normally, the hub source of democracy, the Europe, has consolidated and conserved over the years the ideas of justifying the cause of individuality in collection instead of collectivism per se. The modern democracies are considered democratic only when the people depending upon the governments thereof are confident as well as complacent of the way they are governed. It is generally beyond any doubt that the common people emerging into citizenship from the stage of subjects do have enough expectations from the democratic government(s). To make them a proper system into work-out, every modern democracy needs to be synchronized in a manner that invariably provides support to the generations to come in an allegiant way. In other words, the people in capacity of the electors or voters become in due course the political consumers in a democracy. In other words, democracy in its advanced form of evolution turns into a consumerically equilibrating political arrangement.

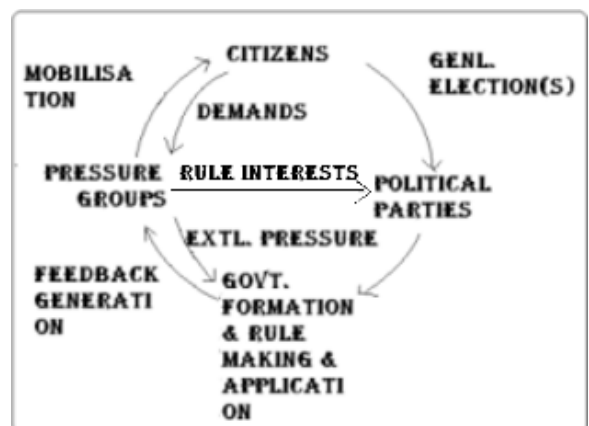
PARTY CIRCLES IN DEMOCRACY

In practice, therefore, a democracy can go running on the basis of party system. In all democracies, it is a common ingredient to streamline so many demands into few broad ones linked on the basis of ideologies. Thus, political ideologies are the means of the political potentialities of democracies. The plenipotentiaries of party system in a democracy are turned about in relation with the ramifications of each ideology into several occupational or professional sub-divisions so that in times of general election(s) all of them can send their member-supporters into voting for the same political party they are at base affiliated to. Incidentally, it deserves remembering that, in general, in a country with planned economy particularly rather than a fully open one, the role of the trade unionist pressure groups is quite extensive. The number of the trade unions is quite great in this system. Therefore, almost all of the voters, who are the earning ones, cannot but become members of one or the other pressure group. Thus, the pressure groups pre-determine the support base of the mother political parties. In many cases, the people join some particular pressure group(s) being convinced with the certain socio-economic as well as political ideologies which are given the organizational shape by the mother political parties. If one joins a pressure group being influenced with a particular political party, this is almost certain that either one is socialized by the political culture of one's family or that of peers. Also, in some cases, the thronging into a certain pressure

groups takes place only when their mother political party or coalition is in power and there is a great chance of being heard for the purpose of solution to their socio-economic problems.

DEMOCRACY: A SYSTEM AS EMPIRICALLY ASSESSED

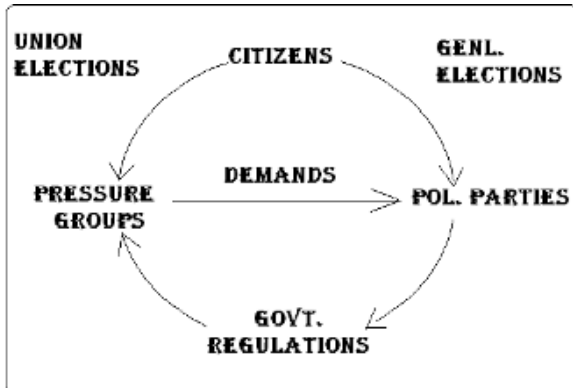
The question of democracy is sometimes found to be related to what extent and how much swift the governmental actions are in order to nip in the bud the minimum potential of protest or no-confidence in the government. In other words, a government is judged by the means of its credibility and accountability to the citizens who returned it to power in the latest general election. It is incidentally very much important to remember that political parties depend upon the pressure groups for the ultimate gain in vote-banks or for the victory in the election. It is also worth remembering that the same citizen has dual role—one as a member of the professional or occupational pressure groups and, the other, as a citizen enrolled in the list of the voters. Therefore, it is clear that pressure groups politics in practice is like a cycle in a continuous motion of operation (See, Model I).



Model I: Relation between pressure groups and parties of opposite circles.

Here, another model should be required to make a clear disposition of the 'pressure group functioning' out of the comparative analysis between Model I and Model II. It is normally found that in every democratic political system, there are two major blocs of parties: one in power and the other in opposition. Now, Model I, that is, the former, is applicable only to the cases where the pressure groups concerned belong to

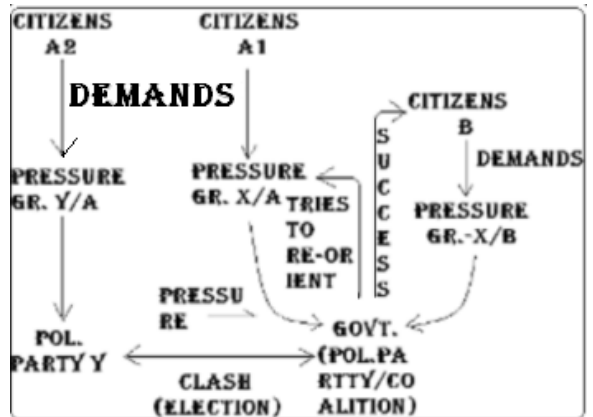
the Opposition; however, Model II clearly depicts the cases where the pressure groups belong to those political parties which are already in power. Despite this difference, there is one thing that is in common is that in both cases, there is no formal communication from political parties towards the pressure groups; at least, that is conspicuously invisible.



Model II: Relation between pressure groups and parties in the same power circle.

Therefore, the potential of such Invisible is very much important as well as significant only because throughout the process, this Invisible functions continuously. Incidentally, it is essential to keep in mind that, as already explained, every political party does have various pressure groups in various fields of actions; in times of general elections, there is found huge competition and lobbying among all the pressure groups affiliated to the same political party for the sake of getting heard by the latter and pacified ultimately in terms of legislations in the governmental capacity of the latter. Therefore, it deserves attentions to a closely related point: when pressure groups fail to satisfy the citizens' expectations off the governments, they lose interest in pressure groups. And, protests often take to the reactions against the government. At that time, the pressure groups affiliated to other political parties, in particular to the opposition, suddenly appear in the behalf of the protestors. In other words, when pressure groups belonging to the political parties in power fail to get their demands fulfilled as a mode of being defeated in the lobbying with other pressure groups within the same circle of action, the pressure groups of the parties in opposition, related to the same field try to capitalize the members' protests. For example, one should suppose that there are S and T — both in the agricultural field but belonging to opposite political parties; between them S is within in the power circle; however, S failed in lobbying with other pressure groups in its circle. In this case, there are two rory possibilities: one, in case of considerable or consecutive defeat(s) in the lobbying, the members spontaneously and unilaterally shift to the pressure groups of the opposition, and, two, the latter grabs this opportunity by describing the defeat as governmental inactions and non-responsiveness to the particular socio-economic section(s) related to the field(s) of action of the pressure groups. And this can be considered as external pressure. Therefore, the significant character of the external pressure acts with success as if to justify that the failure of the pressure groups in the power circle promotes the interests of the parties in opposition more than doing in interests of the particular section(s) where the particular type(s) of pressure group(s) operate. In other words, such pressure group politics is supposed not only as the means to promote the interest of hankering after power on the basis of certain political ideologies but also those very approaches of the political parties in opposition. Therefore, it can be candidly said that a political party not in power and in quest for the loopholes in the functioning of the party in power uses despair of the pressure groups in the latter's circle in order to capture power (See, Model III). In fact, it is important to remember that this happens because the failure of the pressure groups

concerned here is misinterpreted by the Opposition as the failure of responsible performance of the party in power towards its own pressure group(s). So, the party in power having formed the government would have been



Model III: How Opposition capitalizes a negative feedback of internal conflict within the circle-in-power.

supposed to have some extra responsibility towards the pressure groups within its own circle, which it faced with unsuccess.

Therefore, the conflict between the pressure groups and the party in the same circle surface as the open fight in the next general election. Now, as per Model III, the clash (election) is to be worthy on the basis of strength of the citizens in favour of each party. Here, one point deserves attention that Model III showing above demands of A1 combined with that of A2 seems to be reflected. This is only at the level of representing a certain field of occupation. As a result, if Party Y wins over Party X in the next general election on the basis of such conflict and if there is no other conflict emulating this, it is supposed that Party Y coming to power would concentrate on mending over the combined demands of Citizens A (Citizens A1 + Citizens A2) representing a particular field.

PRESSURE GROUP POLITICS: A LIABILITY

Although the political parties cannot go without the help from the pressure groups within their own periphery, yet in reality pressure group politics in itself turns to be a great challenge to the party system, indeed. This can be tallied with the example of a government in a newly-born country which is expected by the citizens to fulfil the aspiration of all of them. Similarly, if a population in a country consisting of the people from all walks of life demand fast responses from the government ever before all else, it becomes a true challenge to the government. To avoid such pressure, the political parties in power always make assessment of comparative priorities among all the pressure groups on the basis of several factors like the strength of the membership in the groups, existence of influential persons including the people's representatives or/and minister(s), nature of leadership of the said groups, and the types of fields of activities from the economic point of view.

Incidentally, it deserves mentioning that the pressure group politics basically takes place the public sector units where the conflicts between two parties of opposite ideologies function always through their pressure groups relentlessly as if to justify the superiority in ensuring better governance in the employees' earning so that in their political capacity they emerge as the saviour in the general election(s). Thus, in democracy of industrial type, in particular, the political parties aim at making cordial relations with the pressure groups mainly in the public sector itself.

CONCLUSION

The practice of democracy in its present form has survived various challenges thanks to the existence as well as the proactiveness of the pressure groups affiliated to different political parties. These elements have been able to protect the government(s) from the attempts of autocracy provided there

are pressure groups almost in all fringes of means of production and services. Thus, alternatively speaking, the less the number of the pressure groups, the more there is the chance of compromise of democracy. So, pressure group politics can be considered as the most reliable buffer for the governments against the ultimate degeneration of democracy.

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