




## Be Mains Ready

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**Q.** Highlight the role and importance of Pressure Groups in Indian polity, also mention their major shortcomings. (150 words)

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### Approach

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- Begin by defining Pressure groups
- Then discuss the role and importance of the Pressure Groups, with suitable examples
- Bring out the shortcomings of these groups.
- Conclude by underlining the importance of Pressure groups in Indian society.

### Answer

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Pressure groups are organised associations, unions or organisations of people having a common interest. They aim to seek better conditions for their members through organised efforts. They try to influence the legislature, executive and other decision-makers to have decisions made in their favour. Pressure groups play a vital role as a two-way communication link between the people and the government.

Business groups, trade unions, peasant groups, student groups, teachers' associations, caste and religious associations, women's associations, etc. are the different types of pressure groups found in India.

### Functions and importance of Pressure Groups

- Pressure groups play a vital role in a democratic society in terms of influencing the government for expressing the common concern of a section of society and promote their interest.
- These groups are actively involved in the process of administration. Through lobbying with the bureaucracy, the pressure groups are usually in a position to influence the process of policy implementation.

- It plays a vital role in the legislative process, they actively engage in lobbying with the legislators for securing desired laws or amendments in laws and policies of the government.
- Pressure Groups bring the demands and needs of the people to the notice of the decision-makers. For example, Medha Patkar and her associates have exercised a vast amount of pressure on the executive at the state and central level over the question of the Narmada dam and particularly the resettlement of the people affected by the dam.
- Pressure groups help in improving the quality of governance. It makes government more efficient by enhancing the quality of the decision-making process – the information and advice provided by these groups help to improve the quality of government policy and legislation.

### **Shortcomings of Pressure Groups**

- Some pressure groups have unsecular and offensive views which stir up communal tensions, and they work for narrow selfish interests.
- Some pressure groups misuse their power and become the tool to subserve political interests.
- Pressure groups can sometimes become aggressive and get involved in militancy to get their demands heard.
- Pressure groups lack stability and commitment. This might result in their loyalties changing according to changing political situations.

In a pluralistic society like India, pressure groups provide a means by which ordinary citizens can participate in the decision-making process, as well as maintaining a check on government activity. Similarly, governments can be better informed of the electorate's sensitivities to policies, because of the pressures articulated by these groups.