

India has seen a **paradigm shift** starting from **government and bureaucratic decision making to more citizen-centricity** owing to greater public participation with time. In the current times, **good governance** has taken the **center-stage** in decision-making processes.

Pressure groups have emerged as a **strong mechanism** for making the **democracy participatory, transparent, accountable and responsive**, during this paradigm shift from government to governance and then to good governance by performing **following roles**:

1. **Connecting link between government and people**: The pressure groups act as a **bridge for sharing of opinions** between the people and the government. **For Example**, in the farmer's protest, the **Bhartiya Kisan Union** acted as a farmers' representative in negotiating with the government.
2. **Educating masses**: The pressure groups play a **vital role in educating the masses** about various **laws and policies** of the government, thus, developing an understanding among the masses. This creates an **accountability framework** for the government. **For instance**, pressure groups like **Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh** help educating the labourers regarding labour laws and reforms, helping to form an opinion about the reforms and create a ground for critique.
3. **Ensure representation of all sections**: Pressure groups lend **voices to vulnerable sections** of the society, especially **women, minorities, children etc.**
 - a. For instance, groups like **SEWA** have worked persistently for **making laws women friendly** and empower women.
 - b. **Caste groups** like **Harijan Sevak Sangh** voice against caste-based exploitation of Dalit community.
4. **Enhance political participation**: Pressure groups **ensure greater political participation** for the issues of public importance, thus, creating a **pathway for good governance**. **For instance**, the **Narmada Bachao Andolan** had been successful in mobilizing masses against the construction of dams.
5. **Improve the quality of governance**: Through enhanced public participation, the pressure groups help in making the government decisions and process more qualitative and refined. **For instance**, during the **India Against Corruption movement**, the exposure of the loopholes in the administrative setup led to an empowered demand for **transparency and accountability** which resulted in the promulgation of **Lokpal** bill.
6. **Wide spectrum of matters**: Various pressure groups belong to various categories including **environment, culture, social justice** among others, thus representing wide range of matters concerning the society, thereby, making way for **citizen-centric governance**.
7. **Non-political critique**: The pressure groups tend to raise the **demands of the citizens rather than politicizing** the matter for party's interests, thus ensuring, **good governance**.

While the pressure groups have played a crucial role in the new paradigm of good governance, there have been a **few deviations** that might include **violence, radical means of lobbying, pushing one's self-interest**, among others. The need, therefore is to ensure the functioning of pressure groups within the **bounds of democratic rules and procedures** in order manifest their real effectiveness. (506 words)