

# Himachal Pradesh GK Mains



## For HPAS Examination



**Politics of Sub-Regionalism  
and Pressure Groups**



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# POLITICS OF SUB-REGIONALISM AND PRESSURE GROUPS IN THE STATE

**Regionalism** is the expression of a common sense of identity and purpose by people within a specific geographical region, united by its unique language, culture, language, etc.

In a positive sense, it encourages people to develop a sense of brotherhood and oneness which seeks to protect the interests of a particular region and promotes the welfare and development of the state and its people.

In the negative sense, it implies excessive attachment to one's region which is a great threat to the unity and integrity of the country.

**Sub-regionalism** is a question of identity rather than distinct identity within the border identity of the region or the state based on social, political and economic distinctiveness.

## REGIONAL DIVIDE IN THE STATE POLITICS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

- The present-day Himachal Pradesh consists of two types of hill areas i.e the **Punjab hills** and the **Shimla hills**.
- **Shimla Hills:** Before independence, the Shimla hills were ruled by native Princes. In these areas the people's struggle was influenced by the nationalist movement in British India, but its object was never to overthrow or eliminate their Princely States.
- **Punjab Hills:** The Punjab hill areas which joined Himachal Pradesh in 1966 were under direct British administrative control before independence. The people in these areas participated in the struggle for freedom with the specific objective of overthrowing the British rule. These areas are experiencing electoral politics from 1921 when the dyarchy was introduced in Punjab.
- Thus, in hilly region prior to independence, two types of movements were going on simultaneously, i.e., the Praja Mandal movement (in Shimla Hill States), and the Freedom movement (In Punjab Hill States).
- There seems to be hardly any divide among the voters of Himachal Pradesh which saw merger of some areas from Punjab in 1966 anymore as the two main political parties, Congress and BJP, have been performing well or badly in different areas. However, call it coincidence or a political strategy, the 'regional divide' in political leadership of the hill state has come to stay.

## POLITICAL DIVIDE BETWEEN OLD AND NEW HIMACHAL:

- Both Old and New areas have 34 constituencies each. Traditionally old areas voted for Congress and new areas voted for BJP. Electoral data from 2003 to 2012 suggests that the Congress on an average won 17 out of 34 constituencies in old areas whereas BJP won only average 8 seats.
- However, in 2017 elections, Congress has won only 7 seats whereas BJP has won 25 seats in old areas. Massive fluctuation in prices of apple and slow pace of its integration with national market could be the possible reason behind this.

### A. Domination of Congress Party in Old Himachal:

- Praja Mandals of Himachal Pradesh were merged in 1948 to form Congress party in Himachal Pradesh. All important leaders of Praja Mandal became part of Congress Party. This is the one of main reason behind the domination of Congress Party in these regions.
- All three Congress CMs in the state, Dr Y.S Parmar (Sirmaur), Thakur Ram Lal and Virbhadra Singh (Shimla district) have come from old Himachal.
- The hill state was traditionally ruled by Congress party, with Dr YS Parmar from Sirmaur district becoming CM four times in 1952, 1963, 1967 and 1972. The state saw the first non-Congress chief minister, Shanta Kumar, in 1977.
- In the Congress, the leadership has remained in Shimla district after 1977, when Thakur Ram Lal from Jubbal Kotkhai became CM for a few months, taking over from Dr YS Parmar. Ram Lal, who won all the nine elections he contested from Jubbal Kotkhai assembly segment till his death in 2002, was Congress CM again in 1982 for a year, before Virbhadra Singh, then a minister at the Centre, was sent to replace him, mainly because of internal politics.
- Since 1983, Virbhadra Singh, who hails from Rampur in Shimla district and has represented Jubbal Kotkhai, Rohroo and then Shimla (rural) Assembly constituencies in Shimla district, has ruled the roost, becoming CM six times. He was in the fray as CM candidate again in 2017, this time contesting from Arki segment in Solan district, vacating his constituency Shimla (rural) for his son, Vikramaditya Singh.
- Political observers said the Congress party probably strengthened its hold in old Himachal area including Mahasu (upper Shimla), Mandi, Sirmaur, Chamba, Bilaspur districts after 1977, when a non-Congress leadership emerged from merged areas.
- At one point of time, entire Shimla backed the Congress leadership strongly. It even gave rise to the figure (aath or saath – 8 or 60), meaning that if the entire state goes one side, Shimla with its eight Assembly segments stood rock solid with the Congress leadership. But things have changed with time and with Dhumal coming to the fore in BJP.

#### **B. Domination of Bhartiya Janata Party in New Himachal:**

- Shanta Kumar, a senior BJP leader and former Union minister, headed the Janata Party government in 1977. He became the BJP CM in 1990, when the party came to power in a pre-poll alliance with Janata Dal. Kangra has 15 Assembly segments.
- BJP politics saw a transition of sorts in 1998, when Prem Kumar Dhumal, earlier in central politics, got the leadership role in the state and became CM in 1998 (when BJP entered into post-poll alliance with Himachal Vikas Congress to form government) and then in 2007, the first time the BJP came to power in Himachal on its own.
- Four-time MLA, Dhumal was the chief ministerial candidate of BJP in the 2017 Assembly polls as well but lost his seat contesting from Sujampur constituency.

#### **C. Cap's colour denotes political leanings:**

- Every time the government changes in Himachal Pradesh - from the Congress to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and vice versa - people's colour preferences too change, specially when it comes to their caps.
- The former CM, Sh. Virbhadra Singh from Shimla district always donning a cap with green band (Singh was so touchy about the colour of his cap, that if anyone presented him maroon cap, he would not relish it ) and his rival, former BJP CM, Sh. Prem Kumar Dhumal wearing a cap having maroon band, as a matter of distinctive choice.
- While different Himachali caps signify different regions in the state, the 'green band' and the 'maroon band' on caps almost became a trademark of Congress and the BJP respectively. The

supporters of two leaders (who became CMs alternatively since 1998) also started portraying political identity with similar caps, with the passage of time. Even the current CM of Himachal Pradesh Sh. Jai Ram Thakur (BJP) wears a maroon band cap

- Even the ordinary folks would switch to caps with green or maroon bands, depending on which party forms the government.
- With BJP taking over the reigns in HP, the people, however, still gift the cap with maroon band to the CM, ministers or other BJP leaders in official or public functions as a trend. But the 'cap politics' is seemingly not going to stay for long now. This was evident during the first visit of CM, Jai Ram Thakur to his home district Mandi earlier this month, where he was presented a white Himachali cap worn in areas of Kullu district.
- The first session of the state Assembly in 2017 was a witness to the changing trend. While many BJP leaders were not wearing any Himachali cap, some others were wearing the traditional Kullu cap with a multi-colour border.
- In Congress, a prominent example was first time and youngest MLA of HP Assembly, Vikramaditya Singh (Virbhadra Singh's son), who was wearing an exclusive Himachali cap, but with a maroon band.
- According to Current Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur the caps to be seen as an inseparable part of Himachali culture and not as a symbol of regional divide.

### ECONOMIC DIVIDE BETWEEN LOWER AND UPPER HIMACHAL PRADESH:

- Economically, Himachal Pradesh consists of two distinct regions: "Agriculture" and "Horticulture". The agricultural region consists of lower Himachal and horticultural regions consists of Upper Himachal. Economy of old areas is based on cash crops whereas new areas live largely under subsistence agriculture. In old areas, cash crops such as apples, potatoes and ginger is more profitable than the conventional grain produced in new areas.
- Fruit cultivation and production in the two regions reveal that horticulture has replaced the traditional agriculture in Shimla region but Kangra region lags behind in this transformation. In order to remove this disparity, Himachal Pradesh government tried to explore the possibility of introducing citrus fruits in the Kangra region and the Joint Directorate of Horticulture was established at Dharamshala in 1979 to help farmers of region.
- In agricultural regions, size of land holding is exceedingly small whereas in horticultural region, it is large. This is the reason behind fast urbanisation in new areas as people are leaving their villages due to increase in pressure on agricultural land.
- **Land Reforms in Himachal:** Land reforms acts turned out to be a clear case of discrimination between two regions. The big land owners from Kangra were deprived of their surplus land, but orchards were exempted from land ceiling. In Kangra region, the landowner organised themselves to protect their landed interests. **Laghu Zamindar Sabha** was formed in 1973 to protect their landed interests. This sabha was naturally ally of Jan Sangh and later the Janta Party as both needed each other in the given political reality.

### SOCIAL DIVIDE BETWEEN LOWER AND UPPER HIMACHAL:

- There is a large cultural divide in Himachal Pradesh on the basis of language, religion, folk songs, dances etc. In high hill areas language is of Tibetan origin which is spoken by local folks while in plain or lower areas Pahari and Hindi is spoken by peoples.

- In some areas of Upper Himachal people mainly in Kinnaur high hills, Lahaul Spiti follows Buddhism due to contouring Tibetan boundaries while in lower Himachal, Hinduism is the main religion. Congress in state politics has followed a traditional leftist approach in politics which believes in secularism and is liberal in many ways and attracts people from different castes and religion whereas the BJP follows a rightist approach in politics and is seen as leaning towards people of particular religion. Therefore politics of sub-regionalism also depends on the vast cultural and socio economic structure in the state.
- Dances, dresses, folk songs can also be compared in these areas which forms the basis of regional divide among people. All these factors are not of much importance to the people of the state, but these cultural disparities are used for political advantages and to gain votes, political masters use the difference in political ideology of people for their party benefits and people get influenced by them on the basis of region or sub-region and can easily be divided then. This political agenda is not good for development in the state administration or on practical grounds where one region such as Shimla is high on development and parts of Chamba are still rural.
- Regionalism is often seen as a serious threat to the development, progress and unity of the state. It gives internal security challenges by the insurgent groups, who propagate the feelings of regionalism against the mainstream politico-administrative setup.
- Regional recognition in terms of statehood or state autonomy gives self-determination to the people of that particular region and they feel empowered and happy. Internal self-determination of community, whether linguistic, tribal, religious, regional, or their combinations, has remained the predominant form in which regionalism in Himachal Pradesh has sought to express itself, historically as well as at present time.

### CONTRIBUTION OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN IN ATTAINING STATEHOOD:

- A public meeting was held in Shimla on the day of integration in 1966, headed by Satyawati Dang. The meeting adopted a resolution demanding full-fledged statehood for the Himachal Pradesh. Tapinder Singh, MLA in Himachal Pradesh Legislative assembly moved a resolution to this effect on July 1967.
- A new resolution was again passed in 1968 by state legislative assembly which strongly urged the centre leadership and Union government to accept the demand for separate state for Himachal Pradesh. They cited increase in geographical area and smooth administrative functioning after 1966 as strong ground for separate statehood.
- All political parties, including the independents supported this resolution. After this resolution a negotiating committee was appointed to take up matter with the Congress High Command and the centre.
- After these non-official resolutions were passed in both the houses of Parliament. In view of the progress made by Himachal Pradesh in various field and the demand of the people, Indian Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi made a declaration in the Parliament that Himachal Pradesh would be given statehood.

### PRESSURE GROUPS

- Pressure groups have become a very important part of an administrative system. These groups try to pressurise the administrative and political system of a country either to ensure that their interests are promoted or to see that at least their interests are not relegated to the background.
- No system can function effectively without taking their viewpoint into consideration. In developing countries like India where there is a scarcity of various resources on the one hand and acute poverty and deprivation on the other, the pressure on administrative system is bound to be very heavy.
- The pressure groups arise in different forms in different walks of life. They provide a stabilising mechanism and form a crucial component of the structural equilibrium which means that they perform the system maintenance function.

### **PRESSURE GROUPS: MEANING**

- Pressure groups are forms of organisations, which exert pressure on the political or administrative system of a country to extract benefits out of it and to advance Emerging Issues their own interests. In the present contest these forms of organisations are broadly referred to as Civil Society Organisations (CSO).
- The term 'pressure group' refers to any interest group whose members because of their shared common attributes make claims on the other groups and on the political process. They pursue their interests by organising themselves and by influencing the governmental policies. Their aim is to see that laws or government's actions are favourable to their interests.
- Pressure groups have been in existence in different forms ever since governmental machinery became capable of delivering certain benefits to either individuals or groups. They did take more concrete form in the wake of industrial revolution and the rise of market-oriented economies. The emergence of trusts and monopolies and the struggle over tariffs led to the formation of pressure groups.
- With the advancement of technology and agricultural skills new problems, desires and needs arose and therefore new groups and organisations came into being to advance their common interests. State assumed various welfare functions in addition to its earlier regulatory activities. All this entrusted considerable power and discretion in the hands of state apparatus and the need to exert more pressure on the State became stronger.
- The dominant sections of the society needed the help of the State in promotion of the economic activities and the weak and the deprived needed its help for meeting their basic requirements. To articulate their interests and exert pressure on the State apparatus these groups gained prominence.
- Pressure groups in mobilising and organising masses have widened the base of political participation as well as creating a responsive political and administrative system. They help in social integration, political articulation, and act as catalysts for change.

### **TYPES OF PRESSURE GROUPS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH:**

Different writers on comparative government have classified interest groups or pressure groups on the basis of their structure and organisation.

**There are number of Pressure groups which work in different sectors in Himachal Pradesh:**

#### **1. The Business Groups**

- The Business group is the most important and organised pressure group. They are also most effective. They are independent of the political parties that exist and they have enough resources with which they can safeguard their interests. They exert varied kinds of pressures, they try to influence planning, licensing bodies and economic ministries. Some businesspersons are always there in different legislatures at the Central as well as State level. In Himachal Pradesh main business groups are **Himachal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Himachal Pradesh Laghu Udyog Sangh** etc.

## 2. Trade Unions

- The Indian Trade Union movement has rapidly developed. The trade unions were present prior to Independence. Under communist influence, the **All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)** was established in 1920s. The emergence of the communist movement also played an important role in the growth of trade unions in India.
- The trade unions when required can be very vocal and militant in their actions to meet their demands. They work through the weapon of strike and have been able to achieve monetary gains in term of wage increase, bonus, change in wage structure, etc. These type of pressure groups have been able to encourage class consciousness and class solidarity among the workers. We have witnessed over the past few years the trade unions resorting to demonstrations, during the disinvestment by the government in public sector undertakings over the past few years.
- In spite of certain institutional limitations, such as, ideological differences, internal splits, external pressures, lack of international backing, the trade unions exert significant pressure at various levels of policy formulation.
- In Himachal Pradesh, such unions are **Lal jhanda union, Contract worker union** etc.

## 3. Professional Associations:

- HP Govt teacher's association, H.P. Library Association, H.P. Medical Officer Association etc.

## 4. Agrarian Groups in Himachal Pradesh

- Apple Growers Association which consists of members from Shimla, Kullu, Kinnaur, Sirmour, Chamba and Mandi. This association was came into polit

## 5. Students Organisations

- The student organisations in India have also acted as pressure groups both prior to Independence and after Independence. The All Bengal Students Association was formed in 1928. The All India Students Federation (AISF) was established in 1936. After Independence the political parties continue to be affiliated with student organisations.
- The All India Students Congress and later on the National Students Union of India (NSUI) are affiliated to the Congress Party.
- The All India Students Federation and Students Federation of India (SFI), are controlled by Communist Party of India.
- The Radical Students Union, Democratic Students Union, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) etc. are all affiliated to different political parties.
- They try to pressurise governmental policy on various crucial issues, their activities are not just confined to educational issues. Like the students organisations we also have teachers' associations.
- In Himachal Pradesh, caste groups also forms Pressure Groups the Himachal Pradesh Brahmin Sabha or Himachal Pradesh Brahmin Kalyan Board was formed to bring all Brahmin Organisations together to work collectively for the welfare of the community.

## 6. Caste based groups in Himachal Pradesh are

- Himachal Rajput Sabha,
- Himachal Jaat Kalyan Parishad,
- Anusuchit Jati-Janjati Kalyan Sangh.

## 7. Pensioners

- These are also emerging as a Pressure Group in the state of Himachal Pradesh, every district, constituency and division has a retired employee welfare committee of its own.
- Every district, constituency and division has a retired employers association and they have even forced the political parties to have separate pensioner cells as one of their fronts.

## 8. NGOs in Himachal Pradesh:

- A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a non-profit group that functions independently of any government. NGOs, sometimes called civil societies, are organized on community, national and international levels to serve a social or political goal such as humanitarian causes or the environment.

### Important NGOs:

- **Abhividbha:** This NGO deals with education, health, women, old age care in rural areas.
- **All India Social Awareness:** To spread awareness in the field of health, education, environment etc.
- **Ashiyana:** To support all children and young adults with learning disabilities, regardless of gender, ethnicity or background. Their aim is to empower and support our members to improve their independence, choice and wellbeing through participation, social awareness and integration.
- **Awaz Social Working Society:** Work for MGNREGA.

CivilsTap Himachal