

The background of the image is a dark blue and purple night sky filled with numerous white stars of varying sizes. In the foreground, there is a silhouette of a forest of evergreen trees. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

JAN'19 (24 to 30)

Pressure Groups and Brexit

The term pressure group originated in the United States of America. Pressure group is a group of people who are organised actively for promoting and defending their common interest. They are a vital link between the government and the governed. They keep governments more responsive to the wishes of the community, especially in between elections. They are different from the political parties in that they neither contest elections nor try to capture political power but their activism influence the public policy. These groups promote a specific issue and raise it up the political agenda or may have more general political and ideological objectives in mind while campaigning. These groups make efforts to bring government into the podium of accountability.

Pressure groups may operate at local, regional, national or even international level, depending upon the cause and notice. All interest groups share a desire to affect government policy to benefit themselves or their causes. They seek to influence political or corporate decision makers to achieve a declared objective. Pressure groups are collections of individuals who hold a similar set of

values and beliefs on the basis of ethnicity, religion, political philosophy, or a common goal. Pressure groups often represent viewpoints of people who are dissatisfied with the current conditions in society. These are a natural outgrowth of the communities of interest that exist in all societies. Pressure groups are widely recognized as an important part of the democratic process.

A similar thing was highlighted in the Brexit case. The Brexit vote was initially scheduled to be held on December 11 but was postponed by May when it became clear to her that she faced a certain defeat. Prior to the vote, May had warned the British legislators that if the plan was rejected, a catastrophe would follow. The United Kingdom is set to leave the European Union on March 29, 2019, two years after the Brexit referendum in June 2016 that triggered Article 50, the exit clause in the EU's constitution and kick-started arduous negotiations with European leaders over a divorce deal.

The EU deal was finally reached in November 2018. However, since reaching a deal in November, the agreement has come under fire from across the political spectrum, with opponents of the EU seeking a cleaner break and pro-European legislators pressing for a second vote on membership in the bloc.

A second referendum, however, has been opposed by both May and main opposition leader Corbyn. It has, however, won the support of many labour MPs, who say that the decision should be put back to the people for a final say, in a public vote, with the option to stay and keep the Brexit deal.

British Prime Minister Theresa May suffered a crushing defeat in the Parliament on January 15, 2019 when over 100 lawmakers of May's Conservative party - both Brexiteers and Remainers, voted against the Brexit deal.

The lawmakers overwhelmingly rejected Britain's withdrawal deal by a vote of 432 to 202, a majority of 230 votes, with just 73 days to go until Britain is scheduled to leave the European Union. The withdrawal agreement had been negotiated between Prime Minister Theresa

May and the European Union. Britain is scheduled to leave the EU on March 29, 2019.

Theresa May's defeat is the biggest-ever defeat suffered by a British premier in modern history. The only other comparable party split and parliamentary defeat happened in 1886, when Prime Minister William Gladstone's support for Irish home rule cut the Liberal Party in two. The crushing defeat marks the collapse of May's two-year strategy of forging an amicable exit with close ties to the EU. The rejection has also complicated and increased doubts about how or whether Britain will leave the European Union on March 29. May's minority government on January 16, 2019 won the no-confidence motion, which was tabled by opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn following the rejection of the Brexit deal, with 325 votes in favour of her government and 306 against, by a majority of 19 votes.

Conclusion:

With the defeat of the Brexit deal, three key options lay before the British Government which are re-negotiating with EU for a new deal, no-deal Brexit or new Brexit Referendum. Brexit vote in Parliament is considered as the most important moment in a generation and the work of various pressure groups are seen changing big decisions.

A large number of pressure groups also exist in India but unfortunately they are not developed as compare to the Western Countries like England, France and USA. The Business group is one of the most important, influential and organised pressure groups in India. Examples of business groups are Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and industry (FICCI) and Associated Chamber of Commerce (ASSOCHAM). Trade unions cater to the demand of workers and labours of the industries. Alternatively, they are also known as labour groups. In India, different trade unions represent different political parties. Examples are The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and All India Trade Union Congress (Communist Party of India).

References:

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- <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jan/27/blow-theresa-may-ireland-stresses-will-not-yield-brex-it-backstop>