

S.S.m.21. PEREIRA GLADYS MYRTLE-Environmental Protection Pressure Groups in Kerala: A Study on their Structure, Strategy and Role with Special Reference to Industrial Pollution-1986-Prof. P.R. Poduval

The study of pressure groups occupies an important place in the modern political system. Pressure groups are more active in pluralistic societies with a democratic form of government. The heterogeneous nature of organizations and groups in a pluralistic society permits its citizens to express their varying interests and desires. Democracy secures to all its citizens freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. The decentralization of power in a pluralistic society is made possible through the democratic process, where people with common interests unite in a group through elections in order to influence the government. The variety of institutions in a pluralistic society makes it possible for the members to satisfy diverse needs. This is evident in democracy, for its members have the freedom of following different ways for making a living, living in different communities, holding different religious beliefs and having different social interests. A pluralistic society is an open system and the democratic framework, within which it operates, favours the different modes of interaction. In spite of the multitude of groups and organizations, there is co-operation among groups in order to gain additional rewards from organised group effort. Thus pluralistic societies are prevalent in countries with a democratic form of government.

Pressure groups have not only influenced political parties and governments, but have also influenced business decisions from time to time. A business

organization cannot function detached from the social context in which it exists, nor can it be insensitive to the pressures affecting managerial decisions in many diverse ways. A business organization receives inputs of money, people and other resources, transforms these through its production process and exports products and/or services. Hence what an organization does directly or indirectly influences every facet of society. Introduction of technology, size of company, attitude towards consumers, unions etc. affect some groups in society. Because of the variety of roles played by business, conflicts often arise to discipline business and to initiate legislative remedies. Consumerism, environmental protection groups and social demands for equal employment opportunities are some of such grass-root movements that have arisen from time to time.

The scope of the present study undertaken by the researcher is confined to "Environmental Protection Pressure Groups in Kerala", especially against industrial pollution. Research studies on pollution in the Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt have identified the types and effects of pollution on man, animals and plants. But no scholar seems to have identified the structure, strategy and dynamics of environmental protection pressure groups as a subject-matter worthy of deeper probe and understanding.

The main purpose of the study is to identify the factors that make pressure groups succeed or fail in achieving their set objectives. The concept "pressure group" used in the thesis is defined as a social group that is not a part of the government and does not itself seek to govern the country or any specific organization in its own name, but does seek to influence the government or other organizations for its own purposes. The factors include the structure and strategies of social pressure groups and the support they receive from the environment. More specifically the scope of the present research study is to investigate:

1. Perception of and reaction to environmental hygiene/protection, environmental pollution and tactics and strategies of pressure groups against environmental pollution by the relevant segments of the public, i.e., medical practitioners, veterinary surgeons, local farmers, managers, trade union leaders and other social groups.
2. Origin, development, structure and types of pressure groups for environmental protection functioning within the Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt.
3. Strategies and tactics adopted by environmental protection groups in Kerala to achieve their objectives.
4. Regulatory framework and public interest litigation relating to environmental pollution with special reference to the role of environment protection pressure groups in Kerala.

Selection of the sample

Since most of the chemical industries - industries which contribute to air and water pollution - in Kerala are situated in the Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt, it was decided to confine the study to this area. The Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt comprises of three Panchayats namely Eloor, Kalamassery and Kadungalloor panchayats. The total population in the three panchayats together is 79,813 (1981 census) i.e., Eloor panchayat consists of 11,192 males and 9,533 females, Kalamassery panchayat consists of 9,505 males and 8,452 females and Kadungalloor panchayat consists of 8,894 males and 8,569 females.

Instead of attempting to cover the total population in the area, the population

was segmented into 6 groups viz. doctors, veterinary surgeons, social group for environmental protection, farmers, managers and trade union leaders. Separate questionnaires were distributed to each segment.

1. Selection of medical practitioners

The Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt consists of eight hospitals with a total strength of 30 doctors, 14 clinics with 22 doctors and three primary health centres with six doctors. Since the total number of doctors in the area is only 62 it was decided to represent the entire population.

2. Selection of veterinary surgeons

There are two veterinary hospitals in Eloor panchayat, each having one surgeon. Kalamassery panchayat has one veterinary hospital with one surgeon and Kadungalloor panchayat has one veterinary hospital with one surgeon. The total strength of surgeons in the four hospitals is four. Their number being quite small it was decided to represent the entire population.

3. Selection of social pressure groups for environmental protection

Since the social pressure groups for environmental protection were found to be small in number in the Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt, the scope was widened to include all the available social pressure groups functioning in various parts of Kerala. Nearly 60 questionnaires were distributed to the office bearers of 19 associations/environmental protection pressure groups in 4 places in Kerala - 15 each for each geographical centre. Cochin, Calicut, Trivandrum and Vellore are the places where such groups are functioning.

4. Selection of farmers

In the case of farmers a 20% sample was drawn by using the random sampling method (Tippett's method) and nearly 120 questionnaires were distributed to 120 farmer families residing within a 5 km. distance from the Fertilizers and Chemicals Tranvancore Limited.

5. Selection of managers

There are 16 chemical units situated in the Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt. At the initial stage questionnaires were distributed to each chemical unit. But lack of co-operation from the management resulted in failure to obtain the necessary data. To compensate this, it was decided to take another approach and a second questionnaire was prepared to collect data on the reactions of individual managers. Only three major chemical units were taken for the study. The study was concentrated on Unit-I consisting of all senior level and middle level managers, and 15 questionnaires were distributed. From Unit-II all senior and middle level managers were included for the study and 15 questionnaires were distributed. From Unit-III all senior and middle level managers were included for the study and 15 questionnaires were distributed.

6. Selection of trade union leaders

There are 11 trade unions in the three units together. Thirtythree questionnaires were distributed to Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Secretaries of each trade union.

Methodology

As a preliminary step personal interviews were held with some selected medical practitioners, veterinary surgeons, farmers, social group for environmental protection, managers and trade union leaders for the preparation of the questionnaire. The draft questionnaire was pretested among a cross section of segments and refined for the final version of the questionnaire as tools for data collection. The original questionnaire after pretesting was modified since some of the data sought were too confidential to be disclosed. Primary data were collected through such refined and tested questionnaires eliciting responses from medical practitioners, veterinary surgeons, farmers, social group for environmental protection, managers and trade union leaders.

Data/Information were collected from secondary sources also. The following cases were prepared and presented in Chapter IV of the thesis on the basis of such secondary data/information and in certain cases by direct investigation by the researcher:

1. Periyar Bund Action Council
2. Farmers' protest against a chemical industry
3. A panchayat against radiation pollution
4. Local people against pollution caused by the Hindustan Paper Corporation.
5. The Mavoor Rayons and the Chaliyar river
6. Environmental protection demands in Kalamassery-Eloor area
7. The Silent Valley Protection Movement*
8. Bhopal gas tragedy*

*Silent Valley and Bhopal gas tragedy are included as cases at the national level, though they are not directly linked with the thesis.

The questionnaire was mailed to the sample selected for the purpose. Nearly 30% responded to the questionnaire mailed without any reminder being sent to them. In the case of others a vigorous follow-up by means of repeated reminders, personal visits, telephone calls etc., had to be made. The researcher could get nearly 50% of filled questionnaires, which is considered by any standard to give reliable data for analysis and interpretation.

Limitations of the study

1. The main focus of the study is confined to the Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt, but since the number of organised pressure groups in this area is quite limited, other areas in Kerala where pressure groups were organised and active have been included.
2. Though there are 16 chemical units in Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt only three major important chemical units have been considered to get personal viewpoints of Managers and trade union leaders on pollution problems.
3. Since the development of environmental pressure groups in Kerala is a recent phenomenon adequate literature on the subject was not available and hence literature pertaining to developed countries like the U.S. on this subject had to be made use of.
4. Lack of cooperation from the representatives of the management concerning the effect of environmental pollution on man, animals and plants has had a considerable constraint on the study. In fact the topic of research "Role of environmental pressure groups in decision making by business organizations

with special reference to Kerala" had to be changed to "Environmental protection pressure groups in Kerala: a study on their structure, strategy and role with special reference to industrial pollution" as the management was very reluctant to reveal their reactions as far as pollution was concerned.

Presentation of the thesis

For the purpose of analysis, the study report is divided into eight chapters.

The first chapter is introduction. It has two sections. The first section deals with the nature and characteristics of the pressure groups in a pluralistic-democratic society. Consumerism and groups demanding equal employment opportunities and employment for the sons of the soil are the areas which have been introduced to show the role of pressure groups on management decisions from time to time. Section two represents scope, methodology, limitations of the study and chapterisation. Definitions of main concepts are dealt with in section two.

Chapter two gives a detailed account of the nature, characteristics and consequences of environmental pollution on man, animals, plants, materials and climate.

Chapter three deals with the environmental protection movement at the international and national scenes. The chapter describes the development and functions of the various environmental groups.

Chapter four presents six case studies of environmental protection groups that came into existence as a result of the industrial pollution in selected areas of Kerala. The national tragedy of Bhopal poison gas and the case of Silent Valley are also included in the chapter as case studies at the national scene.

The regulations laid down by the government for ensuring environmental protection and some environmental litigation cases relating to environmental pollution are presented in chapter five.

Chapter six, seven and eight are the important chapters in the thesis. These chapters present the data collected and their analysis for meaningful inferences relevant to the environmental pollution and role of pressure groups against industrial pollution.

Chapter six deals with the nature, characteristics and consequences of the environmental pollution in the Eloor-Kalamassery industrial belt as perceived by the relevant segments of society i.e., medical practitioners, veterinary surgeons, social pressure groups, farmers, managers and trade union leaders.

Environmental pollution is depicted as a system consisting of three basic components. The first component is the source of pollution. The chemical units in the area are considered to be the source. The second component consists of atmosphere, water and land from where the source emissions are dispersed. From the atmosphere, water and land the pollutants affect the receivers viz. man, animals, plants, property and the general climate. There is a unanimous view among the respondents on the negative impacts of environmental pollution on man, animals, plants, property and climate.

In an attempt to find out the different types of pollution in the area, the various relevant segments were asked to identify the types of pollution in the area. The respondents were unanimous in their opinion that there is air and water pollution. But we find certain variations in the responses given by the various relevant segments on sound and radiation pollution.

In the pollution system the third component is the receivers such as man, animals, plants and materials. During this study an attempt was made to collect data from experts such as medical practitioners on the effects of pollution on human health, from veterinary surgeons on the health of animals and farmers of the locality on the effects of pollution on crops.

Chapter seven which consists of four sections, presents the reactions of the relevant segments to issues on environmental pollution. Section I is a classification and description of the nature of complaints, tactics and strategies resorted to by farmers for redressing their grievances. The attitudes of management and government agencies to the requests of farmers are also analysed.

Section II presents the awareness of medical practitioners and veterinary surgeons relating groups working for environmental protection. Majority of them are of the opinion that the absence of organised environmental groups was one of the reasons for the discharge of effluents into air and water bodies.

Section III presents the reaction of the environmental groups to the problem of pollution. Detailed accounts of the structure, strategy and dynamics of the groups are given in chapter eight of the thesis.

Section IV gives the reactions of managers and trade union leaders to issues on environmental pollution.

Chapter eight gives the structure, strategies and dynamics of the environmental pressure groups in Kerala for achieving their objectives. Factors associated with success/failure of pressure groups against industrial pollution are discussed in detail. The structure, strategy and dynamics of pressure groups are discussed within a theoretical framework. Towards the end of the chapter the summary and conclusions of the research work are given.

Major findings of the study

As conclusion the following features are found to be associated with the ineffectiveness of most of the environmental pressure groups functioning in Kerala:

1. Most of the environmental pressure groups functioning in Kerala are anomic pressure groups in their characteristics than associational or institutional. Anomic pressure groups exist on adhoc problems and issues. They resort to short term tactics to overcome their immediate problems and with the achievement of such adhoc objectives the purpose of the group is achieved.
2. an adhoc-anomic pressure group may show cohesiveness in its immediate action programmes against an immediate target, but the group does not continue for want of long term objectives, structure for role differentiation and norms for its continuity.
3. Members in most of the environmental pressure groups in Kerala are mainly from educated middle class and majority of the members occupy professional/technical positions in formal organizations. There are no rules and regulations for accepting members. The directly-affected parties viz. industrial workers, managers, farmers and other local residents are not active members of the environmental pressure groups functioning in Kerala. There is no definite pattern of interaction among the members in the form of regular meetings in the absence of immediate action programmes against the management of a concern.
4. Leadership of such environmental pressure groups in Kerala is more "task oriented" than "member oriented". Task oriented groups usually fade away

after achieving their immediate objective. Continuity of such groups is blocked by absence of member oriented style of the leaders.

5. Local farmers and leaders of such pressure groups could be pacified by the management by way of offering jobs, compensation or other attractions.
6. Environmental pressure groups in Kerala do not affiliate with other organisations of similar nature, political parties or other institutions. The only exception to this is the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishath. In a developing society with political democracy, anomic and non associational pressure groups can survive and grow only with direct or indirect support of political parties and/or strong well established other organizations.
7. The environmental pressure groups in Kerala do not get direct support from trade unions.
8. Adhoc - anomic groups can maintain their cohesiveness by the presence of an immediate objective or by the presence of an agency for direct confrontation. When the target is vague, the strength of the group gets diluted. Similarly when the direct agency for confrontation is missing, the group may find it difficult to maintain its cohesiveness. In Eloor-Udyogamandal area, where most of the chemical factories are situated on the banks of the river Periyar, it was difficult to distinguish a single agency responsible for pollution of the area. On the other hand in Calicut and Vellore the environmental pressure groups could succeed in directing the confrontation to specific agencies responsible for environmental pollution. From Eloor-Udyogamandal area, pressure groups with mere immediate task oriented objectives could succeed because they could identify and isolate the agency responsible for the environmental issues. Periyar Bund Action Council and litigations filed by the Eloor-panchayat against IRE are illustrative cases.
9. Most of the environmental pressure groups were resorting to dharna, protest march, submission of memorandum and other short term tactics against the management of the industrial organizations. These pressure groups did not take effective strategies in pressurising the enforcing agencies of the government; nor did they make significant attempts at influencing the government through political parties or the legislative process.
10. Another strategy the environmental pressure groups could have resorted to was approaching the judiciary for enforcement of existing laws for environmental protection and taking action against those who are violating the norms. However, majority of the environmental pressure groups in Kerala did not resort to litigation.

Though we find many of the environmental pressure groups functioning in Kerala are not effective in influencing the decisions of the management, they were very effective in creating an environmental consciousness among the public through their publications, research studies and short term tactics. This positive contribution of the environmental pressure groups in Kerala – whatever be its nature and structural characteristics – is a really significant contribution for further effective action for the maintenance of environmental hygiene.

A note on the method of giving references in the thesis

The method of giving reference in the thesis is slightly different from the traditional method i.e. numbering the reference and giving the details of reference immediately at the bottom of the same page. The researcher has adopted the method followed in the books of behavioural sciences, i.e., giving the name of

the author, year of publication and page number in bracket immediately after the sentence and giving the detailed reference in consolidated form in alphabetical order at the end of the thesis. This method is widely accepted in behavioural sciences and it is easy to identify the source of reference without repetitions and expressions such as *Ibid.*, *op.cit.*, *loc.cit.*, *Idem*, *Infra* and *Supra*.