Pressure groups along with political parties play a very significant role in the modern political system. Pressure groups or interest groups as they are called, are not an entirely new phenomenon in Indian politics. Interest groups have been deliberately organised and are much more powerful in modern times. The group theory has been propounded by Arthur F. Bentley who wrote a book 'The Process Government' in 1908 and David Truman made a significant development on it in his book 'The Government Process' in 1936.

An interest group may be defined as a voluntary organisation who join their hands for the protection and promotion of a specific interest. Pressure groups do not and can not govern, nor are they interested in governing. They are interested in particular policies for the benefits of its members. All modern societies are composed of many interacting groups which exercise a profound influence on the policies and actions of the government. In fact, it is one of the functions of the state to adjust the
over-all group struggle going on in the social and political sphere. In the words of Robert L. Hardgrave 'Interest groups in India are a form of linkage and a means of communication between the mass and the elite'. Pressure group directs its attention to the governmental authorities and influence political parties by engaging itself in lobby and participating itself in the party organisation. It also concentrates to mould the public opinion in order to create broad public support for its aim. They are generally moulding and influencing the policy making processes of the government from behind the scene. Pressure groups may be permanent or temporary when groups have long range interest, they try to make an effort to participate in the political process of the state whereas temporary pressure groups are formed to protect certain interest and disappear to the back ground after they have attained their specific objectives. Pressure groups act at different levels with a view to influencing decision making process. These groups are active not only during election times but even before and after. It also influences both election and are a real force to be reckoned with both in the state and society. Some of the groups are really powerful, strong and have good finances at their disposal. No pressure group is interested in contesting election. Each group tries to put forward as many candidates as it can for contesting the election. It also finances them. Whereas political parties on the other hand direct themselves to win a legislative majority support and run the government.
Study of pressure groups becomes important because usually every individual in politics thinks about his own interest more than of the society as a whole. Each individual has also manifold and diverse interests and issues coming out of their interaction and interpretation and to promote those interests he organises different associations and unions. So interest group is a collection of persons to have common objectives who seek realisation of those objectives. It tries to influence public policies through political actions. It unites for a particular cause and upholds that. The interest of the pressure group are both economical and political for which they try to change public policies suited to them. They apply pressure tactics and play a vital role in the political process of the state.

In the opinion of McKean, the pressure groups have limited interest and ambition. He refers to three main features of pressure groups which are found in all societies irrespective of the forms of government. In the representative form of government these groups are allowed to function freely but in a totalitarian state, their main function is to legitimise the action of government of the day. The groups have no political interest but only private interest or the interest of the few. They function behind the screen and do not show their political interest. Another feature of the pressure group is that it is mainly concerned with the common interest of the members whose sole aim is to fully protect
their own interest. Thirdly, pressure groups do not seek to capture political power directly and run the government. They are completely different from political parties who have clear policies and programmes. Political parties mobilise public opinion in favour of their programmes, both at the time of election and after that. It makes certain promises to the electorate and try to fulfill these at the earliest. On the other hand pressure groups are a small organisation of few individuals and are confined to a limited circle.

In a parliamentary form of government the pressure groups look towards the real executive and not to the nominal head of the state. They get their interest accommodated in the party in power. When they do not get any favour from the political boss they look towards the civil servants and try to influence them so that their desired measures are introduced in the legislature. These groups try to concentrate their activities at administrative level. But this does not mean that they have ignored the other levels. They have access to all political strata but economic groups have more access to the government than the others. These groups sometimes have direct channel of communication with ministers who are responsible for policy formulation.

Interest group always gives utmost importance to election because they can manage to put, through political parties, their
own candidates who are likely to champion their cause or interests. These candidates when elected become part of law making process and source of policy formulation. Money is poured by the pressure groups to help the party to win election. They may be considered as the trustees of the party candidate. A group may more effectively influence the area of decision maker if it can lavishly contribute to party as donation or purchase eminent leaders. It acts in a disciplined way and can not influence when political parties are disciplined and government is stable. It can also influence the legislator by creating defection in the party because of the money power. Since there is committee in the representative form of government, these groups try to have maximum influence on the committees. It becomes more active during the time of budget preparation because at that time it can get certain concession. They also extend their influence when important appointments are made by the Chief Executive and prevent such persons who are hostile towards the group. If necessary they try to nullify the appointment, made against their wishes by hook or crook.

The pressure groups exercise four techniques to fulfill, protect and promote their specific interest when the techniques of persuasions fail to serve the desired purpose. These techniques of pressure application are: Lobbying, strike, bandh, gherao and all these are very popular in Indian Politics. Lobbying is a common phenomenon of the pressure group operating in political
system. The operation of lobbying occurs mainly in the area of legislative activities. It signifies a very effective weapon in the hands of the pressure groups to influence the legislators. Support rendered during election in the form of man power and pecuniary assistance keeps the elected representatives " virtually in the pocket of the pressure groups ". Generally, the lobbyists influence the government for keeping the man of their own choice in the administration, for inducting favourable personnel in the departments, formulating policies conducive to their interest and obstructing legislative measures.

A Society is divided into a number of groups depending upon their interests. Some of the most common interest groups which are found in India are Trade Unions, industrialist Associations, student organisations and religious groups.

In Orissa the role of Kendu Leaf Traders was significant in the sense that it acts as a pressure group which operates at the decision taking centres. They establish relations at different levels of administration, viz., with the executive, with the secretariat and even at the chief-minister's level. The main aim of the Kendu Leaf businessmen was to influence decision making authority and for this they adopt different methods of pressure application. When this group feels that the decision taken by the decision-maker is not congenial to their interest, then
the modification and interpretation of rules becomes the concern of this group. Bribery appears to be the most common method of pressure application on the decision-makers. The pressure group offers bribe to the individual who are placed in high positions or in decision centres in order to get undue favour.

The politics of Orissa from 1952-61 was mainly guided by the traders of Kendu Leaf and Messrs Seerajuddin, a mining contractor. When N. K. Choudhury was the chief minister of Orissa during the period from 1950-56, he made a change in the Kendu Leaf Trade by inviting tenders and settling them with the person who offered the highest tender. Before the entrance of N. K. Choudhury as Chief Minister, the settlement of Kendu Leaf with traders was made by private negotiation. Choudhury made this change for the interest of earning more revenue for the state. It appears that by the earlier system the state was getting a meagre amount of about 20-30 lakhs annually and this system enabled the traders to make huge profits but with the change of this system the state earned about 90 lakhs and the traders were badly affected by this new system. N. K. Choudhury was replaced by H. K. Mahtab in 1956 and continued to hold the office till 1961 with the help of Biju Pattnaik, Biren Mitra and the Kendu Leaf Traders. The main intention of the aforesaid individuals and the group was to dislodge the Choudhury Government and place H. K. Mahtab who was supposed to be the supporter of the Kendu
Leaf Traders. *Kendu leaves are found in plenty in the forests of western Orissa and became a major source of revenue of the government of Orissa. Mahtab took keen interest in the Kendu Leaf Trade in Orissa when he was the Governor of Bombay. Even if, he remained miles away from the politics of Orissa, he continued to write letters to Radhanath Rath, the then Finance & Development Minister and the main object of the letter was the postponement and settlement of Kendu Leaf Trade until he took over the charge as Chief Minister. The Kendu Leaf Traders put pressure on Mahtab directly for changing the schedule for the payment of instalments on the ground that they had to pay a heavy amount as royalty. Mahtab wrote on the petition and pointed out that the request seems to be reasonable and may be considered.

But, this request of the Kendu Leaf Traders was vehemently opposed by the ministry of Forest Department. After a year this interest group submitted another petition directly to Mahtab requesting him for a remission of 25% of the royalty payable to the state for each year. Mahtab again found this as of "serious consideration". The Chief Conservator of Forest had opposed it tooth and nail for granting 25% as remission to the Kendu Leaf Merchant. They made another representation to the Chief Minister in 1958 for the extension of the leases for a year without the payment of any royalty. The forest department again strongly rejected this representation on each occasion, the Chief Minister made endorsement on the petitions and pointed out that the prayer
content were either 'Reasonable', 'Serious', 'Urgent'. Mahtab went out of the way to help the Kendu Leaf Merchants inspite of the adverse departmental notice and discussed the matter with the secretaries even in the absence of the Minister In Charge, in order to support the claims of the traders. At last the Cabinet agreed to the remission of 20% for 1959 at a meeting held in the absence of the Development Minister. When the Kendu Leaf Traders met Mahtab at his 'Ekamra Nivas' residence and pleaded for remission, it was decided that if the traders would get 25% remission, they would contribute 3% of the lease amount for payment to Mahtab. So a sum of 2.5 lakhs was collected from the lessee and paid to Mahtab. This interest group of Kendu Leaf Traders had also influenced the government in the allocation of portfolios to ministers and posting of officers in the Forest Department of Orissa. They also applied pressure in the appointment of D.F.Os in the different districts of Western Orissa. Mahtab's Kendu Leaf Administration lasted from 1957-61 and gave utmost gratification to Kendu Leaf Traders who were lobbying to influence legislators to make legislation in favour of their interest. Babubhai Patel, the prominent kendu leaf trader, has such a lobby that he could save the Kendu Leaf Business in Orissa. The political leadership of Mahtab was mainly concerned and busy with mustering majority on the floor of the legislature to remain in power. For winning the support of the legislators, Mahtab had to depend upon this interest group for dragging of members to his side by extending
financial allurement. As per the findings of the Sarjoo Prasad Commission, it was proved that Mahtab received cash bribe from the Kendu Leaf Merchants. This group also financed the decision maker in the form of donation for the election expenses of their political parties as it happened in case of H. K. Mahtab and R. N. Singhdeo who collected a sum of Rs. 6 Lakh from the Kendu Leaf Traders for the aforesaid purpose and was later ascertained and proved by Sarjoo Prasad Commission. This was confirmed by a statement made by N. K. Choudhury which has been published in "The Samaj" that the Kendu Leaf Traders contributed Rs. 12-13 lakh as donation during the election period to the ruling Congress Party and in return they are allowed to get an extra Rs. 50-60 lakh every year, which the state could have earned as profit. It is a fact that the Kendu Leaf Business had played an important role in the Orissa politics. In Orissa the Kendu Leaf Traders always tried to establish a cordial relation with the decision maker. Though Mahtab was the Governor of Bombay in 1955, he did not like to refrain from Orissa politics. The Kendu Leaf Traders ceaselessly tried to establish rapport with Mahtab whom they thought to be the puissant enemy of N. K. Choudhury and with his help they dislodged the Choudhury Government. Babubhai Patel, a prominent Kendu Leaf Lessee, had visited Mahtab at Bombay Raj Bhavan and was pleading the case of the traders. In case the achievement of extra legal interest becomes impossible, the pressure group did not hesitate
to replace them whether they be civil servant or ministers. In this case they may take the help of Senior Ministers, Chief Minister or the influential opposition leaders. They were also depending upon the press to mould the public opinion or create disturbance in the ruling party itself. Mahtab's lust for power and the pressure tactics of Kendu Leaf Traders paved the way for political instability. The period between May 1959 to February 1961 may be regarded as the period of Kendu Leaf predominance in Orissa politics as the Kendu Leaf Traders seemed to have tremendous influence over the decision making centres both at the secretariat and the political executive. It appears from the above analysis that the Kendu Leaf Traders had a hand in forming and breaking the government of Orissa irrespective of the party or persons. But it was appropriate to comment that the political stability of Orissa led by Congress Party was less satisfactory than what it was during 1946, and the poll verdict of 1957 was still worse than the poll verdict of 1952.
CHARGES AGAINST MAHTAB:

Another grave charge of which Mahtab was found guilty was favouritism and abuse of power in granting the lease of Chromite mines to the famous mines contractor, Md. Seerajuddin to the detriment of the interest of the state. In this case also Mahtab took excessively keen interest as with Kendu Leaf Contractor and ignoring the administrative machinery of the state. In 1953, Md. Seerajuddin applied to the state government for the grant of a mining lease for chromite over an area of 6 Sq. miles for a period of 20 years. The Government of Orissa jointly with the government of India set up the Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd. in which each had an equal share till 1961. When it was an exclusively state owned corporation, Md. Seerajuddin application was in abeyance when Mahtab came to power as the Chief Minister of Orissa in 1956. The Secretary, Ministry of Mining and geology pointed out some important questions regarding Seerajuddin's application the foremost of them was that his application had no priority as there were various other applicants prior to him. The commission had found that at all subsequent stages, Mahtab treated Seerajuddin's application of 1953 as if it was still pending. Mahtab granted the lease to Seerajuddin without any reference to the minister concerned and override the decision of his Cabinet and went out of the way to help Seerajuddin. For the grant of chromite Mines
Seerajuddin put pressure on K. D. Malavya, Central Minister of Mines to whom he met in his Office in the ministry. This was proved when Malavya gave evidence before the Sarjoo Prasad Commission.

Between 1949-56, Seerajuddin had been financing the politicians belonging to the ruling party in Orissa. He had gained personal access to Mahtab and addressed directly to him ignoring the ministers and secretaries and obtained favourable response from him. Dinabandhu Sahu also gave evidence before Sarjoo Prasad that he was a minister in Mahtab's Cabinet during 1957-58. Biren Mitra, the close confidant of Mahtab, managing the party in the Assembly to keep the minority government in power. And for keeping the party in power, huge amount of money was required to get the measures passed in the Assembly. Md. Seerajuddin was one of the contributors for maintaining the party in power. Biren Mitra came to Dinabandhu Sahu and pleading to give a mining lease to Seerajuddin saying that it was the wish of the Chief Minister. But there was no evidence before the commission that Seerajuddin had rendered any monetary consideration to Mahtab though the same charge was tabled by Surendranath Dwivedy, a prominent member of Praja Socialist Party on the floor of the Parliament in 1962.
REFERENCES

3. Ibid.
5. Prem Arora op cit Page 273.
6. Ibid Page 274.
9. R. C. Agrawal, op cit page 504.
11. Ibid. Page?
16. See for details, the Report of the Sarjoo Prasad Commission

17. See Radhanath Rath's affidavit before S. P. Commission, 1971, Page. 27.


20. See Dinabandhu Sahu's affidavit before Sarjoo Prasad Commission.
