

Does Social Lobbying Influence Legislators to Publicly Endorse Policy Proposals: Evidences from India

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Lobbying is a well-established practice though it operates in a largely opaque environment in India. Even though there are no regulations on lobbying, it is not illegal. The presence of professional lobbyists, including those dealing with public interest matters, has been evident in public spheres, their forms and processes are varying. It is hypothesized in this paper that social lobbying through social setting including pressurising the governments through public protests in India is more effective in causing legislators to take positions that are requested by the interest groups lobbyists. The aforesaid hypothesis is examined in respect of creating conducive environment leading to the setting of a transparency law, the Right to Information (RTI) Act and the Jan Lokpal (Anti-Corruption Law) in India.

I Introduction

It is often advocated that lobbying is a pivotal characteristic enabling participatory processes in a democratic environment. Therefore, it connotes a catalytic factor commensurate with the pluralist theory of democracy. However, the efficiency of the participatory processes depends on the way lobbying has been experimented with either directly or indirectly in a social setting¹. A question whether an interest group influences legislators to publicly support policies it favours is generally asked as to whether direct social lobbying is a more effective strategy than in formal/classical setting for an interest group to persuade legislators to publicly commit to support a policy? There is no consensus as to whether direct lobbying can influence and change legislators' behaviour as there are conflicting views of scholars like Schattschneider (1960), Baumgartner and Leech (1998), and Bauer, Pool, and Dexter (1963).² Nevertheless, it is expected that direct lobbying by an interest group – especially

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