



PROTAGONIST OF OPPOSITION IN INDIAN POLITICS

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Abstract

Parliamentary democracy is considered the best form of government because, in this system, there is scope for the people to reflect their wishes and grievances through their elected representatives. Parliamentary government is a method of arguments, discussion, and decisions of the majority. Here, all points of view are expressed and discussed. There can always be at least two sets of opinions on any subject, and at least two political parties. The role of the opposition is not to oppose every decision of the ruling party. Rather, the opposition party must support the ruling party for the acts that are in the interest of the nation. Opposition parties play a very significant role as representatives of the people in a democracy. The opposition acts as the 'watchdog' of the system. In such countries where there is a two-party system, the opposition party forms a 'shadow cabinet'. However, today India's parliamentary opposition is not only fragmented but also in disarray. In this paper, we will see what has been the role of opposition in Indian democracy in different periods and how it has affected Indian democracy. This article also tries to explain the reasons for weakness, its importance, functions, and the present scenario of opposition in Indian politics.

Keywords: - Democracy, Government, Indian Politics, Opposition Party, Parliamentary.

INTRODUCTION

Parliamentary democracy is based on a party system of government. Indian democracy is also based on a parliamentary system of government. Opposition is defined as a person or group of people opposing, or protesting someone, or another group. In a democratic system, the opposition party plays an important role in the functioning of the government. The opposition party, also



referred to as the minority party, is an essential element of any democratic society as it acts as a check and balance on the ruling party or government. The opposition provides an alternative perspective, scrutinizes and challenges the policies of the ruling party, and holds them accountable for their actions. The role of the opposition party is crucial to maintaining a healthy and functioning democracy, as it ensures that the government is constantly challenged and alternative views and policies are presented to the people. They play an important role in holding the government responsible for its actions and policies. Opposition parties provide a balance to the ruling party, provide an alternative point of view, and challenge the policies and actions of the government. One of the most important functions of the opposition party is to act as a watchdog, monitoring the government's activities and highlighting any issues or problems that may arise. Furthermore, opposition parties act as safeguards against abuse of power and authoritarian tendencies. They are the ones who will point out the injustices of the government and prevent it from becoming too powerful and oppressive.

In India, the role of the opposition party is as important as the role of the ruling party. Opposition is an essential part of democracy. The parliament is generally a two-wing house. Members of the ruling party are sitting on the right side of the speaker, while the opposition party is on the left side. In a parliamentary democracy, a lot of importance has been given to the political opposition to make the government accountable for balancing the interests of the majority and minority. The composition and role of opposition parties in all forms of democracy is highly debated but the importance of opposition parties is unquestioned.

Currently, India passing through an era of political intolerance and perhaps this has happened just because PM Narendra Modi emerged as a strong and unparalleled leader with a commitment to take India to greater heights. Under PM Modi, India has witnessed many activities, whether it is Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Demonetization, or scrapping Article 370. He has been instrumental in making some of the strong decisions ever any Prime Minister of India has taken in the larger interest of the country, which is required to remove the taboos associated with it. PM Modi has earned more fame and name than any other PM in the history of independent India. For the first time, our generation respected the dynamic side of political leadership and felt a nationalist fervor.



HISTORY OF OPPOSITION PARTY IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY

A healthy parliamentary democracy has always been considered necessary to have a strong opposition party, which is always in a position to remain in power. However, the situation in India has been quite different. It can be said that for some time it was believed that the role of the opposition was only negative, but with time it is appreciated that it has a positive role in national politics. Therefore, the biggest parliamentary achievement of our country is that the role of the opposition party has been formally recognized and given its due place in the parliamentary system. Opposition in India originated during the British rule when India was government through British Acts. At that time, small organizations played the role of the opposition by raising the voice of the people. Like the British Indian Association, Zamindari Association, Bombay Association, East India Association, Madras Mahajana Sabha, etc. Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Badruddin Tyabji, etc, were prominent personalities; who used to discuss India's problems from time to time and attracted the attention of the government by giving loud speeches about the problems of the people. After that, the Congress was formed (1885), after which the role of other institutions was reduced and the Congress became a party in which every section of the society was represented. Congress opposed every wrong policy of the British government. Congress played the role of good opposition until the Act of 1919. In the Act of 1919, parliament was created as an institution in India, consisting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. At that time Congress was the most powerful party, which was playing the role of opposition, although other parties also existed like the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, Socialist Party, etc.

Congress did not participate in the first election held in 1920-21. The moderate leaders of the Nationalist Liberal Union who reached the assembly after winning the elections continued to play the role of opposition in the elections for the second assembly of 1932. In the assembly elections held in 1935, the Congress came back with full force and played the role of a good opposition and the government had to resort to powers from the Governor General many times.

FUNCTIONS OF THE OPPOSITION

Opposition parties are an essential part of the parliamentary democracy. The functions of the people are almost as important as the government. Former Member of Parliament of the United



Kingdom, Alfred Charles Bossom believes that *“the chief function of the opposition is to criticize constructively, ventilate grievances and keep a close watch on legislation and all government actions”*. In the words of Jennings, *“The primary function of opposition is to appeal to public opinion, party to coerce the government, but mainly to induce the electorate to give the opposition a majority at the next election”* (Jennings, 1969, p. 167). British political scientist and historian Samuel Edward Finer noted that the parliamentary opposition has the following functions:-

- a. To take part in the deliberations of the House of Commons;
- b. To oppose objectionable policies by voice and vote;
- c. To compel the government, by all acceptable methods, to modify its policy;
- d. To create public revulsion against the government and public sympathy for itself, as the pre-condition for winning the next election; and
- e. To propose an alternative program. (Finer S. E., 1963, p. 67)

An effective opposition usually refers to an opposition party, which performs two basic functions in a parliamentary democracy. First, it provides constructive criticism and corrective to the policies and programs of the party in power. Second, it can form an alternative government when the party in power goes out of office because of the loss of the mandate of the electorate, constitutional deadlock, etc.

The task of the opposition is not only to discredit the government in the eyes of the people but also to persuade it to change its policies. The responsibility of the members in the opposition is to be objective, pertinent in their criticism, constructive in their approach, and generally amenable to reason. The debate in-house allows the government to explain and defend its proposals and the opposition an opportunity to air their grievances or to criticize the general policy of the government. Opposition parties are expected to educate the masses and make them politically conscious. Their main duty is to remove laziness among the people and make them interested in government affairs.

The job of the opposition is to attack the government and individual ministers. That responsibility is the main check on corruption and maladministration. It is also how individual injustices are prevented. This responsibility is no less important than that of the government. Opposition and



government are carried out alike by agreement. The minority agrees that the majority must govern and the majority agrees that the minority should criticize (Jennings, 1969, pp. 499-500).

It is not allowed to oppose only for the interests of the opposition party. Its criticism is effective and responsible because it is 'the government-in-waiting'. The opposition must keep a constant watch on the activities of the government and acquaint the people with the various problems confronting the country. The opposition has to project the image of a credible alternative government. If it is to win the next general election, it must look like a united body of men who would be competent to govern the country. The opposition must exploit every weakness, or flaw of the existing government, and come up with remedies and solutions to position it to gain voter support if the government loses popularity.

POST-INDEPENDENCE

After India's independence in 1947, the Indian National Congress enjoyed the great respect and confidence of the people. When the country's first general election was held under the leadership of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in 1952 won both at the center and state elections. However, by this time, Syama Prasad Mukherjee established the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) as an opposition party. Socialists and Communists also started opposing the policies and programmes of the Congress party under the leadership of Ashok Mehta. Until the 1962 elections, the Communists, Socialists, Swatantra Party, and Bharatiya Jana Sangh had made their mark.

THE OPPOSITION PARTY AFTER 1967

However, after that, the monolithic character of the party came under heavy stress and the opposition party more powerful. In 1962, the Congress ruling party faced nationwide criticism for India's defeat in the war against China. The people brought back several opposition leaders to the Lok Sabha, who vehemently criticized the policies and programs of the government. Due to the death of Nehru in 1964, elections were held in the country in 1967, and the strength of the opposition increased greatly. The monolithic character of the Congress party was completely shattered in many states. The opposition parties in the form of the United Front (UF) and the United Legislators Party formed governments in various states. The opposition became so powerful that it moved a no-confidence motion against the government not once but several times;



although no such motion could be passed successfully. Regional opposition parties also took root during this period. Their representatives in the Lok Sabha vehemently opposed the ruling Congress at the center.

In 1969, the Congress party split between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Congress President Kumaraswami Kamaraj. This division made the opposition strong. Along with this, the opposition in India was first recognized in the Lok Sabha in 1969 and Ram Subhag Singh was recognized as the leader of the opposition who was the leader of the Congress organization.

In 1975, during the tenure of Indira Gandhi, a national emergency was imposed in the country and the leaders of all the opposition parties were imprisoned. In 1977, after the 19-month emergency, the elections to the Sixth Lok Sabha were held in the country. This time five national parties, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Indian National Congress (O), Congress for Democracy (CFD) formed by Jagjivan Ram after splitting from Congress, a Socialist group led by Charan Singh, and Bharatiya Lok Dal joined together and formed a new party, called Janata Party (JP). During the emergency, due to some policies of the Congress government and press censorship, the ruling Congress was badly defeated and the newly formed Janata Party, the national alternative to the Congress, emerged victorious. The position of the opposition in the Fifth Lok Sabha was weak but the role of the opposition increased after the imposition of emergency by Indira Gandhi.

SITUATION OF OPPOSITION AFTER 1977

After the formation of the Janata Party government in 1977 (First Morarji Desai then Charan Singh's government) within two and half years, the government fell due to mutual disagreements. A few months later, the house disappeared. The Seventh Lok Sabha elections were held again at the end of 1979 and the Congress got a massive majority in this election. In the Eighth Lok Sabha election of 1984, when the Congress got a big mandate, the opposition party was the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which got 30 seats. In a departure from the past, the Rajiv Gandhi government has accorded leader of the opposition status to TDP leaders in the Lok Sabha. In this way, no recognized opposition could be formed in the Seventh Lok Sabha but qualitatively the opposition was very good and the same was the case in the Eighteenth Lok Sabha, but the role played by the opposition, despite being rare in numbers, was commendable.



Government bills were fiercely opposed in both houses. In the Ninth Lok Sabha (1989), the Congress despite being the single largest party, became the opposition and the National Front became a minority government. Rajiv Gandhi became the leader of the opposition and he played the role of a good opposition. In the Tenth Lok Sabha (1991), the Congress formed a coalition government. In this government, first Lal Krishna Advani became the leader of the opposition, and later Atal Bihari Vajpayee took over this responsibility. This happened for the first time in the Eleventh Lok Sabha (1996) when an opposition member P. A. Sangma was elected as speaker.

In Twelve Lok Sabha (1998), the BJP was in alliance and Congress was in opposition. Sharad Pawar became the leader of the opposition. 'Liberhan Commission' worked by CBI, the Temple-Mosque dispute, the Pokhran blast, etc, were the weapons of the opposition. The BJP government was formed in the Thirteen Lok Sabha (1999) and Sonia Gandhi became the leader of the opposition. In this Lok Sabha, the ruling party was badly surrounded by the Tehelka incident, and the proceedings of the house were not allowed to continue. The role of the opposition in this tenure was mostly boycotting, noisy, and sloganeering. The period from 1989 to 2004 ensured a weak government when minority parties played a key role in forming and toppling the government.

While the opposition was claiming to provide an alternative policy vision, after coming to power, they failed to provide any major alternative policy. For example, the BJP criticized the liberation policy introduced by Congress in 1991 but bailed it after coming to power. A major development that followed the 2004 elections was that the left political parties, the leading critics of the Indian government's economic policies, became part of the ruling coalition. This development in a way supported the opposition in the ruling party. This development, in a sense, supported the opposition within the ruling system. Left political parties played the role of a watchdog for the policy measures of the ruling government. Big scandals like Bofors and the problems associated with the government that was in power from 2004 to 2014 (Fourteenth and Fifteenth Lok Sabha) were strongly criticized by the BJP as the main opposition party. However, the BJP, which had spent its energy criticizing the UPA first and second governments, is following almost the same in both policy formulation and implementation.



STATUS OF OPPOSITION FROM 2014

Due to the Modi wave in the Sixteenth Lok Sabha elections, 2014 BJP got 282 seats out of 543 on its own. The result of this election was unexpected as it was the highest majority any party got after 30 years. In this election, the Indian National Congress can get only 44 seats. A similar situation happened in the election of the Seventeenth Lok Sabha (2019) where BJP got 303 seats going ahead and the Indian National Congress was reduced to 52 seats this time too. In this way, in both these elections, the opposition face was completely cleared and no party could come forward to claim a strong opposition. The growing popularity of the BJP brought together all the minority parties in parliament with a united opposition against their policies and actions.

The crisis in the existence of not only the opposition parties but also the leader of the opposition has deepened under Modi's rule. In such a situation, it makes a difference because the voice, which can be of a person sitting in a constitutional post, cannot be of the status given by grace or government. Now parliament needs a Leader of opposition more than before because the phase of first, second, and third Lok Sabha was in Nehru's time and the foundation of democracy was being laid at that time, the form, which was made by the constitution makes, was strictly followed. Nehru had great respect for the leader of the opposition and he used to invite criticism, many times they had said in the parliamentary speech that there should be no hesitation in criticized me in front of me.

In today's era, due to the weakening of the opposition, a little apprehension increases in the governance. During the previous BJP government, there were many occasions when there were allegations of tampering with constitutional institutions and something happened for the first time. For example, the judges of the Supreme Court had to hold a press conference and it was alleged that attempts were being made to influence the functioning of the judiciary. There was turmoil during the appointment of the Director of CBI as well.

Apart from this, on 8 November 2016, the BJP government announced Demonetization suddenly. As a result, Modi sucked up 86% of the currency in circulation in the Indian economy based on value. The ruling party took this decision alone without informing anyone and without discussing it in parliament either with the opposition party or with other parties. The decision was taken against the advice of RBI governors, Raghuram Rajan and Urjit Patel. This was done on the false assumption that the economy had too much cash (12% of GDP) and that the 500 and 1,000 rupee



notes were too high in value, a move that would remove all black money from the system and eliminate fakes easily. We know exactly what happened to 99.7% of the system currency going to 'banks and dividends' making. Demonetization is one of the most arbitrary decisions ever taken by an elected leader in a democracy.

The Modi government had a majority in the Lok Sabha but not in the Rajya Sabha and the democratic spirit required that the government allow debate on every bill in both houses, but the government resorted to deceit to pass some bills. One such bill was the Aadhaar Bill, which was passed by the government through the Lok Sabha as a money bill. However, did not allow the Rajya Sabha to debate the provisions of the bill. Amending four laws to enable the secret electoral bond scheme, which allows anonymous and unlimited donations to political parties, was hidden in the Finance Bill 2017 and did not allow any debate on the matter in the Lok Sabha.

In all the cases mentioned above the weak presence of opposition is revealed and the lack of strong opposition is felt. It seems that the opposition has indirectly surrendered to the ruling party and has not been able to stop the controversial decision of the ruling party.

The first session of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha began on 4 June 2014, its last session ended on 13 February 2019, and between these two sessions, the country witnessed turmoil, inside and outside the parliament. This Lok Sabha passed a total of 133 bills and 45 ordinances and worked for a total of 1615 hours, which is the second shortest tenure completed by a house. An analysis by RRS Legislative Research, a non-government organization has revealed. This Lok Sabha spent 40% less time than the average hours completed by the previous lower houses and lost 16% of its scheduled time due to interference, which is 37% better than the Fifteenth Lok Sabha but 13% worse than the Fourteenth Lok Sabha. In this Lok Sabha, the question hour was reduced 83% of the budget was passed without discussion, and all the resolutions (100%) made in the Union Budget 2018-2019 were passed without any debate. In this Lok Sabha, most of the bills sent to the Parliament survived the investigation, even on the demand of the opposition parties, these bills were not sent to the inquiry committee. Of these bills, only 25% were sent to committees, which was much lower than the Fourteenth Lok Sabha (60%) and the Fifteenth Lok Sabha (71%). However, the house demanded more time for deliberations than the previous Lok Sabha did.

This has not only undermined democratic values and the functioning of parliament but also damaged the quality of bills. For example, the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill and Transgender Bill



were widely criticized as reflecting caste and patriarchal outlook and oppressive understanding sensationalism and emotional games are not essential to the democratic process of parliament as it lies in the way it precedes. All these things indicate the undemocratic functioning of parliament sessions under the Modi regime.

It is believed that if the opposition is strong, then the government has to pull back its steps many times and it is not autocratic. It is an established principle that an overwhelming majority leads to autocracy and history has proved this repeatedly.

SIGNIFICANCE OF OPPOSITION IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY

The opposition in India plays a vital role in providing a practical critique of the ruling party. The opposition party needs to have a leader who can represent the interests of non-major parties in these roles. The leader of the opposition has a major role in the appointments of constitutional institutions such as the Director of the CBI, the Chief Vigilance Commissioner, the Information Commissioner, the Chairperson of the NHRC, and the appointment of judges of the Supreme Court.

In a democracy, the post of the leader of the opposition is considered at the level of the Prime Minister and Chief Justice Indian democracy has witnessed the fact that whenever leaders of the opposition like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Lal Krishna Advani spoke in parliament, the ruling party listened to him very seriously. Not only listened, but the policies and plans of the ruling party were given an edge by the debate of the opposition and it was considered better for the uplift of the people. The importance of opposition in parliamentary democracy can be understood very well from these lines of the Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar, who composed a classic Tamil text 'Thirukkural' that, *"a king who has no one to criticize, who is devoid of protection, yet no one is destroyed, he is surely destroyed"* (Thiruvalluvar, 1812, p. 448).

ROLE OF OPPOSITION IN INDIA

In India, we have many political parties. There are some parties, whom there is a specific socio-economic program to work for. They have developed a concrete framework of action to pursue the programs and policies they stand for. Opposition to the government refers to the non-ruling party or coalition that won the highest number of seats in the Lok Sabha. Opposition status is awarded



when an independent party wins at least 10% of the seats. In India, from 2009 to 2014, the official opposition party was Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

However, there is no opposition party for the period . Leader of the Opposition in India refers to a political figure who leads the official opposition party. However, the post remained vacant from 2014 to 2024, as there was no official opposition. The role of the opposition parties in India is as important as the ruling party. They ensure that the acts of the ruling party are not detrimental to the interest of the public or the nation at large. The role of the opposition is not to oppose every decision of the ruling party. Rather, the opposition party must support the ruling party for the acts that are in the interest of the nation.

REASONS OF WEAK OPPOSITION IN INDIA

1. **Leaderless opposition-** The opposition today in India is leaderless. There are good political leaders at the helm of the major regional political parties but there is no consensus on the name of any person or party as the leader of the opposition.
2. **Highly fragmented-** Today, the opposition is fragmented into various political parties and alliances with different ideologies and working styles, which hinders its fragmentation and thus unity.
3. **Lacks an original agenda-** The opposition today lacks a core agenda or plan to put against the government, but instead is concerned with merely reacting to government actions rather than presenting alternatives to the electorate.
4. **Involved in adverse politics-** The opposition sees the government as its adversary remains involved in unnecessary criticism and does not support even good policies. For example, the opposition criticized the Gaganyaan Mission (India's first human spaceflight program) and the construction of the New Parliament Building as wasteful expenditures.
5. **Not being innovative-** Opposition parties engage in old ideologies of left and right. Primitive methods like walkouts from the Houses of Parliament, and protests and rallies rather than engaging in new methods like Facebook Live, virtual rallies, podcasts, etc. have resulted in disconnection with the youth of the country.



6. **Playing the role of investigative agencies-** Where opposition parties keep hunting for frauds and misappropriation of funds in government schemes rather than upholding government accountability.
7. **Loss of credibility-** Constant disruptions in Parliament proceedings, blind opposition to the government, and lack of connectivity at the ground level have lost the opposition party's credibility in the eyes of voters.

IMPORTANCE OF THE OPPOSITION

Under a strong party government without any worthwhile opposition to deal with popular feelings and interests are neglected and in its place party interests and its well-being are only looked after. For the effective functioning of the government in a parliamentary democracy, the existence of an organized opposition to hold the government accountable is important. As Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Benjamin Disraeli said, *"No government can be long secure without a formidable opposition"* (Disraeli, 1844). British Lawyer Ivor Jennings points out, *"If there is no opposition, there is no democracy"* (Jennings, 1969, p. 15). American political scientist and sociologist David Ernest Apter says, *"Just as the fluctuation in the glass of a barometer indicates information about the weather, so the rise and fall of support of an opposition indicates the government the effectiveness of its policies"*. In the words of Sir Illbert, *"A strong government tempered and controlled by strong, vigilant and representative criticism is the ideal on which parliamentary institutions work"* (Illbert, 1950, p. 103).

The opposition as a watchdog observes the activities of the government, and whenever it finds them working undemocratically or acting against the interests of the people, brings the government on the right track through criticism and expressing protest. To save a democratic government from becoming the handmade of the party in power, it is prime important to have an opposition. For democracy to survive there must be an opposition. Otherwise, democracy may degenerate into one-party rule. Former Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain Quintin McGarel Hogg observes, *"It is not a long step, from the absence of an organized opposition to a complete dictatorship"* (Hogg, 1962, p. 87).



The nature and form of the opposition in a parliamentary democracy depends on many factors including the number of political parties, ideological affiliations, coalitions, party strength, and membership. A one-party system does not allow the opposition to exist as a separate entity. In a one-party system, the real opposition is found within the party. It might criticize the government at party meetings with varying degrees of freedom and might take the form of a dissident group (Duverger, 1979, p. 413).

In a two-party system, the political parties are more or less balanced. The opposition tends to be real institutions, as in British. As only two major political parties existed, and power alternated between them, the opposition behaved and discharged its duty with a sense of responsibility. The opposition has a reasonable chance of replacing the government and consequently, it uses the parliamentary system in its continuous struggle to defeat it. In this way, the government is waiting for the opposition in the two-party system. The two-part system has certain advantages. Firstly, it enables the electorate directly to choose its government. Secondly, it brings responsibility for actions taken by a particular group.

In a multi-party system, the opposition is comprised of heterogeneous groups and the institutional form of opposition is absent. These groups often fight against each other. Where no single political party is returned is the strength to form the government, shifting alliances lead to the fall of the government. The rise of a new combination, which governs the country or state for a short period, meets with the same fate as the former. In such a situation, the role of the opposition party is different. It does not function as an alternative government due to its heterogeneous composition. The government is, therefore, faced with no consistent and regular machinery of criticism, but irresponsible lethal attacks from all sides (Finer H. , 2005, p. 626).

There should be an opposition party for the sake of the government. Opposition parties should be seen as good friends of the government instead of enemies. A good friend not only compliments but also points out faults from time to time. The opposition, through its criticisms and objections, vividly highlights the various shortcomings of the government, which, if not identified in time, can harm both the government and the people. Hence, timely warning of opposition led to the efficiency of government. The opposition parties act as vigilant critics to remind the government of its limitations and make it responsive to the people. In the absence of any opposition, the



government is bound to be lax in its work and dereliction of duty. Thus, the opposition acts as a mirror in which every action of the government is reflected. Harold J. Laski, the British political scientist has summed up beautifully: *“Men who are to live together peacefully must be able to argue together peacefully”*.

CONCLUSION

The opposition parties play an important role in a democratic system by holding the government accountable for its actions and policies. The opposition balances the government, provides alternative views and policies, and ensures that the government acts in the best interest of the people. The importance of the opposition cannot be overstated as it plays a vital role in maintaining a healthy and functioning democracy. The Opposition's main role is to question the government and hold it accountable to the public by way of organizing mass dharnas, protests, and rallies. It also helps to correct the mistakes of the ruling party and hence the role of the opposition parties is to check the excesses of the ruling or dominant party, and not to be opposition. Playing the role of the opposition party in India has been very challenging from the beginning. Its situation has been subjected to many difficulties from time to time. In recent times, India has witnessed the legitimate absence of a strong opposition leader to provide practical criticism of the ruling party. Therefore, the absence of an opposition will weaken our democracy in the case of no strong contender to question the ruling government. Moreover, the leader of the opposition has a defined role, but if there is no such leadership, it will fail to check the power of the ruling party because dissent is crucial for the proper functioning of a mature democracy. Hence, in short, theoretically, at least the opposition should have a powerful base to question the government. At present, a divided and weak opposition is more dangerous to Indian democracy than a strong ruling party is. Therefore, a strong opposition party is necessary for the smooth running of a democratic system.



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