

MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH - Prof. Rajani Shikhare

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THE ROLE OF OPPOSITION PARTY IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY

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Key Word:

Democracy, Citizen, Opposite Party, Indian, Parliamentary, constitutional, acknowledged, Committees.

Introduction:

It has long been acknowledged by democratic theory that the principle of democracy. As I an Shapiro has contended, "democracy is an ideology of opposition as much as it is one of government". The fundamental role of a proper working of liberal democracy, has, finally, also come to be acknowledged by the overwhelming majority of political elites and citizens of all mature democracies.

Owing to the diverse geographical, social and cultural concerns, India has nurtured the growth of the multi-party system. Over a period of time, national and regional political parties became the vital constituents of the world's largest democracy, India. Whether the proliferation of parties has helped the country's cause, is a different debate altogether. However, it's important to know what exactly these political parties stand for and what role do they play within the parliamentary democracy.

In India, we have a large number of political parties. There are a few parties which have a definite sociao-economic programme to work for. They have chalked out a definite framework of action to pursue the programmes and policies for which they stand. However, there are many parties which do not have any coherent programme or policy to fall back upon. Their purpose is simply to aspire to come to power by hook or crook.

What is the opposition?

A properly functioning constitutional democratic system is about choice. In such a system, there must be a constant reminder to the populace that there is a viable alternative to the incumbent political grouping that holds the potential of moving the country onto a qualitatively higher development plane.

The institutions and bodies that play this role are generally referred to loosely as opposition. However, when the term the opposition is used, it largely refers to parliamentary opposition considered to be the 'true' from of opposition. In western democracies, all other forms of 'unconventional' and possibly 'unconstitutional' opposition tend to be viewed as 'deviations' from the parliamentary type of political opposition.

Origin of the Opposition:

The British Parliament is commonly acknowledged to be the "Mother of Parliaments". It has also been the best model of a system. The Opposition is officially recognized as Majesty's Opposition.

The largest minority party constitutes the official Opposition in the British Parliament, with its own leader and its own council. It is popularly known as the "Shadow Cabinet". The leader of the Opposition in Britain (and in most parliamentary democracies around the world) is accorded official recognition and provided several facilities to enable him to function adequately. He is regarded as the future Prime Minister, since his party, especially in Britain, offers a viable alternative to the government of the day.

Nature of Opposition Party:

- Indian has been accepted there is a parliamentary system of government, according to which the party with the highest majority through a general election is entitled to from the government and its leader becomes the Prime Minister of the country.
- The second largest party becomes the opposition party. Its leader enjoys
 the status of the leader of opposition. The ruling party means the
 government during its tenure is free to determine the policies,
 programmes and make decisions for the welfare of the common people.
- The opposition parties have a very significant role in a democracy. Because they are the representatives of the people to safeguard their interests. Time to time, they criticize the government in case it fails to keep its promises.

- The opposition parties also warn the government. They think it necessary. Sometimes they show their protest too against the government. Thus they try to keep the government may be seen in the country.
- The most dominant role of the opposition in a democracy is that of a watch dog' of the system. In a country where there is a two party system, the opposition party forms a 'shadow cabinet' and remains vigilant over the performance of the government.

The role of opposition party in Indian Democracy:

The role of opposition party in India is as important as that of the ruling party. They ensure that the acts of the ruling party are not detrimental to the interest of general public or nation at large. The acts that are in the interest of the nation.

The political parties should work among the people; win their confidence on the strength of their propounded goals. They must build public opinion in their favor by suggesting alternative programmes and policies which could practically take the country forward. The opposition ensures that the ruling political parties have a definite programme and policy to offer to the people and who can show a progressive path by action and not just by propaganda.

The role of the opposition party is not to oppose every decision of the ruling party. Rather, it is the duty of the opposition party to support the ruling party for enjoyment of better standards of living.

In this context, there are a few political parties to play a constructive role and swing in political education among the masses. They opposition should guide the countrymen to more desirable objectives of socio-economic achievement.

Official Opposition party in India:

In India official opposition party refers to the non-ruling party or coalition that has secured the highest number of seats in the Lok Sabha. The status of opposition party is given only when a standalone party secures at least 10 percent of the seats. In India, for the period of 2009-2014, the official opposition party was Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The ruling party for the period of 2014-2019 is BJP. However, there is no opposition party of the period (2014-2019), since not a single party managed to secure at least 10 percent of the seats. Leader of the Opposition (India) refers to the political figure who leads the official opposition party. Sushma Swaraj was the leader of the opposition party for the period of 2009-2014. However, this position remains vacant for the period of 2014-2019, since there is no official opposition.

Role of Opposition Parties in Parliamentary Committees:

In a parliamentary style of government, the opposition party is judged by the way it conducts itself the House. One of the most important parliamentary committees has an opposition leader as the Chairman. Public Accounts Committee, which investigates the use of finances granted to the government, is led by a member belonging to an opposition party.

Presently, there are 24 Standing Committees of the Parliament segmented as per the departments and ministries. Some of the crucial committees such as finance, external affairs, and home affairs are led by the members of opposition parties. It is under their aegis that the standing committees examine legislations, expenditure plans of ministries and government schemes. Every MP of the House has to go through the recommendations of these committees.

As a chairman of some of these parliamentary panels, an opposition leader contributes towards strengthening legislation in an informed and participatory manner. The Opposition party members also have a significant role to play in the ad hoc committees constituted to scrutinize a specific case. The Joint Parliamentary Committee is an apt example in this regard. The committee, which was constituted to probe 2G scam, had 15 members from the opposition party out of a total strength of 30.

Role of the Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament:

In India Rajya Sabha and Loksabha have a Leader of the Opposition, who is chosen from the largest opposition party? The Position is recognized by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. The leader of the Opposition is accorded certain privileges including a separate room in the Parliament with Secretariat and other facilities. The incumbent has to offer constructive criticism of government policies. He / She has to ensure that House proceeds expeditiously and holds adequate debate on pressing issues. The Leader of the Opposition is expected to apprise the government of the party's stand on certain legislations even before the Bill is tabled in the parliament.

Recent opposition leaders in Loksabha:

Sr.No	Name	Political Party	Term
1	Sonia Gandhi	Indian National Congress	31 Oct 1999 - 6 Feb 2004
2	L.K Advani	Bharatiya Janata Party	21 May 2004-18 May 2009
3	Sushma Swaraj	Bharatiya Janata Party	21 Dec 2009 - 19 May 2014
4	Vacant	No official opposition	Since 4 June 2014

Source: Lok Sabha. Legislativebodiesinindia.nic.in Retrieved on 2014-205-21.

Recent opposition leaders in Rajya Sabha:

Sr.No	Name	Political Party	Term
1	Manmohan Singh	Indian National Congress	21 March 1998-21May 2004
2	Jaswant Singh	Bharatiya Janata Party	3 June 2004 - 16 May 2009
3	Arun Jaitley	Bharatiya Janata Party	3 June 2009 - 26 May 2014
4	Ghulam Nabi Azad	Indian National Congress	8 June 2014 - Incumbent

Source: Rajya Sabha Introduction. Rajyasabha.nic.in. Retrieved on 2014-05-21 **Duties of the opposite Political Party in India:**

- In India opposite party should have the capacity to promote responsible and reasonable debate-Through healthy debates they should be ready to promote national welfares.
- In India the opposition party brings the ruling party, with their voice an makes them to do the ministerial duties. This created a bond between the citizens and the opposite party.
- they should be able to act as role models for the future leaders, their act should be in such a way that, they have to rule the Government in future.
- It should acts as a watch dog for the ruling government for its commissions.
- It should acts as a watch dog for the ruling government for its commissions.
- They should earn good name and a name of "Government in waiting".
- The opposition party should strengthen the culture of democracy.

Conclusion:

Opposition is expressed in various forms and there is no single opposition model: the parliamentary opposition, which is indeed an opposition within the parliament, is distinct from other types of opposition, which can in particular exist politically without necessarily being recognized by the law since they are outside the institutional system. How generously national political forces are represented depends on the voting system. The search for a stable government based on a strong and cohesive parliamentary majority can therefore naturally lead to the exclusion of the weakest political groupings from legislative power. The democratic process in such that new political forces are emerging on the parliamentary stage while, by contrast, parties that seemed firmly entrenched in the political landscape are diapering.

Although it is true that today's opposition in a parliament may be tomorrow's government, it must also be admitted that the same might apply to the non-parliamentary.