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## Role of Opposition in Indian Politics: A Study in The Context of Present Scenario

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### ABSTRACT

Parliamentary democracy is regarded as the ideal type of government because it allows citizens to express their desires and complaints to their elected officials. Arguments, debates, and majority decisions are the hallmarks of parliamentary government. Here, all points of view are expressed and discussed. There can always be at least two political parties and two different points of view on any given topic. The role of the opposition is not to oppose every decision of the ruling party. Instead, for the sake of the nation, the opposition party should support the ruling party. Opposition parties play a very important 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.

## INTRODUCTION

Parliamentary democracy is based on a party system of government. An individual or group of people who oppose or protest someone or another organization is said to be in opposition. In a democratic system, the opposition party plays an important role in the functioning of the government. Since it serves as a check and balance on the ruling party or government, the opposition party, also known as the minority party, is a crucial component of any democracy. The opposition holds the ruling party responsible for its actions, offers a different viewpoint, and examines and questions its policies. The role of the opposition is crucial to maintaining a healthy and functioning democracy, as it ensures that the government is constantly challenged and that alternative views and policies are presented to the people. They play an important role in holding the government accountable 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. Acting as a watchdog, keeping an eye on the government's operations, and drawing attention to any flaws that crop up, is one of the opposition party's most crucial roles. Furthermore, opposition parties act as safeguards against abuse of power and authoritarian tendencies. They will be the ones who draw attention to the government's abuses and prevent it from becoming too powerful and oppressive.

In India, the opposition party's role is just as significant as the ruling party's. 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.

India is currently experiencing a period of political intolerance, which may be related to PM Narendra Modi's rise to prominence as a powerful and unmatched leader who has pledged to lead India to greater heights. India has seen several initiatives under PM Modi, including the removal of Article 370, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and Demonetization. The linked prohibition should be lifted for the greater good of the nation. In the history of independent India, no prime minister has gained as much name and fame as Prime Minister Modi. For the first time, our age had a strong sense of national pride and appreciated the dynamic aspect of political leadership.

## **HISTORY OF OPPOSITION PARTY IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY**

A healthy parliamentary democracy has always considered it necessary to have a strong opposition party, which is always in a position to hold power. However, the situation in India is completely different. It can be said that for some time the role of the opposition was considered negative, but over time, it is appreciated to have a positive role in national politics. Therefore, the opposition's function has been officially acknowledged and given its proper place in the parliamentary system, which is our nation's greatest parliamentary accomplishment.

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**

Parliamentary democracy cannot function without opposition parties. People's actions are almost as important as the government's. 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 functions of parliamentary opposition are as follows:-

- 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 in a parliamentary system, carries on two fundamental tasks. **First**, it offers helpful critiques and corrections of the ruling party's policies and initiatives. **Second**, it can form a backup government if the ruling party is ousted owing to a lack of support from the people, a constitutional impasse, etc. The opposition's job is not limited to making the public view the administration negatively but also to persuade them to change the policy. Members of the opposition must be impartial, pertinent in their critiques, constructive in their methods, and generally open to debate. Internal debate allows the opposition to voice their complaints or analyze the government's overall policy, while the government can explain and defend its proposals. The people are supposed to be educated and politically aware by opposition parties. Their main duty is to remove laziness among the people and make them interested in government affairs.

The opposition's role is to criticize the administration and specific ministers. It is the job of the opposition to attack the government and individual ministers. That responsibility is the main check on corruption and maladministration. Individual injustices are also avoided in this way. This responsibility is no less important than that of the government. The opposition and government cannot be equal

through compromise. The minority agrees that the majority should rule and the majority agrees that the minority should be criticized (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 needs to inform the public about the nation's numerous issues and maintain a close eye on the government's operations. The opposition must appear to be a legitimate alternative administration. It must appear to be a cohesive group of men who can govern the nation if they win the upcoming general elections. The opposition must take advantage of every flaw or weakness in the current administration 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 was well respected and trusted by the populace. When the country's first general election was held under the leadership of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in 1952, he 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 opposition gained strength and the party's monolithic nature was severely strained. India's failure in the war against China in 1962 drew widespread condemnation from the Congress ruling party. The populace who were highly critical of the government policies and programs brought several opposition leaders back to the Lok Sabha. Due to the death of Nehru in 1964, elections were held in the country in 1967, and the strength of the opposition increased tremendously. In many states, the Congress party's monolithic nature had entirely stopped. The opposition parties in the form of the United Front (UF) and the United Legislators Party formed governments in various states. The opposition gained so much strength that they repeatedly introduced motions of no confidence against the government. However, no such proposal was successfully passed. 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 has strengthened 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 Telugu Desam Party (TDP), the opposition party, won 30 seats. The Rajiv Gandhi administration broke with tradition by granting TDP politicians opposition status 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 while minority parties played an important role in the formation and fall of governments.

While the opposition was demanding 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 opponents of the ruling party. This development, in a sense, supported the opposition within the ruling system. Left political parties have played a watchdog role in the policy actions of the ruling government. Major scandals like Bofors and the problems associated with the government in power from 2004 to 2014 (Fourteenth and Fifteenth Lok Sabha) were heavily criticized by the BJP as the main opposition party. However, the BJP, which spent its energies criticizing the first and second UPA governments, is following almost the same in both policy formulation and implementation.

### **STATUS OF OPPOSITION FROM 2014 TO TILL NOW (2024)**

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 were 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, based on value, Modi seized 86% of the cash that was in use in the Indian economy. 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 RBI governors Urjit Patel and Raghuram Rajan advised against the move. 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. One of the most capricious actions made by a democratically elected leader is demonetization.

Although the democratic spirit demanded that the government provide debate on all measures in both chambers, the Modi government used deceit to pass some bills despite having a majority in the Lok Sabha but not in the Rajya Sabha. The Aadhaar Bill was one such bill that 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. The Finance Bill 2017 concealed four legislative revisions to allow the secret electoral bond scheme, which permits unrestricted and anonymous contributions to political parties 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.

The Eighteenth Lok Sabha elections, of 2024 were held in seven phases from 19 April to 1 June. Results were declared on 4 June. Now BJP seats decreased to 240 seats out of 543. In addition, this time Congress increased to 99 seats. On 7 June, PM Modi assured the President of India Droupadi Murmu of the support of 293 MPs. This was Modi's first time leading a coalition administration and his third term as prime minister. Two significant allies were the Janata Dal (United) of Bihar and the Telugu Desam Party of Andhra Pradesh.

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**

In India, the opposition is crucial in offering useful critiques of the governing party. In these capacities, the opposition must have a leader capable of representing the interests of non-dominant parties. The leader of the opposition has a major role in the appointment 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 Supreme Court judges.

In a democracy, the role of the opposition leader 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, Lal Krishna Advani, and Bhairon Singh Shekhawat spoke in parliament, the ruling party listened to them 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 significance of parliamentary democracy's opposition 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 created a tangible plan of action to carry out the policies and initiatives they support. The non-ruling party or alliance that secured the most seats in the Lok Sabha is referred to as the opposition to the government. When an independent party secures at least 10% of the seats, it is granted opposition status. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was the official opposition party in India from 2009 to 2014.

For the years 2014 to 2024, the BJP is in power. For the years 2014 to 2024, there is not an opposing party. In India, a political figure who is in charge of the official opposition party is referred to as the leader of the opposition. However, because there was no formal opposition, the office remained unfilled

from 2014 to 2024. In India, the opposition parties play just as significant a role as the ruling party does. They make sure that the interests of the public and the country are not harmed by the ruling party's actions. Opposing every decision made by the ruling party is not the opposition's job. For the benefit of the nation, the opposition party ought to back the ruling party.

## REASONS OF WEAK OPPOSITION IN INDIA

1. **Leaderless opposition-** The opposition today in India is leaderless. While there are good political leaders at the helm of the major regional political parties, 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 divided into alliances with different political parties and different ideologies and styles, which hampers its fragmentation and thus unity.
3. **Lacks a core agenda-** The opposition today lacks a core agenda or plan to hold against the government, but instead is concerned with merely reacting to government actions rather than presenting alternatives to the electorate.
4. **Engaging in hostile politics-** Opponents see the government as engaging in unnecessary criticism and not even supporting 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 are stuck 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 the opposition hunts for fraud and misappropriation of funds in government projects instead of holding the government accountable.
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 viable opposition, people's sentiments and interests are ignored and only party interests and their welfare are looked after. In a parliamentary democracy, having a well-organized opposition to hold the government responsible is essential to the government's efficient operation.

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 say, *"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 party as a watchdog monitors the government's operations, and by voicing disapproval and protesting when it is operating in an undemocratic manner or against the interests of the people, it corrects the government. To prevent a democratic government from being formed by the ruling party in power, having an opposition party is paramount. For democracy to survive there must be an opposition. Otherwise, democracy can turn 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).

Numerous elements, such as the number of political parties, alliances, ideological affinities, party strength, and membership, influence the type and structure of the opposition in parliamentary democracies. The opposition cannot function as a distinct entity in a one-party government. The true resistance in a one-party regime is located inside the party. It can take the shape of a dissident organization and criticize the administration in party meetings with differing degrees of freedom (Duverger, 1979, p. 413).

The political parties are roughly equal under a two-party system. Real institutions like the British are typically the opposition. Because there were only two major political parties and power was shared between them, the opposition acted responsibly and carried out its responsibilities. The opposition employs the parliamentary system in their ongoing fight to overthrow the government because they have

a realistic prospect of doing so. In this way, the government is waiting for the opposition in the two-party system. The two-party system has some advantages. First, it enables voters to directly elect their government. Second, it brings responsibility for actions taken by a particular group.

In a multi-party system, there are no formal forms of opposition and the opposition is made up of many organizations. These factions frequently engage in combat with one another. Where no single political party regains the power to form a government, coalition switching leads to government collapse. A new combination that briefly governs the nation or state eventually meets the same end as the previous one. The opposition party's role is different in such a scenario. Because of its diverse membership, it is unable to operate as an alternative form of governance. As a result, the administration is subject to reckless, deadly attacks from all sides rather than a steady and regular apparatus of criticism (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 praises but also points out mistakes 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 cause loss to both the government and the people. Therefore, prompt opposition warnings result in government efficiency. To make the government aware of its shortcomings and more responsive to the public, the opposition parties serve as watchful critics. Without an opposition party, the government will inevitably perform poorly and neglect its responsibilities. As a result, the opposition serves as a mirror reflecting all of the government's actions. 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. By offering opposing viewpoints and policies, the opposition keeps the government in check and makes sure it operates in the public interest. It is impossible to overestimate the role that opposition parties play in preserving a robust and functional democracy. The main role of the opposition is to question the government and hold it accountable to the people through mass dharnas, protests, and rallies. Limiting the excesses of the ruling or dominant party also aids in correcting the errors made by opposition parties. 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. India has recently seen the justifiable lack of a powerful opposition figure to offer useful critiques of the ruling party. Therefore, without a formidable opponent to challenge the current administration, the lack of an opposition will erode our democracy. Additionally, the opposition leader has a specific role; nevertheless, in the absence of such leadership, it will fail to check the power of the ruling party as dissent is crucial for the proper functioning of a mature democracy. In other words, theoretically, the opposition should have a solid foundation upon which to challenge the government. At present, a divided and weak opposition is more dangerous to Indian democracy than a strong ruling party. Hence, a strong opposition party is essential for the smooth running of a democratic system.

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