



‘The Role of Opposition in Parliamentary Democracy’

Pravin Arun Powar

Research Student, Dept. of Pol. Sci.

Shivaji University, Kolhapur

Introduction :

The work of the ruling party is very important. It has run the government, make policies and look after the welfare of the people. All the powers mentioned in the constitution are exercised by the ruling party. Anyhow the opposition party also functions in an effective manner. In some ways, the work of the Opposition party is no less important than that of the ruling party. Opposition is the norm for the stability of parliamentary democracy. In the parliamentary system, the opposition has to work in the legislature and outside the legislature. In the legislature, the opposition party is mainly controlling the goals of the government through parliamentary devices, forcing the government to achieve the proper direction and to think the people's questions in a priority manner. Attending various questionnaires in the state, discussing them, forcing the government to make positive decisions, controlling the unruly instincts of the government, supporting good policies and opposing the wrong policies at the same time. Outside the legislature, the work of the opposition is important. Opposition parties are working to criticize the wrong policies of the government and

mobilize the masses against it. Therefore, the existence of opposition parties and their effective working role are important for the achievement of democracy, its conservation.

Although there is a difference of opinion between the ruling party and the opposition on the basis of the principle of the achievement of parliamentary democracy, their role is necessary for democracy to be complementary and robust. Effective performance of parliamentary democracy requires the opposition. Due to the review and constant vigilance of government policies, the ruling party does not become autocratic and unconstitutional. Controls the tyranny of government if there is a competent opposition party. The opposing party, who is strictly theorizing and treating the wrongs of the learned and the governing, is not affordable to the ruling party. The Opposition carries out the responsibility of keeping the ruling party aware and alert by bringing about the mistakes of the ruling party, failure of them to solve the questions of the people, corruption in the government scheme.

Therefore, for the successful functioning of democracy, the Opposition must exist. It has been proposed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Responsible opposition parties who criticize the ruling party through the parliamentary devices are needed for the continued effective existence of democracy. But if opposition parties should not be motivated by narrow self-interest, then it would be more motivating for democracy to criticize the realistic view of the failure of the government for wider nationalism and public welfare.

As a result, the role of the opposition is crucial in enabling democracy.

In short, the Opposition offers a secured guarantee of the success of democracy. The absence of an overt and organized Opposition always promotes the growth of dictatorship or authoritarian regime.

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To understand the Opposition role in Parliamentary Democracy, it is worthwhile to consider the views of some Political thinkers or Scientists.

Hayal Singh Fartyal underlined the techniques of the opposition parties in Governmental affairs in legislature as follows: “In the legislature, the opposition exposes the Government omissions and opposes the measures contrary to the public interest. The majority party has a mandate from the people for the management of the affairs of the nation for the time being. The Government, therefore, maintains political peace and stability in the administration. The opposition by its constant scrutiny and criticism of the Government policy makes the Government a more useful instrument of democracy. An organized opposition makes the use of various parliamentary methods to compel the Government to admit mistakes and adopt appropriate remedies.”

Also he said, “The ventilation of public grievances is one of the main tasks of the Opposition in Parliamentary democracy. It ventilates public grievances in the Parliament through various Parliamentary methods, such as Questions, Short duration discussions, Call-attentions, Adjournment motion, etc., and secures

discussion particularly on questions that agitate public and tries to press the government to solve them.’ Like this opposition works in the house or Parliament. Outside the Parliament the opposition parties attract the attention of the Press and Report their criticism of the government policy in the newspapers. Sometimes Oppositions organize demonstrations and agitations against some actions of the government. In this way, the government is prevented from taking arbitrary decisions.

According to Renu Saxena, “The existence of opposition is the most distinctive characteristic of parliamentary democracy; it is its life blood. Democracy admits of dissent and conflict which give rise to opposition. Parliamentary democracy needs an opposition most if it is to function effectively and successfully. No leader or party can overcome the temptation of becoming dictatorial, autocratic and arrogant in the absence of the watchful eye of a strong, viable, well-informed, vigilant opposition. It is the opposition that can expose the mistakes, the errors, the failures the corruption, the lack of honesty and integrity, the readiness to resort to most unscrupulous methods and mean to achieve the ends of objectives of the rulers.”

Sadasivan views on it, “No real democracy can function without a strong vigilant and vigorous opposition. It is an integral part of the democratic structure and the conscience-keeper of a democratic society. An effective opposition restrains the party in power from transgressing its functional limits, constantly reminds it or its responsibility of the opposition to inform the nation in time the defects and dangers in the official plans and politics and to mobilize public opinion to get them suitable modified. It educates public

opinion on the issues facing the country and brings them before the legislature to activate the process of discussion and debate and enforce the right of being consulted. It organizes social power to check official power from becoming arbitrary and acts as a vigilance force for the safety of the democratic order.”

The views held by Indian Political Scientist on this theme are not different. C.P.Bhambhri summarized the importance of the Opposition in a parliamentary Democracy.

“An effective Opposition is very necessary for the right functioning of a parliamentary democracy. But it is not the business of the opposition to obstruct the Government. Its purpose is not criticized not to hinder. Obstruction brings parliamentary Government into contempt. The Government must govern and the Opposition must oppose. The opposition has the power to obstruct the Government but neither kind of obstructions is desirable because it leads to confusion and results in inefficiencies.”

Thus the role of Opposition is important because it gives expression to public opinion and reflects current public reaction to government policy, it is the mouth-piece which the constitution provides for expression of public opinion and government must always pay attention to it. Its aim is to present itself as a creditable alternative government to the party in power. It has to be constructive in the sense that it offers an alternative policy to the policy of the party in power. This is perhaps the most important of all the opposition functions.

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