

Importance of opposition in a democracy

In democratic systems, the opposition is officially permitted and recognized. Even the leader of opposition is given an honorable place in the system. In India too, the opposition leader has been given certain rights and privileges like a cabinet minister.

The opposition parties enable men and women who think alike on public questions to unite in support of a common body of principles and policies and to work together to see that those principles and policies are adopted and implemented by the government. In the mass and without organization, the people can neither formulate principles easily nor agree on policy. The opposition makes articulate the inarticulate desires of sections of the masses and give. Expression to their pent-up feelings. This goes a long way in checking violence and political crimes which are, in reality fatal for the healthy survival of democracy.

By and large, the opposition in independent India has played a responsible and healthy role. It has always kept the government on its toes. However, the opposition has remained divided because of personality clashes, petty policy difference and vested interests. Today, there is a multitude of opposition parties at the national and provincial levels. As a result, an effective alternative of the ruling party is not available into the Indians.

To sum up the opposition fulfils certain necessary functions- so necessary, indeed, that many competent thinkers consider it essential to the working of representative government. Of course, the opposition sometimes delays the proceedings and the implementation of vital legislation. But the balance tilts towards its beneficial impact rather than the baneful. If democracy has come to stay, it is not because it is the perfect form of self-government. No plan or policy can benefit the people if we look only at its pros and deny the 'cons'. Only the opposition can provide those 'cons'. Above all, it is the opposition that puts a rein on the power of the government and checks it from becoming absolute.