CHAPTER VII

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE OPPOSITION IN INDIA
ITS CAUSES AND CURES

Parliamentary democracy functions according to certain postulates, the most important being the responsibility of the executive to the legislature and through the legislature to the electorate. Another postulate is peaceful transfer of governmental authority from one party to another either as a result of a general election or as a result of an adverse vote in the parliament. The party in power and the party and parties in opposition are, therefore, essential parts of representatives democracy. Thus it is a truism to say that democracy functions only when there is an effective opposition party functioning in the legislature. It is equally true, or at least, this is what political scientists say, that the extent to which there is no effective opposition, the ruling party tends to become autocratic. And yet, it is curious that in one of the biggest democracies of the world that India is, it has not been possible to build up an opposition party which could pose a challenge to the ruling party either directly or even remotely. But the way in which the opposition parties functioned, without coordination and without so much as even consultation in their approach to the ruling party’s policies and programmes hardly created conditions under which a well knit opposition party could thrive.


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The effective working of parliamentary government however, needs the two party system in which the majority party acts as the party in power and the other acts as the party in opposition. But in India opposition is weak and divided in several groups and parties and independents and therefore was very limited in parliament. Hence the work of opposition in the parliament was very strenuous, but it would be wrong to conclude that it had fared badly.

The opposition had a good record on ventilation of public grievances through questions, half an hour discussions, short duration discussions, motions for adjournment, discussions on matters of public importance etc. The opposition had played a major role in protecting the privileges of the parliament, its committees and members. It made major contributions in the development of parliamentary procedure. The government and the opposition, though worked as contending blocs, yet there was not ever-widening chasm between them, worked together in the arrangement of the business of the House. The opposition often did not function for the sake of opposing alone and sometimes it supported some of the government measure which in its view were in the public interest and some times made its modifications in government bills and resolution.

The opposition had, however, not been able to hold out the threat of an alternative government. There was no party which could provide alternative government and dislodge the congress party from the seat of power. Thus the irony of the Indian political scene was the lack of an effective democratic opposition in the sense in which it is understood in the west. Thus one of the most important question before us is: why did a national opposition not emerge in India during all these years? Several factors were responsible for this. We may summarize them below.

Before the attainment of independence, the congress party was the principal force in the country. After independence a large number of parties and groups were formed due to personal, social, economic and other differences, while the congress was popular throughout the country, other parties were not much known. The congress claimed to be the only party of freedom fighters. The mass of voters was politically immature and could not detach itself from the historic organisation and voted the congress to power.

The organisation of the opposition parties was very limited. In India, most the people being illiterate, party manifesto and propaganda literature could not wield much influence on the electorate unless the top leaders visited them for canvassing. While the congress had a country wide organisation, the organisation of other parties was confined
to a few states and they had no close touch with the electorate on the national scale. A vast majority of the people voted the congress to power because they did not know about the other parties fully. Secondly, the composition of congress also helps him to be in power. Extreme nationalists, communists, socialists, conservatives, orthodox Hindus, who believe in vadic dharma and traditions, the richest industrialists have supported congress party which stands for a socialist society. It is in fact a conglomeration of all parties but together parading under one banner. It is this cosmopolitan nature of party that has enabled it to survive as the most representatives party in the country.

"Whether it is the P.S.P. or the S.S.P.; the Jan Sangh or the Swatantra, none of them has been able to make inroads into the territory of the congress mainly because they have been not / able to fight a party which has such mixed membership and could meet every one of them effectively."

In fact, the condition for the emergence of an effective opposition could not have been more propitious any where else. But still all the opposition parties are in better disarray. But the only reason that the people by and large do not think that any other political party would be able to

do better than the congress. The congress party is the only party which has an effective mass base and however much other parties, more especially the Jan Sangh, try to make up for this, it has not been possible to do so. The congress party has been catholic in its outlook and this itself has been the chief source of its strength.

There is also widespread illiteracy in the electorate of the country. They do not understand the intricacies of the political ideologies to enable them to assess the true significance of the need for opposition parties. The illiterate masses has understood the political institutions hazily and one form of government did not appear to them very different from the other. They are satisfied with the congress party in general and the congress exploited this factor to the utmost to retain itself in power. Further, the right to vote requires certain social and political awareness but in the lack of such awareness, the illiterate voters caste their votes in a frivolous manner.

Thus our 80 per cent of the population is still aware of just one party, namely the congress and considers it as the party of those who rule and has no option but to follow its dictates. The work of the opposition groups which fight

5. Ibid., op.cit., p. 38.
amongst themselves in the big cities and towns lacks this broad base of rural support and whatever illusions of popularity they may develop by large attendance at the meetings in these crowded urban centres is shattered by the results of election when the rural representatives belonging mainly to the congress out number them at most in the proportion of four to one.

Again a sense of defeatism has over taken all the opposition parties and today they stand completely demoralised. It looks as if in India representatives government can function with only one party which political parties have vital role in democratic political process, and the vast multitude of the people do not miss them. This is because they really do not know what it to have an effective opposition party. They are ignorant of the political gains that can accrue to them if only they know they could put fear into the minds of the ruling party by exhibiting a certain sense of discrimination instead of blind allegiance. And for this failure, the opposition parties have contributed a good deal. In England there is constant political propaganda and the parties work methodically in a planned manner. In India, this just does not happen.

8. Ibid., p. 39.
Thus the political parties are expected to educate the masses and make them politically conscious. Their prime duty is to remove the lethargy among the people and make them take interest in matters pertaining to government. But in India, one hardly sees much of political activity by the opposition parties except a few months before a general election.

The congress party exploited the names of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru. Some of the voters cast their votes for the congress not because they liked or understood its policies, but because it was a party of Gandhi and Nehru. So long as Jawahar Lal Nehru was alive, there was hardly any person, with the possible exception of Dr. S. P. Mukerjee who could stand equal to the weight of his personality on the national scale. The opposition leaders were regional rather than national. The congress party had, thus advantages from the point of view of personality.

The next important reason for the slow development of opposition parties is the very nature. The opposition parties, led by persons who were once in congress. In the case of many of these top ranking leaders, the differences that have driven them into the opposition camp, at least in

10. Ibid., p. 245.
the understandings of common people are more of a personal than of a political character, many of those veterans have changed their party labels after leaving the congress. No leader, then that the common people consider them to be either impractical cranks or disgruntled ex-leader, people do not feel it safe to learn their fortunes in the lands of such leadership.

Another major barrier to the development of a healthy party system in India is posed by those who do not believe in parties at all. This group includes many people who are influential in Indian political life and many more who are influential in Indian society. Many of these people look upon parties as undesirable organisation, and they would substitute for them other means for permitting popular expression and for implementing the people's will. "Often they drive their ideas from Gandhi, and from the Mahatma's ideas of the sarvodaya society. Such ideas are being propagated today by two of the most influential people on the Indian scene, both long-time followers of Gandhi. Acharya Vinoba Bhave, through his support of the Bhoodan movement and through his frequent writings and public pronouncements on political matters. As every one calls of J.P. the advocate of a party less democracy."

Many Indian feels as did M.N. Roy, and as do his followers the Radical humanists. "That the people are too back ward to become politically conscious and discriminating members of any party, hence a different approach to the participation of the individual in social and political life is held to be necessary."

Large funds for election are necessary for the election. Though election commission fixes the ceiling on the expenditure that may be incurred by a candidate for election to the Lok Sabha at Rs. 25,000. But in practice it goes beyond the definite line. One is, therefore, driven to the conclusion to be a candidate in a election would mean ability to see the support or sponsorship of an influential political party or at least be in a position to raise the necessary financial resources. The opposition parties lack of these resources. Thus the expensive nature of the election, made the rise of any opposition party extremely difficult if not impossible. It is the impediment to the growth of party system. While the congress party was given financial support by the business men and the industrialist or by the rich man the coffers of congress are filled by such sections and thinks the others as beggars brow. The opposition parties had no such support.

12. Raju S.V. Ibid., p. 578.
They largely depended on their sympathiser for finance. Thus, while the congress could afford to go through the expensive elections, the opposition parties could put up sufficient candidates against the congress.

The amassing of high funds by the Congress in a questionable manner is due to the reasons, that our industrialists are particularly prove to power pressures with the network of controls including taxation, import licences, loans for industries, orders from government departments and so on. These in power are able to make their frowns and favours felt very effectively. Therefore any congress man is in a position to give a personal note to a proprietor or manager of an industrial factory in the areas which almost guarantees employment. But, on the other hand, the industrialists would do every thing to evade the payment of taxes but most them would do nothing in the interest of development of any revival political groups. As a result the congress is further strengthened by their support both in the form of funds and in the form of concessions to those who work the congress which the opposition parties suffer relatively. Yet the Jana Sangh stand out side this consideration, and occupies the highest places. So intents and purposes it was a communal party going to set it self up against the secular congress.

And it became popular with the refugees, rich and poors and also among the orthodox Hindus, harbouring anti pakistan and anti Muslim feelings in their hearts. The industrialists also contributed to its funds with a view to that it would preserve their interest in all tales of socialism. Thus the coffers of Jana Sangh and the Congress were filled by the same sources, which were no against the democracy. But in India political consciousness and appreciation of socialism have been going side by side and Nehru had been the greatest preacher and protagonists of both the constitutions, therefore of the big purses and these political parties were regarded by the masses, including the educated poor, as a conspiracy to fluke them.

The opposition parties did not have an army of dedicated workers who could carry their message down to the grass root level. It was a sad fact that the workers were available only for a price. The price varies from place to place and from individual to individual. It had been easy for the ruling party to find workers because it had both the financial resources and the power of patronage. Unfortunately for the opposition parties, they had neither the financial resources nor power. Therefore it became difficult for them to attract loyal and dedicated workers.

There was a widespread misuse authority by those in power for personal or party and during election time. Sometimes a minister went on an election tour accompanied by the officials. It had been reported that this gave the impression to the poor villagers that the minister was sarkar and they had to demonstrate their support for the sarkar by voting for the persons the minister wanted. By and large there was also identification of the party and the government. The rural landlords had been uprooted and the influential people in the villages, like the patwaris and tehsildars, were government servants. Some of the subsidiary organization were paid fabulous subsidies from the government funds, but they were manned either by the members of the ruling party or their supporters. Thus a large network of a spoil system existed in which millions of men and women were paid apparently for their work, but actually for supporting the party in power directly or indirectly.

Most of the opposition parties are trying to copy ready-made western needs of political, economic and social patterns. Again, these models do not differ very much from the model which congress is trying to imitate. People are often at a loss to know why there are so many parties proclaiming "Democratic socialism." When congress proclaims and claim to practice the same creed does not convince the

18. Fratayal, H.S. : Ibid., p. 246, also see Raju S.V. Ibid., pp. 624-630.
people. Further the P.S.P. rule in Andhra, the C.P.I rule in Kerala and Janata Maharashtra Samiti rule in the local bodies in Maharashtra has not at all substantiated the claim that the administration in the hands of these opposition parties would be more efficient and less corrupt than the present set up. People have developed, in general, a certain cynicism regarding all politicians. They are convinced that a change in government is not likely to mean a better and more efficient administration. Therefore they constitute to support the known group rather than a new and unknown group. Therefore the policy and programme of the congress party hindered the growth of a healthy opposition. Its belief in the democratic way of life, faith in socialist pattern society, its object to achieve casteless and classless society its firm aim to remove inequality in all spheres of life, and its foreign policy of friendship and of non-alignment and its faith in parliamentary institutions attracted masses to support it.

On the contrary, the approach of most of the opposition parties had been too dogmatic and they could not provide adequate alternative programmes. The integrity of some of the opposition leaders was doubtful. People knew the communist party through its series of 'betrayals' beginning with

the party's support to war efforts of the British, its opposition to quit-India movement in 1942 and its advocacy of violent revolution in 1948-49. After independence, it get success in some parts of the country not because the people liked its policies, but because the party raised regional issues. The socialist, after their withdrawal from the congress could hardly offer a better programme. There had hardly been any concrete difference between the congress and the socialists and the adoption of the principle of socialist pattern of society by the congress finally eliminated the distinction between them. The Jana Sangh drew its support from the conservative economic interests and from those who were inspired by the past glory of India. Other parties and groups were organized on the basis of caste, communal, religious, provincial and regional interests. In the absence of broad alternative programmes, suited to the Indian conditions, people did not vote for these opposition parties in sufficient number.

The multi party system dominate the Indian political scene during all these years with one strong party in power and several minor parties and group in the opposition. Before the beginning of the first general election (1951-52), according to the election commission report, nearly 128 parties and group intended to contest the election, though only 65

parties were recognized in the long run and this divided the opposition votes. During the year 1952-1953, there was some reduction in the number of parties, but after 1954 some splits occurred in the congress and the communist parties. Some of the leaders of the congress left the party due to personal differences and formed their own parties. Thus the Jan Kiranti Dal in Bihar, the Jan Congress in Orissa, the Bengal Congress in Bengal, the B.K.D. in Utter Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, the Janta in Rajasthan and the Visal Haryana party in Haryana were formed on the eve of the fourth general elections (1967). In 1967 the Congress was divided into two parties, namely the leftist congress and the Rightist congress. The communist party was also divided into three parties - the C.P.I., the C.P.I.M., and the revolutionary communist party a little before fourth general election.

The pressure of such a large member of parties is of course, not conducive to the success of parliamentary democracy. Some time it is argued that ... simple majority and single ballot system with multi party system.

According to this view, there should not have been such multiplicity of parties in India. The reality is that,
the social economic, religious, caste, communal, linguistic, local, provincial, personal and factional differences in the Indian society has divided the people.

The existence of several parties in the country has only added to the confusion in the political life of the country. The common man does not understand evaluate the relative merits and demerits of parties like the P.S.P. or the S.S.P. Nor does it make any difference to him that these two new merged into one. Besides the multiplicity of the parties, and other serious defects with the parties in India has been the utter lack of discipline. Instances of defections from one opposition party to another have been very common. The congress party exercised a certain amount of restraint though not fully and even now it is not willing to admit to its fold automatically persons who had left it earlier. A good deal of serving is being done and it is thus that has strengthened the congress party.

Opposition parties have never formed electoral alliances on the national scale. There were hardly straight contests between the congress and the opposition candidates. The communist party wanted to form a united front, but because of the extra territorial loyalty none of the major parties

25. Pattabhi Ram, Ibid., pp. 31-40.
agreed to accept the offer. Even the Praja Socialist party and Samyukta Socialist Party on the one hand and the communist party of India and the marxist communists party on the other put up their candidates against each other in the fourth general elections (1937). The multicronered countests favoured only the congress party. In this way the opposition parties instead of forming a United front against the congress were engaged in their own internal war.

The presence of a large number of independent candidates in the electoral arena had been an index of an undeveloped political life and they were largely responsible for the fragmentation of the opposition votes. By and large they were persons who enjoyed local influence. In the absence of party control over them they hardly put up good behaviour in the election campaign."

Casteism and regionalism also obstructed the growth of a national opposition. This is the most important factor which a political party has to reckon with before setting up a candidate. We must also pay attention to the strength of communalism, casteism and provincialism. Congress as well as other opposition parties has been attached to these consideration. Many parties in India indulged and effected by the vital role played by caste and religion in the election. If

the congress party set up a Kayastha in Bihar, the opposition party immediately tried to fix up another Kayastha and if there were already two Kayastha in the field then the opposition party reckoned with the sizeable Bhomidar minority in the constituency. It was so with the Khammas and Reddi in Andhra, the Chattiars and Nadars in Madras, the Rajputs and Jats in Rajistahn, the Brahmans and Marathas in Maharashatra, to maintain only a few. The regional parties raised local issues at the time of election. The voters, instead of favouring candidates of national parties, supported those the regional parties in the interest of their local issues. Further the congress had made an impression on the Muslims and the Harijans that if the congress was defeated, others would not safe their interests. The result of such a propaganda was that most of the Muslims and Harijans gave their support to the Congress Party. The Congress Party had also created an impression on the minds of the people that the congress alone could offer a stable administration to the country. The opposition parties had not bearable to convince the masses that stability might of the amount to stagnation. If the opposition elements were able to demonstrate that they could successfully tackle problems of administration, the confidence of the people in the opposition could grow.

The present rulers do not recognise that there are certain conventions of parliamentary life which guarantees some fundamental rights to the opposition parties. It is this attitude of the ruling party that prevents the healthy growth of an effective opposition to the present regime. "But the leadership of the ruling party in its new lust for absolute power often tramps down the west traditions of our national democratic movement and bring in Daecilian laws as to stifle the opposition."

The return of the congress to power often every five years made the opposition parties impatient. The congress was drawing upon its accumulated bank balance of deeds of sacrifice and service. Those who had come out of the parent body in 1948 and later on believed that their ideological stand socialism or communism would commend itself to the poors and the so-called down-trodden; and hoped that they would give them preference while exercising their votes. Their belief has been belief again and again. "They have not been able to create any noteworthy impacts either on the educated or the uneducated for socialism. In fact, instead of carrying on educative propaganda, they chose a negative way as a short cut to power. This was to malign and denigrate congress rule."


30. Ram Gopal, Ibid., pp. 6-7.
Impartiality of speaker, the presiding officers is necessary for the growth of strong opposition. Though the congress in principle has generally been following British convention. But the congress leadership felt that it should not be necessary for these offices to detach themselves from the party and that it was quite impossible for them to be impartial. On the other side it is contended by the moderate opinion that same kind of psychological effect of the party affiliation is bound to affect the presiding officers." This is a powerful factor, it must have some contribution and to the confusion at times created by opposition members on the floors of the legislatures. But it is one thing to carry violation of the sanctity of the house to the extent of compelling the speaker to ask the marshal and his assistants to bodily leave the obstructive members, who has refused to obey the chair's orders to quit and put him out of the house, and it is quite another thing to agitate constitutionally for a change."

One of the possible reasons why the opposition parties failed to impress the people in the way in which its representatives conducted themselves in parliament. Some of the disorderly scenes in parliament were certainly occasioned by the behaviour of opposition and thus through them some of the opposition parties seems to have been more interested

interested in creating scenes and getting publicity in the
press rather than contribute to informed discussion on vital
issues. The success of a political party also depends to a
large extents on the impression it creates among the people.
Demonstration by Jana Sangh in November 1966 on parliament
street which led the police firing and the S.S.P. demonstrated
at Patel Chouk during 1970 which culminated in inquiries to
some of its own M.P.'s have got really added to the urge
of the parties in the public eye. In August 1971, the
congress organized a mass demonstration in Delhi, and there
was peace and not a single impleasent incident. The police
too were quite happy with the demonstration since they did
not have to use the big stick.

Prime Minister Nehru's personality was partially
responsible for weakening sections of the opposition. In
India we witnessed a strange phenomenon of opposition parties
adopting an ambivalent attitude to Nehru. There are oppo-
sitionists who opposed the congress led by Nehru and at the
same time offered their unstinated support to him. The
ruling party in turn capitalised on this ambivalent attitude
of the oppositionists and is every movement of crisis and
in every crucial election made prime minister Nehru its sole
symbol to seek the support of the voters. Not every often
the clay-futed oppositionists who themselves built the Nehru-

32. Pattabhi Ram, Ibid., p. 40.
cult destroyed under their very feet the strength of the 33 opposition and ensure this victory of the ruling party.

Lastly, the opposition did not have enough time to develop as compared to the opposition in western democracies. The historical conditions which gave rise to the party system and the opposition in the Western democracies were different from those in India. In this country parties developed as an instruments for achieving independence from the British and they, therefore, got little training. Effective contact with the people and educating them in the party ideology and programmes are important for developing an opposition party. All these take a great deal of time. Britain and the U.S.A. have taken about 700 and 300 years respectively to develop an effective party system.

The above difficulties hindered the growth of a national opposition in India. Inspite of all these difficulties, India needs a responsible, constructive and effective opposition as provided by a two party or multi party system in western democracies. The major questions before us is: How should it emerge? In Western democracies, the opposition is a fortuitous development, a product which has evolved out of the

34. Fratayal, H.S., Ibid., p. 249.
peculiar economic political and historical conditions that prevailed from time to time. If we advocated the emergence of such an opposition in India, it would take in great deal of time. Mr. Jai Prakash Narayan suggested that the government should help in the growth of the national opposition party. But it is not the duty of the government to strengthen the opposition it must build itself.

For the development of an effective opposition some of the parties proposed that the non-communist parties should form a united front in the parliament. Some went to the extent of suggesting a complete fusion of the non-communist opposition parties into a single party, determined to offer vigorous opposition to the congress. Such a unified opposition is not possible. The opposition party has to function on a responsible way, exposing the policies of the ruling party and its acts of omission and commission. The non-communist parties, consisting of heterogeneous elements ranging from the most reactionary forces on one extreme to progressive elements on the other, would not see eye to eye when measures against their interests will be proposed in the parliament. Any effort to have a unified opposition of these diverse elements is bound to fail.

It should not mean that there are no prospects for the development of a strong democratic opposition in the near future. The following suggestions should help the
emergence of a national opposition in India's capable of forming an alternative government.

The major national opposition parties should expand their organisation which should be based not only on the constituency but also on the territorial divisions of each state. Their activities should be intensified in the villages so that the rural people may know them better. They should keep close contact with the people, educate them on important political and civic question and foster good will in the constituency. They should also develop their financial resources.

The electoral system should be reorganize so as to make elections much less expensive. The policies and programmes of opposition parties should be eclectic and not doctrinal. They should draw up plans for each mandal, district and bloc.

They should provide the basis of official plan which will give them a sense of participation in the development of their region. Sufficient political literature should be available in all regional languages. They should set an example of honesty, efficiency and integrity, and evolve an internal machinery to check corruption and indiscipline among its members and encourage proper type of leadership. The
members should have a sense of dedication and sincerity for the development of the party.

The opposition parties should be increased their membership and put candidates for the election. It will remove the difficulty of finding out the right candidate, which is faced by the opposition when a large majority of persons wanted to contest the election on the congress' party ticket. The candidates should be product of the soil of the constituency and the parties should adopt the practice of the U.K. where all important parties adopt prospective candidates' rights through the life of the existing parliament, should be selected and given ample opportunity to show the results before they are finally adopted and thus a person is given a chance to nurse his constituency over a number of years.

There should be effective electoral alliances among the opposition parties. This can be possible if efforts are made to narrow down the differences. It has been seen that whenever there was a polarization of political forces, the congress lost many of its seats in the elections in 1967. A united front is, however, not possible on the so called ideological basis. There are certain problems which need prompt attention and these problems have nothing to do with

35. Fratyal, H.S., Ibid., p. 250. See also Raju, S.V. Ibid., p. 633.
ideologies. The problems of five year plans, corruption and nepotism and inefficiency in the government, neither on the political nor the administrative level are not related to ideologies. On the basis of such issues the opposition parties should form united fronts at the time of elections to avoid multi-cornered contests.

The opposition should recognised by law and provisions should be made for the payment of monthly or annual salary to the leader of the opposition and such a recognition will foster a tendency in the minor groups to come close together and encourage a sense of responsibility among the opposition parties and groups. The role, privileges and responsibilities of the leader of the opposition should be defined by law.

The illusion that was created in the minds of the people that congress alone can offer a stable administration to the country, because of its longstanding experience, wide net work of cadres and ample resources."If effective opposition is to be developed this myth of congress being the sole custodian of stability will have to be exploded. The opposition parties have not been able to organise effective campaign to convince the masses that stability may often amount stagnation. If opposition demands are able to put forward projects in the co-operation and other fields where in they can demonstrate their creative potentialities and also show that they

have cadres and functionaries who can successfully tackle problems of administration and managements, the confidence of the people be the opposition can grow.

The task of building up an effective opposition is one which calls for patience. It should strictly oppose the ruling party and has to function as an alternative to the party. It must however, be emphasised that there are no short cuts to the creation of available opposition." Unfortunately in India the patience and perseverance needed to build an effective opposition and lacking. Deserting the ranks of the opposition and joining the ruling party is mainly an expression of exhausted patience, through very often it is glorified as an act of conviction."

Stable party system says Weiner Myron, "Can develop in India only where political polarization is between parties which agree on basic values." Hence there should be a reduction in the number of parties. This can be achieved in four ways.

In the first place, the government should take effective steps to ban the working of those parties which are organized on the basis of caste, religion, language, communal and

37. Raju, S.V., Ibid., p. 635.
38. Ibid., p. 635.
regional interests. Such parties create not only confusion in the public mind but also divert public opinion from major national issues to narrow issues. The major national parties should also help in this task by educating the public about the evils of such local parties.

Secondly, political fragmentation in the country has acted as a great hindrance in the task of developing an effective opposition in the country. On the most flimsy grounds political parties have split and a multiplicity of parties has grown up. A country where the opposition is already weak can ill afford such a political fragmentation. Therefore, public opinion should be allowed against. The evil of defactions since they are undermining the foundation of democracy. The phenomenon of defactions has made everyone inactive with the result. Little attention is paid to the poor. The recommendations of the all party committee on defactions—one year ban on defectors, from becoming ministers—should be implemented and law should be made to check defactions.

Thirdly, the tendency of forming minor parties should be discouraged even if it has to be done by legislation. In this connection it is worth nothing that in the U.S.A. some

41. Raju, S.V., Ibid., p. 635.
42. Pratayal, H.S., Ibid., pp. 251-52.
of the states have passed legislation discouraging the rise of third party. In Florida, for instance, unless a party, polls 5 per cent of the total votes at the preceding election it cannot present a list of candidates in an official ballot. In Illinois, a new party must present a petition signed by at least 2,500 voters, including at least 200 in each of the 50 of the 10-counties. Such legislation is also necessary for our country with a view to discouraging the rise of local parties.

Fourthly, like minded parties should merge because political fragmentation in the country has acted a great hinderance, in the development of an effective opposition. It is true that a total unity of the opposition parties is not possible and three trends, viz., democratic, socialist, communist and conservative are bound to continue among the opposition forces. The urgent need therefore, is the unification of these incompatible trends is most harmful to the healthy growth of an effective and principled opposition. However, like minded parties and groups should merge with the major like minded organizations. The efforts for socialist unity are a welcome step in this direction. The parties like the Sawatantra and the Jana Sangh which have, by and large an identical approach to economic and social problems can come together and similarly splinter groups which are fellow

travellers of the communist party of India can unhesitatingly merge with it. Along with this process and political consolidation, realignment in various political parties is also necessary. Those who remain in the opposition parties and yet develop political affinity towards the ruling party must leave its rank rather than weaken it from within elements which penalise the will to resist and oppose the ruling party do a great disservice to the opposition.

If the polarization of parties is done on the above lines, there will be only four or five parties in the country. But the main difficulty in the way of polarization is that the parties are afraid that merger would lead to the blurring of their identity. Party leaders are also afraid that chances of individual advancement in terms of office will diminish as the size of political groups increase. But in the interest of democracy, they should not care for office and identity. It is difficult for parliamentary government to function in India under the multi-party system, because it gives room for the formation of coalition governments and their frequent falls. The polarization of parties is, therefore, not only necessary but also desirable for the emergence of an effective national opposition.

44. Raju, S.V., Ibid., p. 637.