Role of Opposition Party

Why in news?

The 26 Opposition political parties from across India have formed the INDIA coalition (the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance) for the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

What is INDIA coalition?

- The Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) is a coalition of 26 Opposition political parties (so far) from across India.
- They have joined hands to take on the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) for the 2024 Lok Sabha election.
- The coalition had two meetings so far which saw participation of Chief Ministers of seven states and several former Chief Ministers.
- The parties part of INDIA coalition are -

What is the history of opposition in India?

- The first general elections to the Lok Sabha after independence were conducted in 1952 and the Congress won the elections.
- The Congress the dominance the Lok Sabha elections during the period 1952-1962.
- None of the opposition parties could win one-tenth of the number of seats.
- In the first general election, CPI won 16 seats and emerged as the largest opposition party.
- In December 1969, the Congress Party's (O) leader Ram Subhag Singh was recognised as the opposition leader for the first time.

What is the Constitutional position of opposition party?

- Leader of largest opposition party which is having at least 1/1oth seats of the house is appointed as the Leader of opposition.
- It is not mentioned in the Constitution but mentioned in Parliamentary statute.
- Coalition is not possible in the opposition party.

- **Leader of opposition -** The post is recognised by the speaker.
- Leader of opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha has statutory status since 1977.
- LoP got their statutory recognition through Salaries and allowances of Leaders of opposition in *Parliament Act of 1977* (both RS and LS)
- They receive salary and allowances equivalent to Cabinet Minister.
- **Present status -** The post of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha is vacant since 2019

parliamentary election as none of the opposition party could fulfil 10% quorum.

What is the role of opposition in a democracy?

- Opposition plays a crucial role in maintaining the democratic character of the system.
- Negates one-party dominance in Parliamentary houses.
- They provide a democratic political alternative in a Parliamentary system.
- They offer a sustained and principled criticism of the policies and practices of the ruling party.
- This kept the ruling party under check and balances the power.
- They uphold accountability of government in the legislature.
- They put forth the public opinion in the Parliament.

What are the other roles played by the opposition?

- Conventionally Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha is from opposition.
- From 1967, Chairman of Public Accounts committee is from opposition by convention.
- They also forms part of several other Parliamentary committees.
- Opposition or LoP is part of the appointment committees of major bodies such as NHRC, Lokpal, CIC, CVC, CBI, etc.

How the opposition in UK different from India?

- India borrowed the parliamentary system from the British Constitution.
- In the British parliament, the leader of opposition is referred to as the '*shadow prime minister*'.
- They also form a *shadow cabinet* to balance ruling cabinet.
- They not only oppose and criticise the government but always in a state of readiness to take over the government if the government falls.
- **India -** There is no such shadow cabinet in India.
- In a multi-party system, the second largest party in the legislature is the opposition.

What is the significance of Opposition?

- The leader of the opposition is one of the key parliamentary functionaries whose role is not defined in any rule.
- Opposition gives a ready alternate government without fresh elections in case of any failure of the ruling government.
- Strong opposition is necessary for success of parliamentary democracy.
- Opposition's role is crucial in maintaining the productivity of the Parliament.

References

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2. The Hindu - 26 Opposition parties form INDIA to take on NDA in 2024



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