

UNRAVELING OF OPPOSITION ALLIANCES

Last year, amid difficulties, opposition parties came together to form an I.N.D.I Alliance, presumably with the aim of contesting the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. This alliance likely raised hopes among the populace for a strong opposition to challenge the ruling party.

The alliance faced setbacks and uncertainties, particularly regarding seat sharing talks. These talks were unilaterally postponed, leading to confusion among the parties involved. The postponement was attributed to the assembly elections held in late 2023, with some parties opting to contest independently.

The reversal of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's stance can be seen as a significant blow to the opposition alliance.

Kumar, who was playing a pivotal role in architecting the alliance, decided to align with the BJP and NDA, thereby weakening the opposition narrative.

The departure of allies from the alliance, starting with the split in the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), contributed to its fragmentation. This trend likely further eroded the alliance's strength and cohesion.

Environmental Framework: Nature, Living and Non-living

■ DR. RAJKUMAR SINGH

The environment encompasses all living and non-living things that exist on Earth, as well as their interactions. It includes everything from the air we breathe, the water that covers much of the Earth's surface, the land on which we live and grow food, to the plants, animals, and other organisms that share our planet. Broadly, environment can be divided into two main components:a. Abiotic Components: These are the non-living parts of the environment and include elements like air, water, soil, sunlight, temperature, and climate. They provide the basic materials and conditions necessary for life to exist and thrive.b. Biotic Components: These are the living parts of the environment, including all different kinds of organisms, from the smallest bacteria to the largest mammals, as well as plants, fungi, and microorganisms. The interactions among these organisms, as well as their interactions with the abiotic components, form ecosystems.The environment plays a crucial role in the health and survival of all living things and provides essential resources such as food, water, and shelter, and influences climate and weather patterns that affect life on Earth. Human activities have a significant impact on the environment, including pollution, deforestation, and climate change, which have led to a growing need for environmental conservation and sustainable living practices.

Development of environmental elements

The development of environmental elements involves changes and interactions between abiotic and biotic components over time, influenced by both natural processes and human activities. I It can be observed in various contexts, such as ecosystem dynamics, urban development, and climate change. The key environmental elements develop and interact include: a. Natural ProcessesGeological Processes: The Earth's surface and its topography are shaped by geological processes such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, erosion, and sedimentation. Over millions of years, these processes have formed mountains, valleys, rivers, and oceans, influencing the distribution of biotic elements.Climatic Changes: Climate patterns have changed significantly over the Earth's history due to natural factors such as variations in solar radiation, changes in the Earth's orbit, and volcanic activity. These changes affect temperature, precipitation patterns, and the distribution of ecosystems.Evolution and Biodiversity: Biotic elements, particularly flora and fauna, have developed through the process of evolution. Natural selection leads to the development of diverse species adapted to specific environmental conditions. Biodiversity hotspots, for example, are regions that have experienced stable climate conditions over long periods, allowing for a wide variety of species to evolve.Succession: Ecosystems undergo succession, a process where the species composition of a community changes over time following a disturbance or the creation of new habitats.b. Human Influences: Agriculture and Domestication: Humans have dramatically altered environments through the domestication of plants and animals and the development of agricultural practices. This has led to significant changes in land use, from natural forests to farmland, affecting local ecosystems and biodiversity.Industrialization and Urbanization: The development of industries and urban areas has transformed landscapes, introducing new abiotic elements like pollution (air, water, soil) and altering natural water courses. Urbanization leads to the creation of the built environment, replacing natural habitats with human-made structures.Deforestation and Land Use Change: Human activities such as logging, mining, and urban expansion have led to deforestation and changes in land use. These activities can lead to habitat loss, reduced biodiversity, and changes in local climate and soil conditions.Climate Change: Human-induced climate change, primarily due to the emission of greenhouse gases from fossil fuel combustion, deforestation, and industrial processes, is causing global temperatures to rise.

Kinds of environment

The term "environment" normally refers in several contexts, each with its own nuances:a.Natural Environment: This refers to all living and non-living things that occur naturally on Earth. It encompasses ecosystems, wildlife, and natural resources such as air, water, and soil. The natural environment is the complex of biotic and abiotic factors that act upon organisms and determine their form, survival, and development.b.Ecological Environment: In ecology, the environment is seen as the surroundings in which an organism operates, including air, water, soil, and other organisms. It includes the physical and biological factors that an organism interacts with, which can be described as the sum of local abiotic (non-living) and biotic (living) factors that influence an organism or a group of organisms.c.Built Environment: This refers to the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, ranging from buildings and parks to neighbourhoods and cities, and can include their supporting infrastructure, such as water supply or energy networks.d. Social and Cultural Environment: This encompasses the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural influences that shape an individual's perceptions and interactions with their world. It includes not only the physical spaces in which people live and work but also the social context and cultural norms that influence behaviour. e.Work or Occupational Environment: This refers to the setting, conditions, and influences in a workplace. It includes the physical space, the tools and materials used, the social aspects of the workplace, and any hazards or safety concerns associated with the work. f.Global Environment: This can refer to the sum total of all local, regional, and international environments, focusing on global-scale issues such as climate change, global warming, and international environmental policy.

(The author is a youth motivator).

It is most regrettable that nuclear energy is being harnessed for making nuclear weapons.

-Lal Bahadur Shastri

Insertions made in text of Preamble of Constitution don't of violate ‘Doctrine of Basic Structure of Col

■ DAYA SAGAR

According to the Constitution of India (CoI), Parliament and the state legislatures in India have the power to make laws within their respective jurisdictions but the constitution can be amended by Parliament only. This power is not absolute in nature. The Constitution vests in the judiciary, the power to adjudicate upon the constitutional validity of all laws/acts of Parliament. If a law made by Parliament or the state legislatures violates any provision of the Constitution, the Supreme Court has the power to declare such a law invalid or ultra-vires. Notwithstanding review jurisdictions, those who drafted the constitution through the Constituent Assembly surely wanted the Constitution to be an adaptable citizen friendly democratic socialist document but they were very much conscious of their limitations , circumstances in had, having no any previous experience of having lived in such like system of governance and experience of the type and since they also did not want to give their generations a rigid framework for governance so they had also kept a provision in Art 368 for amendment by Parliament used the constituent (constituent power) but not beyond the principles enshrined in the final document. .Article 368 of the Constitution may give to some the impression that Parliament's amending powers are absolute and encompass all parts of the document but the position is not like that . The Supreme Court can go for checks through reviews and has at occasions acted for suitable checks on legislative enthusiasm at occasions of since independence. In line with the intention of preserving the original ideals enshrined there in of the visionary constitution-makers, the Supreme Court of India has also laid down in 1973 (through the Judgment 13 judge Constitution Bench in The Kesavananda Bharati judgment (Kesavananda Bharati Sripadagalavaru etc. v. State of Kerala and another etc. Writ Petitions Nos.135/70, 351-52i~73-74 and L±UO of 1972 , delivered on

24 April 1973) that Article 368 can not be used by Parliament to amend the constitution so as to distort, damage or alter the basic features of the Constitution under the pretext of amending it. Although the phrase 'basic structure' itself" is not found in the Constitution but the Supreme Court had placed before the citizens this concept in black & white for the first time in the Kesavananda Bharati case in 1973 as something like commonly understood as Doctrine of Basic Structure . Supreme Court has been the interpreter of the Constitution and the arbiter of all amendments made by Parliament but supreme court has in a way reserved the jurisdiction to 'self' to name the elements of basic structure of CoI as and when case for review comes before the apex court.

Parliament's authority to amend the Constitution, particularly the chapter on the fundamental rights of citizens, was challenged as early as in 1951. After independence, several laws were enacted with the objective of reforms like land ownerships / special supports so socially & economically weaker people & areas keeping in view socialistic spirits of the Constitution/ Article 39 (b) (c) of the Directive Principles of State Policy/ prevention of concentration of wealth in the hands of a few but citizens like the owners of properties/zamindaars / large land owners affected by such laws went to courts under protections provided in constitution where in some cases the land reforms laws were struck down by courts naming the laws as violating that the fundamental right to property, Upset by unfavorable judgments Parliament amended the constitution using Art 368 and placed such laws even in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution through amendments like the First Constitution Amendment Act of 1951 and Fourth Amendment Act of s 1954and 1952 respectively making them free from the scope of judicial review.



A Look through the Mist Part-I

In Sankari Prasad Singh Deo v. Union of India 1952 and Sajjan Singh v. Rajasthan 1955, the Supreme upheld that Parliament can amend any part of the Constitution including fundamental rights. But the dissent of two dissenting judges in Sajjan Singh v.Rajasthan case raised the questions about dangers of the fundamental rights at some occasion becoming of play way of the majority party/ group in Parliament..

Not only that In 1967 an eleven-judge bench of the Supreme Court delivering its 6:5 majority judgement in the Golaknath v. State of Punjab case Chief Justice Subba Rao put forth the curious position that Article 368, that contained provisions related to the amendment of the Constitution ,merely laid down the amending procedure and Article 368 did not confer upon Parliament the power to amend the Constitution and the amending power (constituent power) of Parliament arose from other provisions as contained in the Constitution (Articles 245, 246, 248) which gave it the power to make laws (plenary legislative power). Thus, the apex court held that the amending power and legislative powers of Parliament were essentially the same. Therefore, any amendment of the Constitution must be deemed law as understood in Article 13 (2). The majority judgement invoked the concept of implied limitations on Parliament's power to amend the Constitution. This view held that the Constitution gives a place of permanence to the fundamental freedoms of the citizen. In giving the Constitution to themselves, the people had reserved the fundamental rights for themselves. Article 13, according to the majority view, expressed this limitation on the powers of Parliament. In a way the apex court held that some features of the Constitution lay at its core and required much more than the usual procedures to change them.

So far the Indian Constitution has been

amended 105 times by Parliament of India using constituent power resting in Art -368 . Some of the amendments have been made to explicitly project the spirits/principles enshrined in the 'hearts' of constitution like the insertions made in the text of the Preamble { using/substituting "Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic" by forty-second Amendment Act, 1976, s.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3-1-1977). And using expression/ substituting "unity and integrity of the Nation " by s.2, ibid., for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3-1-1977) by making insertions } and some of the amendments have been made keeping in view implementation of welfare intentions laid down in some articles of the constitution/ directive principles / fundamental rights / like as through 'The Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951 June 18 1951 where under Art 15,Art 19, Art 31, Articles 85, 87, 174, 176,341, 342, 372 ,376 were amended and Ninth Schedule was added after 8th Schedule) and 4th Amendment Act (The Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act, 1955 17 April 1954 where under articles 31, 31A & 305 of, and the Ninth Schedule to the Constitution were amended) . The substitutions made in the text of Preamble of Constitution of India have been very much within the powers of Parliament as laid in Art 368 of COI since the concerned section of the 42nd amendment Act of 1976 have very much with in the doctrine of basic structure of COI as professed in The 13 Judge - Bench (Chief Justice S. M. Sikri) Writ Petitions Nos.135/70, 351-52i~73-74) which had held that Parliament has powers to amend the Constitution using Art- 368 but the Parliament cannot go beyond disturbing the basic structure of the Constitution of India and all amendments made to constitution are subject to judicial review.

To be continued
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International Childhood Cancer Day

■ DR. KANIKA GUPTA

International childhood cancer day is a global collaborative campaign to raise the awareness about childhood cancer and to express support for children and adolescents with cancer; the survivors; and their families.

The objective of this day is to foster a heightened appreciation and a more profound comprehension of the issues and obstacles associated with childhood cancer. This includes its effects on children and adolescents diagnosed with cancer; as well as the challenges faced by survivors, their families, and society at large.

Furthermore, the day emphasizes the imperative for improved and more equitable access to treatment and care for all children dealing with cancer; regardless of their geographical location. This annual event was established in 2002, initiated by Childhood Cancer International, a global network comprising 176 parent organizations, childhood cancer survivor associations, support groups, and cancer societies in over 93 countries spanning five continents.

Do You Know?

A child succumbs to cancer every three minutes, highlighting the urgency of the situation. Annually, over 400,000 children and adolescents under the age of 20 receive a cancer diagnosis. Survival rates vary globally, with high-income countries boasting an

80% survival rate, while low and middle-income countries struggle with a mere 20% survival rate.

The WHO Global Childhood Cancer Initiative sets a crucial target goal: to eradicate the pain and suffering endured by children battling cancer. By 2030, the initiative aims to achieve a minimum of 60% survival for all children diagnosed with cancer worldwide. This ambitious goal entails nearly doubling the current cure rate, ultimately saving an additional one million children's lives in the next decade.

Significance of the day

International Childhood Cancer Day holds significant importance as it serves as a dedicated global platform to raise awareness about childhood cancer and its impact on children, adolescents, survivors, families, and society at large. The day provides an opportunity to:

1.Increase Awareness: It helps in spreading awareness about the prevalence of childhood cancer; its signs and symptoms, and the challenges faced by young patients and their families.

2. Advocate for Equitable Access: The day emphasizes the need for better and more equitable access to treatment and care for children with cancer worldwide. It sheds light on the disparities in survival rates between high-income and low-middle income countries.

3.Support for Families: International

Childhood Cancer Day acknowledges the emotional, financial, and psychological burdens that families of children with cancer often endure. It promotes support systems and resources for these families.

4. Promote Research and Funding: The day encourages increased funding and research for childhood cancer; aiming to improve treatment options, enhance survival rates, and minimize the long-term effects of cancer treatments on young patients.

5.Global Collaboration: It fosters collaboration among international organizations, governments, healthcare professionals, and communities to work together in addressing the challenges posed by childhood cancer on a global scale.

6. Highlight Achievements:The day celebrates the progress made in the field of childhood cancer treatment and survivorship, recognizing the efforts of healthcare professionals, researchers, and organizations dedicated to improving outcomes for young cancer patients.

In summary, International Childhood Cancer Day plays a crucial role in advocating for better care, support, and outcomes for children with cancer worldwide, ultimately aiming to reduce the impact of childhood cancer on individuals, families, and societies.

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When my work is over with this body i will leave it

■ MOHANJI

At one point, Gurudeva slowed down and started showing signs of Detachment from everyone, as if preparing to leave his body. He did not leave the shade of a banyan tree for a week, and was staring at the sky all day. He lay there without eating, drinking, or sleeping. All of us concluded that he would soon be leaving his body, and that was a painful thought for us. Our anxiety grew day by day.

One day, Gurudeva spoke: "You fools! Why are you so anxious, upset and crying? You are upset because I may leave this 'dead' body. I am ashamed that you have understood nothing by walking with me all these years. Death is inevitable for everyone, but not the soul. The Soul Never Dies. I will never die because I was never born. All that is born will die. This is the truth and there is no tragedy in it. When my work is over with this body, I will leave it. I am not the body and nobody can hold me back. You will also leave your respective bodies just like I will, someday. Crying over a dead body is the silliest and stupidest thing one can ever do. When I die, do not put my body in a tomb. Burn it and give the ash to the rivers that bathed it and nurtured it all these years. There should be no visible trace of Atmananda. I will come back again in another body to fulfil every wish of everyone who connects with me. When I come back, I will come back only FOR THE SAKE OF DHARMA and will have no boundaries or barriers. It will have nothing to do with this body that people call Atmananda." Gurudeva made this very clear and started his wandering pattern again when he felt better. We understood that he had wanted to give us an important lesson in life.

Significance of Saraswati Puja

■ ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

BharatvarshaBharatvarsha is a country of religions, faiths and festivals. There are more festivals celebrated in Bharat than anywhere else in the world. Each festival has its own customs, occasions and importance. Saraswati Puja, having great spiritual and cultural significance, is one of the eminent festival heralding the arrival of spring, which is the season of renewal and blossoming.

Saraswati Pujais celebrated every year on the Panchami Tithi of Magha Shukla Paksh of BharatiyaPanchang (calendar). Hence it is also termed as Vasant Panchami, Sri Panchami, Saraswati Panchami in some parts of the country.The festival usually falls in the last month of January or February of the Gregorian calendar. In south Bharat, Saraswati Puja is also celebrated as "Aayudha Puja" during Navratri festival (which usually falls in October/November month).

Saraswati Puja has its own significance as the young children start their first step in the field of education by writing the letters of alphabet with a ritual known as "Akshar Abhyasam", "Vidya Arambham" or "Patti Pujan". People celebrate this day whole heartedly. On this day, Goddess Saraswati is worshipped in Mandirs, schools, colleges, educational institutions, Music & cultural houses as well as other public places, especially by students and teachers.

This day is considered an auspicious day for starting new ventures, projects or even moving into new homes. The pos-

itive energy of spring coupled with the blessings of Maa Saraswati brings progress, success and prosperity in the life of the devotee. For farmers, this day symbolizes the preparation and readiness of the harvest crops.

Yellow and white colours have their own importance in Saraswati puja. According to religious belief, yellow colour is auspicious and represents energy, knowledge, learning and prosperity, whilewhite colour symbolizes light, knowledge and truth. Maa Saraswati is adorned with yellow or whitecloths and traditionally devotees themselves dress up in yellow or white cloths.

Goddess Saraswati is known by several names such as, Vageshwari (Goddess of Speech), Veenapani (Goddess holding Veena in her hands), Pustakdharani (Goddess carrying books), Veenavadini (Goddess playing the Veena), Hansvahini (Goddess sitting on swan), Varneshwari (Goddess of letters), Maa Sharade (who loves Sharad i.e. Autumn season), Bharati (Goddess of history), Vani (melodious speech), etc. by her devotees. According to scientists, when we see yellow colour, our body emits a special hormone called serotonin, which is helpful in reducing stress and strengthens brain.

Maa Saraswati holds Pustak (book), Mala (Rosary), Jalpatra (Water pot) and Veena in her four arms, which has symbolic meaning of importance. The book symbolizes the Veda or learning, the Rosary represents a meditation and spirituality, the Water pot signifies the purifying power to separate right from wrong and the Veena symbolizes all cre-

ative arts & sciences. Her four arms denote the four sides as well as the four aspects of human personality in learning, namely- Manas (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (alertness), and Ahankar (ego). Her vehicle is Hansa (Swan), a sacred bird, which if offered a mixture of milk & water, drink the milk alone and thus symbolises the ability to distinguish between good & evil. Sometimes Mayur (peacock) is also shown sitting near her feet, which symbolisescolourful splendor & prosperity.

Maa Saraswati is a part ofTridevi - Sarasvati, Lakshmi, and Parvati, who are associated with the almighty Tridev - Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. During Navratri, on the seventh day, theGoddess is worshipped in the form of MahaSarasvati, in honour of the Goddess of learning & knowledge.

Goddess Saraswati is mentioned in the Rigved, Upnishad and other Dharmashashtra and has remained significant from the Vedic period to modern times. In Shanti Parva of Mahabharat, Shehas been called the mother of the Vedas.

Rigved signifies her both as a holy river as well as a deity. As per Rigveda-2.041.16, "Ambitame Naditame Devitame Sarasvati", i.e. Saraswati is the best of mothers, mightiest of rivers, and the supreme among Goddesses. Mythologically, She is one of the holy rivers of Triveni Sangam at Prayag in an invisible form.

Shrishti Khand of Padma Puran as well as Skand Puran have detailed mention of Saraswati becoming a river on earth.

The Goddess is referred as MahaSarasvati in Kashmir Shakti Peeth, and as Shardamba in Sringeri. The ancient Sharda Peeth, located on the bank of river Kishanganga (now renamed as Neelam in Pak-captured portion of Northern Kashmir), is one of the oldest survivingtemple of Saraswati. As one of the ancient MahashaktiPeeths, Sharda Peeth is the spiritual location of the fallen right hand of Goddess Sati.

In Sikhism, Vasant Panchami marks the occasion of the marriage of Guru Govind Singh ji Maharaj. In Harmandir Sahib Amritsar, musician stats the Basant Rag, which continue till the first day of Baisakh.

In Jainism faith also, Saraswati is revered as the Goddess of the source of learning and responsible for the dissemination of Thirthinkars. In Buddhism sect, Saraswati is considered as the consort of Manjushree- the knowledge of Bodhisatva.

Saraswati Puja is celebrated in a large number of countries such as Bharat, Nepal, Bali (Indonesia), Thailand (earlier Siam), Myanmar (earlier Burma or Brahma Desh), Pakistan, BangalaDesh, Bhutan, Mauritius, Surinam, Fiji, Japan, and Tibet as per their own custom.

Maa Saraswati is the deity of language, music, arts and wisdom. She represents Sattwa Guna and Gyan Shakti. She is the possessor of knowledge and protector of the universe. It is believed that every intellectual endeavor should begin with Saraswati Vandana.

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