For every election to be held after 1st May 2015, it is mandatory for the balloting unit, i.e. ballot paper/EVM to display the photograph of each candidate. This decision of the Election Commission of India is democratic and constitutional.

India has been Independent for 68 years; even then we do not have peoples' democracy. Only the rule of the white people has been replaced by the Brown skin. Through elections, change in governance has been experimented with, but once any political party comes to power, it gets into the same mode of governance. We have experienced after freedom, that by changing the political party, we are not getting a change in governance. Till there is no appropriate change in system, the nation will not see any change. And this change in system cannot be done by party politics. Therefore, in order to bring true democracy in the country, the people will have to fight for a second freedom struggle through non-violence. In this battle, our vote is our weapon. If this weapon is used with thought and discretion, then this battle can be won. In this battle, we will not injure anybody, nor will we be injured.

The oppressive Britishers did great injustice and harm to the Indian people. Tired and angry by the oppressive regime of the Britishers, the people of this country started a War of Independence in 1857. For 90 years between 1857 and 1947, lakhs of martyrs sacrificed their lives till we got Independence on 15th August 1947.

The freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives had envisioned freedom from the cruel, oppressive regimes of the Britishers to be replaced by a free India where democracy would be run by public participation. The Britishers left the country but true democracy run for the people, by the people, of the people, has not been realized. Instead of that, governance by Political Party mechanism established itself which did not allow true democracy to come to this country.

Thanks to the Constitution drafted in 1949, India became a Republic on 26th January 1950. From that day, the rule of the people began in our country. People became the owners of the country. The government treasury became that of the people. Under these circumstances, all political parties which had been formed prior to Independence should have been disbanded. Mahatma Gandhi had advised the Congress Party leaders to disband the Congress Party but the leaders of Congress did not do so.

After Independence, when the first elections took place in 1952, there is no mention of political party in the Constitution. Congress leaders decided to fight election as a Party which was against the Constitution. Hence, other parties also joined the election race. At that time itself, the Election Commission should have raised an objection stating that it is unconstitutional to fight elections under the umbrella of a political party and should have disallowed the elections. However, it did not do so and hence, the elections of 1952 took place.

Since 1952 to date, all political parties have been fighting elections against the tenets of the Constitution. Due to elections, the competition between the political parties to capture power, intensified. Each and every political party started thinking that, hook or crook, we must win elections and come to power. In order to win elections under any circumstances, the parties started giving their election tickets to even candidates who were known to be corrupt and had criminal backgrounds. Thus, the Parliament, which is the sanctum sanctorum of Democracy, was also filled with corrupt and criminal representatives. There are more than 170 tainted elected representatives.
there, today.

Although various political parties committed the mistake of giving tickets to the wrong people, even the voters did not use their discretion to vote for candidates with a good character and one who did not belong to any political party. There has been no such awareness amongst the voters nor did anyone try to raise such awareness. Thus, it is clear that members of the political parties only think of the progress and development of their party. For them, progress of the society and nation, is a far cry.

This way, because of the party politics, elections against the tenets of the Constitution continue. Thus, in the Parliament and outside it, various alliance of political parties have been formed. Due to these alliances, corruption and goondagiri has increased and public treasury is being looted. If anyone raises voice against them in the Parliament and outside, they group together, to silence these voices. These collective alliances have maliciously spread the poison of casteism and communalism in the community. This is the reason why there are communal and caste rifts and riots. If elections were to be held as per Constitution, instead of political parties, honest and upright candidates would have individually been elected and hence maybe, there would have been no fights amongst castes and communities and there would not have been increase in corruption and loot of public treasury.

Mahatma Gandhi had stated that until villages are developed, our country cannot be developed. Today, in most of the villages in our country, the collective alliances of political parties have created their vote banks, as a result of which, infighting in most villages has increased. There has been hurdles in rural development, as a result of which, development of villages has suffered. Power has been centralized in the Mantralaya and the political parties sitting in the Parliament are not willing to decentralize the power. The ownership of land, forests and water belongs to the village. If the central or the state government wishes to acquire any of the village's natural wealth, it cannot do so without the permission of the gram sabha. If such a law was made, then true democracy would have flourished. However, political parties do not want such a democracy. Therefore, they do not want decentralization of power.

Youth power is the strength of the nation. If the power of the youth had been used for legislative work, then the society and the nation would have had a bright future but alliances of political parties have divided the university students into different political groups and created rifts and fights between them. As a result of which, in many places, students have also been murdered. The strength of the youth which should have been channelized for the development of the nation, has been used for infighting amongst themselves.

As per the Constitution, we call Parliament, the Lok Sabha, which should have been a congregation of people. If, as per the Constitution, individuals absent from political party affiliations were sent as elected representatives, then such a congregation, could have been aptly termed as a Lok Sabha. However, because they have gone there as representatives of political parties, it has turned into a congregation of political parties.

Most of the political parties have decided that money is required for elections and any donation upto Rs.20,000, need not be accounted to the people. Today, political parties take donations from corporates in lakhs and crores of rupees which is fragmented into Rs.20,000 in fictitious names and thus, black money is converted to white and they are not subject to any accountability. This has become a grave danger for the nation. Elected representatives sitting in the Parliament enjoy privileges of bungalows, motor vehicles, rail and air travel, electricity and telephone, amounting to lakhs of rupees. They also take a salary of Rs.50,000 per month. Despite this, political parties of different hues come together to demand salary hike to Rs.1 lakh. How can they distribute the wealth of the nation without the approval of the people? They ask for Rs.1 lakh salary but waste
months of Parliament Session time, in infighting, thus wasting crores of rupees of public money. This is not good for the country. If, as per the Constitution, individuals, bereft of political affiliations had entered the Parliament, such a situation would have been reached.

To eradicate these ills, we need to have people with character, without party affiliations, to be elected to the Parliament. The key to this change is in the hands of the people but the voter has forgotten to use it. And hence, the voter gives his vote to the wrong candidate, in return of Rs.100, Rs.200 or Rs.500. Now, the voting public must pledge in the name of Bharat Mata and say that I will not give my valuable vote for any party-affiliated, corrupt and criminal candidate. I will give it only to the individual candidate with strong character who is not affiliated to any political party. If such an awakening happens, then, some day, we can have true democracy in our country. That day, the public will experience true Independence and true Republic.

On 26th January, the voter had become the king of this country. This king has sent to the Parliament, elected representatives to work as his sevaks. All voters are the owners of the country, and all elected representatives are sevaks of the public. However, today, the elected representative belongs to a political party and hence instead of being a sevak of the electorate, has become rulers of the country. And the public has become the sevak. We need to change this.

If the public is the Master and elected representative is the sevak, then if the sevak does not perform as expected, then the Master must have the right to remove him. Hence, strong laws like Right to Recall and Right to Reject must come into force. But members sitting in Parliament belonging to the political parties do not want such laws. This would be possible only when the public sends true and honest candidates into Parliament. Such laws are very important for a strong democracy.

Public money is deposited in the government treasury. With that money, colleges of higher education like engineering and medicine are established. In such colleges, everybody, rich or poor, should have equal opportunities but the institutes of higher education have been usurped by political parties with mutual understanding and turned them into money making shops. As a result, the youngster from a poor family is not in a position to pursue higher education. This is against the tenets of the Constitution.

Scams of thousands of crores of rupees like 2G Spectrum, Bofors, Coal etc happen due to the alliances of different political parties. If individuals without party affiliations had gone to Parliament, maybe such scams would not have occurred.

Seeing the path on which these alliances of political parties are taking us, it seems unlikely that this nation will have a bright future. There is no hope of true democracy for our nation. Then the question arises, whether the sacrifices made by lakhs of martyrs during the 90 year period from 1857 to 1947 has gone in vain.

It is hence imperative for all of us to pledge that we will not let the sacrifices of all our martyrs go in vain. We will tenaciously fight the second battle for freedom in a non-violent manner; we will not vote on the basis of political party affiliations and we will send candidates bereft of them to the Parliament. We will end the unconstitutional party based elections and make true, the dreams and aspirations of those martyrs to bring in true democracy, by the people, for the people and of the people.

For this fight, we shall have to unite people from every village in every state in the country. Those who join this movement should possess good character and be untainted and have the strength to bear insults thrown at them. They need not leave their homes or towns but need to awaken the voters in their area because an awakened and enlightened voter is the pillar of democracy.

Some people say if party politics is abolished, how will the country run? This is also an ignorant thought. The elected representative who will go to
the Parliament will not be party-affiliated but will be people of character, sent by the public. The Constitution already provides the direction for all the elected representatives towards governance. They will have no difficulty if they follow these directions. The Constitution has detailed directions on how the Prime Minister, Speaker etc need to be chosen. If we have to fulfil the dreams of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and similar laks of martyrs, then we have to dissolve party based governance and politics and the key to this lies in the hands of the voters. Without having to fight with anybody, without any violence, just with the vote, the citizen can bring about true democracy in our country.

This work is not going to be easy. The old habits acquired during 68 years of Independence, cannot be changed easily. In each home, even brothers have joined different political parties. In such circumstances, it is not easy to remove party-based politics. However, in the coming five, 10 or 12 years, if like-minded people get together and start working towards public education and public awareness from village to village then party based politics can be eradicated and we can have true democracy.

As per Section 84, any individual who is an Indian citizen, above 25 years, is eligible for election to the Lok Sabha and above 30 years, is eligible to be elected to the Rajya Sabha. The Constitution does not mention any party based elections. Then the question arises, how did such party based elections come into being? Political parties curbed true democracy and started forming government. As per the interpretation of the Constitution, the government should be made of non-partisan individuals in which there is no party in power or party in opposition. But each candidate works for the welfare of his or her constituency and is responsible towards his electorate. Democracy requires responsibility. That responsibility is towards whom? Today, due to the presence of the election symbol, the representative instead of being responsible to the electorate has become responsible towards the Party. Hence, governments are formed for the benefit of the Parties rather than for the good of the common man.

The Election Commission has taken a good decision. For every election to be held after 1st May 2015, it is mandatory for the balloting unit, i.e ballot paper/EVM to display the photograph of each candidate. The candidate’s photograph and the candidate’s name will figure on the ballot paper panel. Column space will be provided between the name and the photograph of the candidate where the voter can stamp his vote. This is the decision taken by the Election Commission on May 1st 2015.

Now, we, the people of this country, should together, request the Election Commission that the decision it has taken is democratic and constitutional but now there is no need of any political party symbol to be displayed along with the candidate’s photograph. To keep such party symbol would be against the Constitution. We must all appeal to the Election Commission to remove all election symbols from the ballot papers of the EVM as it is unconstitutional. If this happens, it will be easier for democracy to come to this country. Come on, let us get together to remove election symbols from the ballot papers/EVM.

To join this campaign, please send your name, address, email and mobile no to the address given below.

Bharat Mata ki jai!
Vande Mataram!!

K B alias Anna Hazare

P.S: This letter maybe printed and distributed by any individual for creating public awareness.

Ralegan Siddhi, Tal.: Pamer
Dist.: Ahemadnagar, Pin 414302 (Maharashtra)
Ph.: 02488-24401 Mob. No.: 985020090
Email: annahazareoffice1@gmail.com
www.annahazare.org | www.joinannahazare.org.in