

COALITION POLITICS IN INDIA :

A STUDY

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Preface

The present Ph.D. thesis **COALITION POLITICS IN INDIA : A STUDY** tries to depict the various dimensions of Coalition Politics in India. Attempt has been made to explore & explain the problems, origin, nature impact and other dimensions of Coalition Politics in the Indian Political System.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Manas Chakrabarty for his perennial support, guidance & encouragement throughout the writing of my thesis without whose constant guidance the thesis could not be completed. I am also thankful to my wife for her constant inspiration in completing the work.

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CHAPTER - ONE

Introduction

A coalition government is a cabinet of a parliamentary government in which several parties co-operate. Usually, such a government is formed if no party on its own gets a majority in the parliament elections. However, a coalition government may also be created in a time of national difficulty or crisis, for example during wartime, to give a government the high degree of perceived political legitimacy it desires whilst also playing a role in diminishing internal political strife. If a coalition collapses, a confidence vote is held or a motion of no confidence is taken.

The term coalition is derived from the Latin word *coalitio* which is the verbal substantive of *coalescere*, which means to grow together. (1) However, as actually used, it somewhat belies its nominal meaning, for the units or the elements brought into combination by a coalition very seldom grow together in any literal sense. (2)

According to the dictionary meaning, Coalition means an act of coalescing, or uniting into one body, a union of the persons, states alliance. In the strict political sense, the word coalition is used for alliance or temporary union into a single government of distinct parties or members of

distinct parties (3). In other words, it commonly denotes a co-operative arrangement under which distinct political parties, or at all events members of such parties unite to form a government or ministry .(4)

It is generally regarded as the product of parliamentary democratic process and is commonly used in connection with political parties, particularly in multiparty system. It may, however, refer to, an alliance of forces within a party or groups cutting across party lines. It is applied to the union of two or more parties, or, as generally happens, portions of parties, who agree to sink their differences and act in common .(5)

Coalition thus refers to a combination of political groups or forces, temporary in nature and for specific objectives (6). It is also generally accepted that a coalition can take place only within the contexts of mixed motive in which both conflict and common interest are simultaneously present and must govern the course of action chosen (7).

Coalition politics: A Theoretical Framework:-

In spite of the fact that the subject of Coalitions is not of recent origin, it has not entrenched itself as a part of the literature on Political Science especially with regard to a theoretical understanding of the concept. In India, the study of coalitions is of recent origin though the

developments of the last two to three decades have witnessed an upsurge in the writings on coalition politics (8).

Two seminal contributions to the theoretical literature on coalition politics are found in the works of William H. Riker and William A. Gammon. Riker has primarily employed game theory to study coalition politics, thus imparting a more disciplined tone to the whole field. He uses the n-person game to develop his theory and simplify a highly complex phenomenon. He put forth the notion that in order to discover the trends or design of a coalition, it is advisable to make an assessment of the human behaviour of the members constituting a coalition. Especially of those who are at the helm of a coalition. Riker holds that general decision making policy of a coalition depends upon its leader (9). The analysis of his leadership is as essential as the analysis of a mathematical theorem or a chemical reaction. Riker's theory finds its echoes in Bryce who subscribes to much of the former's views.

It is seen that a coalition can take place in two phases: pre election alliance or adjustments between the parties and post election union to share political power and run the government (10).

The former type of coalition has two additional advantages than the later. A pre poll understanding provides a common platform to the parties in order to attract the electorate on the basis of the joint manifesto. Moreover, the radicalism of such parties is softened to a great extent in the process of mutual concessions without causing the slightest damage to the image of either of them.

There are generally three types of situations, which inevitably give rise to a coalition government in a state.

a) Inability of any single party, in a multi-party system, to form ministry by commanding a working majority, in the Lower House of Parliament in a bicameral legislature. Owing to the fractured mandate at the polls, India has in recent years increasingly been confronted with such a situation.

b) Existence of a dead lock between the two parties in a bi-party system that is an even balance between the two parties, leading one of the two to ally itself with any minor group.

c) A national crisis necessitating the suspension of party strife and the concentration of all forces in a common direction for the common safety.

The latter two types of situations are most commonly found in the history of England. England is classic land of bi-party system and it is there that the above types of coalitions have occasionally taken place.

Again, a coalition can be tacit or implied and formal or express (11). A tacit coalition is a mere understanding with some group without actually coalescing with it. An express or formal coalition is a formal and legitimate alliance with some group with a clear understanding of give and take (12).

To be more precise, the term **coalition government**, or **coalition cabinet** refers that it is a cabinet in parliamentary government in which several parties cooperate and come under one political umbrella in order to make a majority to form a government. 'Majority' is a must which is the prime requirement of a parliamentary democracy. In a situation where no party has a majority, coalition is the only alternative. In times of crisis, such as war or a major economic or political crisis, parties may form an all-party coalition often called as a National Unity Government or a Grand Coalition.(13)

Cabinets based on a coalition with majority in the parliament ideally are more stable and long lived than minority cabinets. While the former are prone to internal struggles, they have less reason to fear votes of no

confidence, although majority governments based on a single party are usually even more stable as long as its majority can be maintained.(14)

It is seen that Coalition cabinets are common in countries where the parliament is proportionally representative for several political parties. It may be stated that it does not appear rather than the lower house (such as the United States). In semi-presidential systems, such as France, where the President formally appoints the prime minister but where the government itself must still maintain the confidence of parliament, coalition governments are formed quite regularly. In fact, it has become the practice of the day.(15)

It may further be pointed out that the term 'Coalition' as it is generally used in political science, is a direct descendent of the exigencies of a multi-party system in a democratic set up. It is a phenomenon of a multi-party government where a number of minority parties join hands for the purpose of running the government, which is otherwise not possible in a democracy based on a one-party system.(16) A coalition is formed when many splinter groups in a House agree to join hands on a common platform by sinking their broad differences and form a majority in the House. It is an astonishing chorus of discords. Though outwardly a coalition appears to be one solid mass,

inwardly it is ridden by party foibles and frantic party favours and it is for this reason that coalition prove to be transient.(17)

The system of coalitions has certain important implications.(18)

Firstly, coalitions are formed for the sake of some reward, material or psychic.

Secondly, a coalition implies the existence of at least two partners.

Thirdly, the underlying principle of a coalition system stands on the simple fact of temporary conjunction of specific interest.

Fourthly, coalition politics is not a static but a dynamic affair as coalition players and groups dissolve, and form new ones.

Fifthly, the keynote of coalition politics is compromise and a rigid dogma has no place in it.

Sixthly, a coalition Government works on the basis of a minimum programme, which may not be ideal for each partner of the coalition. After all, politics is the act of the possible and coalition politics is its highest expression.

Seventhly, pragmatism and not ideology is the hall mark of coalition politics. In making political adjustments, principles may have to set aside and in this process ideology is the first casualty.

Lastly, the purpose of a coalition adjustment is to seize power; it may seek to stake its claim for the formation of a Ministry for pulling a Ministry down. As the former Governor of D.C. Pavate visualized; if the purpose of forming a coalition is to topple the existing government without any common programme of action or approach, the coalition, however, broad-based or cohesive it may be, would not provide for stability and would in its turn be the victim of the same process of defections.(19)

It is seen that quite often coalitions are formed to prevent a common enemy from capturing power.(20) In this context, the coalescing parties having ideological differences are compelled to come to an understanding, as they have to choose the lesser of the two evils. There have been instances of the Rightists and Leftists coming together to challenge the citadels of the ruling party. Equally interesting is the instance of the Communists and anti-communists forging an alliance to face a common enemy. A coalition devoid of ideological moorings survives till the enemy is humbled. Once the

euphoria of victory is over, differences come to the surface and the structure collapses like pack of cards.(21)

It should be stated that there are a good number of instances of parties shifting their alliance in search of fresh pastures. If power is the only motive behind joining a coalition, realignment will be a regular feature. Indeed, in a coalition set up, alliance go on changing like the sand dunes of a typical desert. No coalition partner has permanent friends or enemies, it has only permanent interests and this is the key word of a coalition.(22)

The subject of coalition government is one which is of great interest and importance to the contemporary world. To us in India, the subject has a special significance and relevance in the context of current political trends and development. An objective and scientific study of the various aspects of the system of coalition governments, and academic elucidation of the principles underlying the system, will be invaluable in helping to identify the problems confronting coalitions and to discover solutions.(23)

The Coalition Government is a familiar form of government in democratic systems. Such a Government is the result of a cooperative arrangement between distinct political parties.

Such arrangements become necessary in a multi-party system when any single party cannot command majority and in a bi-party system where one party allies itself with a minor group or party in order to keep itself in power and also when in a national crisis, party strife is suspended and the demands of national security requires concentration of all forces.(24)

In multi-party countries coalition government often serve as stop-gaps. Sometimes such arrangement takes place between parties owing allegiance to similar ideologies. But that is not a necessary condition. When parties follow different ideologies, there may be political compromises and mutual concessions. Although these do not conduce to stability, such arrangements have been observed to 'tend to curb radicalism and likewise to liberalise conservatism".(25)

In a vast country with diversities as ours, coalitions may be a necessary stage in the evolution of democracy. Sometimes, they may constitute a natural step in the process of change from a multi-party system to a bi-party system. It is obvious that coalitions have both advantages and disadvantages. As Lord Bryce observed that an administration formed by a coalition of parties is usually weak, not merely because the combination is unstable, but because men, whose

professed principles differ, are likely to be entangled in inconsistencies or driven to unsatisfactory compromises.(26) Since Bryce wrote, the dynamics of coalition have undergone changes in certain countries. A recent authority has remarked that "for the political scientists, it may be as superficial to say that a coalition was dissolved because of policy conflict as it may be for a doctor to say that a man died because his heart stopped". But this authority also says that some coalitions are both effective and quite stable. It is said that should all coalitions be of a fleeting duration? Is it not possible that political parties may learn from the experience of coalition governments in this and in other countries and may try to minimise the risk of disruption by a wide and judicious choice of the minimum common programme, by loyal implementation of its items, by the appointment of a strong coordinating committee and by the adoption of such other measures and advices as may result in reducing strains and stresses between the various participants and in promoting cohesive action. The stability of a coalition government depends on the cohesion and determination of the people composing it. In this connection, an example cited by Professor Jennings is pertinent. He observes: "Curiously enough, the coalition which saved civilization between 1940 and 1945

seems to have been at least as united as the ordinary party government".(27)

It is minority parties who generally enter into coalitions with other. It is well known, however, that even minority governments can be stable. In his book on Cabinet Government, Professor Jennings remarks that where no party obtains a majority at a general election there are two possibilities only, the formation of a Coalition Governments or the formation of a minority Government with Opposition support, for, another dissolution is not practicable. He notes that in England there were minority governments from 1839 to 1841, from 1846 to 1852, from 1858 to 1859, from 1866 to 1868, from 1885 to 1886, from 1886 to 1892, from 1910 to 1915, in 1924, and from 1929 to 1931. Thus, it appears that a minority government is not quite an abnormal feature of democracy and must have been within the contemplation of our constitution-makers.(28) It is worth remembering that in England coalition governments operated from 1852 to 1855, from 1895 to 1905, from 1915 to 1922 and from 1931 to 1945. Professor Jennings remarks that the exact point at which a coalition becomes a unified party government is not always clear. There is a tendency for coalitions to lose their party differences. Speaking about coalition government Professor Jennings

said: "Here there may be a little personal and no party loyalty. The Cabinet has a plethora of eminence. There are rival policies as well as rival ambitions". "England", said Disraeli, "does not love coalitions". The truth is that the parties in the coalitions do not love each other.(29)

Excessive political strife and repeated unstable governments would naturally, in ordinary cases, affect good administration and the welfare of the people and even the security of the country may suffer if attention is diverted too long, even though the security of the country may suffer if attention is diverted for long, even though partially, from the real objects for which the democratic system exists.(30) In such cases, the problem must be how to make the administrative machinery so strong that even without superior direction and vigilance for a short period, it can carry on its functions without detriment to public interests. In this connection, the history of France furnishes usual examples.

It is unfortunate that in India floor-crossing and defections continue to vitiate public life in spite of the universal realisation of their pernicious effects. They feed the causes that lead to uncertainties in our political life.(31)

Related to coalition governments, is the question of the power of the Governor in the matter of formation of governments. It is acknowledged

that in the performance of his functions in normal times he is neither the agent nor the servant of the Central Government. Although appointed by the President, he derives his authority from, and is clothed with functions and obligations by the Constitution. It may not be denied that except in matters where he is required, expressly or by necessary implications, by the Constitution to exercise his functions according to his discretion, he is bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers. In normal cases, the provision regarding the necessity of acceptance of such advice by the Governor would apply to the cases of dissolution of Assembly also. It is also asked that is the applicability of this provision affected by the fact that the government for the time being is a minority government or a coalition government?

Again, if the law is that the power to appoint or dismiss a Chief Minister vests in the Governor but he can appoint or dismiss other Ministers only on the advice of the Chief Minister. Does this provision apply to a minority or a coalition government and in the same way as in the case of a minority government ? There are important questions which should be examined.

The study of the various cases which have occurred so far in India, may enable one to deduce some concrete principles. If any variance in

practice is discovered, what is the correct view ? For nothing is more desirable that uniformity in action and certainly in the operation of the Constitution.(32) A continual study of practice leads to formulation of principles which help in the development of constitutional law and conventions. Professor Jennings truly said: "Practice suggests theory; and theory helps to mould practice if it seems to accord with political conditions". It cannot be disputed that consensus of fundamentals is a matter of transcendental importance. Such a consensus will help in precluding the possibility of confrontation between high functionaries.

There is no doubt that the system of coalition governments has a bearing on the question of Centre-State relations. The question relating to the relationship between the composite legislative wing and the party organisations may also arise. Such a conflict, however, is not an abnormal feature of the party system, and it may be said that the prevailing view favours the superiority of the legislative or governmental wing over the party organisation.(33) The view is based on the principle that power and responsibility must go together. But, in reality, the legislative wing and the party organisations are interdependent and such conflicts could perhaps be easily resolved. A careful attempt to

examine many of the problems in depth may be undertaken. An attempt would be taken not only to deal with the history and background of our Coalition governments but will also seek to examine the basic issues confronting them. The focus of the study would cover the role of the Governor, Civil Service and the administration vis-a-vis Coalition Government; the powers and functions of the Chief Ministers; and power relationships between parties in coalition; coalition governments and legislatures; defections etc. In view of the fact that multi-party systems and coalition governments are to be found in other countries, the study here will probably refer to the experience of the Coalition governments in those countries also.

Meaning of Coalition

In its ordinary usage, "coalition" refers to a group of people who come together to achieve some end, usually on a temporary basis. In politics, it signifies a parliamentary or political grouping of different parties, interest groups or factions formed for making and/or influencing policy decisions or securing power. (34) It may be defined as "the joint use of resources to determine the outcome of a decision in a mixed motive situation involving more than two units".¹ With the elaboration of the theory of person games,

the concept has assumed a high degree of mathematical systematization. As the games theory is based on coalitions of players and provides a model for the study of decision making in legislative assemblies, committees, cabinets and international organizations, coalitions can be regarded as a characteristic form for political decision making. Generally, The theory on person games was developed by John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern and was later elaborated by Duncan R, Luce, Anatol Rapoport and William H. Riker. According to this theory, in three person or larger games, the problem for each player is to select partners who can collectively win (as distinguished from two person games in which the problem for each player is to select the best strategy against his opponent). The result of the process of selection of partners is the formation of coalitions. Coalition is a process basic to decision making in politics and needs to be given a proper place in a theory of politics. According to Professor William H. Riker, "Since politics is often defined as the authoritative allocation of values and since allocation is a process of coalition formation, it is apparent that a theory of coalitions is a central part of a theory politics".(35)

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Theories of Coalition Formation

There are many theories of coalition formation which aim at predicting the combination of parties and their modus operandi. Usually, three theories are generally referred regarding coalition formation. In order to show how each theory can be applied, the following example of a coalition situation has been used by Gamson. We can take a situation where polling at a political convention has reduced the list of candidates to three : candidate X with 46 per cent of the votes ; candidate Y with 30 per cent and candidate Z with 24 per cent. It may be assumed that each of the three has absolute control over the votes of supporters. The rules state that whoever obtains a simple majority is nominated.

The first theory is minimum resources theory which was first developed by Gamson and Riker. The basic assumption of this theory is that “a coalition will be formed in which the total resources are as small as possible while still being sufficient”. To use the above example, since the coalition YZ, having 54 per cent of the votes is the possible winning coalitions, it is the one that is likely to be formed. In this situation, the strength possessed by the candidates in term of their resources before any coalition is formed, is really weakness, since the strongest candidate (i.e. with 46 per cent of the votes) is excluded from the winning coalition.

A second theory is called *the theory of minimum power*, based on L.S. Shapley's method for evaluating the worth of a person game for any player. This method is part of mathematical game theory and "is based on the number of times a player is the 'pivotal' member who turns an insufficient coalition into a winning one". A player's pivotal power is a measure of his initial bargaining power which is distinct from his power possessed in terms of initial resources. In the case of the three man convention, since there are six permutations, each candidate will be pivotal twice. On this assumption, the Winning Coalition will be smallest one possible in terms of the total pivotal power of its members.

A third theory of coalition formation is known as the *anti competitive theory*. "The basic assumption of anti competitive theory is that players in the coalition situation do not want to compete with each other ; on the contrary, they are concerned mainly with preserving social relationships within the group. It follows that coalitions in such a group will form along the lines of least resistance". In such a situation, players who follow the lines of least resistance will avoid hard and skillful bargaining. Playing to win will be playing to lose, since the more openly a player seeks to get as much as he can, the less likely it is that he will find a partner who will help him to get it. In such coalitions sometimes, the players who profit most are those

who have made least efforts to do so the aftermath of the 1967 General Elections in India which witnessed a new stage in Indian politics in that it signified the process of transferring the power, previously concentrated in the “Congress System”, to diverse parties and party coalitions in more than half the Indian states. The multi party system which has emerged in India is fundamentally dissimilar to what Giovanni Sartori calls a “structured party system”.

It should be mentioned that the policy making process of the Coalition is fairly direct in its method. Committees are generally formed by Ministries in response to an idea for policy of theirs. So for instance, if the Ministry of Energy wants new regulations on reactor production, they would form a committee to study it, made up primarily of the bureaucracy. (36) They study the idea and its impact and generally do what governmental committees do today. Sometimes they will bring in civilians with knowledge of the area they are looking at to sit on a committee as well, although this is not standard practice, as there is a thriving bureaucracy to draw upon. However, Prosek has said that he wants a thorough review of policy before it reaches the Senate.

From there, it gets sent on to the Senate. The Senate was created as a sober second look to items that are seeking the Emperor's attention, and it

stands as the make or break arena for policy. Generally an item gets three readings in the Senate, and if it is voted down at any step, it must return to the committees for further improvement. If it fails, all three readings, it is considered a dead item. When it finally passes all three readings, it goes on to the Emperor for Imperial approval. Senators are appointed by the Emperor himself, and there are 100 of them at any given time. Most are specialists in one field or another who lend some of their time to their Empire, and the Emperor tries to keep the number balanced from each region.

It goes without saying that the Emperor has to, in the end, finally sign all items into law. Of course, he also has the final authority to approve or kill the item. Quite often he will kill something that is expected to be signed, and most of the peons can only assume he has some great reason for it, but he rarely states why. With Imperial approval stamped on, it goes on to the bureaucracy, whose job it is to implement the policy as per guideline.

The Emperor's advisers are often kept apprised of policy within their purview and are involved in the Senate readings and sometimes add some items before it reaches the Emperor but after it is passed in the Senate, the Military Council and Civil Council both have full time members in the Senate and both tend to be fairly powerful members of the fairly equal Senate.

Because both have the direct ear of the Emperor, they are considered Advisory for all nominal purposes.

A surprising entry into the political circle tends to be the Emperor's family, both literal and extended. When dealing with an Imperial form of government, influencing the Emperor is of prime importance to achieve the agenda, and quite literally anyone who has the Emperor's ear can be used for that purpose. While wackos always exist who claim to be the Emperor's long lost brother, actual blood relatives of the Emperor can be powerful tools if used properly. The Prosek clan has always tried to keep their offspring out of the political loop but such is impossible when dealing with such an important family. Politicians trying to influence the Imperial family are best urged to use utmost caution since like any family raised in the spotlight they tend to be aware of such maneuvering, but if done correctly, you can skip the entire chain of bureaucratic process and possibly impress the Emperor himself.

STRATEGY IN THE PROCESS:

We can ask a fundamental question : how can one have any sort of politicking in an authoritarian environment ? The key here is to picture the government like a big circular maze, with bureaucracy maintaining guarded

doors on each level closer to the center, where the Emperor resides. Some people may walk by all the gates without blinking and others won't ever pass the first, and adept politicians know how to quietly slip in or to find alternate ways in. The Emperor remains at the center of everything, orbiting around him like his own little universe. In fact he remains as a pivot round which the satellites revolve.

The politician walks a fine line in the Coalition. Openly displaying greatness which will usually get him hated and make him enemies, while displaying incompetence leads to the same result. Wise politicians learn to listen and not to speak unless spoken to, because showing that if we know more than others rightly should, is a dangerous thing, while openly broadcasting great ideas, is likely to get them stolen and credited to anyone. Allies are best gathered and kept in reserve, but too many allies could result in unwanted attention from the own government, and the wrong kind of allies will definitely lead down the wrong path. It's not easy, but those who have mastered the political game, are influential people indeed and worthy of more respect than current politicians who more or less fall into their positions. (37)

Targeting the correct people is the key to working the political game. If we have an idea about water management and we talk to the Minister of

Education's wife about it, we don't expect much in the way of results. Wise political creatures learn quickly that usually the top level is out of reach to begin with and the bottom level is useless. The mid-level bureaucrats are often the best place to start, having enough pull to pass along something good and hopefully take you with him. Most mid-level bureaucrats will eventually fade away but some advance and finding those ones who will advance, is a good skill to have and getting in on the ground floor with them, so to speak, will take you up to the top when they go there. Patronage positions are not yet a dead concept and the buddy system remains in full effect in the hierarchy. (38)

Of course, shameless self-promotion never hurts, either. Being at the right parties and talking to the right people is always a big bonus, and squirreling away potential allies is highly recommended if we plan to spend any time at all in the political arena. Just as pointing out our own highlights can be useful, so can pointing out opponent's weaknesses. Of course, needless to say this will garner some enemies in the process, but no one ever said life was fun. Capitalizing on an enemy's weakness is a key to politics (and arguably the whole basis of the Parliamentary Democracy). However, we can take a situation where a guy just humiliated in front of his Minister probably has his own set of friends in high places too and we

can bet he won't let that slight slide for long. Which of course, brings us to the most important rule of all, and watch our back. Politicians learn to have many fronts and if they are lucky, no backs, so they can see it all coming, but the nature of politics is that it could all change in a moment, especially under the auspices of an Imperial form of government. However, as a rule, one usually has friends in high places or friends in low places, not both. The nature of politics is such that the politician only gets to align with one or the other since keeping everyone happy is totally impossible. (39)

There are some old standbys that still work in the Coalition, including every gamer's favourites, bribery and blackmail. Political compacts are created on the promise of reward for support, but bribery goes above and beyond this, offering direct, literal material or social goods in exchange for a mild change of opinion. While by no means a corrupt bureaucracy can, but it certainly is willing to make a little extra on the side for a relatively painless agreement. Blackmail goes a step further and holds incriminating or damaging evidence on someone else and is waved over their heads to either force them to comply with our demands or the evidence will be released, usually ruining said person. Quite often thuggery can be involved, which is also known as sending a "goon squad" over, perhaps threatening, perhaps kidnapping family members. Such tactics are considered very

significant. A relatively new twist is psychic compulsion and while very rare tends to be highly effective. Character assassination goes two steps beyond pointing out the weaknesses of our opponent and takes things out of context and/or creates entirely false things about someone to weaken their image. The list is endless of white, grey and black means by which politics can be played out.

Of course, the inclusion of the Senate changes things immeasurably. The Imperial Senate wields much of the power to control who and/or what goes on to Imperial approval, and that is a lot of power concentrated in few hands, especially few non-elected hands. Senators tend to be very jealous of this power and yet at the same time extremely easily influenced, which is how the political parties (so to speak) can operate. Of course, we need a fair number of Senators (about 51 of them) to vote for our proposal, and this is where the major politicking comes about. With a number of contra-influential groups trying to influence them, Senators tend to be quite rich and quite sought after, although most manage to maintain some sense of foresight with regards to the Empire. After all, if too many bad items make it through, the Senators know they can be replaced almost as fast as the trigger would be pulled. This is not a traditional liberal-democracy Senate but rather an extension of the Emperor himself, given the task of guarding

him from frivolous policy that he has no time for. Each is patriotic to itself and that comes first, while the rest is mostly perks. Yet the jockeying for Senatorial approval is a vicious game still, full of passionate near-fanatics. Senators must walk a fine line for one day they will be called to account for their lifestyles and voting the wrong way at that time could be fatal. Still, a Senator is an immensely powerful person. Most are known by name as well as their political leanings, although it tends to be a degree of grey more than anything. Most can ask to see the Emperor and see him within a reasonable amount of time. The populace as a whole are quite loyal to their Senate and most are treated with a celebrity status that few know in the Coalition. (40)

This all being said, it must be restated that the Emperor is the ultimate figure over which this whole thing is fought. He sits like an objective judge, awarding favour and taking it away as he sees fit. The whole ordeal is a play to the Emperor and his relative applause or lack of it results in men being made or destroyed. However, it is a game of influence, and those who get counted out today may be back tomorrow even stronger than before. It also needs to be said that virtually everyone who gets caught in political games is a patriot at heart, but there are degrees of patriotism. American militia groups are ostensibly patriots of the highest order while

bleeding-heart liberal groups are the same. It's all done for the best of the Coalition, or at least so they believe, and that arguably is the best definition of politics of all.

Coalition Politics: A Critical Evaluation :-

Acceptance of coalition politics as an important political phenomenon today, makes it imperative to study their advantages and disadvantages.

Bryce once remarked administration led by coalition of parties is usually weak, not merely because the combination is unstable but because men whose professed principles differ are likely to be entangled in inconsistencies or driven to unsatisfactory compromises.

Coalition politics in a democratic polity is a reflex of a living and continuous interaction between a parties are natural and hence ultimate quest to come to power by itself and the expedient perhaps transitory inter-party collaboration to capture the reins of government. Thus, by its very nature coalition politics is subject to contradictory motivational pulls and pressures. It is therefore not surprising if parties tend to use the coalition experience fulfill the ultimate objectives, it is equally understandable if parties avoid and even prefer to opt out of a coalition if the former goal tends to cost the latter. Thus stability is a major casualty in

a coalition government that which is an essential requirement for carrying out any long-range programme of economic and social development and providing administration.

Again, the leadership of the real executive is one of the accepted principles of parliamentary democracy. This principle hardly appears to be empirically tenable in the context of coalition politics in India.

The following reasons may be discussed;

Firstly, a person does not owe his position as PM/CM to his election as leader of a particular party or to his pre-eminence within a party but to inter-party acceptance which is usually the result of hard bargaining. There are claims and counter claims which results in the creation of the post of a Dy. Leadership which tends to be more contractual than a cultivated one and as such he is PM or CM more by courtesy than by right, though there are always exceptions.

Secondly, the PM/CM does not always enjoy even elbowroom freedom in the distribution of portfolios. This distribution is in fact part and parcel of the agreement governing the coalition.

Thirdly, the PM/CM is always fighting the battle of political survival sometimes placating the prospective defectors with more minister ship, at

others being at the beck and call of co-ordination committees, and at still other maneuvering for an alternative set of political alignments.

The principles of collective responsibility, so critical to parliamentary democracy, are also seriously threatened by coalition politics. There are numerous examples of responsibility being more individual than collective, especially in state governments. An extreme case being that of Ajoy Mukherjee, the CM of West Bengal who would resort to hunger strikes and mass satyagrahas against Jyoti Basu, Home Minister in his own Cabinet. The cabinet, which consists of representatives from different parties, speaks in many voices. The sense of direction and unity of purpose gets lost.

Political homogeneity is another characteristic of a parliamentary government. This, in turn, is rooted in programmatic unity. Though coalition governments do make efforts to provide for programmatic unity through minimum programmes, they are very poor substitutes, ill-conceived compromises of contradictory programmatic pulls and pressures. The parties in the coalition also have different support structure, which further militate against minimum programmes being treated as an integrated programmatic unit, and more importantly against its implementation. Thus minimum programmes are many a time and evil however necessary-

dysfunctional to political homogeneity, they are more a source of weakness than strength.

Another dysfunctionality is that it affects the morale of the rank and file of the parties. With frequent elections at all levels, the problem that arises is that of alignment. Continued partnership at one level may come in conflict with possibility of competition at another levels. The rank and file does not always appreciate the competition of national level politics. They are further alienated if they don't get adequate share of offices and patronage. There are no assurances for them that the policy of their party will get properly implemented.

Neutrality of the civil servants under a coalition government sometimes suffers. The contradictory pulls and pressures of the coalition model may either cripple independence on the part of the civil servants that may become too strong and just ignore the misunderstanding. Neither attitude is conducive to nation building.

Many critics of the coalition experiment raise the question of its negatively affecting relations between the Center and the States. Obviously in terms of its relation with the Central government, a state government will be at an advantage if formed by a party which supports the Central government. On the other hand, a state government formed by parties,

which are in the opposition in the parliament, will have a difficult passage. However, this is not only true of coalition governments. Even with single party majority governments such problems do arise and these have more to do with working out an effective federal structure that allows smooth Center State relation than with coalition politics per se.

Then comes the question of growth of fissiparous tendencies and factionalism based on region, caste, community etc. getting stronger due to coalition politics. However, the reverse is also true. Diversity in society gets political representation more clearly through coalition rather than single party dominance. Thus, in explaining success or failure of coalitions, political culture is an important factor. Cultures which accord a central place to accepting and negotiating differences are considered conducive to the consolidation and stability of federal coalitions. Recent experiment in India with the instability of minority and coalition governments has undeniably generated misgivings, but it need not necessarily be so.

The diversity and plurality in India's fabric can be best represented through coalition politics when even small groups regional groups, etc. have say in politics. This is not possible in single party dominance. Even only when that party had within it various shades of opinions and espoused a multiplicity of cause. In a vast country with diversity as ours, coalitions may

be thus a necessary stage in the evolution of democracy. Also, a coalition government need not necessarily lead to instability or discontinuity in policies, nor can they be called ineffective or less purposive. The coalition government in Kerala had many achievements to its credit, the most important being land reforms. The coalition, in West Bengal was equally successful although, its success may not be spectacular in dealing with communal labour issues.

With respect to collective responsibility and the powers of PM, it can be said that while there is undeniably a difference in this respect because of the absence of party discipline mechanisms, the contrast is not as sharp as it is made out to be. It is widely recognized that head of government don't have absolute power to choose and remove colleagues. Some impose themselves by virtue of their political weight, while others cant be removed with impunity. Regional, caste and minority representation has always played a role in cabinet formation. All these factors only become accentuated in coalition government situations.

Accountability is best achieved in plural societies through coalition politics. Those who bemoan the cost of coalition governance ignore similar deals cloaked in the secrecy of dominant party discipline. The multiplicity of partners and sub-agendas obviously brings about greater transparency, but

the policy outcomes are not necessarily or inferior to those emerging from single party dispensations. As a result of the pressure experienced by the various partners within the coalition, the policies, which finally emerge, are in the nature of consensus, avoiding extreme positions. For example the BJP had to drop Mandir plans in order to successfully forge a coalition and form the government.

One might now consider the argument that only a bi-party system will lead to efficiency and stability. Studies have shown that coalitions are more a common feature of the political systems of a majority of countries and the USA, UK, Australia, Canada are really not perfect models of bi-party system. These two or three parties are only what are called the main pillars of the political system. The American Government may be cited as the foremost instance of a two party system. However, it must be remembered that the American parties are themselves coalitions of various forces and groups.

In India, the Congress has gone on record against the principle of coalition government, calling them dishonest alliances. This ignores the possibilities of honest alliances and draws sustenance from a typically British aversion, which could be an unreliable guide to governance alternatives for a federal party.

Thus, though the Indian experience with coalition has not been very encouraging - it would be foolish to dismiss them altogether.

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CHAPTER – TWO

Research Questions

The proposed study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (1) How coalitions emerged in the Indian states?
- (2) How it spreaded to the central level?
- (3) What is the impact of coalition over the Indian states?
- (4) What is the impact of coalition over the entire nation?
- (5) What are the problems of coalition in India?
- (6) What is the future of coalition in India?
- (7) Is it going to be a permanent feature in the states?
How long it is going to be survived?

METHODS OF ENQUIRY:

Data for the present thesis have been collected mainly from the secondary sources like books, journals, periodicals, newspapers etc.

CHAPTER - THREE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A good number of scholarly works have been written on political parties and coalition governments during the 20th century based on the experiences of Britain and the European countries. But the classical works have been mostly biased in favour of single-party majoritarian governments and they have regarded multi-party governments as non-durable. More objective and comparative transnational studies appeared towards the end of the century and they seemed to take the coalition phenomenon as natural and related to political culture. The growth of the scientific interest in the study of European coalition politics led to the development of two approaches:

1. the European politics tradition and the game-theoretic tradition. The chief contributor to the latter tradition has been William Riker whose *Theory of Coalitions* (1962) has become the source of the theory of minimum winning coalition.

Lawrence C. Dodd challenges the time-old theory that a durable Cabinet (*Coalitions in Parliamentary Government*, 1976)

requires a majority party government and argues for a fundamental alteration in the existing conceptions.

Vernon Bogdanor (*Coalition Government in Western Europe* (ed.), 1983) describes the working of coalition governments in the democracies of Western Europe. The influence of coalition politics on Cabinet, Parliament, policy outputs, etc. are studied here in the context of countries like West Germany, Norway Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Ireland.

Ian Budge and Hans Keman (*Parties and Democracy — Coalition Formation and Government Functioning in Twenty States*, 1990) analyse the actual behaviour of some four hundred governments in twenty post-war democracies and try to find answers to questions relating to the formation of governments, distribution of portfolios and how parties influence policy.

Michael Laver and Norman Schoefield (*Multi party Government —the Politics of Coalition in Europe*, 1990) have tried to reconcile the theoretical and empirical approaches to the study. Their work offers an accessible approach that bridges the distance between the 'European politics' and 'game theory' traditions of political science. Five basic themes are examined: the identity and

motivation of actors in the game; the eventual membership of the coalitions they form; their durability; the pay offs that are shared; and the impact of constitutional, behavioural and historical constraints on the process of coalition bargaining.

Jug Steiner's comparative analysis (*European Democracies*, 3rd edition, 1955) is another major contribution in this area.

Joseph A Colomer's edited volume (*Political Institutions in Europe*, 1996) contain several sections on the individual nations of Europe.

Jan-Erik Lane and Svante O. Ersson (*European Politics : An Introduction*, 1996) explains the character and trends of European politics and devotes a major part of the work for the analysis of European coalitions.

Bradley Richardson's work (*Japanese Democracy*, 1977) pays attention to the recent coalitional developments in Japanese politics and thus takes a look towards Asia.

So far as politics in India is concerned, innumerable books and articles have been published. But specialist works on coalitional aspects, theory or practice, have been limited in number. A few works deserve mention. K.P. Karunakaran's edited

volume (Coalition Governments in India: Problems and Prospects, 1975) analyses some theories and concepts about coalition making and gives brief reports about some States in India.

S.C. Kashyap's edited work (Coalition Government and Politics in India, 1997) broadly examines the question in the context of the United Front coalition at the Centre.

D. Sunder Ram's work [Indian Parliamentary Opposition (ed), 1996] contains two reprinted articles on coalition politics in India, by Iqbal Narayan and Ramakrishna Hegde written much before coalitions appeared at the Centre.

Indian Politics at the Crossroads (1998) edited by Anil Kumar Jana presents three chapters dealing with the different aspects of coalition politics. Many articles have been published in various journals dealing with current politics of the country.

There are a few works on coalition politics in the Indian States including Kerala and West Bengal.

John P. John (Coalition Politics in Kerala, 1983) examines the working of the coalition ministries of the 1950s and 1960s.

K.V. Varghese (UF Government in Kerala 1967-69, 1978) makes all exhaustive study of the coalition led by E.M. Sankaran Namboodiripad in 1967-69.

E.J. Thomas (Coalition Game Politics in Kerala after Independence, 1994) looks at coalition politics from the game theory point of view.

A. Balakrishnan Nair (Government and Politics of Kerala, 1994) makes a comprehensive study of Kerala politics including coalition phases.

There are other writers, too, like T.J. Nossiter (Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation, 1982),

N. Jose Chander [Dynamics of State Politics-Kerala (ed), 1986] who have paid attention to some aspects of coalition politics in Kerala. It may be noted here that some Ph.D. dissertations have been submitted to the University of Kerala which relate to some major aspects of coalition politics.

A.A. Sebastian's work (Role of Chief Minister in Coalition Governments: A Study of Kerala, 1994) and Raju Abraham's thesis (Role of Political Parties in State Legislature, 1990) are outstanding contributions.

Anjali Ghosh (*Peaceful Transition to Power*, 1981) makes a detailed and perceptive study of the coalitional games played by the Communists and non-Communists during 1967-77 in West Bengal.

P.R. Choudhary's work (*Left Experiments in West Bengal*, 1985) deals with the political history of West Bengal during two decades-1960s and 1970s.

Surabhi Banerjee's biography of Jyoti Basu (*Jyoti Basu : The Authorised Biography*, 1997) covers the political developments of West Bengal from a biographical perspective. A number of articles have been published on Kerala and West Bengal in current journals and dailies, in addition.

CHAPTER – FOUR

COALITION EXPERIMENT IN OTHER COUNTRIES: A Survey

If we make a cursory glance over the world, it is seen that the countries that often have a coalition cabinet include: the Nordic countries, the Benelux countries, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Israel and India. Switzerland has been ruled by a loose coalition of the four strongest parties in parliament since 1959, called the "Magic Formula". Sometimes a coalition government is also created in times of national difficulties or crises, for example during wartime, to give the government a high degree of political legitimacy and acceptability whilst also diminishing internal political strife to a significant extent. In such a situation, it is the only alternative.(1)

To deal with a situation where no clear majorities appear, parties either form coalition cabinets, supported by a parliamentary majority, or minority cabinets which can consist of one or several parties. There remains no other alternative open.(2)

In this regard, the case of Germany may be referred for example. In Germany, for instance, coalitions are the norm as it is rare for either the CDU/CSU or SPD to win a majority of their own. Thus coalitions are formed

with at least one of the smaller parties. Helmut Kohl's CDU governed for years in coalition with the FDP. From 1998 to 2005, Gerhard Schröder's SPD was in a coalition with the Greens. If a coalition collapses, a confidence vote is usually taken in the Parliament or the concerned legislature as the case may be.

It may be mentioned that a similar situation exists in Israel with its dozens of parties. It may be mentioned that the centre-right Likud thus forms coalitions with far right and orthodox groups, while Labour allies itself with more leftist and pacifist parties.(3)

In both countries, grand coalitions of the two large parties also occur, but these are rarer and large parties usually prefer to associate with small ones. But if none of the larger parties can receive enough votes to form their preferred coalition, a grand coalition may be the only choice. In early elections in September 2005, the CDU/CSU did not get enough votes to form a coalition with the FDP; similarly the SPD and Greens did not have enough votes to continue their governing coalition. A grand coalition was formed between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, but partnerships like these usually involve carefully structured cabinets. The CDU/CSU ended up gaining the Chancellory, but the SPD took a majority of cabinet posts.

It may be pointed out that a coalition can consist of any number of parties. In Germany, a coalition rarely consists of more than two parties (where CDU and CSU, two non-competing parties that always form a single caucus, are considered a single party), while in Belgium, where there are separate Dutch language and French language parties for each political group, coalitions of six parties are quite common. India's governing coalition, the United Progressive Alliance, consists of fourteen different parties. Finland experienced its most stable government since the independence with a five-party coalition established as early as in the 1990s.

If we turn to Australia, it is seen that in Australia, the conservative Liberal and National parties are united in an effectively permanent coalition. This coalition became so stable (at least at a Federal level) and so permanent, that in effect Australia had a two-party system.(4)

In the United Kingdom, coalition governments (known as *National Governments*) operated since 1915 only been appointed at times of national crisis. The most prominent was the National Government of 1931-1940. In other circumstances, when no party has had a majority, minority governments have been the rule of the day. However, it may be mentioned that the devolved government in Scotland was run by a coalition

of Scottish Labour and the Scottish Liberal Democrats, as Labour did not have a majority in the Scottish Parliament.(5)

It should be stated that contrary to popular belief, the Coalition is not one large common voice speaking imperatively in total unison. Much like any diverse society, they have a multitude of diverging views and ideas, but the major difference is that there is no outlet for these other views, as a rule. An attempt will be made to examine the nature of the Coalition government and then provide some sample political groups that can be used as a model. (6)

During the Second Dark Ages, Humanity was at best a dust scattered across tempestuous winds. The major instinct for survival grouped together people in the thought that there is more safety in numbers than alone. As these people again came together, a wide variety of methods of leadership were tried on a small scale, and most worked on a smaller scale. However, as the Coalition was forming officially, they realized an important point, that humanity needed a single, strong voice to guide them through these trying times.(7) From a strictly efficiency point of view, dictatorships are very practical to get things done in, and Prosek declared himself Emperor, which is another more grand word for Dictator-For-Life. Even historians at large are forced to admit that at the time it was one of the better moves,

the Coalition did (one of perhaps few). Humanity without direction offered no hope of survival as alien horrors overtook their planet, but with a single, charismatic power to lead them, an empire was forged from the ashes, using rediscovered technology to arm itself and the power of words to justify it. (8)

The Emperor is no puppet nor merely a titular head of state. While the Prosek clan has not necessarily perpetuated this view per se, there is a growing idea with the success of the Coalition that perhaps the Proseks are a family blessed, touched by divinity, fate, or whatever higher force we believe in. While not confirming this, they neither deny it as it serves their interests for the time. That being said, the biggest problem with an Imperial line is that each successive heir must maintain that same strength of character and charisma that their elder had. Another large problem arises if the line of succession is ever even mildly unclear.(9)

It may be mentioned to prelude the discussion of how the CS government works because it is important to understand the hierarchy involved ends absolutely at the Emperor. In a very real way, Prosek was the living, beating heart of the Coalition and wields supreme authority over the entire deal. Now, Prosek learned his history lessons well and like Hitler surrounded himself with experts in their fields and generally listened to

them, and with good reason the Emperor could claim it for his own, and if it failed, a scapegoat for it existed. A problem with any supreme power like that however is that quite often his underlings will tell him what he wants to hear rather than how things actually are (which could be a good game justification for why the Tolkeen attack will go forward). The Emperor need not trust his advisers, only their advice.(10)

Obviously, access to the Emperor dictates importance, as a rule. All laws, edicts, and so forth came from the Emperor himself, although they are often delegated to underlings to carry out. This quite often means that surprising people are caught up in the web of politics that makes the Coalition run. Primary is the Emperor himself, and to catch the eye or ear of the Emperor is considered a great boon. Second to that would be his advisers, or at least his core advisers, including his Military Council, Civil Council and Ministry Heads. All of these top-level people form the advisory panel to the Emperor, although they have no power to enact anything but the most basic parts of their ideas without Imperial approval. Between the Civil Council and the Ministry Heads, existed all the power to literally run the empire, while the Military Council existed for the obvious purpose of preserving the empire. The Civil Council and Ministry Heads wield all of the bureaucratic power that existed outside of the military, which makes up a

sizeable part of the deal in and of itself. Finally, the Senate forms a buffer of sorts between the scores of policy ideas and the Emperor. (11)

The Civil Council is basically a collection of top-level governors from each Coalition state. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Emperor has little interest in the day-to-day affairs of his empire and delegates that power to state heads, typically referred to as Governor-Generals. The Heads of the Ministries refer to governmental agencies that oversee specific parts of the Coalition, including such things as Education, Foreign Affairs, Finance, and so forth. Both these groups have their own respective bureaucratic hierarchies stretching from the Deputy Minister all the way down to the clerk in the local state building. Any politician worth anything learns very quickly to listen to the bureaucracy, or at least appear to, because they are quite often the literal cogs that turn the wheels of government.(12) The Military Council is understandably considered separate from the rest (i.e. there is no Ministry of Defence) and operates as its own entity, including top-level members from each branch of the armed forces. The military bureaucracy is notorious already and suffice it to say that where civilian agencies are given slight leeway, the military agencies are given little slack except where defensively speaking. But again, very little gets done without the Emperor's seal of approval. (13)

Political Parties

Now, we must understand that the phrase political parties isn't used in the traditional, current context, but in the context of Rifts Earth. The Coalition is essentially a single-party government of the exclusive kind (i.e. no opposition), but its single party is divided into a great deal of camps, and it is these varying groups with like-minded opinions that is labelled as political parties.(14) They are merely collections of citizens with similar outlooks and agendas that they want enacted and they actually resemble more closely a lobby organization of today than an actual literal political party. The methods of doing this are as wide and varied as the arsenal of political methods, but in general word of mouth is the way they spread their ideas the most, followed by rallies and seminars. On very rare occasions, they will demonstrate or even protest but these are very, very few and far between due to the generally lack of a governmental sense of humour about it all. Membership is usually unofficial but some have created actual headquarters and issued membership cards.(15) Technically anyone can walk around proclaiming to be a member but they better be able to defend their alleged views if confronted. Also, contrary to popular belief, the political parties of the Coalition are no more violent or radical

than our own lobby organizations. We can take as little or as much salt as we wish, but as always, we have the final say on them in our game. (16)

Their primary methodology is, of course, to influence the Senate, which is where many of their ideas are killed prematurely. They act much like an interest group which does today to influence a lawmaker, expect they have to be a little more subtle about it because a great deal of attention could be gained from their activities which are not technically illegal, but are certainly not what the Emperor envisioned. (17)

We can take up a handful of sample political parties that we can use, abuse or discard completely. It should be noted that many of these are what the Coalition would define as "dangerous" but all political parties that survive for any time learn to camouflage their core philosophies. After all, they are all essentially out to improve the Coalition, they just have different visions on how exactly to do that. Considering their net influence is nearly zero, the CS tolerates them as a sort of "venting system" for undemocratized citizens. It makes more sense than it seems when we actually think about it. These are samples and by all means stock your own game with your own parties.(18)

Libertarians:

Freedom is always an issue for any political society and the Coalition is no exception. However, before we get the wrong image in our head, this party believes only in personal freedom -- in the government staying out of its citizens' lives. They have only a little difficulty in dealing with deeds but are in general a human supremacist group in that they believe humans are the most important of the races and therefore need to enjoy the most freedom.(19) They have no issues with the government except where the government interferes with a citizen's freedom to live and they are often the first ones to point out cases .

Democratic Alliance :

Actually a true multistate phenomenon, this quiet group emphasizes the fact that the Imperial system of government has done its duty and got Humanity back on its feet and that now it is time to give the citizens a voice in their own government. (20) They feel the Coalition would be far superior if it were a democracy and try to demonstrate this daily, although as we can imagine they rarely prove just that which is about the only reason the whole party has not "gone missing" in the night. They are actually well organized but given their lack of a single, solitary leader, they are often

caught in squabbles of their own, which just seems to prove the Coalition's point.

Neo-Americans:

A surprisingly misunderstood party, most educated people who hear the name, assume they want a return to the pre-Rifts American style of government, which would seem to make them an offshoot. However, the Neo-Americans are something of a grassroots organization, which is to say, rather uneducated, and they actually preach a release to an anarchic society. They labour under the belief that America before the Coming of the Rifts was essentially a "might makes right freedom fest" and they seek a 'return' to that. They have some radical ideas about decentralization of power however that make some wonder if they are actually as harmlessly ignorant as they appear.(21)

Order of Progressive Might:

This party is what would traditionally be called ultra-right, even for the Coalition. They seek a totally militaristic society (not totally unlike Heinlein's Starship Troopers society) where those who fight have the rights. While observers from the outside of the Coalition wonder how it could get

possibly MORE militaristic, OPM is serious when it calls for radical policy changes regarding the elimination of civilian police for military patrols, elimination of civil rights for all but soldiers and other ideas that are more scary to ponder than anything.(22) They feel -- honestly -- that the Coalition has softened up and seek a return to the good old days of the mass purges and lusty battle of the Federation of Magic war.

Society for Social Equality:

The SSE is a surprisingly reasonable party which seeks to revive the old socialist traditions of pre-Rifts Germany and Japan, where the state takes care of the (productive) citizen from cradle to grave.(23) They feel that corporations should be nationalized and that a high rate of employment is possible under that nationalized system, along with a healthy social benefits package and a generous welfare package if unemployment was to actually occur. They are also for additional support to the often-ignored hinterlands of the Coalition and rural areas to equalize all social conditions. (24)

Humanist Alliance:

While the name suggests, they would be in line with the Libertarians. They are in fact another extreme right group who believe that Humans are the chosen race of the Megaverse -- the rest of the Megaverse just doesn't know it yet. They firmly support and unapologetically push for policies of genocide of nonhuman races except those that can be made to serve.(25) In their vision, the Coalition lords over the Earth as the master race with a whole pile of slave underlings to serve their whim. As we can imagine, this group is a little radical for most citizens although it has been known to shack up with them from time to time. (26)

Green Party:

They are popularly known as the environmentalists. During the Second Dark Ages, there was a small percentage of the population who actively enjoyed this seemingly poetic justice of nature and were equipped to live off the land again. While the majority of these kooks are still out in the distant wilderness hills of Rifts Earth, some joined up with the forming society of the Coalition with their self-mandated purpose of making sure that humans don't screw up Earth a second time. With the environmental damage repaired over 300+ years, the Green Party acts as a watchdog on

the Coalition government, ensuring that no gross environmental disasters happen. The Coalition actually tolerates this party as long as they don't get too curious and to some degree Prosek actually sympathizes with them, as he feels Earth is a birthright and they shouldn't mess it up.(27)

Theocratic Assembly:

This curious party doesn't promote a theocratic society as one might suspect but pushes for religious freedom within the CS while maintaining the precept of separation of Church and State. Recently a small faction of this party has started to refer to the position of Emperor as a divinely appointed servant and a minor civil war is brewing in the party. (28)Those who venerate Prosek will probably eventually leave and form their own party.

Utopia Alliance:

Quite often taken as a joke, this party preaches the usual fact that humans have a second chance at existence, but their twist is that they should take this chance to create the perfect society, which they just happen to have a blueprint of. (29)Their society would involve benevolent

castes all in harmony with lots of parks and generally a sacchrine sweet view of the world.

Worker's Union:

This party on the other hand is taken fairly seriously, and with good reason. While not a union in the traditional sense (that would be far too much power in the hands of CS citizens), it does represent the working class and brings their requests (they never demand, of course) to various Ministers. (30)They push for typical union things (better wages, better working conditions, more days off, etc.) and generally speaking they have the unique power to seriously negotiate with the CS government. The Union is aware of their special status and take their position seriously, sparing the government the more foolish and silly requests while allowing the government to address the working class without actively campaigning for them.(31)

Société pour Quebec Libre:

The Society for Free Quebec used to push for Quebecois rights in the Coalition. As one can guess, they spend a lot of time on the run these days as the CS hunts down active members, but the Free Quebec party continues

to exist as a mostly illegal political organization which quietly lobbies politicians to fight the strange order about Quebec being traitors.

Politics in Your Rifts Game

Ever since the Rifts Main Manual came out, we were given so very little information on the Coalition except what was clearly needed for Palladium's vision of them, which is to say, lots of evil devices and locations that we could go purge them from. A contributor to the Inconsistencies said that Palladium seems to draw cool looking power armor first and then give it statistics to fit the cool picture, and we can get the idea that this must be how they handled the Coalition -- created a vision of this evil empire and created the details to fit it without considering the actual logic of their creations. Without getting into a huge politics debate, it may be said that an Imperial system of government would not exist in a highly technological society, but it exists in Rifts because of the external horrors that batter the world and require strong leadership. But worse is the fact that Palladium continues to issue orders, ostensibly from CS High Command, which boggle the mind as well as generally ignoring the logistics of running the Coalition.

(32)

Politics gives the Coalition a context to be used in. This is even more true when the Coalition is forced to work outside of Palladium's vacuum it created for the CS -- which is to say, the politics of the CS are best used in a game which has contact with other kingdoms, such as Quebec. Interactions between the CS and other kingdoms can be as easy as countries interacting today in our own world. The absolute best source for political ideas for Rifts is the daily newspaper. The fact is that politics provides the REASON behind the Coalition's actions. (33)

Let's say that Ishpeming is having a really bad day and they request a little garrison in town by the Coalition to help them out. Ishpeming maintains an open-sale policy on its Juicer technology and the CS unsurprisingly doesn't like this. The CS responds with a negative answer noting that their Juicer equipment could handle it easily. Wise Ishpeming politicians realize this is a play by the CS to make them get rid of their Juicer technology, or at least limit its sales, in return for a garrison of CS troops. Ishpeming responds by saying it will dismantle its Juicer bands but will continue to sell the conversion.(34) The CS reply will be that they can't trust the safety of their precious troops to such a dangerous potential for a crazy Juicer going nuts. Ishpeming realizes it is caught and can either petition another empire or comply with the CS's wishes. This sounds much

better than the GM saying, "Ishpeming doesn't sell Juicer conversions anymore. This opens up a whole variety of options for the PCs involved. Perhaps they are contracted by Ishpeming to go out and try to find a mercenary band to fight it, or are sent to a garrison for a lesser political cost.

Politics can also retroactively explain some of the most bizarre decisions Palladium has ever made. The declaration of Quebec as traitors boggles but irregardless, if we assume that Quebec was politically speaking getting too dangerous , then it makes a lot more sense as well as adds an interesting backdrop to the PC's stories. If we ask a CS troop why they aren't attacking Tolkeen and we might get a spit and the answer, "Pah, politics." Skelebot divisions? Politics. Even some of Palladium's bizarre technologies can be explained if the cousin to a General happened to run a factory that made Skelebot chips and wanted his contract in full, the program continues despite reservations.(35)

The Senate is a powerful entity and entire political campaigns could be done about PC Senators, or PCs who wish to become Senators. Dancing the corridors of CS power is not as easy as we might imagine, nor they for that matter. An interesting game might be to try to infiltrate the Senate as a non-CS citizen, either as a Senate aide or perhaps even trying for a full

Senatorial seat. This also opens up the upper echelons of the Coalition to game play and could lead to more of a strategic sort of game as opposed to our face tactical game. Or to be more straightforward, to play on the decision making side, rather than the carrying through side.(36) Playing bodyguard or Senate guard would be interesting too, as it would give both a dose of politics and a dose of action at the same time. Senate allies would help immensely for PCs who find themselves in hot water, although what they might have to do afterwards to repay the debt would be interesting. On a similar note, the Senate is not a homogenous body and PCs could be hired for "darker" operations against each other, including scare tactics, blackmail, thuggery, or even assassination. All of these games would take place in the corridors of power and be very difficult but extremely rewarding at the same time. (37)

On a more practical note, the Senate may explain why many so-called great ideas don't get through to the Emperor. Sure, it sounds good to get a CS space program going again, but the Senators probably decided it was too impractical and would waste money, so it got voted down. A lot of the common sense and practical ideas we as players have for the CS probably wouldn't make it through the Senate, either due to outside influencing on them or by their own simple *attitude*. Those folks can fall to pride like crazy

because of their self-important positions, and many frequently do, acting shortsighted and foolish over issues of pride.(38)

The Masquerade where no one can look at something without getting paranoid but when dealing with a technical game like Rifts it helps to have a number of political levels (municipal, state, national) in mind to provoke game ideas or to explain errors or to just create a lush world that Palladium failed to give.

The classical paradigm of parliamentary democracy consists of an elected representative Parliament which is supreme, a Cabinet collectively responsible to Parliament, a Prime Minister who is supreme within the Cabinet and an organised opposition within the Parliament. Usually, the majority form the government and the minority function as the opposition(39) But the problems arise when no party can secure enough majority to form a single-party government after the election results are declared, and in such a situation the alternative is the coalition or multi-party government. This situation invariably leads to some changes in the traditional paradigm of parliamentary democracy. The composition of Cabinet, the nature of its working, the style of the Prime Minister/Chief Minister, the character of electoral politics

and the party system, and even the composition of the legislature to a limited extent are likely to be affected by the nature of coalition politics.(40) Although the UK had brief spells of coalition governments, they did not last long enough to change the institutional character. It is left to other countries that are compelled to work continuous coalitions to modify the parliamentary institutions.

So far as Coalition Politics is concerned, legislatures and political parties all demand a fresh appraisal in the light of the exigencies of coalition politics. The processes of government formation and dissolution, the role of the Head of State and the working of the Cabinet are all likely to be affected by the coalitions, and the conventions regulating these processes may well differ from those operative in countries enjoying single-party government.(41)

It must be pointed out that the strategies of political parties are likely to be affected by the knowledge that they will be unlikely to will power oil their own but will have to share power with like-minded allies.(42) The dynamics of a multi-party system in which coalition is the norm will, therefore, inevitably prove more

complex than those in a system of the Westminster type with its presumption of two parties alternating in office, each in turn enjoying the full plenitude of power and patronage.(43)

It is pertinent to make a focus to foreign countries with regard to the experiences of coalition. Coalition building between two or more parties has been frequent in Europe. Between 1990 and 1995 there were no less than 91 Cabinets in office, of which 19 were single-party governments, 68 multi-party governments and 4 caretaker governments.' Nevertheless they have not institutionalised coalition politics apart from the parliamentary system. The only exception is perhaps Switzerland with a permanent coalition government by means of its seven-member Federal Council, elected for a fixed four-year term by the Federal Assembly on a party proportional basis. Once the election results are known in Switzerland, it is a question of simple arithmetic as to how the Cabinet seats will be distributed among the parties. The process of Cabinet formation here does not create clear winners and losers.' As a result stability is very high in the Swiss case, especially since there exists no vote of non-confidence. This is one

of the important factors which is perhaps a factor of a longer period of existence of a coalition.(44)

It is well known that Parliamentaryism reigns in Europe but varies from Country to country as regards some basic structures and practices. According to Jan-Erik Lane and Svante O. Ersson, the institutions of parliamentaryism may vary in relation to the legal requirements for: (i) Cabinet investiture or the procedure for appointing a Premier or government; (ii) a vote of no-confidence by Parliament in relation to the government; (iii) the request for a vote of confidence by the Premier; and (iv) the dissolution of Parliament in order that new elections be held .In the UK there are few restrictions on how these four mechanisms of parliamentaryism may be employed, whereas in other countries they are more regulated.(45) The German requirement for a 'constructive vote of non-confidence' is one example which is practised also in Spain where Parliament is restricted to bringing down a government only if it can support a new one. Another instance is the French institution of the block vote, where the Premier may demand that a bill be voted on its entirety, and its rejection by Parliament entails that the Cabinet will step down.

Finally, the prerogative of the Premier to dissolve Parliament may be restricted by rules that either stipulate specific circumstances, such as a successful motion of non-confidence, or place the final decision with someone else such as the President in countries with strong presidentialism.(46)

It may be pointed out that Lane and Ersson have distinguished between three types of coalition governments depending on how large the parliamentary support is.'

They are:

(1) minority or less than 50 per cent support;

(2) small majority or more than 50 per cent and less than 60 per cent support;

(3) grand coalitions or oversized governments with more than 60 per cent support. The cut off point of 60 per cent in this classification is arbitrary. In the Indian situation, this may be raised to 67 per cent or two-third majority, as two-third majority is required for passing constitutional amendments. The minority model tends to prevail in the Scandinavian countries, whereas grand coalitions are to be found in the so-called consociational countries in Central Europe on the one hand and in the new

democracies in Eastern Europe on the other. Minority governments have existed in India both at the Centre and in some States, but majority governments have been the rule rather than the exception.

The level of political stability achieved in the post-1949 European democracies can be measured by the average life-span of governments. According to an estimate, most of the elected Cabinets have survived for periods of considerable length.(47) The mean survival score in Germany has been 37 months and has been significantly higher than in Italy (13 months), Belgium (22 months) and the Netherlands (27 months). In most cases in Germany, the elected government remained in office throughout the period, but there have been exceptions to the rule, as in 1972 and in 1982 when a vote of confidence made way for the dissolution of Parliament before the full term.

Lawrence C. Dodd examines in his *Coalitions vs. Government*, the arguments of eminent scholars from Lowell to Blonde) who have asserted that coalition governments are bound to be short-lived.'(48) A. Lawrence Lowell had argued in his *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe* (1896) that "the parliamentary system will give a country strong and

efficient government only in case the majority consists of a single-party". This thesis has been reaffirmed subsequently by several political scientists in their works. Lord Bryce says in *Modern Democracies* (1921) that a government formed by a coalition of parties is bound to be weak because of the unstable and conflicting character of the compromise involved. Harold J. Laski upholds, in *Parliamentary Government in England* (1938), that durable government requires a majority party system and argues that the multi-party system either results in a coalition with its "inherent erosion of principles" or provides a minority government which is likely to be weak. Maurice Duverger, in his *Political Parties* (1951) asserts that multipartyism weakens the government and a parliamentary regime. The absence of a majority party necessitates the creation of heterogeneous Cabinets with "limited objectives" and "lukewarm measures". Jean Blondel says that the duration of Cabinet governments is always influenced by the type of party system prevailing in the country and that one-party government is the factor contributing most decisively to the stability of coalition. As pointed out by Lee Chen that coalition, small or large, appears directly antagonistic to stability. Scholars from Bryce to present day upheld Lowell's thesis by comparing the parliamentary experiences of France and Weimar Germany to those of the UK, implicitly accepting that the former were typical multi-

party regimes while the latter was typical of a majority party system. Jean Blonde and Hans Daalder made all advancement by bringing more countries under examination. Blondel analysed the behaviour in seventeen Western parliamentary democracies from 1946 to 1966, focusing on the average differences in Cabinet durability between party systems. Daalder analysed ten smaller "European democracies from 1918 to 1969. Several others too have contributed to the analysis of multi-partyism resulting in what Dodd calls "the myth of multi-partyism" which implies:

(i) governments in multi-party Parliaments must be minority Cabinets, coalition Cabinets, or both;

(ii) minority and coalition Cabinets are, by their very nature, bound to be transient; and

(iii) multi-party systems are undesirable as they produce only transient governments. O. Dodd himself analysed the politics of seventeen European countries from 1919 to 1974 and observed: "While the durability of cabinets may be low for all multi-party parliaments, a large number of durable cabinet survived in multi-party regimes." He further says that some multi-party Parliaments produce durable Cabinets, the multi-party Parliaments produce transient Cabinets. This implies that durability depends not merely on the number of factors but on a variety of factors.

These factors are what constitute the political culture of a country. So whether a coalition government will be durable in a multi-party system or not depends on the political culture of the country concerned.(49)

It should further be stated that a coalition is an alliance of parties formed for the purpose of contesting elections jointly and/or forming a government and managing the governance by a process of sharing power. So coalition implies co-operation between political parties and this operation may take place at one or more of three different levels —electoral, parliamentary and governmental. Parliamentary coalitions occur, according to Bogdanor, when no single-party gains a majority and the party asked to form the government prefers to rule as a minority government on an understanding with another for external support. Such an arrangement may be for a long period or for a limited period till a definite date of termination as with the Lib-Lab pact in Great Britain in 1977-78. It is also possible when a government seeks support from different parties for different items of legislation—a method much used in Denmark where it is known as government by ‘jumping majorities’. Finally, a minority government might survive without support on a basis of toleration

by the opposition parties which do not vote it out for tactical reasons. This was in general the situation of the three Labour minority governments in Britain in 1924, 1929-31 and 1974. In Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, majority coalition rather than minority government is the invariable rule.(50) In Denmark and to a lesser extent in the other Scandinavian countries, minorities may result from the process of government formation. In Italy also single-party governments have been formed and sustained by support from outside. Nevertheless in both Scandinavia and Italy, majority coalition is almost always the preferred type. Japan too has experimented with coalition governments since 1993 and in spite of frequent changes of government, majority coalition has been the order." In India the governments led by Charan Singh, Chandrasekhar and Deve Gowda had been sustained by Congress support from outside and that of V.P. Singh supported by BJP. In these cases the Support had been issue-based, as they claimed.(51)

The governmental coalition is a "power sharing" coalition and it occurs when two or more parties, none of which is able to win a majority of its own, combine to form a majority government.

(52)The parties comprising such coalitions need not necessarily join together in an electoral pact; they may continue to compete electorally with their own coalition partners. This sort of power sharing coalitions are generally familiar to continental Europe, but comparatively unknown to British politics. In fact, power sharing is the end of all coalitions and, therefore, it is the ultimate stage to be achieved in the election process. Any arrangement that stops short of the ultimate stage lacks commitment. Finally, there are what may be called integral coalitions that link parties through the election process, parliamentary performance and governance.(53) Continuous collaboration and cohesion of allies through the above stages of the political process make them constitute stable coalitions while preserving separate identity of the parties.

Vernon Bogdanor likes to look at coalition government as “a particular form of executive rule separate from both presidential government and from the classical model of Cabinet government as adumbrated by authorities such as Bagehot and Morley. He asserts that a coalition government is more than a modified form of parliamentary government, having its own conventions and rules, all emerging from the fundamental principle of power

sharing. According to him, the impact of coalition government will be apparent throughout the whole of the political system, so that “the working of institutions such as the Cabinet and the legislature will prove very different from that of their counterparts in systems dominated by the Westminster model.” It points out some areas of government wherein coalition politics has made significant deviation from the Westminster model. These relate to the following:

i) The role of the Head of State :

In a coalitional system, the Head of State is always liable to find himself playing a more active role in government formation than is customary in Britain or in other countries where single-party majority government is the rule.

(ii) Political homogeneity :

In a coalitional government ministers are invariably drawn from different political parties and hence they represent different and even contradictory viewpoints.

(iii) Collective responsibility :

It is possible to maintain collective responsibility within a coalition Cabinet with the Prime Minister as the keystone. But it is

harder to achieve this ideal in a coalition government than in a single party government.

(iv) The role of the Prime Minister :

The Prime Minister a coalition government is neither able to select his colleagues nor exercise control over them.

(v) The need for party discipline:

A coalition government is likely to be less able to afford rules of party discipline than a single-party government. The coalition partners are bound by all agreement, tacit or open, on policy and performance, and dissenting votes by any backbencher may threaten the government's majority as well as the very basis of the coalition.(54)

Many countries today have accepted coalition politics, but their constitutions are conspicuously silent on coalition governments which are derived from the exigencies of multiparty politics.(55) Some constitutions, however, contain provisions which facilitate the formation of coalition governments. Germany is the most notable example which indirectly promotes coalition building by the constitutional provisions for a powerful Chancellor, constructive vote of no-confidence, regulation of parties,

possibility of outlawing a disloyal opposition, etc. Coalition building in the Federal Republic of Germany was influenced by factors such as the political culture, the geopolitical situation of the country, the functioning of federalism and the development of large catch-all parties." The Belgian Constitution provides for the equal representation in government, with the exception of the Prime Minister, of the French speaking and Dutch speaking members of Parliament. The Constitution further says that on issues related to the language, legislation must be passed with a majority vote within each linguistic group of both Houses, provided the majority of members of each group are present and the total votes in favour of the two linguistic groups attain two-thirds of the votes cast. Apart from constitutional provisions, there are a number of other statutory and institutional factors in European States that might influence the formation of coalition politics, like the electoral system and rules relating to the formation and defeat of governments. A number of West European constitutions, for example, require that an incoming government should survive an investiture vote. This may be sometimes an informal convention,

still it makes a major difference to the politics of coalition in a given system.(56)

Coalitions may be classified as :

- (i) policy pursuit models, and
 - (ii) office seeking models based on objectives, and as
 - (iii) minimum winning models,
- and.

(iv) large size models based on strategy. Policy pursuit models are those formed by like-minded parties, i.e. parties that have a common policy orientation or ideological background. It is often presumed that coalitions are easily formed to make a government when parties are not at a policy distance from each other. Examples are right wing coalitions and left wing coalitions. A coalition which combines leftist parties and rightist parties is a difficult proposition. But sometimes parties and individual legislators may be interested in the pursuit of power or office in total disregard of ideological considerations. They may argue that as power is an instrument for pursuing policies, power or office is what matters most in politics. Minor parties or uncommitted legislators may play truant and jump from the left front to the right front and vice versa, but they tend finally to settle down to a front that is more congenial to them.

It is widely known that William Riker's coalition model is office seeking and purely pragmatic. It involves two profound ideas. First, coalitions tend to be as small as is strictly necessary for winning a simple majority to form a government. A minimum winning coalition stands on the brink so much so that the defection of a single member will make the coalition no longer extant. One advantage of a minimum winning coalition is that the total gains won by the coalition can be distributed in larger shares for each partner participating in the coalition. Hence it is a matter of maximum pay off for the minimum number possible. Second, minimum winning coalitions are less vulnerable to opinion shifts than grand coalitions or minority governments and therefore more durable than the latter. Probably being on the brink, a minimum winning coalition realises the necessity of discipline and cohesion among its ranks. However, the office seeking minimum winning model is more theoretical than practical and it precludes the consideration of political reality or circumstances. In societies with sharp ethnic or other divisions and with innumerable groups and parties representing them, grand or large sized coalitions seem to be in order. In the Indian situation, both at the Centre and in the States, the tendency is to make coalitions large and broad based and therefore the leading parties try to entice into their fold even feeble parties that are not

sure of their post-election survival. Probably this is facilitated by three factors. One, the leading parties want to ensure such a large majority as to be representative of vast sections of people in the country. Two, the lack of discipline and cohesion among party legislators fail to assure the continuance of a minimum winning coalition. Three, the factional character of all parties, including the major parties, does not rule out the possibility of defection of members in spite of anti-defection laws that may exist in the country.(57)

Most theoretical models of coalitional behaviour applied in Western Europe have tended to assume a bargaining environment more or less free from constraints. They tend to assume that every arithmetically possible combination has a chance of becoming real, other things being equal. Little or no attention is paid to the specific local circumstances or to the institutional, legal and personal constraints involved. Some constraints are products of very specific local circumstances like personality clashes, ethnic group identities or similar conflicts that deter groups or parties from coming together. In most political systems of Western Europe, certain political parties have been treated as political untouchables, being excluded from the bargaining process by all

other parties.(58) All such phenomena are available in the Indian society too, having a large and diverse population as in the whole of Europe taken together. Hence these constraints influence the character of coalitional politics in the national political system as well as in each State political system in the country.

It may be pointed out that in the light of the various studies conducted about the coalition governments of Europe, the Indian experience in coalition politics deserves to be examined. The Indian political system has similarities and differences with the European political systems in general, but the political culture and people being different, the political outputs may also be different. Being the largest Parliamentary democracy in the world, India's experiments are of vital importance to the political world.(59)

However, it must be said that no comprehensive and scientific analysis of coalition politics in India as a whole has attempted so far and the present work is a humble attempt in this regard.

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CHAPTER - FIVE

COALITION POLITICS IN INDIA

So far as the concept of Coalition is concerned, it strongly believes in the democratization and pluralism of the Indian polity, and is pledged to contributing, in its own exceedingly modest ways, to creating a political and social framework for South Asia that would remove the injustices and liabilities faced by such traditionally disempowered elements as women, tribals, and ethnic and religious minorities. The Coalition shares in the Gandhian view that no one is truly free until everyone is free, Freedom is indivisible.(1)

It is to be pointed out that Members of the Coalition agree that for a successful coalition, there must be some level of understanding between and among the members of the coalition. If there is no understanding, a coalition can never be successful or it cannot survive at all.(2) In fact, the continuance of a coalition is dependent on better understanding. So far as India is concerned, the seed of coalition politics was sown as early as in 1967 with the conclusion of the Fourth General Election. In this election,

although not at the Centre but coalition politics emerged as many as in seven states in India.(3)

The politics of coalition is not a phenomenon peculiar to India. Such a system prevailed in Weimar Germany and operated in contemporary France and Italy and some of the countries of Asia and Africa. In India, the development of some of the political sub system, following the end of the 'one party dominance system' after the General Elections of 1967, is characterised by coalition politics and government. Some political analysts and observers conclude on the basis of recent trends that coalitions would, for quite some time to come, form the basis of democratic, competitive politics and provide a structure and mechanism for the functioning of political institutions in India.(4) The subject of coalitions in India is, therefore, receiving increasing attention of political scientists and sociologists.(5)

EXPERIMENT OF COALITION POLITICS AT THE CENTRE

This section traces the evolution of coalition politics at the national level since 1977. Although coalition politics of any significance started with the Janata experiment, a genuine coalition government could install itself in power at the Centre only with the United Front Government of 1996. This chapter

analyses in detail the problems of Cabinet formation and Cabinet management under various coalitions from 1996 to the end of 2000.

With the progress of time, this phenomenon has taken deeper roots, to the extent that political pundits now predict that the days of a clear mandate in favor of a single party are over. The previous decades, incidentally, vouch to this fact. Since the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, all the formations at the center have been coalition governments. Some have succeeded, as in 1991, 1999 and 2004 elections, while some have not, e.g., as in 1989 and 1996. The first coalition experiment at the center – in 1977 – also failed miserably.

It well and truly seems that the era of a single party dominating the polity and government is long over. The last clear mandate in favor of a single party – in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections – seems like a distant dream (A majority of the voters now were not even born then!). Every single election since 1989 has strengthened this theory – that coalition governments at the center are here to stay.

It is not that coalition-culture has affected the national politics only – the states have also been affected at individual levels. The trend of coalition politics is still not being strongly felt at the state level, when compared to

the national politics. The bigger states such as UP, Karnataka and Maharashtra are more likely to get a coalition government when compared to smaller states – though smaller states like Jharkhand have also repeatedly got coalition government.

The Janata Experiment

Coalition experiment at the Centre can be traced to the first non-Congress government led by the Janata party (1977-80). The Janata party was the offspring of the continuous struggles made by the opposition parties to pull down the Congress from power. Frustrated by the authoritarianism of the Congress during the Emergency (1975-77), certain opposition parties and groups decided to fight the next general elections under a common banner and thus provide all alternative to the Congress. On the initiative of Jayaprakash Narayan who provided moral leadership to Indian politics at the time, the Congress (O), Jai Singh, the Socialist party and the Bharatiya Lok Dal came together to undertake the challenge.

On 20 January 1977, the leaders of the above parties met in Delhi to chalk out their strategy for the elections. As the first step,

this development was to have a tremendous impact on Indian politics. They decided to fight the Lok Sabha elections unitedly under one flag and with one programme. Morarji Desai who became leader of the party announced the decision to go to the polls under the name of the Janata party. An executive committee was set-up to monitor the selection of candidates, drafting of the election manifesto and management of the party's election campaign. The Swatantra party became its constituent on 24 January, 1977.

It was at this time that Jagjivan Ram, H.N. Bahuguna, Nandini Satpathy and others resigned from the Congress party and announced the formation of the Congress For Democracy (CFD). This group joined the Janata party as an ally. The Janata and the CFD mobilised all anti-Emergency forces in the country and ensured the election of a non-Congress government for the first time at the Centre. Although lacking in resources and organisational machinery, the Janata had leaders of rich political acumen, led by Jayaprakash Narayan who had the moral stature of a national leader almost of Nehruvian stature.

The general elections were held during March 1977, and the non-Congress opposition could sweep the polls. The sixth Lok Sabha gave surprise to the country by defeating the Congress as well as its leaders like Mrs. Gandhi and others .

The Janata party secured 271 and the CFD 28 seats respectively.' Among the Janata party constituents, the breakdown was as follows: Bharatiya Jan Sangh – 93, Bharatiya Lok Dal – 71; Congress (O) – 51; Socialists – 28; Chandrasekhar Group – 6 and others – 25. The formal Constitution of the Janata by merging the constituents took place only on 1 May, 1977, i.e. after the formation of the government, although the constituent groups were fighting the elections with a common symbol — the symbol of Haldhar — previously allotted to the Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD).

The desperate nature of the Janata Dal asserted itself when the party was faced with the task of electing its leader who was to take over the role of the Prime Minister. Jagjivan Ram of CFD, Charan Singh of BLD and Morarji Desai of Congress (O) were serious contenders for the post. When Morarji Desai was elected leader and was sworn in as Prime Minister on 24 March, 1977, the other

two felt betrayed. And factionalism continued even after the formation of the government

The decision of the Janata government to dissolve the nine Congress-ruled State governments and hold fresh elections aggravated the infighting. The distribution of tickets for State Assembly seats added fuel to the fire. Seven States - UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, MP, Orissa, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh - were won by the Janata party in the elections of June 1977, and the Chief Ministerships were shared by the two constituents - the BJS and the BLD. The other constituents were disappointed. In the Assembly elections that followed in February 1978 in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Assam and Meghalaya, the Congress party made an impressive victory in the first three States. This gave further occasion for bitter criticism of the party president Chandrasekhar by Charan Singh and Raj Narain. Charan Singh had in fact opposed the election of Chandrasekhar as president of the party.

After a few months, reconciliation was reached in the party with the decision to have two Deputy Prime Ministers. Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram were installed as Deputy Prime Ministers. However, Charan Singh's faction continued to be active within the party and was routed in the parliamentary party elections in May

1979. All the six important posts in the parliamentary party were won by an informal alliance of the BJS and the Congress (O) groups. Charan Singh continued to entertain hopes about becoming the Prime Minister and Raj Narain, a socialist and Charan Singh's close associate, used every opportunity to press for the same. Although it was Raj Narain who was responsible for the Allahabad High Court judgement against Mrs. Gandhi which eventually forced her to declare the Emergency, he was compelled to seek her help and advice to overthrow Morarji Desai. Raj Narain was removed from the national executive of the party for one year for his personal attack on party leaders and open criticism of government policies. Protesting against the decision and alleging RSS domination in the party, he resigned from the party and formed the Janata (Secular). It was in these circumstances that the Congress party had brought a no-confidence motion against Morarji Ministry and got it passed. On 15 July, 1979 Morarji Desai submitted his resignation. Following the Ministry's fall, Charan Singh left the party and formed a separate Janata (J) party. Bahuguna, S.N. Misra and others also deserted the Janata party.

Y.B. Chavan, the leader of the Congress parliamentary party, was then called by President N. Sanjeeva Reddy to form the government. Being unable to secure a majority, the Congress declined the offer. The President then invited Charan Singh who felt confident of getting external support from the Congress. Charan Singh was asked to prove his majority in the House at the earliest possible opportunity within three weeks' time. On 20 August, 1979, he submitted his resignation without even moving the confidence motion, having failed to ensure the support of the Congress. On 22 August, 1979, the President dissolved the Lok Sabha and ordered fresh elections. Charan Singh government continued as caretaker.

In the elections held in January 1980, to constitute the seventh Lok Sabha, the Congress (I) led by Mrs. Gandhi secured a two-third majority and the Janata constituents were reduced to small proportions. Thus the dream of providing a durable alternative government was shattered by the sudden collapse of the party. The Janata was not able to attain the cohesion and unity required of a single party. The only uniting factor was perhaps the nomenclature, the members being loyal to former groups to which

they once belonged. The power-hungry Janata leaders were indulging in mutual bickering and mudslinging which made the government congenitally unstable. Lack of discipline among party leaders led to disobedience of the party high command and public criticism of governmental policies. Finally, there was no ideological homogeneity among the constituent parties which joined together to provide an alternative to the Congress.

The Janata experiment came to a close with the disintegration of the party thereafter. It was neither a single party government nor a coalition government. Having had their experience and training in the single-party dominance system of the Congress, the leaders failed to imagine how to develop a consensus or coalition system among the different political groups that comprised the Janata. Eyeing each other with suspicion, the constituent parties forgot their competition with the Congress and indulged in conflict among themselves. Further their policy during the regime appeared to be retributive action against Mrs. Gandhi rather than any positive programme of action to rectify the errors of the previous Congress governments.

The National Front Government

The next serious attempt to form a non-Congress government at the Centre was made in 1988 by a coalition of parties called the National Front under the leadership of V.P Singh, the Defence Minister in Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet who had resigned in protest. The seven-party National Front formally launched on 17 September, 1988 consisted of a conglomeration of ideologically disparate, regionally based political parties and groups committed to ousting the Congress from power. The seven parties included: the Jan Morcha, the Janata party, the Lok Dal, the Congress(S), the Telugu Desam, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Assam Gana Parishad. The new found unity was the result of the continuous efforts on the part of V.P. Singh and of N.T. Rama Rao, the Telugu Desam leader and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

V.P. Singh, after his resignation from the Rajiv Gandhi Cabinet and subsequent suspension from the Congress(I), carried on a campaign against corruption in high levels and formed the Jan Morcha as a forum to voice his views. The Jan Morcha was welcomed by other groups and politicians opposed to the Congress (1) who volunteered to share platforms with V.P. Singh and

organised joint campaigns to root out corruption and tackle people.

Other pressing problems facing the V. P. Singh was of cooperation among the opposition parties led to the formation of a common national platform for the Jan Morcha, the Janata party, the Congress (S) and the Lok Dal (A) led by Ajit Singh. A joint statement issued at New Delhi by the group listed fourteen issues which might constitute the core of the strategy to give the country an alternative policy, a new social and a better tomorrow.' The list included electoral reforms, decentralisation of political and economic power, elimination of corruption at all levels and a self-reliant economy with rural parity. Addressing a rally in Bangalore to mark five years of Janata rule in Karnataka, several non-Congress (1) Chief Ministers and opposition leaders affirmed the need for forming an effective anti-Congress (1) front. The rally was addressed by several opposition leaders including the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Karnataka and West Bengal. A series of Joint rallies and conferences culminated in the merger of Lok Dal(A) and Rashtriya Sanjay Manch into the Janata party. There were similar moves for bringing together the other

opposition parties at that time. The opposition moves got an impetus from the election of V.P. Singh from Allahabad Lok Sabha constituency in the bye-elections held in June 1988 with a margin of 110,000 votes. Further, this made V.P. Singh the undisputed leader of the opposition parties, relegating the claims of other aspirants like Chandrasekhar and Devi Lal into the background.

Efforts to merge like-minded parties such as the Janata, Lok Dal, Congress (S) and Jan Morcha continued without apparent success. The main hindrance appeared to be the personal jealousies and ambitions of the leaders of these parties. After much dillydallying, the Janata party, Jan Morcha and the Devi Lai faction of Lok Dal merged and finally launched the Janata Dal on 11 October, 1988. The Congress (S) and the Bahuguna faction of Lok Dal remained aloof. The birth of Janata Dal was acclaimed as a turning point in Indian politics as it promised a centrist, secular alternative to the Congress. The new party was recognised by the Speaker on the floor of the Lok Sabha in April 1989 and was also recognized as a national party by the Election Commission of India in October 1989. Nevertheless, personal enmities remained

between leaders like V.P. Singh, Chandrasekhar, Devi Lai, Bahuguna, Ajit Singh and others

Simultaneously, parallel moves were being made under the leadership of N.T. Rama Rao to forge unity in the opposition ranks. This resulted in the formation of the National Front on 17 September, 1988 — about three weeks before the formation of the Janata Dal. That is to say, the formation of the National Front preceded the formation of the Janata Dal. Of the seven member parties of the National Front, the Janata, the Jan Morcha and the Lok Dal joined to form the Janata Dal; the other four parties preferred to retain their identity. Thus the number of National Front constituents was reduced to five: the Janata Dal, the Congress (S), the AGP, the DMK and the TDP. N.T. Rama Rao was made Chairman of the National Front.

The leaders of the Front turned to the right and left quarters for support. Rama Rao held discussions with Jyoti Basu while V.P. Singh and others shared platforms with the BJP. But the ideological difference between the CPI and CPI (M) groups on the one hand and the BJP on the other, stood in the way of opposition unity moves in the first half of 1989 election year. The second half of the year witnessed a change in the attitude of the political parties. The opposition parties realised that the

Congress (1) was at its weakest and their failure to grasp the situation would never be forgiven by the people. In June 1989, the BJP President L.K. Advani announced the party consensus on the question of seat adjustment with the Janata Dal and other constituents of the National Front in the Lok Sabha elections. After two more days the national conference of RSP held in New Delhi decided to have electoral alliance with National Front to avoid division of votes.

On 17 October, 1989 the Election Commission announced the schedule of the 9th general elections to be held on 22 and 24 November, 1989. The election proclamation brought about the occasion for a rare display of unity among the opposition parties. Seat adjustment talks with the BJP and the left parties got under way. The Election Commission recognised eight political parties as national parties with reserved symbols for the coming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. They were: the Congress (1), Janata Dal, the Lok Dal (B), the Janata Party, the BJP, the CPI, the CPI (M) and the Congress (S).

In these circumstances, the BJP softened its stand towards the Janata Dal and the National Front. The left parties too agreed to make seat adjustments with parties allied to the BJP. It was

clear that the old reservations had to be shed under compulsions of real politik. It was publicly claimed that the Janata Dal had made no open alliance with either the BJP or the Communists; but in fact, their State units were permitted to make electoral adjustments with both.

In the 9th general election that followed, the Congress (1) won the largest number of seats but had no majority to form the government. The Congress (1) made it known that they had no intention to stake the claim for forming a government. So the opposition parties started their moves. The National Front presidium met in New Delhi and constituted a five-member committee to initiate talks with non-Congress (1) parties. The members of the committee were: N.T. Rama Rao, V.P. Singh, Devi Lai, Ajit Singh and Arun Nehru. The committee members held discussions with representatives of BJP and the left parties. As a result, the CPI, CPI(M), RSP and the Forward Bloc decided to extend unconditional support from outside to the National Front to form a government. The BJP also offered to give general but critical support to the National Front to run a minority government without participating in it. Meanwhile, an attempt was made to

explore the possibility of forming a government of “national reconciliation” by including all national political parties, but the idea was not acceptable to all parties and leaders.

Seats Won by Various Parties in the 1989 Lok Sabha Election

Congress (1)	197
Janata Dal	143
Baratiya Janata Party	85
Janata Party	0
Lok Kranti Dal	0
Communist Party of India	12
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	33
ICSS	1
Telugu Desam Party	2
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	0
Other major State parties	22
Others	22
Independents	12
Total	529

The Janata Dal parliamentary party meeting, presided over by Madhu Dandavate, elected V.P. Singh as its leader. Although V.P. Singh was popularly thought of as the Prime Ministerial candidate, Devi Lal and Chandrasekhar were strong aspirants and were trying every means to subvert the election of V.P. Singh as the parliamentary leader. It was by prolonged persuasion and pressure that the two leaders were made to accept the election of V.P. Singh as the leader. V.P. Singh proposed Devi Lal as the leader of the parliamentary party and Chandrasekhar seconded it. But Devi Lal declined and proposed the name of V.P. Singh, and Ajit Singh seconded the proposal. The drama gave tense moments as there was a general fear about Devi Lal's changing moods. Madhu Dandavate then declared V.P. Singh to be elected as the leader of Janata Dal parliamentary party. Chandrasekhar, however, expressed his reservation about the manner in which the election was conducted. Then the National Front parliamentary party also elected V.P. Singh as its leader unanimously.

The President of India, R. Venkataraman, invited Rajiv Gandhi to form the government following the principle of first invitation to the largest party. When he declined, having had no majority for his

party and having no intention to seek support from other parties, Venkataraman turned to V.P. Singh, the leader of the second largest party, the Janata Dal. The President stipulated that V.P. Singh would have to take a vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha within thirty days of his assuming office, which he did successfully with the help of the BJP and the Communists. The National Front was supposed to be a wider group comprising five national and regional parties, but the Janata Dal alone had 143 members out of 146 of the National Front. Hence, the National Front was not in fact a coalition, and the National Front government was a minority government led by the Janata Dal and supported by the BJP and the left parties without participating in the government. Nor did the Front parties have a common minimum programme to unite themselves and the ideologically distant supporting parties. The Front leaders did not think of evolving any mechanism for the effective co-ordination and monitoring of the government, not to speak of nurturing a new political culture.

The natural and inherent differences in the National Front government came to surface within a short time of its formation. In August 1990, the V.P. Singh government, following its own

electoral calculations, decided to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission report under which 52 per cent of the government jobs had to be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Castes. The government took the decision without consulting the supporting parties. The decision antagonised the BJP as such a move would adversely affect the electoral interests of the party. V.P. Singh's decision was highly unpopular among the urban upper caste and middle class Hindus who served as BJP's in Bihar, during the course of his Ayodhya-linked Ratha Yatra, by the Janata Dal government of the State gave impetus to BJP's decision to withdraw support to the National Front government. On withdrawal of support by the BJP, the President asked V.P. Singh to prove his majority in the Lok Sabha. The eleven month-old minority government of V.P. Singh was voted out of power on 7 November 1990 with passing of a no-confidence motion in the Lok Sabha with 346 votes against the Government and 142 in favour.

The threat to the National Front government came not merely from the external supporters, but also from within. The Janata Dal was not fully integrated in spite of the merger of the Janata party, Lok Dal and Jan Morcha. Factions of the Janata Dal

and Lok Dal had remained separate, protesting against the policy of the official leadership. And the factions that merged (led by leaders like Chandrasekhar and Devi Lal) were unhappy about the dominance of the Jan Morcha and its leader V.P. Singh. This unhappiness manifested itself when the Janata Dal broke up under their leaders into new political outfits.

After the fall of V.P. Singh government on 7 November, 1990, the Janata Dal was split by Chandrasekhar, who with the support of 55 members formed the Janata Dal (Saimajwadi). Chandrasekhar assumed the office of Prime Minister on 10 November, 1990 with the support of the Congress (1). This was another minority government, not a coalition, solely dependent on the outside support of the Congress and was bound to repeat the fate of the earlier minority government led by Charan Singh. President R. Venkataraman is reported to have enquired whether the Congress support would last for at least one year. Rajiv Gandhi replied: "Why one year? It could continue to the life of the Lok Sabha. Differences occurred soon between the government and the Congress(I) on various issues relating to Punjab, Kashmir and Assam, the economy of the country, rising prices and the question of permitting US planes to refuel in India. Finally, came the allegation from the Congress (1) that its President Rajiv Gandhi's

residence at 10 Janpath, New Delhi was being kept under the constant surveillance of Haryana intelligence men. The Congress (I) walk-out in the Lok Sabha on this issue led to adjournment of the House twice for want of quorum. The Congress party's decision to stay out from the House until adequate action was taken against all concerned forced Chandrasekhar to submit his resignation on 6 March, 1991 and advise the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha. The President of India, R. Venkataraman, dissolved the ninth Lok Sabha on 13 March, 1991 and ordered fresh elections. Chandrasekhar continued as caretaker Prime Minister.

In the next elections held in May-June 1991, the Congress(I) emerged as the largest single party with 224 seats, but without majority. Being the leader of the largest party, P.V. Narasimha Rao formed the government and surprisingly he could complete the five-year term.

The United Front Government

The Eleventh Lok Sabha elected in April-May 1996 witnessed a severely fractured verdict with no one party or alliance being able to come anywhere near an absolute majority. It was a multi-cornered fight, the BJP alone being able to give the semblance of

an alliance. The Congress fought it alone with perhaps some electoral adjustments at the State level. The National Front (NF) and Left Front (LF) parties could not reach any agreement about a third front as a viable alternative to the Congress and the BJP. Despite several rounds of talks, neither the NF nor the LF could agree on their allies or on a common programme. The main cause was the absence of any strong focal point or a leader who could bring them together. The greatest obstacles arose at the State level, particularly in UP, AP and Tamil Nadu where the State unit leaders could not agree to work with their rivals.

The BJP emerged as the single largest party with 160 seats as against 139 seats won by the Congress(1). Atal Behari Vajpayee was unanimously elected leader of the BJP parliamentary party. A delegation led by L.K. Advani met the President of India to stake claim to form the next government.

Meanwhile, the Samata party national executive decided to give issue-based support to the BJP and requested the President to invite the BJP leader to form the government. The President Shanker Dayal Sharma invited Vajpayee on 15 May, 1996 to form the

government and asked him to prove his majority on the floor of Lok Sabha by 31 May, 1996.

At this time, the National Front and the Left Front parties were working hard to forge unity among themselves to stake claim to form the government as well as to check the BJP from reaching power. The Congress (I) Working Committee also decided on 13 May, 1996 to ensure that the BJP would not be able to form the government. In a pre-emptive strike, the NF-LF combine elected H.D. Deve Gowda, the Janata Dal Chief Minister of Karnataka on 13, May 1996 as their candidate for Premiership, and the election was communicated to the President. The election of Deve Gowda was made after a process of elimination, with V.P. Singh, Jyoti Basu and G.K. Moopanar declining to take the responsibility. Jyoti Basu was in fact willing to become the Prime Minister, but the party politbureau decided otherwise. Still it was surprising that the claims of better known politicians like Ramakrishna Hegde were ignored. The leaders who supported Gowda and signed the communication to the President were: H.S. Surjeet (CPI-M), Indrajit Gupta (CPI), Laloo Prasad Yadav (JD), M. Karunanidhi (DMK), G.K. Moopanar (TMC), Mulayam Singh Yadav (SP), Chandrababu Naidu

(TDP), Durgadas Boro (AGP), Madhav Rao Scindia (MVPC) and N.D. Tiwari (Cong-T) Deve Gowda now formally requested the Congress (1) to extend their support to the Third Front in the formation of government. However, the President summoned Vajpayee on 15 May to the discomfiture of the Third Front who criticised the Presidential action as "hasty".

Thus the first BJP Prime Minister was sworn in on 16 May, 1996 along with eleven Cabinet Ministers. But Vajpayee could not settle down to office as he had to muster enough support to keep up the Ministry. Nor could the Third Front leaders, they being committed to snatching away power from the BJP.

The NF-LF leaders now renamed the Third Front as the United Front (UF) and formally elected Deve Gowda the leader of the United Front parliamentary party. The United Front consisted of nine parties of the National Front (JD, TDP, DMK, TMC, AGP, SP, KCP, MPVC, Cong-T) and four Left Front parties (CPI-M, CPI, FB, RSP). Deve Gowda's name was proposed by the CPI(M) leader Somnath Chatterjee and seconded by leaders of all thirteen parties constituting the United Front. By this time, it was clear that the BJP government's fate was sealed. Vajpayee formally moved the

confidence motion on 27 May and after debate on 28 May, he announced his resignation without facing a vote on the floor of the Lok Sabha. The President accepted his resignation and asked him to continue until alternative arrangements were made.

Then the President invited Deve Gowda, the consensus leader of the United Front, to form the next government and prove his majority on the floor of the House. Gowda was sworn in on 1 June, 1996 with 21 Ministers including 12 Cabinet Ministers. Another interesting development at this time was the hurried formation of a Federal Front within the United Front by regional parties - DMK, TMC, TDP and AGP on 31 May, the eve of the swearing in of the UF government. A brainchild of Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, the Federal Front with 58 MPs was supposed to function as a pressure group within the United Front. With the aim of planning a common strategy and joint action on issues common to States vis-a-vis the Centre, the Federal Front was designed to be an instrument of regional parties to assert themselves at the Centre. The United Front drafted a Common Minimum Programme agreed upon by all partners as a guide to action for the new government.

The United Front won the confidence vote on 12 June, 1996 with the support of the Congress(I). Narasimha Rao, the Congress(I) president, affirmed that the Congress would not allow the government "fall under any circumstances". Thus, a genuine coalition government consisting of thirteen parties committed to a common action programme, and propped up by a larger party without participation, came to be established for the first time at the Centre.

The Gowda Ministry could not complete one year, for Sitaram Kesri, the then Congress (I) President, handed over a letter to the President of India, Shanker Dayal Sharma on 30 March, 1997 conveying the decision of the Congress (I) to withdraw support "with immediate effect" and demanding the resignation of Deve Gowda. The Congress President accused the government of trying to marginalise the Congress and not taking serious efforts to check communal, divisive and separatist forces in the country. The Congress Working Committee supported Kesri's decision and authorised him to take appropriate action "for staking claim to form the government". But many Congress leaders themselves were surprised at the sudden move of the Congress President.

Although a number of charges had been listed in the letter addressed to the President of India, the real reason lay elsewhere. The Gowda government had by this time decided to reopen investigation in the Tanwar murder case in which Sitaram Kesri was allegedly involved.

SUMMING UP

Since 1999 Indian Politics has been dominated with Coalition Governments which by far have been stable after a shaky start. Currently, the incumbent Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh is heading a coalition Government of 15 parties called the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) with Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, widow of Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi being its Chairperson.

It should be stated that India entered into the age of Coalition Politics in the 1990s in the true sense of the term. Although Post 1970s emergency period saw the emergence of Janata Party and the weakening of the Indian National Congress, which once was the undefeatable Political Party in India, the breaking up of the National Parties saw a resurgence of Regional Parties which started dominating the state-level politics.

Although Coalition Governments were in existence once or twice during the era of Late Shrimati Indira Gandhi, during 1996-1999 there were 4 Coalition Governments.

When Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee couldn't sustain the Government in 1996 due to lack of Majority (i.e. 272+ seats) in the Indian Parliament after being just 13 days old, the Third Front (a group of regional parties and Non-Congress and Non-BJP combine also referred to as the United Front) formed the Government headed by Mr. H. D. Deve Gowda who was in office from 1 June 1996 to 21 April 1997. The Congress Party and other smaller parties including the left, provided outside support to him in order to provide a stable Government and prevent snap-polls.

But due to rising discontent between the UF and Congress, the latter withdrew support and in order to avoid elections, a compromise was reached. The Congress party agreed to support another United Front government under new leader, provided its concerns - such as not being consulted before taking important decisions and being marginalized - were addressed. The United Front elected Shri Inder Kumar Gujral as new leader and he was sworn in as Prime Minister on 21 April 1997. But unfortunately due to some internal problems in the Government, Congress again

withdrew support and mid-term elections were called after Third Front governments failed twice.

THE ERA of coalition in Indian politics is now a decade old, but it is yet to come of age. The main reason behind the formation of two blocs in Indian political system has always been a compulsion to prevent the other bloc from joining the power-centre. Both the blocs, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), which was inspired by the formation and structure of the NDA - that is, one major national party at the helm and several regional parties participating -- started allying with regional parties not by choice or because of their similar ideologies, but because of the post-poll compulsion of 1998 general election. Thus, the basis for a coalition has never been national interest, but the selfish interest of the political parties to defeat the others and secure the North Block.

This time, a cohesive bloc of political parties lined up with it to form the National Democratic Alliance headed by the BJP, and Shri A.B. Vajpayee was sworn in as the Prime Minister. The NDA proved its majority in Parliament. Towards the end of 1998 however, the AIADMK withdrew its support from the 13-month old government. The government lost the ensuing vote of confidence motion by a single vote. As the Opposition was

unable to come up with the numbers to form the new government, the country returned to elections with Vajpayee remaining the "care-taker Prime Minister".

After 4 failed Coalition Governments and 2 mid-term elections, on October 13, 1999, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee took oath as Prime Minister of India for the third time. The BJP-led NDA had won 303 seats in the 543 seat Lok Sabha, thereby securing a comfortable and stable majority. The Coalition Government that was formed lasted its full term of 5 years - the only non-Congress government to do so.

The National Democratic Alliance was widely expected to retain power after the 2004 general election. The Parliament had been dissolved before the completion of term in order to capitalize on the economic boom and improved security and cultural atmosphere. However, the coalition sidestepped controversial and ideological questions in favour of bread-and-butter economic issues during the campaign and subsequently lost almost half its seats, with several prominent cabinet ministers being defeated.

The Indian National Congress, led by Mrs. Sonia Gandhi became the single largest party and, along with many minor parties, formed the United

Progressive Alliance. With the conditional support of the leftist parties from the outside, the UPA formed a government under Dr. Manmohan Singh.

But just after the UPA sealed the Indo-US nuclear deal, the Left parties withdrew their support and kicked the government to the verge of collapse. However, at that time the Samajwadi Party saved the government during the no-confidence motion moved by the Opposition against the UPA, resulting in the completion of the full term of the UPA government. At one point of time both these parties, INC and Samajwadi Party, were foes and now they are friends which show the ideological differences among the two parties.

The alliance completed a full term and remained in power after the 15th General Elections in May 2009. Although the left no longer supports the UPA but with new allies it has been able to extend its lead in the Lok Sabha.

India now looks forward to a stable future of Coalition Governments as single-party majority seem to be a thing of the past now.

Both Experts and Political Parties agree that the era of Coalition Politics has just begun and its here to stay. "At the time when regional political parties are assuming significance and the days of single party rule

are over, there is no escape from coalition politics."- said Mr. Sharad Pawar, Union Agriculture Minister and President of the Nationalist Congress Party.

Experts say that Coalition Politics is result of rise of Regional Parties on agendas of national importance. One of the reasons for the growing importance of Regional Parties has been their success in articulating the interests of the assertive backward castes and Dalits or 'untouchables'. These parties remain 'regional' in terms of geographic location, but are national in terms of issues relevant to the country as a whole. Their role within the national coalition is also indicative of a more competitive and polarized party system.

The continuity of coalition governments (first under the NDA and later UPA) confirms not merely the decline of one party rule and rise of regional and smaller parties, but a crisis of majoritarian political culture, based on the dominance of a single party led by a charismatic leader over a cluster of smaller parties.

Both the Coalitions have faced the problem of internal disputes due to clustering of parties having differing manifestos. For the sustenance of a stable future of Coalition Politics, the parties must keep their Common Minimum Program ahead of their own ideologies

The coalition era dates back to 1998 when, after repeated attempts, the BJP, led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, failed to form a stable government. It was then that the political honchos in BJP's central committee decided to ally with the regional players to get closer to the magical number required to form the government at the Centre.

The announcement of the National Democratic Alliance in May 1998 signaled the first step in the building of the coalition, which formed the government in 1998, but collapsed within a year due to the AIADMK's pulling out. But it moved ahead to win the next elections held in 1999, with a greater majority and new alliances.

The formation of the NDA government led to an internal debate in the Congress. It was widely felt that on the lines of NDA, the Congress and the non-allied parties should form another bloc to counter it, as it was almost impossible to form a government single-handedly. After the elections it was quite clear that the ruling NDA is far behind the required number and this opportunity led to the formation of UPA (United Progressive Alliance) soon after the 2004 general elections.

The UPA's policies were initially guided by a common minimum programme that the alliance hammered out after consultations with Jyoti Basu and Harkishan Singh Surjeet of the 59-member Left Front. Hence,

government policies were generally perceived as centre-left, reflecting the centrist policies of the INC and the Left policies. Despite having a common minimum programme, allied parties always targeted the Congress Party for some reason or the other.

The NDA Coalition functioned at the Centre from 1999 to 2004 under the leadership of Atal Behari Bajpai. The main issue with which it could come to power was the Ram Janmabhumi Babri Masjid issue. After completing the full term fresh election was declared. But in the election of 2004, the NDA could not come to power. In this election, the UPA Govt. under the Prime Ministership of Dr. Manmohan Singh operated in the Indian political process. The Indian National Congress was the main partner in the UPA coalition government. The same coalition could again come back to power in the 2009 election and this coalition with a little change in its partners is functioning at the Central level.

One aspect should be mentioned is that although Coalition experiment started in India at the Central level in the year of 1977 but none of the coalitions could complete full term. It was the NDA government who scored for the first time and after that the UPA

government has gained the credit of completing full term from 2004 to 2009 and future political currents will say whether this trend will be continued or not.

The present trend therefore is coalition government at the center will be the norm, rather than exception at the center, at least for the foreseeable future.

The experience has been a mixed bag, though one feels that negatives have far outweighed the positives. The first ever coalition experiment in free India, in 1977, was a disaster of unprecedented proportions. The worthies of the coalition could not see eye to eye on almost any matter, and the different pushes and pulls disintegrated the government before it could even complete term.

The 1989 coalition government was another travesty - the coalition government came into being on an anti-Congress and anti-Rajiv Gandhi platform, and ended two years later. Funnily enough, the government collapsed because Congress withdrew its support to Chandrashekhar, who was the Prime minister at that time.

The next government was formed by Congress as the leading party, though supported again by a rag-tag combination of various parties. The coalition succeeded in completing its full five-year term, though not before

giving some anxious moments. Major controversies marred the term of this government - especially the Securities Scam, Babri Masjid incident, Mumbai bomb blasts and then riots, and a number of corruption charges - the telecom scandal and the JMM bribery charges leading among them. The most notable achievement of this government was that the economic reforms were finally started in India.

The period 1996-1999 was almost completed in a daze, as far as the government at center is concerned. BJP turned out to be the single largest party, and was invited to form the government. However, BJP failed to gather the herd effectively, and fell well short of the needed numbers. The next largest party, Indian National Congress, declined to form a government, and instead chose to support a rag-tag coalition of impossibly adverse partners, named National front. Predictable, the period saw two prime ministers - HD Devegowda and IK Gujaral. It is a homage to Indian democracy that a person like HD Devegowda, an unknown entity in national politics till then, and having only a handful of MPs in his own party, could become the PM of India.

The next election brought glad tidings for BJP, which again emerged as the single largest party. This time, the party succeeded in cobbling together a coalition (National Democratic Alliance), and completed its full term in the

office satisfactorily, with Atal Behari Vajpayee at the helm as Prime Minister. However, the alliance could not repeat its performance in the next general elections, much to the surprise of analysts.

In 2004, Indian National Congress emerged as the single largest party, though not large enough to form the government on its own steam. It combined with the Left Front to form the government. The INC and the Left Front alliance was pulled in different directions from the inside, but survived its quota of five years somehow. The INC and the Left Front were diametrically opposite in thinking and ideology, and this manifested in significant - almost crippling - differences with regards to policies, especially economic and foreign policies.

In 2009, INC fared much better in elections and came back into power, much to its own surprise. However, even this improved performance was not enough to get a clear majority, and a coalition was formed with various parties.

It should be said that despite the shortcomings of the coalition governments, there is a positive side about it. Greater participation of the regional parties has put the regional issues on the central table, which, otherwise, would not have got the treatment they deserved. In this

election, the effort of the parent party is to focus on regional issues through the regional allies to maximise their gain.

It should be stated that the formation of coalition governments reflects the transition in Indian politics away from the national parties toward smaller, more narrowly-based regional parties. Some regional parties, especially in South India, are deeply aligned to the ideologies of the region unlike the national parties and thus the relationship between the central government and the state government in various states has not always been free of rancor. Disparity between the ideologies of the political parties ruling the centre and the state leads to severely skewed allocation of resources between the states.

The Elections of 2009 have once again revealed that India has firmly entered into the phase of coalition politics. A closer scrutiny of pattern of results indicate that the parties which understood the grammar of coalition politics effectively could benefit more than those parties which failed to do so. For over a decade of Indian politics have decisively established this trend. In 1996, for instance, the then prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee faced the confidence vote in Loksabha, the entire Indian political spectrum opposed the BJP government. But, within two years, thanks to intelligent political maneuvering, the BJP could succeed in rallying a large number of

parties behind it. On the contrary, the congress at its Panchmadi meet took a stand against coalition politics and maintained that it can come to power on its own. This helped the BJP led National Democratic Alliance to come to power in 1998 and 1999. But soon the congress learnt lessons from its debacle. The party revised its stand at its Simla meet. The congress declared its readiness for coalitions. In fact, the congress high command took personal initiative to implement this changed stand. Sonia Gandhi flew to Chennai to participate in DMK chief Karunanidhi's birth day celebrations. She went to Mayawati's residence to greet her on her birthday. All this helped the congress to gain the confidence of non-BJP parties on the seriousness of the congress to forge alliances. In 2004 elections, congress could get formidable alliances in many states after it has revised its stand on coalition politics. For instance, the congress could arrive at winning alliances with Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) in Bihar, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in Maharashtra, DMK led front in Tamilnadu, Jharkand Mukti Morcha in Jharkhand , Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) in Andhra Pradesh, PDP in Jammu Kashmir .The only exception perhaps is Uttarpradesh where despite earnest efforts by it , congress could not reach an agreement with either Samajwadi party or Bahujan Samaj party.

On the contrary, the Bharatiya Janata Party which was earlier the most significant beneficiary of coalition politics was caught on the wrong foot this time. The costliest mistake was done in Tamilnadu. The rate of failure of BJP'S allies was more than that of its own failure. All this reveal the indispensable factor of coalition politics.

The 2009 elections also reaffirmed the trend of fractured verdict. The national parties could reap electoral dividends where ever they could forge ties with popular allies. The congress has benefited in West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu while the BJP could repeat its gains in Bihar.

Let us now look at some of the apprehensions and misconceptions surrounding the era of coalition politics.

Firstly, it is often being argued that coalitions are the hazard of Indian politics. This is not true. The coalition politics is neither unique to India nor new to India. Several advanced, industrialized democracies have coalition governments. These include Germany, France, United Kingdom, Japan etc. Infact, a country like Italy saw over fifty governments since Second World War. Japan has seen several governments falling not only due to coalitions but also after facing serious corruption allegations. In India too, we have seen several coalition governments in states after the congress supremacy

on power was challenged for the first time in late 1960's. The coalition government was formed at the centre too in 1977 comprising of by Janata Party with Akalidal.

Second, coalition governments cause political instability thereby resulting in uncertainty in governance. This argument is partly true. In the early phase of coalition politics, there were frequent changes in government.

But over the period of time, coalition governments have consolidated. For instance, Kerala has seen frequent change of governments. But off late, Kerala has governments remaining in office for a full term .Different political parties are clearly identified with one or other coalition. Even at the centre, coalition governments are running for full term. Therefore, it seems the political instability created by coalition politics is a transient phenomenon. The coalition politics have transformed over a period of time. In the initial stage political parties came together to form coalitions either to come to power or keep their common enemy out of power. The coalition partners may differ on many aspects but share power. In the second stage, political parties despite differences form coalition after arriving at a common minimum programme before or after elections. Such a common minimum programme will be a negotiated document striking a

balance between the positions held by various coalition partners. Such arrangements can not be considered as opportunistic but a display of pragmatism in the era of coalitions. This is in fact a strange characteristic of coalition phase. This is evident from the arrangement at the centre in 2004. The communist party of India (Marxist) won 41 out of the 44 seats it won by defeating the congress-I in 2004 elections. However, still it has to support the congress led united progressive alliance government at least from outside. Such a kind of peculiar arrangement is bound to create some strains and problems within a coalition. One should have political maturity to understand and appreciate the dynamics of coalition politics. The political parties do not wish to govern with coalitions. Fractured verdict of the people make coalitions compulsory. This explanation is to substantiate the argument that coalition arrangements are not politically opportunistic.

The coalition politics have to reach the third stage of its evolution to avoid instability and pulls and pressures leading to frequent irritants. At this stage political parties are coalition partners not only within the parliamentary sphere, but also outside too. Such coalitions are characterized by common worldview and ideological affinity. For instance the left front government in West Bengal and BJP - Shivasena coalition which ruled Maharashtra earlier.

Yet another argument against coalition politics is that it impedes economic progress. But, there is no empirical basis to argue that it happens always. The period of 1990's has witnessed further consolidation of coalition politics. In the era of liberalization there is a tendency towards delinking of economics from politics. There is greater political unanimity on crucial economic policies. On many a reform measures, even the opposition is also with the government.

Even the empirical evidence also does not suggest that coalition politics retard economic growth. At a time when India is passing through the phase of coalitions, the economy achieved 8 percent growth. India has achieved 5.7 percent growth rate during 1990's. Even the international experience also indicates the same.

CHAPTER - SIX

COALITION POLITICS IN THE STATES :

The Indian Union has a federal structure, although there are many unitary features. It has 29 States, including the three States - Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh - created in August 2000. There is a Central Government for the whole of the country and State Governments for each of the 29 States. The system of government is parliamentary, the Constitution having made provisions for both Central and State Governments, more or less on a similar pattern. Built on the majoritarian principle of the Westminster model and buttressed by the single-party dominance of the Indian National Congress, the Central and State Governments in India have been able to present a picture of stable parliamentary politics in the first two decades since Independence. However, there have been instances of States lacking in political stability from early 1950s owing to the failure of the major national party - the Indian National Congress - and of the regional parties to muster enough support to form a stable government.

The erstwhile States of Travancore-Cochin and PEPSU were the first two States in the country to form coalition governments after the first State Legislative Assembly elections in December 1951-January 1952. During 1953-67, three more coalition governments appeared: Andhra Pradesh (1953-56), Orissa (1957-62) and Kerala (1960-64). In 1967, eight States formed non-Congress coalition governments, and they were: Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa. Of these States, Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, Bihar and Orissa had fragmented Assemblies after the Fourth General election of 1967. In Haryana, UP and MP, the Congress party formed its own governments but they fell owing to defection of members and gave way to coalitions. This trend continued although some of the above States went back to single-party Congress governments. In 1997, the number of States with coalition governments rose to fourteen, the States being: Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur and Sikkim. In successive elections to the Parliament, the Congress party retained power at the Centre until 1977 when it was replaced by the Janata

party which was a hotch-potch union of several parties. The Centre also entered the coalition phase in 1996, having formed the first United Front government which was undoubtedly coalitional in character. Among the above States, Kerala has had the longest experience of stable coalition politics with West Bengal standing second. Their experiences have been unique in Indian politics. Coalition politics of the other States have had a chequered history, going back and forth between single-party and coalitional forms of government. The experience of the major States are outlined briefly in the following paragraphs.

It may be stated that Punjab witnessed the emergence of coalition politics in 1967 when the then ruling Congress party lost majority and the opposition parties formed a coalition government under the leadership of Gurnam Singh.' The constituents of the United Front were: Akali Dal (Master Tara Singh Group), Akali Dal (Sant Group), CPI(M), CPI, Jan Sangh, Republican Party, SSP and Independents. The CPI(M) gave unconditional support to the Ministry without joining it. Starting with five Ministers, the Cabinet was expanded five times to give representation to the constituents as well as to accommodate defectors from the Congress. However,

internal dissensions within the leading Akali group and the manoeuvrings of the Congress from outside led to the rise and fall of four coalition Ministries during the period from 8 March, 1967 to 13 June 1971 with a six months' President's rule and a mid-term poll in February 1969.

The second phase of coalition government started after the June 1977 Assembly elections when the electoral alliance of Akali, Janata and CPI(M) parties captured 91 out of 117 seats. The Akalis and the Janata formed the government and the CPI(M) gave external support. This Ministry led by Prakash Singh Badal came to an early end owing to infighting among the Akalis and withdrawal of support by the Janata members on 3 September, 1979 for reasons relating to the then Central Government. The Ministry continued until 17 February 1980 when it was dismissed and President's rule imposed together with eight other States in the wake of the Congress party coming to power at the Centre in January 1980. In the elections that followed to the Punjab Legislative Assembly the Congress secured 63 seats out of 117 and formed a government under Darbara Singh. President's rule was imposed again in 1983, and the next polls were held in September

1985. In this poll, the Akalis secured 73 out of 117 seats and formed the government. But this government led by Surjeet Singh Barnala had to face a serious crisis as 27 Akali members left the party and the government had to depend on the support of the Congress(I), BJP, CPI and CPI(M). However, in view of the fast deteriorating law and order situation in the State, the President's rule was declared again on 11 May, 1987.

After another spell of Congress(I) rule, marked by continued infighting of Akali factions and mass scale destruction of human lives, Punjab entered the next phase of a peaceful coalitional politics after the Assembly elections of February 1997. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)-BJP electoral alliance won a near three-fourth majority and formed a coalition government under Prakash Singh Badal as Chief Minister. Although SAD alone had a strength of 74 out of 117, it preferred to maintain the alliance in running the government for various political reasons.

First, it was a pre-electoral alliance and was therefore committed to implementing common minimum programme.

Second, the BJP and the SAD are allies in the National Democratic Alliance at the Centre and had a joint responsibility to work together at the Centre for implementing the national agenda.

Third, they had a common interest in sharing power at the Centre and in the State despite the apparently contradictory positions they occupied at the two capitals. The BJP's command over the coalition at the Centre and the superiority of the latter over the former in the State of Punjab make for a see-saw arrangement beneficial to both the parties.

To sum up, the coalitional experiments in Punjab during the three decades since 1967 had been chequered by factional infighting in the major parties and the extremist violence let loose by terrorists and the police, resulting in the prolonged breakdown of law and order and the failure of constitutional government. Only when peace was finally restored in late nineties, coalition politics of the Akalis and the BJP were established as a normal system of parliamentary government.

Bihar provided another instance of unstable coalition governments during 1967-72. During the five-year period the State had as many as nine governments with the life-span of four days to ten months. Out of these governments, four were anti Congress coalitions, three Congress-led coalitions and two Congress-supported minority coalitions. A mid-term poll was held in February 1969 which did not make any improvement on the situation. However, with the general elections in March 1972 the Congress (I) came back to power on its own, putting an end to the era of coalition

governments. The second phase of coalition politics in Bihar started after the Legislative Assembly elections held in February 2000. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (101) - a breakaway wing of the former Janata Dal - led by Laloo Prasad Yadav and his wife Rabri Devi who was Chief Minister, lost majority but gained the largest number of seats. Ignoring the claim of RJD to be invited to form the government, the Governor V.C. Pande played politics to favour the NDA and invited Nitish Kumar who had been elected the leader of the NDA parliamentary party to form the government and prove his majority. However, Nitish Kumar had to make exit within seven days as he could not prove majority in the Assembly. Although the Congress(I) and the Left parties had opposed the "corrupt" RJD government in the elections, they offered to support a "secular" RJD government to spite the "communal" NDA. Laloo Prasad Yadav cleverly supported the Congress(I) candidate for Speakership and checked the expected split in the Congress(I) by manipulating the absence of Congress(I) MLAs by keeping them in a Patna hotel.' The parties represented in the Assembly were so fragmented so as to close the possibility of single-party government reemerging.

The State of Orissa was one of the earliest to experiment

the coalition government. They formed a coalition of the two largest parties in the Assembly - the Congress and the Ganatantra Parishad - in 1959. After the second general elections in 1957, the Congress party had formed a government of its own under H.K. Mahtab as Chief Minister with the support of the Communists and the Jharkhand party. As problems arose between the Congress and the Communists, the former entered into coalition with the Parishad and formed the first coalition government on 12 May, 1959. The government continued to function for 21 months and finally broke down on 25 February, 1961 owing to factionalism within the Congress.

The second coalition government came to power after the Fourth General elections in 1967 when the Swatantra–Jana Congress government was formed with R.N. Singh Deo, the Swatantra Party leader as Chief Minister. Split in the Congress in 1969 and the consequent changes in the relations between the Congress party of Orissa and the Jana Congress led to the withdrawal of the Jana Congress from the Ministry in January 1971.

The Assembly elections held in 1971 left the situation equally fluid although the Congress(I) emerged as the largest party. But a government could be formed by a coalition of the Swatantra Party and the Utkal Congress and supported by the Jharkhand Party. The Ministry was headed

by Biswanth Das, a veteran Congressman who returned from political retirement. But the Ministry broke down barely after 14 months, with the election of some Swatantra members and the merger of the Utkal Congress with the Congress (1). Thereafter, the State had a long spell of Congress rule, with a brief Janata return between 1978-80 and a Janata Dal government under Biju Patnaik until it was replaced by the fourth coalition government. After this the Biju Janata Dal and the BJP were elected in the Assembly elections of February 2000.

It should be stated that none of the first three coalition governments could complete full term, and they broke down owing to intra-coalition conflicts or factional infighting within the constituents. The fourth government led by the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and headed by Naveen Patnaik, was cemented by the common interests of the BJP and the BJD who were also partners in the Central government and therefore depend on mutual support at the Centre and in the State.

The political situation in Uttar Pradesh was slightly different from that of the other States after the fourth general election. The Congress emerged as the largest party in the Legislative Assembly but it failed to secure absolute majority. However, the Congress managed to form a government of its own under C.B. Gupta as

Chief Minister with the support of seventeen independent MLAs and four other MLAs who joined the Congress. But soon dissensions broke out in the Congress and Charan Singh, together with sixteen followers, left the Congress to form his own party, the Jana Congress. At the time of voting on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address, the Jana Congress voted with the opposition and defeated the government. On resignation of C.B. Gupta's Ministry, Charan Singh was elected leader of the opposition United Front and was sworn in as Chief Minister on 3 April, 1967. However the government could not function smoothly, and MLAs started leaving the fold in batches until Charan Singh tendered his resignation on 17 February, 1968. The State was placed under President's rule and the Assembly was dissolved.

Accordingly, fresh elections were held on 9 February, 1969, and the Congress having secured majority in the Assembly, C.B. Gupta again formed the government on 26 February, 1969. Following the split in the Congress at the national level in 1969, some Congress MLAs led by Kamalapati Tripathi, left the Congress. Possibilities of a coalition government were explored but differences could not be settled regarding who was to lead a new government. After days of "bargaining games", Charan Singh, who had

by this time merged the Jana Congress with the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, formed the second coalition government together with the Congress (1) on 17 February, 1970. The B K D soon fell out with the Congress (1) on several issues including nationalization of sugar mills in the State and the abolition of privy purse by the Centre. The situation reached a breaking point when the Chief Minister asked thirteen out of twenty-six Congress ministers to resign and the latter refused. The Chief Minister then requested the Governor to dismiss the ministers and the Congress in a countermove withdrew support and demanded the dismissal of the government. Although the Congress (0), Jan Sangh, Swatantra and Samyukta Socialist Party decided to extend support to the Charan Singh Ministry, the Governor recommended suspension of the Assembly and the proclamation of President's rule. And thus the second coalition came to an end on 1 October, 1970.

On the same day, the Congress (0), Jan Sangh and Swatantra Party agreed to form a United Legislative Party (Samyukta Vidhayak Dal) which was joined by the BKD in four days. The SVD thus came to have a strength of 242 members in a House of 425, and elected T.N. Singh of the Congress (0) as their leader. After seventeen days of the President's rule, the SVD coalition under T.N. Singh came to

power. As T.N. Singh was not a member of the legislature, he sought election on 5 January, 1971 but was defeated by a Congress (1) candidate. However, he continued as Chief Minister until 30 March, 1971 when he tendered his resignation on the passage of an amendment to the official motion of thanks to the Governor. Several single-party Congress governments followed, with a Janata inter regnum after the Emergency (1975-77). All political developments in UP were pushed under the carpet of history and politics stood still during the long spell of President's rule lasting from 1985 to 1997. The second phase of coalition politics in UP appeared when the elections were held in March 1997.

The President's rule continued until 21 March, 1997. Through a protracted process of discussions a novel political formula was devised between the BSP and the BJP to co-operate in spite of their being bitter enemies in the election. According to the formula, the Chief Ministership was to rotate between coalition partners —BJP and BSP —after every six months. The working of the Ministry was to be monitored by a three-member panel comprising Vajpayee, Advani and Kanshi Ram. The first term of Chief Ministership was to be with the BSP and Speakership with the BJP. It was also agreed

that the political situation would be reviewed by the two parties at the end of one year.

The Ministry did not work smoothly, and a serious friction arose on the question of the change of Chief Minister and Speaker at the end of the first term of six months. However, it was decided to retain the Speakership with the BJI, and Kalyan Singh of BJP was sworn in as Chief Minister on 21 September 1997. The friction continued and the BSP pulled out of the government within a month. An unusual spectacle of horse-trading and defection followed which helped to prop up the Kalyan Singh Ministry in power. Twenty-two out of thirty-seven Congress (I) MLAs formed the Loktantrik Congress Party and three out of seven Janata Dal members formed a separate group. Twelve rebel BSP members also joined the pro-Kalyan Singh camp. All defectors were rewarded with ministerships, raising the total number of ministers to 93 — the biggest ever Ministry in the Indian States. Although BJP could strengthen its hold on the government with artificial support encouraging defection in the opposition ranks, Chief Ministers had to be shifted to accommodate intra-coalitional conflicts and BJP's factional infighting.

Thus it is seen that Uttar Pradesh experimented with coalition governments, but governmental stability has been always undermined by

the ulterior motives of power-mongering politicians. The trends established in the earlier phases are still maintained, resulting in frequent changes of ministries and their unscrupulous expansion. No serious efforts have been made to forge pre-poll alliances with any commitment to a common agenda; even the present ruling coalition is a post-poll, hotchpotch arrangement. No institutional mechanism has been created to effectively co-ordinate the coalition partners or iron out their differences.

The State of Haryana, born on 1 November, 1966 out of the reorganisation of the State of Punjab, has been notorious for the defection games of its politicians. At the time of its formation, the Congress party was able to make a government of its own under Bhagwat Dayal Sharma as Chief Minister who was reappointed as such after the Assembly elections of 1967. But differences arose within the Congress on the question of Ministry formation, and the dissidents formed a new party — the Haryana Congress — and elected Rao Birendra Singh as its leader.

The opposition parties collaborated with the Haryana Congress to form the United Front, elected Birendra Singh as the United Front leader. The latter was sworn in as the first coalition

Chief Minister on 24 March, 1967. But as a result of frequent Floor-crossings, the relative strength of parties underwent changes and the Governor was compelled to dismiss the Ministry on 21 November, 1967 and bring about President's rule in the State.

In the mid-term elections of May 1968, the Congress secured absolute majority and Bansi Lal became the Congress Chief Minister. But the game of defections continued and obstructed functioning of the Legislative Assembly. Ultimately on the recommendation of the Chief Minister, the Governor dissolved the Assembly on 21 January, 1972. After the next elections were held within three months, the Congress (1) could provide a single party government which completed the full term.

The second coalition Ministry in Haryana came to office after the elections of June 1987 in which the Lok Dal (Bahuguna group) and its electoral ally BJP made a clean sweep." Lok Dal had enough strength to form its own government, but Devi Lal, who became Chief Minister included some BJP members also in the Ministry. Instability of government continued to haunt Haryana from 1987 to 1991 when there were seven governments under five Chief Ministers.

The next major coalitional development took place after the 1996 Assembly elections in which the BJP was all ally of the Haryana Vikas Party (HVP) led by Bansi Lal. A coalition government of the two parties was formed under Bansi Lal as Chief Minister. Inter-party conflict led to the withdrawal of support by BJP which rendered the government in a minority. Although the Congress (I) offered to prop up the HVP Ministry, they had to back out as Bansi Lal did not accede to some of their conditions. Further, a section of the HVP legislators broke away and helped the Indian National Lok Dal under Om Prakash Chautala to form a government in July 1999. In the February 2000 Assembly elections, held one year and a half ahead of the schedule, the INLD fought in alliance with the BJP under the NDA banner and secured 47 and 6 seats respectively in the Assembly of 90 members in total. Although there are several points of conflict between the INI-D and the BJP at the State level as well as at the national level, the alliance continued as a coalition government even after the elections.

Another major State where coalition government existed in Maharashtra. In the Assembly elections held in September-October 1999 no party or combine could secure absolute majority. The BJP -

Shiv Sena alliance, which was ruling the State at this time was short of 20 seats to reach majority (Shiv Sena-69, BJP-56) in a House of 288. The Congress (I) emerged as the largest party with 75 seats and the National Congress Party secured 58. The Congress (I) and the NCP had fought the elections independently and were enemies, the latter Bahujan Mahasangh and the CPI(M). The new coalition Ministry took office towards the end of October 1999 under Vilasrao Deshmukh of Congress(I) as Chief Minister and Chhagan Bhujbal of NCP as Deputy Chief Minister.

The first coalition government of Maharashtra, formed by BJP and Shiv Sena, which ruled the State since 1995 had begun rather smoothly. But they developed intra-coalition conflicts and factional infights within the Shiv Sena, leading to the' replacement of the Chief Minister Manohar Joshi by Narayan Rane, both belonging to the Shiv Sena."

On the whole, out of the 29 States in India as on 1 January, 2001, 15 States have coalition governments and 12 single-party governments.

CHAPTER - SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Challenges and Suggestions :

The main challenge regarding coalition politics is that since in India, it is inevitable, the focus should be on how to ensure that basic issue of good governance, clean politics and administration are not neglected. It is a fact that coalition politics has come to stay in the Indian scenario. One party majority system or that of two single party system is past. The dominant political scenario would be the two coalition group. Thus rather than return to a political centralization that was the economic ruin of India, our major national parties need to focus on social and cultural ecosystems, linking them, together across regions and communities.

Electoral dynamics are also ensuring that no single party will be in a position to dominate the political scenario. Politics of consensus is sought to be achieved, which unfortunately often becomes politics of one-upmanship and bargaining. In this context, however a contrasting and different view may be taken of two former home secretaries of India, Mr. N.N. Vohra and Mr. K. Padmanabiah. Mr. Vohra has an optimistic viewpoint that since meetings are so often and there is so much conversation, decision, taken

may be slow, but they are more lasting. Mr. Vohra who was also principal secretary to Prime Minister, I.K. Gujral, there have been few governments where the Cabinet & Cabinet Committees have met so often. Mr. Padmanabiah also agreed and said that in a multiparty government, the state satraps who are rewarded with cabinet portfolios do not resist development related decisions.

However, an alternative and differing viewpoint have been given by former Cabinet Secretary T.S.R. Secretary T.S.R. Subhramanium who said that simply bringing about a meeting between two ministers of different parties becomes a herculean task, more a process of appeasement. This is one of the most important challenges for not only the ministers but also the bureaucrats. They have to rise above parochial and narrow considerations and think in terms of the national interest.

Often, coalitions are formed after the electoral process is over. This sometimes leads to politics of horse-trading, especially if two groups of parties have roughly the same strength. Therefore, it is desirable that pre-poll alliances are formed which would mean that at least the voters are clear of their choices and later on after election results, the peoples' mandate is respected. It is so important that majority should be tested on the floor of the house and a specific time period be given before the floor

test. Often this time period varies, and unnecessarily this leads to allegation of bias against the President or Governor as the case may be.

In coalition politics, it is understandable that the parties to the coalition will try to expand their support base. This can not be avoided altogether, but this should not be the immediate-and exclusive objective of the partners, who should also owe loyalty to the coalition and the common minimum program. The coalition of parties should endure consultation and co-operation between the organizational and ministerial wings through devices such as co-ordination, consultation committees. Constitutional functionaries such as the President, the Prime minister, the Governor, the Chief Ministers as well as the Civil Servants should not transgress or be denied their importance simply because the Government happened-to be a coalition.

A closer look also needs to be taken at whether the first past the post system is serving the its purpose in a coalition politics system or whether a system if say proportional representation would be more suitable. In the latter, the final result would more closely reflect the wishes of the people, However smaller parties would be sidelined and marginalised which in itself may not be desirable.

Since coalition politics has come to stay and all parties have come to realise the inevitability of coalition and political alliances their tactics will also accordingly change. They will aim at compatibility which would reduce and even remove in-coalition stress and conflicts. This would necessarily lead to prior formulation of ideological and policy commitment oriented to solving issues than merely gaining power. Coalition will probably work better if there are two or three major parties which might act as the anchor or pillars of the system. The other parties can co-operate with them in an endeavour to provide a stable government.

In the context of the emergence of a competitive multi-party system and the inevitability of coalition politics, minor reforms need to be initiated in the scheme of parliamentary governance to expand the democratic space and increase the effectiveness of government. The suggestion that the Prime Minister should be elected by the Lok Sabha and the Council of Ministers can be removed by a vote of no-confidence by the Lok Sabha only after the House had selected an alternative leader also needs to be widely debated and implemented, if there is consensus among parties on this issue.

India has now moved much ahead from where it was sixty three years ago. Material progress can be realised faster if moral areas are guarded. That is the weakness today. The foundations of the new politics cannot be built without an ethical base for politics and administration.

While diving to the conclusion part, we can make some categorization.

Firstly, out of the fifteen States with coalition governments, a few have achieved political stability through continuous experimentation and methodical practice on the part of the political parties and leaders (Kerala and West Bengal).

A second category consists of States that have moved back and forth between one-party government and coalition without having the opportunity to practise coalition politics with commitment (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Goa).

A third category manages coalitions under the patronage of anchor parties, i.e. one party having enough strength to run the government but willing to share some power with the poll allies (Haryana, Orissa, Punjab and West Bengal).

The fourth category includes new entrants, still in the experimental stage (Maharashtra).

The fourth general election (1967) was believed to have marked a watershed in Indian politics, as it broke the Congress dominance in several States and aroused hopes of political polarization. But later developments resulted in the further fragmentation of party structure and gave rise to a more competitive multi-polar politics. The emergence of new political parties and forces including the regional parties occurred at the expense of the dominant Congress which was cut down to size in several States and subsequently at the Centre. Not only are the regional parties today cutting at the roots of the Congress power they are also checking the growth of any alternative party including the BJP at the national level. The two NDA experiments at the Centre seem to strengthen the view that there is no going back to single-party dominance of any complexion —secular or non-secular, socialist or non-socialist.

In the present situation, India is today undergoing through a complex political transition. The context of one party dominance system has become a myth and has given birth to an era of coalition politics. It is seen

that with the decline of the Congress system and since there is no national alternative it was logical for the people to repose faith in different parties and groups. Some of them confined to region only. During the initial period the coalition politics has suffered from the lacuna of unprecedented instability and weak governance. The tentative experiment in coalition government, specifically at the centre, has evoked mixed responses ranging from extreme scepticism to post facto admiration and acceptance. In fact, the inevitability of the arrival of coalition politics in the working of our democracy has become a concern for all.

A clear and in depth analysis of coalition polities is crucial for us to understand the myriad of changes that are occurring in our polity in order to better manage the transition and anticipate and influence the future course of action to be undertaken,

In view of the fact of demands by religious, cultural or ethnic groups for greater autonomy have increased in India, there is an urgent need to think afresh about approaches to structures of governance in multicultural and multiethnic societies like India. India's experience as arguably the most diverse society in the world and her attempt to wrestle with tensions between centralising and decentralising tendencies is reflected in our experiment in coalition government.

It must be said that the formation of coalition governments reflects the transition in Indian politics away from the national parties toward smaller, more narrowly-based regional parties. Some regional parties, especially in South India, are deeply aligned to the ideologies of the region unlike the national parties and thus the relationship between the central government and the state government in various states has not always been free of rancor. Disparity between the ideologies of the political parties ruling the centre and the state leads to severely skewed allocation of resources between the states.

APPENDIX

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