

# COALITION GOVERNMENT AND ITS CHALLENGES OF 21ST CENTURY IN INDIA

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## Abstract:

Coalition politics is an issue of Indian politics. Indian politics is trying its best to adjust to the coalition politics. Democratic form of government depends on public opinions, and its elected leader enjoys supremacy of the government. When all the parties which agree to work together for implementing a particular common minimum programme, but do not merge to form a new party, it may be said to have formed a coalition government. Coalition government is a new form of government and is a means of sharing power. Constitution gives opportunity for expression of ideas and democratic rights to small and regional parties. Coalition government promotes democracy and is a representative administration. However, sometimes coalition government is formed after declaration of election giving rise to horse trading for the purpose of providing majority in the House of Representatives. Further, the inherent complications and tensions within the coalition government creates problems in governance and administration. It is the federal political system of the country that is responsible for the growth and development of Coalition government.

## 1.0. Introduction

Coalition government is the form of a parliamentary government in which more than two or multiple parties cooperate and come together to form the government, and they always try to reduce the dominance of one party within the coalition. A coalition government might also be created at a time of majority problem or at the time of economic crisis, or when a general election does not produce a clear majority for a single party. At

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that time coalition may consist of one or more parties coming together to form a government.

In this regard a political alliance, also referred to as a political coalition, political block, is an agreement for cooperation between different political parties on common political agenda, often for purposes of contesting an election to mutually benefit by collectively clearing election thresholds.

**Table 1**  
Examples of Coalition Governments in India

Number of coalitions	Period of coalition	Prime Minister	Alliance within the parties	Leading Party
First	1977-1979	Moraji Desai	JP, BLD, SP, CONG(O)	Janata Party
Second	1979-1980	Charan Singh	CPI, CPI(M)	Janata Party
Third	1989-1990	V.P Singh	CPI, CPI(M), BJP, RSP	Janata Dal
Fourth	1990-1991	Chandra Shekhar	SAD, K.CONG, AIADMK, BSP.	Congress
Fifth	1996-1997	H.D. Deve Gowda	SP, DMK, AGP, CPI, TDP	Janata Dal
Sixth	1997-1998	I.K.Gujral	INC, LEFT, OTHERS.	Janata Dal
Seventh	1998-1999	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	AIADMK, BJD, AD, SN, TRC.	BJP
Eight	1999-2004	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	AIADMK, BJD, AD, SN, TRC, TMC	BJP
Nine	2004-2009	Manmohan Singh	NC, RJD, IUML, BSP, RJD, TMC.	Congress
Tenth	2009-2014	Manmohan Singh	JD, RJD, BSP, SP, NC	Congress
Eleventh	2014 to till date	Narendra Modi	MGP, TDM, SN, LJP, KC, NPF, GJM.	BJP

## 2.0. Objectives of the paper

The present paper aims:

1. To evaluate the coalition governments in India;
2. To understand the coalition politics and political ideology;
3. To critically discuss the coalition politics and party manifesto;
4. To assesses the challenges of coalition politics in India.

## 3.0. Methodology of the study

This analysis is based on secondary data taken from the reputed published sources like various books and websites on internet, newspapers, articles, various international journals, magazines, and all the data was discussed through quantitative and qualitative techniques. The methodology estimated in this area which is a combination of primary and secondary research.

## 4.0. Meaning of coalition government

The term coalition is derived from Medieval Latin *coalitio*, from Latin *coalescere* 'to coalesce'. In the field of political science coalition government means two or more political parties coming together within a single umbrella for short time partnership for forming a stable government if a single party does not have the required majority to form a government. Coalition thus means growing up together; a coalition is formed when many groups come together on common terms and define a common programme or agenda for working together. A coalition government always remains under pulls and pressures particularly in a federal set up like India.

Coalition is a phenomenon of multiparty government where a number of different parties join hands for the purpose of running government which otherwise is not possible. According to the dictionary, coalition means an act of coalescing of a body or parts into one whole. In the field of political science, the term coalition is used for an alliance or temporary union for joint action of various powers or states and also of the union into a single government of different parties or members of the different parties.

The parliamentary coalitions can be classified into two types:

1) **Pre-election coalition:** The Pre-election alliances involve electoral alliances and adjustment for fighting election for various seats among the political parties. The pre-poll understandings between the parties are very common. They may agree on a common programme or an understanding not to oppose others' candidates in certain constituencies and even to extend them support.

2) **Post-election coalitions:** Post-election coalition starts after the declaration of the voting result, this political coalition is totally different from the pre-election coalition, a post-election coalition is facilitated if it is preceded by a proto or pre-election understanding. There are a lot of negotiations and much of give and take. There may be a lot of horse trading or other types of exchanges.

### 5.0. Evaluation of coalition government in India

After independence, the largest democracy in the world has largely been ruled by the single largest party, the Indian National Congress. The Indian National Congress faced many challenges during the India's freedom struggle and is one of the most organized political parties of Indian parliamentary system. The organized congress party ruled India with no parallel or competition, since independence till 1977 and it enjoyed full power, like a dominant one-party political system.

- First experience of coalition government in free India at the union level goes back to 1977 when the non-congress forces united under the leadership of Moraji Desai in the name of Janata Party.
- Second coalition was formed with Mr. Charan Singh as the prime minister in July 1979. Charan Singh government was supported by the Left parties. Choudhary Charan Singh served as a Prime Minister of India from 28 July 1979 till 14 January 1980.
- Third coalition was formed in the name of National Front under the leadership of V.P. Singh in December 1989. V.P. Singh government was supported by BJP and the then single largest party congress which did not form the government, as a political strategy, and also with support by CPI, CPI (M) and RSP,
- Fourth coalition was formed under the leadership of Mr. Chandra Shekhar with the help of the Congress (I), the AIADMK, BSP, Muslim league, J&K National conference, Kerala Congress, Shiromoni Akali Dal, and some Independent members of Lok Sabha. He built a good image during his few months in office.
- Fifth coalition was formed under the leadership of H.D. Deve Gowda under the banner of United Front government. The united front was a coalition government of 13 political parties including outside support of Congress and CPI, and the other political parties were Samajwadi Party, Asom Ganaparishad, Tamil Manila Congress, Telugu Desam, and others.
- Sixth coalition was formed under the leadership of I.K. Gujral which was from 21st April 1997 to 19th March 1998. The Indian National Congress withdrew support from his government on 28th November. In this circumstance Gujral sent his resignation letter to the President K.R. Narayanan.
- Seventh coalition was led by A.B. Vajpayee from 19 March 1998 to 10th Oct. 1999. The BJP led coalition was supported by AIADMK, BJD, AK, PMK, TRC, and the others. This government did not run long.
- Eighth coalition was formed under the prime ministership of A.B. Vajpayee from 11th October 1999 to 21th May 2004 under National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The leading political party was BJP, but other 23 political parties supported this

alliance. The others supporting parties were AIADMK, TDP, NC, TMC, SAK, SN, and others. It ran full term of Parliament.

- Ninth coalition was formed in 2004 under the leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh in the name of United Progressive Alliance, and supported by the National Congress Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal, National Conference, Kerala Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Samajwadi party, Bahujan Samajwadi Party, Left parties and others.
- Tenth coalition was formed under the leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh in the year 2009, which was UPA-2. The supported parties were TMC, JD, RJD, BSP, and SP. All the parties decided to form the coalition so as to keep out any possibility of a BJP government in the next five years.
- Eleventh coalition was formed under the leadership of Narendra Modi in the year 2014, this government known NDA-2. He is the 15th Prime Minister of India, since the beginning of his tenure in 2014, led by BJP and supported by 28 political parties such as Shiv Sena, Shiromoni Akali Dal, Naga People's Front, Lok Janashakti Party, Rasthriya Lok Samata Party, Maharashtrawadi Gomontak Partry, Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam. On 16th March 2018, Telugu Desam Party quit NDA-2. This is the first NDA coalition to come to power at the centre to form Government after the 1999 general elections.

#### **6.0. Coalition politics and political ideology**

A coalition government is a cabinet of a parliamentary government in which many or multiple political parties' come together to form an alliance, and reduces the one-party dominance within the alliance or coalition. The main reason of this coalition is that no party on its own can achieve the majority of the parliament. Most of the coalition governments are formed on urgent basis like wartime or economic crisis, After Independence congress party occupied the central government for a long time. At the national level the first ever coalition government was formed under the Prime Minister Late Shri Moraji Desai which came into existence on 24th March 1977, till 28 July 1979 Since 24th March 1977, when India witnessed the first ever coalition government under Sri Moraji Desai, till 2018 we observe that there are mostly coalition governments and the ultimate result is that their political ideology is non-existent, because in coalition, left party, right party, caste based party, communal political party, regional party, and linguistic party- all of them come under a single umbrella, the coalition government. However, it is true that coalition politics has led to the rise of regional parties. They have been empowered by this liberal democratic system.

#### **7.0. Coalition politics and party manifesto**

The coalition governments were formed at the central level in 1977, 1989, 1996, 1998 but all the governments failed to complete their parliamentary tenure. The failures of coalition governments have been due to many reasons such as different political ideologies, regional interests, lack of power sharing mentality, personal egos and others. In spite of these in 1999 the first successful coalition government was set up at the central level under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Then in 2004 and 2009 Congress formed coalition governments under the banner of United Progressive Alliance, under the leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh. In this period every political party realized that it was very difficult to form one party government in contemporary Indian politics, so coalition government is the ultimate choice, any party manifesto is less important in coalition era. Coalition government works together with a Common Minimum Programme as common minimum programme is a document outlining the minimum objectives of a coalition government.

### 8.0. Challenges of coalition politics in India

- Coalition government is less transparent as, no single party has a real chance of forming a government alone. The party manifesto they had presented to the public before the elections is practically unrealistic at the time of formation of coalition government, and it has been very bad experience of parties as no party can achieve its targets.
- Government is very unstable, often collapsing and re-election taking place are the natural phenomenon of coalition government. In India many coalition governments collapsed at the centre like Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, V.P Singh, Chandra Shekhar, H. D. Deve Gowda, I.K Gujral and Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.
- Coalition governments are definitely far less effective, non-durable, and non-dependable as compared to the governments formed by a single party with definite principles and specific ideology.
- In coalition government, MLAs and MPs from all the political parties are given ministries /portfolios and appointed as minister. These ministers are appointed on the recommendation of parent party, without any enquiry or any educational qualification or criminal records.
- Coalition governments gave birth to regionalism as any political party, especially the regional political parties and local leaders exploit the regional sentiments, they give importance to the regional problems in their election manifestos and promises for political and regional development. These have been the bad examples of coalition government in India.
- Horse trading is another demerit of coalition government in India. There is widespread agreement that horse trading in the political arena is immoral and undesirable, and should be illegal. It is alleged that horse trading takes place to influence the no confidence motion.

### 9.0. Conclusion

Coalition government has entered into a new phase of Indian political system. In today's political scenario, Indian parliamentary system and multiparty system are very much correlated, and have significantly changed the face of the regional political parties in India. Nowadays, every regional political party plays important role in forming central government, and have changed the relation between government and opposition. although it may be argued that coalition provides good government as their decisions are made in the interest of the majority of the people, often it is seen that the various demands made by the coalition partners, sometimes to the harm of other coalition partners, lead to extreme tension within the government and make it impossible to formulate laws Further, a single national policy, which may be against the interest of a region, cannot be formulated, if a party belonging to that region is part of the government.

The role of Prime Minister of a coalition government is very different as he is neither able to select his colleagues nor exercise his control over them. In parliamentary system collective responsibility falls on a coalition cabinet where Prime Minister is the keystone, but it is harder to achieve this ideal in a coalition government than that in a single party government.

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