Exploring the Forcing Factorsof the Coalition Government in India

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Abstract: If a single political party is unable to secure a majority of seats in an election, political parties ally to make coalition governance. The idea of building a coalition government becomes more important in India, where the election system is not only complex but also very dynamic due to the diversity of the country's geography, caste system, and socioeconomic composition. India is a developing nation that has a lot of historical baggage from caste and class systems. The caste system's impact on the nation has dropped significantly with progress and globalization, but it is still quite critical when it comes to the electoral system. To perform this investigation library method was deployed. Based on information gleaned from a variety of books, journals, websites, newspapers, and scholarly papers, this research has been finished. It was observed that political parties have failed to convince people about their common minimum program hence voters were divided and they were not able to choose one single largest party by the majority was the major forcing factor for the coalition government. This research study has explored the facts regarding democracy, coalitions, regional parties' effect on policymaking, the benefits and drawbacks of coalitions, and the scenario of coalitions in India.

Key Words: Coalition Government in India, Indian Electoral System, National & Regional Parties, Alliance Politics.

Introduction

With the progression of time, the era of the monarchy comes to an end, and international politics are altered as a result of foreign invasions, the revolt for independence, and various movements that gain traction across the world. After the monarchy was abolished, the concept of democracy was established as a result of a new populist spirit. Democracy is the idea that the people should elect a leader who would represent them and work for their welfare, (McDonnell & Cabrera, 2019). In a democratic nation, the leader of the winning party is responsible for managing the state or nation. In other words, the majority party's leader will take over as Chief Minister (CM) or Prime Minister (PM). The CM and PM of each party will be the leader of the party with the most MLAs and MPs, respectively. The government will be formed by the party that receives the most votes. In cases where neither party is certain of receiving the necessary number of votes, the party will attempt to establish a coalition government with another party to secure the majority. India's coalition government has a

lengthy and interesting history. Since 1953, India has had a practice of forming coalition governments. The coalition government's standpoint is apparent everywhere, whether it is in the state or national governments (Panika, 2022). The parties select who will receive which significant positions when they join the coalition, in addition to agreeing on a common basic policy. Despite general minimum procedures, accurate number calculation is done before the coalition formation. Even while the political parties claim they do not calculate the number of votes cast for coalitions in a given location, the unpleasant truth is that coalitions are formed to gain an electoral advantage. Since India has such a diverse population and environment, political parties tend to focus on the groups that have the most influence over it. This is why coalition politics are so common in India. In addition to the ethnic and caste systems, there is a very strong hold of farmers in the nation because farming is the primary industry or source of income. As a result, political parties must reach an understanding with farmer associations and form a coalition with their leaders to win elections (Diwakar, 2016). The coalition's principal objective is mutual growth. In independent countries, it is agreed that the party that selects more than half the members will constitute the government. The majority party, whose leader receives more than half of the total members, has the power to form the government. Sometimes during elections, a government cannot be established if no party wins a majority of seats. If a party wants to expand its total to more than 50% of the seats, it must meet with the leaders of other parties. If there isn't a state or national emergency, and no more resources are being squandered on elections, the coalition government is the preferred alternative, (Kumar, 2020; Sridharan, 2018).

Coalition Government and Its Need

The Latin term "coalitio," which means "to develop together," is where the word "coalition" originates. Thus, a coalition is defined as a process of bringing disparate elements together to form a larger entity. A coalition in politics is an association of different political parties. Political groups that come together to form a government are known as coalition governments. It is a government that was established by multiple political parties coming together. If there is a hung parliament after a general election and no party has a clear operational majority, the parties may choose to form a coalition government. A coalition government might also be established during a period of national difficulty or crisis to provide the government with a high level of apparent democratic power. Additionally, it may contribute to fewer political disputes inside a nation (*Bidyut Chakrabarty*, 2006),(*Barthwal*, 2022).

Indian Coalition Government Background

Some of the major points on the background of the Indian coalition are as follows (*Prachi Hajare*, 2020) (C. P. Barthwal, 2012), (Barthwal, 2022):

- End of Congress Era: Despite winning a majority with 415 seats in the 1984 election, the Congress party was defeated in the 1989 election results and lost its prominence.
- Growing Mandal Problem: Due to the Mandal Commission's suggestions to reserve
 positions in the Central government for other underprivileged classes, disagreements
 between supporters and opponents of the Committee arose.
- Fresh Monetary Changes: In 1991, Rajiv Gandhi launched several projects for structural change.
- Babri Masjid Destruction in 1992: As a result, the BJP and Hindutva ideologies grew
 in power and the nationalism and secularism debates in India were given birth.
- Rajiv Gandhi was murdered in 1991: Narasimha Rao became the new leader as a result of what Sri Lankan and Tamils did during the Tamil Nadu electoral campaign.

Indian Coalition Government Features

Some of the best features of the Coalition Government are as follows (M.G. Khan, 2003), (Barthwal, 2022):

- There are two categories of coalitions: internal coalitions and external coalitions.
- A coalition agreement is a contract inked by the parties that make up the coalition government in nations with multiple political parties.
- The most significant common goals and objectives of the cabinet are codified there.
- Legislature party leaders usually write it.
- The fundamental premise of a coalition system is the straightforward momentary convergence of particular interests.
- Coalition players and organizations can split up and form new ones in the dynamic world of coalition politics.

Coalitional During Congress Control and Decline of Congress

Some of the important points regarding coalitional during the congress government are as follows (*Praveen Rai*, 2017), (*Barthwal*, 2022):

- In a democratic environment, Congress maintained sway.
- The legacy of the freedom struggle can be linked to the Congress party's exceptional success.
- The Congress brings together several groups with usually at-odds objectives.

- During India's early years of independence, the Congress had grown into a socioeconomic coalition with a variety of colors that represented the nation's diversity of class and caste, religious backgrounds, and a wide range of interests.
- Congress was remarkably strong because of its coalition-building tendencies. Congress' tremendous power came from its coalition-like structure.
- Though some of these divides had academic justifications, the bulk was driven by rivalries and personal ambitions.

In 1989, the National Front (Janata Dal and regional parties) dominated Congress. The demise of Congress ushered in a period of a multi-party system, during which no one party won a majority of votes in elections from 1989 to 2014.

Alliance Politics in India

Some of the important points regarding the alliance policies in India are as follows (Shanmugasundaram et al., 2021), (Barthwal, 2022):

- Several parties arose via the United Front government, which Congress backed in 1996, that favored Dalits and OBC.
- The National Front government drew support from the BJP and the left in 1989 to stop Congress from taking power.
- However, to prevent the BJP from gaining power in 1996, Congress and the left endorsed the National Front.
- The BJP won the election in 1996 and went on to form a coalition that ruled from May 1998 to June 1999 before being re-elected in October 1999 with Atal Bihari Vajpayee as prime minister.
- After the 1989 elections, 11 central governments were either in coalition or minority governments backed by others, signifying the beginning of a period of coalition governance.

Role of Mandal Commission

The Mandal Commission's main goal in India was to determine the circumstances surrounding the social and educationally disadvantaged sections to evaluate the issue of seat and quota reservations. It was presided over by Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal, hence the name Mandal Commission. Some of the important points regarding the Mandal Commission are as follows (Shanmugasundaram et al., 2021), (Barthwal, 2022):

- The Mandal Committee's suggestions were put into practice by the National Front government, which assisted to engage OBCs in politics and provide them with possibilities for jobs and study.
- In North India and at the national level between 1977 and 1979, the Janata Party fought for quotas for vulnerable communities.
- Karpoori Thakur (CM of Bihar) announced a new reservation policy in Bihar.
- The SEBC (Second Backward Class Commission) was established by the Central Government in 1978 to make recommendations on measures to ameliorate the circumstances of the weaker sections of society.

Lok Sabha Election 2004: New Consensus's Formation

Some important points related to new consensus emerged through the 2004 Lok Sabha elections as follows (*Shastri et al.*, 2009), (*Barthwal*, 2022):

- The United Progressive Alliance (UPA), which had support from left-wing parties, was established after Congress, the BJP, and their allies garnered nearly identical numbers of votes.
- In the political race, four significant parties the BJP and its coalition, the Left Front parties, and others emerged.
- A broad understanding was developing among various parties on:
 - a) A consensus on economic principles.
 - **b)** Recognition of the political and social assertions made by underclasses.
 - c) Acknowledging the political involvement of state-level parties.
 - **d)** Realistic considerations are prioritized over allegiance and ideological ideas.

Benefits of Coalition Government

Only coalition governments can create effective, in-control governments. The fact that no one or any party can dominate an area is this government's primary benefit. Any party won't be able to rule a region or make any other suggestions without the opposition's or another leader's intervention. Dictatorship has fewer prospects in such governments. Some of the benefits of the coalition government are as follows (*Patil Amruta*, 2023), (*Barthwal*, 2022), (*Panika*, 2022):

- The manner the government functions takes into account several interests.
- The needs of multiple parties can be met and addressed by a coalition government.
- Coalition politics help the Indian political system's federal structure remain strong.

- A coalition government makes despotic rule less likely. Since no one political party controls all of the government's actions.
- All of the coalition's members are taking part in the decision-making.
- Political unanimity is encouraged by a coalition government.

Limitations of Coalition Government

All leaders prioritize their local and personal development more than anything else when it comes to development. Some of the limitations of the coalition government are as follows (*Patil Amruta*, 2023), (*Barthwal*, 2022), (*Panika*, 2022):

- They are either unstable or verging on instability. Due to disagreements among coalition partners, the government is collapsing.
- A key tenet of the parliamentary form of government is the prime minister's leadership. This idea is restricted in a coalition government since the prime minister must consult the political allies before making important decisions.
- By putting regional concerns to the forefront, regional leaders take part in national decision-making.
- Coalition-leading politicians are unwilling to accept accountability for mistakes and inefficiencies in the government.
- The coalition government's limited base of support might act as the "king-maker."

India's Electoral Systems

Given that India is a very diverse country with a variety of geographies, languages, and cultures, its electoral system is designed to provide every individual with an equal opportunity to vote in an election. Members of the "Lok Sabha (the Indian parliament's lower house)" and the "Rajya Sabha (the upper house of the Indian parliament)" are chosen through a multi-tiered election system in India. The elections are open to all Indian citizens who are 18 years of age or older on the qualifying date. The secret ballot principle is also the foundation of the Indian election system, which guarantees that each voter has the freedom to express their opinion without outside intervention. Elections for the Lok Sabha take place every five years, while those for the Rajya Sabha happen every six. This indicates that the winner of a particular constituency is the candidate who receives the most votes. Additionally, the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha have seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Indian voting system. Independent candidates are also permitted to take participation in the election under the Indian electoral system. The Indian election system also allows for the nomination of candidates by officially recognized national and state political parties. Under the Indian

electoral system, national as well as state political parties are entitled to several advantages, including the opportunity to have their party name printed on ballots and the right to assign their candidates a party symbol (*Gill*, 1999), (*Sridharan*, 2018), (*Ruparelia*, 2016).

National and Regional Parties in India

In Indian politics, there aren't many national parties, hence there aren't many parties with a strong national presence. A national party in India receives at least 6% of the vote in at least four states or wins 2% of the seats in the Lok Sabha from at least three or four distinct states. With the addition of the Aam Aadmi Party, there are currently only 9 national parties in India (Saurabh Raj, 2022; wikipedia, 2023). Due to their control over local issues, regional parties in India have always played a significant role. The regional parties in India mostly concentrate on and support a few caste groups. In numerous nations, including India, the caste system continues to have a significant impact on elections. The current Indian government has abandoned its reliance on caste systems, and it has successfully based its political campaigns on conflicts between religions. The current Indian government is frequently condemned for its Hindu religious ideology, which has broken up regional parties and their hold on caste systems and united castes under the banners of Hinduism and Nationalism (Katharine Adeney, 2007). Due to the dominance of the country's largest party (B.J.P.), which is led by Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi, many regional parties have suddenly lost influence in recent years (McDonnell & Cabrera, 2019), (Pradeep Chhibber, 2021).

Regional parties in India have historically contributed significantly to determining the political climate of the nation. Regional parties are essential to the smooth operation of a strong democracy. The popularity of these parties has also been influenced by the development of social media and the 24-hour news cycle. As a result of their greater knowledge of regional problems, they are frequently better suited to handle the particular needs of their constituency. As they can operate as a check on the influence of bigger parties, regional parties also serve as a safeguard against the extravagance of national parties. By concentrating on creating powerful grassroots networks, regional parties can reclaim their influence in several important ways. This can be accomplished by establishing trusting bonds with local authorities and groups, as well as by working to address the particular issues that matter to their constituents. Creating partnerships with other regional and national parties is a crucial next step for regional parties. This can aid them in winning a larger percentage of the vote and posing a more serious threat to the bigger parties. Alliances can also aid in preventing vote fragmentation, which can be advantageous to the larger parties. Therefore, regional parties are crucial to maintaining the

strength and vitality of Indian democracy (Radhamani, 2018), (Sridharan, 2018), (Chacko & Mayer, 2014).

Some well-known examples of unsuccessful coalition in Indian politics on a national level include the 1993 alliance between the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (S.P.). Despite having a very strong hold on their respective voter bases, the two parties, who were prominent regional parties in India's state of Uttar Pradesh, were unable to form an effective coalition in 1993, despite winning the election by a wide margin. Also in 1999, B.J.P. failed to manage regional small parties due to which Vajpayee Government was brought down (*Vinod Kumar Shukla*, 2019). On the state level coalition failure can be observed through the 2019 Karnataka elections. In Karnataka, the Congress-JD(S) coalition established the government in 2018, however, it was overthrown in July 2019 as a result of 15 politicians quitting their parties, which resulted in HD Kumaraswamy's defeat in a vote of confidence. Internal disagreements and a lack of cooperation and coordination among the MLAs led to the crisis (*Wikipedia*, 2022).

There have been some successful coalition governments in Indian politics despite the majority of failed coalitions. The BJP fell short of a majority in Assam, garnering 60 of the state's 126 seats. But with the help of the AGP and BPF, it passed the threshold of majority and was given a five-year term. From 1977 until 2000, West Bengal was governed by the Left Front, a coalition of six parties with the CPI(M) at the helm. Jyoti Basu served as the chief minister during this time. The front's long-term success demonstrated that a coalition government made up of individuals with similar ideals was capable of not only surviving but also thriving for decades (*Rupam Shukla*, 2022). Regional parties have been crucial to coalition politics since they are frequently centered on certain concerns or regions. Regional groups including the Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, All India Trinamool Congress, Shiv Sena, Telugu Desam Party, and Biju Janata Dal, etc. have recently had a big impact on Indian politics (wikipedia, 2023).

Multi-Level Coalition and Managed Foreign Policy-Making

The central government of India is in charge of determining foreign policy. However, when viewed through the viewpoint of coalition politics, the regional parties largely struggle to have an impact on any policy decisions or issues. While local and regional parties address concerns in India's coastline and border regions (with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka), they have little to no influence over foreign policy. These groups frequently aid the national government in exchange for timely funding for state development and assistance. They now

have a chance to exert pressure on the government as a whole through the coalition government. In South India, where Tamil leaders were inclined to establish relations with Sri Lanka, one of the major issues with foreign policymaking and regional parties first came to light. At that time, it became a significant historical challenge for the central government, led by Indira Gandhi, to sever ties with Tamil separatists and Sri Lankan rebels. Since the Indian Constitution grants the central government the authority to develop policies, coordinating multi-level coalitions and foreign policies is a tiresome undertaking in varied nations like India. At the same time, coalitions allow regional parties to have a modicum of influence in national politics (*Blarel & Van Willigen*, 2020), (*Monika*, 2018), (*Beasley & Kaarbo*, 2014).

Coalition Governance in India

In India, the coalition government first took office in 1946. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, established the coalition government as the temporary one. The government was co-formed by the Hindu Mahasabha, Muslim League, and Indian National Congress. In 1953, a coalition government was established in independent India. Indian politics have been conducted solely within the country since the Joint Cabinet was created in Andhra Pradesh in 1953. This government fell and collapsed after 13 months. In the same way, mixed governments were established in the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, etc. To protect the welfare of the people, a mixed government is founded. However, for a variety of reasons, the mixed government is unable to sustain itself. Similar to how contentment and unhappiness coexisted, a coalition government, or mixed government, was established in the states. In India, the coalition government first took office at the federal level in 1977. The coalition government of Morarji Desai served as India's first at the national scale from 24 March 1977 to 15 July 1979. In India, a coalition government was established on May 1st, 1977, by the Socialist Party, Bharatiya Lok Dal, Democratic Congress, and Jan Sangh. Following this, a coalition government was once more formed in India on December 2, 1989, under the name of the National Front, with the participation of numerous states and national parties. However, due to stark divisions, this government was also unable to serve India well. This government too soon fell apart and was dissolved because of Chandrashekhar's tyranny and his excessive position hunger. During 1979, 1989, 1990, and 1991 In India at this time, coalition governments were formed frequently, but they all abruptly disintegrated. BJP - 194, Congress - 140, and various regional parties all came together to create a coalition government

in the 11th Lok Sabha elections. However, the coalition only lasted for 13 days until it was dissolved. A coalition government was once more established in 1999 following the 13th Lok Sabha elections by combining all 24 parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (182), Congress (114), and 162 more parties. This was the first administration to complete the job in five years. Congress formed a coalition government in the 14th Lok Sabha elections under Manmohan Singh's leadership, and it was seen as being a very good government. A coalition government led by Manmohan Singh was created when the two parties teamed up to run in the 2009 election for the 15th Lok Sabha. After the 16th Lok Sabha elections, India experienced extraordinary transformation for the first time as a single party took power. The first autonomous one-party government was established in 2014 under the direction of the current prime minister, Shri Narendra Modi, and the practice of coalition governments came to an end at that point. In this way, a coalition government already existed in India before its independence. In other parts of the world, coalition governments may or may not be effective, but in India, they have been a massive failure (*V.Pujar*, 2003), (*Panika*, 2022), (*V.Pujar*, 2003), (*Shanmugasundaram et al.*, 2021), (*Chanwahn Kim*, 2022).

Since the 2014 general election, there have been substantial changes in Indian coalition politics. BJP, won 282 out of 543 Lok Sabha seats in that election, making it the greatest party as a single entity. With its victory, the BJP became the first non-Congress party to achieve a majority on its own since 1984, signaling a dramatic shift in Indian politics (Bejar et al., 2011). Several significant economic and social reforms, including the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the demonetization of high-value currency notes, were implemented during the first term of the Modi government. The government also worked to increase foreign investment and upgrade the infrastructure. These programs sought to increase economic growth and generate jobs, but they were criticized for causing widespread disturbance and hardship. In India, coalition politics made a comeback in the general election of 2019 (Kumar, 2020). Despite winning 303 seats, the BJP was short of the number of seats required to establish a government. Despite winning 52 seats, the Congress party was unable to bring together a coalition to oppose the BJP. Instead, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was successful in forming a government with the help of several regional parties. Several significant economic and social reforms, including the introduction of the One Nation, One Ration Card initiative, the program for financial inclusion, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, and the Ayushman Bharat health program, have been made during the second term of the NDA government. The government has also worked to strengthen the nation's infrastructure, attract more foreign investment, and maintain law and order. In recent years,

several regional parties have emerged on the Indian political scene. In 2019 article 370 was also removed from Jammu and Kashmir by the NDA government (*Milan Vaishnav*, 2014), (*N.R.P. Singh*, 2018), (*Chacko & Mayer*, 2014), (*Chanwahn Kim*, 2022), (*Byjus*, 2023).

Third-Party System and Dawn of Coalition Politics in India

The country's third-party system has been largely caused by the absence of a national political pole in Indian politics. Congress served in this capacity for a very long period, but beginning in 1989, the congress party began to falter at the state level. As a result, the leaders of Congress founded multiple parties. Currently, elections are not truly national in the traditional sense; rather, national elections are the combined outcome of state-level judgments. However, N.D.A. led alliance by the B.J.P. is on the verge of becoming what Congress once was. Although the process of forming a coalition government in Indian politics is not new, the 2014 election altered the perception of coalition governments as a whole (Beasley & Kaarbo, 2014). In recent years, political parties have established coalitions at practically every level, but they either failed at the outset or disintegrated after the election. The one-party B.J.P. was able to forge effective coalitions and establish governments in many states. They were able to create their governments through last-minute coalitions even in states where the B.J.P. did not receive the majority of the popular vote. According to different media reports and charges made by regional parties, the manipulation of legislation and excessive reliance on central government institutions has resulted in the state's total dominance of power. The country's coalition politics have taken a completely new turn, with voters casting ballots regardless of caste or religion. Even powerful coalitions, like the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samajwadi Party's partnership in the 2017 state election, were unable to defeat the B.J.P. (*Bejar et al.*, 2011).

Discussion and Conclusion

Coalition politics in India exists due to multiple reasons and there are both pros as well as cons to the coalition government system. India witnessed the diminishing role of regional parties in the elections in the past few years, as well as the rise of the single largest party B.J.P., and the success of its alliance in the various states. The coalition government gives space to various leaders and their parties to act as a pressure group and ensure the successful execution of the common minimum program but in some places, it is also seen that the involvement of too many people in decision-making leads to delayed and ineffective decisions. The country is under the rule of a majority government which has taken away the space of regional parties from the states and they have demonstrated total dominance in elections. Some new players like Aam Aadmi Party are also working hard to become a big name in Indian politics and they also can

be seen as a rising hope for democracy because, in the environment where most of the regional parties are struggling to defend their homeland, a new party has come up and is giving challenge to the powerful (B.J.P.). The politics of coalition in India would be successful if the political parties make coalitions by giving more space to public issues rather than doing traditional coalitions based on caste numbers and religion. The parties will have to rise above the issues of caste, class, and religion and will have to focus on social and on-ground issues so that they can regain the faith of the general public to win elections and form effective coalitions. When time needs to be conserved, the coalition notion can be applied. If no party can secure a majority in elections then to save time as well as money for Nation instead of conducting fresh elections coalition government serves better option. Creating and running a coalition government in a country like India is extremely challenging. Every coalition administration, from 1946 to 1953 to 1999, has fallen. While it commonly occurs for different parties to begin pulling the country in diverse directions, coalition governments frequently forego the country's progress in favor of their development. The country suffers its greatest loss in such an instance. Even the smallest parties begin acting arbitrarily when coalition governments are created by threatening to topple other parties. They instill dread by carrying out random tasks throughout the entire nation. Since the 2014 general election, there have been substantial changes in Indian coalition politics. The overwhelming victory of the BJP in 2014 signaled a departure from India's traditional coalition politics, but the 2019 election saw a return to these practices. Some successful coalitions on the state level were also observed during this study. Regional parties have become increasingly significant in Indian politics in recent years, and the second term of the NDA government has seen several significant economic and social reforms. This paper will be very helpful for both academics and practitioners to gain important insights regarding coalition and its interrelated factors.

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