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Impact of coalition politics on Indian parliamentary institutions (Indian experience)

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Abstract

The Parliament of India, is the supreme bilateral legislative body of Republic India and It is composed of the President of India and the two houses the Rajya Sabha (Council of States) and the Lok Sabha (House of the People). As we know that the President in his role as head of legislature has full powers to summon and prorogue either house of Parliament or to dissolve Lok Sabha. The president can exercise these powers only upon the advice of the Prime Minister and his Union Council of Ministers.

Those elected or nominated by the President to either house of Parliament are referred to as Members of Parliament (MP). The Members of Parliament, Lok Sabha are directly elected by the Indian public voting in Single-member districts and the Members of Parliament, Rajya Sabha are elected by the members of all State Legislative Assembly by proportional representation. The Parliament has a sanctioned strength of 543 (as called as Magic number to form government in central) in Lok Sabha and 245 (as called as Magic number to form government in state) in Rajya Sabha including the 12 nominees from the expertise of different fields of science, culture, art and history. The Parliament meets at Sansad Bhavan in New Delhi.

Keywords: Parliament of India, Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha, Election.

1. Introduction

The roots of the demand for parliamentary system of governance in the country may arguably, be traced back to the early 20th century when Indian persistently demanded the establishment of parliamentary Institutions on the pattern of British Polity of afford an opportunity to them to associate themselves with the governmental activities in the country. Though the colonial rulers had consistently refused to accede to the wishes of natives on ground of the unsuitability of the Indian to run such kinds of Institutions as such for India, on the other, the resolve of the enlightened Indians for some sort of parliamentary systems to be established in the country become progressively hardened with every of the British India government for the same. Afterwards in most, if not all of the documents proposing the model of political set up for Independent India like Nehru report, Sapru report the draft constitution of three India published by socialites party and Hindu Mahasabha as well as by Individuals like Manavendranath Roy. The argument for parliamentary system of government figured prominently as the Ideal model of governance for India after Independence.

Austin reveals was what form of Political Institutions would foster or at least permit a social revolution? As Austin Informs further two competing system of political institutions were available to the framers to opt for first looking back in to the nations rich heritage and findings Indigenous Institutions capable of meeting the country's needs, the framers would base the constitution on the village and its panchayaths and erect upon them a superstructure of Indirect, decentralized government in the Ghandhian Manner and second, opting for the Euro – American constitutional traditions, reflected in the form of parliamentary system, though it meant continuing in the country had taken during the colonial period. The constituent assembly's decision in favour of latter option was arrived at with over whelming majority, with only one member rising a voice in favour of the village panchayath's though the broad confronts of his scheme of things also appeared to be in the moulal of representative democratic governance. Meaning of coalition Govt, Coalition means alliance, combination, Fedaration, Union of fusion in to one whole, A group formed by people from

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several different groups, especially political ones agreeing to work together for a particular purpose. Coalition may be temporary combination between parties retaining distinctive principles for combined action.

According to Dictionary of govt and politics by P.H. Collin: Coalition means “group of two or more political parties who come together to form a government, when no single party has a majority”.

According to Rogar Scruton in his Dictionary of political thought defines the term coalition as “Political alliance of distinct parties or persons who preserve their political Identities”.

The society today is undergoing fragmentation not just in terms of the caste, religion, economic factors but also in terms of class, lifestyle, professions etc depending on the socio-cultural and economic divisions, the needs and the interest of the masses vary. In such a situation, it is impossible for a single political party to cater to the variegated and heterogeneous needs of the people.

National parties may not always represent regional interest this result in the mushrooming of a multitude of parties, with each one representing the interest of a particular region or section. Each region or section prefers to choose its own representatives rather than a party which has a national magnitude. This situation results in fractured verdict of the people which necessitates the formation of a coalition Government.

Sailent features of the coalition Government

1. The coalition Government may effectively represent mass interest. A variety of social spheres and sectional interest are brought in to the lime light of politics.
2. The minority and under privileged groups will have a say in Governmental functions.
3. Coalition Government may be an attempt in itself to bridge the socio-economic and cultural factors.
4. The decision taken may be balanced in approach since they are reached after continuous discussion and possible consensus between the member parties.

Reasons for the formation of coalition Government

1) Failure to obtain majority

Usually the coalition governments are formed when no single party is able to enjoy a majority in the legislature. A combination of some political groups or parties is essential to command majority these political parties or groups join together to form government. They do not lose their separate identity. They agree to a common minimum political, economic, and social programme and when differences arise, any group or party is free to withdraw from coalition.

2) Pluralism

India is known for its pluralism and the entire society exhibits various level of pluralism in different walk of life. It is but natural that this pluralism is carried from the society to the political level. India is a sub-continent exhibiting diversity in language, religion, culture etc. coalition system is therefore the naturally corollary of a system depicting pluralist tendency. Moreover in India coalition is a natural system due to the Individualism of each individual. Multiplicity of political parties and pluralism are the effect of such a mentality of Indian.

3) Dominance of the congress party

One more reason highlighted by political scientists regarding the emergence of a coalition system relates to the role played by the congress party in the earlier decades after Independence. Its dictatorial functioning is supposed to have suppressed the emergence to pluralist tendencies. The regional parties have emerged as a consequence of such an attitude of rebellion the emergence of coalition system in India. These regional parties represents regional aspirations of the people of the region. These aspirations differ from state to state and coalition system is the one and system that could comfortably accommodate regional political parties.

4) Electoral System

Our electoral system along with the political system also encourages small political parties to contest the election and get represented in the legislature and the ministry moreover, minority communicate are able to get presented in the political system only through coalition system.

Impact of Coalition on Indian Politics

1. Instability

The parliamentary system of government functions successfully with two political parties. But in India the number of political parties have increased in number even at the state level. In Tamilnadu for instance there are DMK, AIADMK and the TMC. In Andhra Pradesh there are TDP and NTR TDP and so on since the coalition is formed with many parties, the fate of such coalition governments hang in the balance depending on the withdrawal of support by one or other Sridharam has given the average life of the various coalition governments from 1977. According him the 33 coalition governments at the centre and states lasted and average for 20 months and the 14 minority governments lasted for about 14 months. Thus the coalition governments failed to provide stable and good governance.

2. Weak and Ineffective

Since the coalitions are heterogenous they are ineffective and unstable. When a system of coalition operates cabinet secrecy is also thrown to the winds. To secure a consensus within the parties is a very difficult task. The usual reason for detesting coalitions is due to the reason that they have come together only for power. Each coalition partner tends to suspect the other. If the government is efficient each constituent partner is worried that the other will get credit on the other hand, if it is ineffective, each partner will blame the other. And if the government had to take some unpopular decision. Then each one will blame the other and keep the distance is neither possible to take credit for the achievements of the parties in a coalition nor can they blame other parties for any kind of failure. Therefore the coalition has had the impact of creating a weak and ineffective governments.

3. Subordination of party Ideology to power

The next impact of coalition system is that there is a subordination of Ideology to power. In the Indian context there is a single party which is dominant in a coalition of several parties. So there is every chance and also the absolute necessity that the identify, agenda and the ideology of that party has to be merged with the remaining small partner or other words it needs to dilute its ideology or keep

some contentious issues in the back burner as was done by the BJP in deference to the wishes of the political parties joining it to form the government. Naturally the BJP subdued its distinct identity for the sake of maintaining the coalition of Article 370, Implementation of uniform civil code and building up Ram temple had to be shelved to widen the support base of BJP. In other words, the compulsions of coalition politics necessitated such a move by BJP even the common minimum programme diluted for the sake of maintaining power. The coalition parties led by BJP had to show its commitment to inviting foreign direct investment opening up Indian market and privatizing many areas.

4. Narrow outlook parties

Another Impact of coalition on Indian politics, relate to the desire of political parties to maintain political power at any cost, Regional parties do not give up their parochial approach and therefore are narrow in their outlook. These regional parties tend to get support through populism. In this system, power shifts from the centre to the states. All the regional parties of the coalition have their stronger state agendas and thus national agenda is forgotten completely. As a result the state tend to become strong and the centre become weak.

5. Leadership of Prime – Minister undermined:

In a coalition prime – minister cannot take a strong decision even the smallest party in the coalition can hold the P.M to ransom the prime minister has to deal with heterogeneous group of power seekers who make no secret of their real intention. Such a PM cannot even choose his own cabinet. He has to consider the demands of so many parties, their leaders and select his team. Pressure is on the PM to allot certain portfolios to certain Individuals. The prime minister frequently depends on the consent of the constituent parties. This has an impact on Indian politics as the nations and foreign policy tends to be weak.

6. Power shifts from cabinet to the co-coordinator:

The next impact of the coalition in such a system is that power shifts from the cabinet to an extra constitutional authority like co-ordinator or steering committee. Despite all such developments does not last long it has been remarked by Disraeli one as follow “coalition through successful have always found that their triumph has been brief”. A coalition is a weak and unstable government. Sometimes, the parties associated with other parties in spite of their Ideological differences. This lack of ideological affinity and cohesion creates lots of problems. The prime minister himself finds it extremely difficult to carry the entire cabinet as one body.

7. The regional parties deciding the fate of National parties:

A large number of regional parties have propitiated since 1989 resulting in the emergence of a confederation of regional parties. These regional parties are increasingly playing an important role in deciding the national players. That is why some regard coalition system as undemocratic since the smaller parties tend to exercise more power and authority deciding the fate of bigger parties.

8. Federal system more federal and real:

Federal system also tends to more federal and real when coalition system operates at the national and state level.

Indian federation being extremely flexible has transformed due to the change in party system. Centralization of authority, misuse of article 356 are today rarely spoken of many political scientist have welcomed coalition politics and say that it has created a genuine democratic and federal structure with the aspirations of regional parties taken care of by the national parties just to retain power at the centre. Our federation today can truly be called as a co-operative and bargaining federalism. Governance through consensual approach is also adopted. Dialogue, debate and discussion have replaced the parliamentary majority and its dictatorship there in also general restructuring of centre state relationship.

Ground rules required to be followed to make coalition more effective

Since the coalition have to be accepted, as a reality in India there is a need to have a re look in to the continuation and plug the loopholes wherever possible to make it more effective is prevent the instability in governments. Size of the ministry in a coalition system need to be cut down. An effective methodology is required to make defections unattractive. Amendments need to be done in the Indian constitution to plug the loopholes in the electoral system. Which are misused by the party in power. Party reforms and electoral reforms require to be initiated make coalition more effective.

At present there is a need to provide ground rules for its operation so that stability is maintained, our parliamentary system has to work effectively with the multi-party system and also the coalition governments. Therefore the parties which joins together to form the government must have common minimum programme and all the members of the party should agree to abide by it. Major problems should be settled through consensus and agreement.

Since the coalition system implies the modification of the parliamentary system. The political parties should also develop the capability of separating national issue from state issues. The coalition politics at each level has to involve all parties and all kinds of politics. In this connection, the issue that has to be settled is, whether there should be a pre-electoral or post-electoral alliance. In the pre-electoral alliance, there may be understating regarding the sharing of seats but the post-electoral alliance is only a marriage of convenience and may break off soon. Today our party system at the national level could be called as the two dominant systems in a multiparty system since the Congress and BJP at the regional parties leading the allies or partners in sharing power. These two parties need to work out means through which coalition could remain effective and stable.

Whatever solution that is suggested, it is fact, that the coalition in India are Indicative of the pluralistic tendencies in India and Indian politics. It is a natural processes creating a unique system and it needs to be strengthened to make democracy more effective and representative.

Thus the coalition in India has both positive and negative impact on India politics. Even though there is a common minimum programme. Which binds the constituents there is often in fighting regarding its implementation misunderstanding is also common regarding the distribution of portfolios or office. Horse trading and defections are also common such problems arise in operating the reality of coalition politics. It makes democracy more participative as every small fractions get represented and heard in the

legislature. It also gives chance to regional parties to participate in national politics and there is a less chance of one party dominance, consensus, understanding, toleration

become the watch words since the coalition system is a delicate balance of pluralistic elements.

Coalition experiments in India (Central Governments)

Year	Name of coalition	Head of the coalition governments	Parties in coalition	No of years in coalition
1977 Sixth Lok Sabha	Janatha Government	Moraji Desai	Janasangha, Bharathiya Lok Dal, Congress (s) socialist party, CFD, Ex-congressmen (Chandrashekhar Group) others (like Akali dal etc)	Two years
1979 Sixth Lok Sabha	Janatha Government	Charan Singh	CPI (M), CPI, Congress I	Six months
1989 Ninth Lok Sabha	National Front	V.P. Singh	Congress – I, CPI, CPI (M), RSP	One year
1990 Tenth Lok Sabha	Congress Government	Chandrashekhar	Congress-I, AIADMK, BSP, Muslim League, J & K National Conference, Kerak congress (M) shiromani Akali Dal, and few independent members.	Eight months
1996 Eleventh Lok Sabha	United Front Coalition	H.D. Devegouda	Janatha Dal, left parties, telugu Deshan and congress	Ten months
1997 Eleventh Lok Sabha	United Front Coalition	Inder Kumar Gujral	Janatha Dal, left parties, TDP and congress	One year
1998 Twentieth Lok Sabha	BJP Government	Atal Bihari Vajapayee	BJP, BJD, Trinamoola congress, samatha party, HVP, SAD, Shive-sena, TDP-Laxmi Parvathi, Lokshakthi, AIADMK, PMK, PDMK, TRC, Anenachat congress, Independents.	One year Six months
1999 Thirteenth Lok Sabha	National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	Atal Bihari Vajapayee	Congress (1), lift parties, RJD, Samaja Vadi party, Lok Jana Shakthi, JMM, DMK, Nationalist congress party and others	Five years
2004 Fourteenth Lok Sabha	Union Progressive Alliance (UPA)	Dr Manmohan Singh	Congress (I), left parties, RJD, sanajvadi party, Lok Jana Shakthi, JMM, DMK, Nationalist congress party and others	Five years
2009 Fifteenth Lok Sabha	Union Progressive Alliance (UPA)	Dr. Manmohan Singh	Congress (I), left parties, RJD, Samajavadi party, Lok Jana Shakthi, JMM, DMK, Nationalist congress party and others	Five years
2014 Sixteenth Lok Sabha	BJP Government (NDA)	Narendra Modi	Samatha, BJP, SAD, AIDMK, BJD, TDP, LOK Jana Shakthi, ASSU, Shivasena	Five years
2019 Seventieth Lok Sabha	BJP Government (NDA)	Narendra Modi	BJP, AIADMK, JDL, LJP, YSR Congress, TRS, SAD	Till Date

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