Coalition Governments in India and its Stability

C.T. Ravi

Research Scholar Department of Political Science KSOU Mysore

ABSTRACT: *Indian democracy has gained strength during the past seventy-two years and people are expecting democratic institutions in larger number which is good sign for the stability of Indian Democracy. It would stabilize the process of democratization of the masses. The lack of political participation of the people through political parties, institutions and organizations is a threat of instability of Indian democracy. Political parties are complex and multi-faceted organizations with multiple linkages to organizations in civil society. Due to multi-party system the regional political parties have a mushroom growth and resulted in the coalition politics. The Coalition governments have become inevitable in India today. Pre independence and post-independence witnessed fractured verdicts of coalitions till 1999. After 1999 nation witnessed four full term coalitions of two national political parties successfully completing its term through alliances. The political parties applied various strategies to complete the term successfully. This paper focuses on the various strategies adopted by the political parties in its working and completing the term along with the challenges and problem faced by the coalition governments in India.*
KEY WORDS: *Democracy, Political parties, alliances, coalitions*

I. INTRODUCTION

Coalition governments are not only the main feature of Indian polity but also many other countries in the world. In Britain, there have been coalition government in two or three occasions. In some Western European countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark, coalition governments have been successful. In India the movement of coalitions have begun in both centre and states. The parliamentary system has become accessible mainly because, with the emergence of coalition government. There are many reasons for the origin of coalition governments in India which includes the relationship between centre and states in terms of administration aid, socio-economic planning and also in the field of politics.

India has seen 16 general elections so far. Each of the Indian elections has been alwaysspecial,'eksebadkarek'inhinditheysay;it'smoresignificantthanoneanother.heveryfirstelectionheldinIndiainth eyear195152wasamilestoneariseinthedarknesstimeforacountrythatmanywesterncommentatorswereinfluencedtodes cribeso.The1977electionsweresignificantinthehistoryofelectoralpoliticsinIndia.DemocracywasretainedbytheIndia npublicandpublicconfidenceinIndiandemocracyalsoboostedup.Theruleofdictatorship[4]wasoverthrownbythese1977 electionsin India.ThecurrentBJP,whichwonthe16thLokSabhageneralelections,andin1977Janatha Party had won elections, and it was the first non-Congress party called as JanathaPartyalongwithseveralpartiesmadeagovernmentattheCentre.Thisresulted in the working of Indian democracy, according to people's choice. But in the initial stagesasJanSangh,itreceivedonly3.1percentvotesin1952generalelections.The patch was not same when the scholar compared between 1952 and 1977. In the 1977 elections, the BJP won 282 seats and 31percent of national votes and then in 16th general elections, the winning BJP had a sweeping victory of winning more than 300 seats with a majority. But it cannot be denied that the 16th and 17thloksabha is also a coalitionasitissupportedbyapre-allianceofthepoliticalparties.

Coalitions have two classes of theories **power maximization theories** and **policy-based theories** of coalition formation and behaviour. **Power maximization theories** stress the maximization of pay offs, that is power, and derivatives as the key factor in coalition formation, ignoring ideological and policy affinities as elements. The policy-based theories, consider such affinities the key to the formation of coalitions. Power maximization theories, accordingly, predict minimum winning coalitions, defined as a coalition in which each party is indispensable to the coalition's winning a simple majority of seats because in such coalitions, each member's share of the payoff is maximized.

The policy based theories has been adopted in this paper to study the working of coalition governments in India. Indian polity witnessed coalition governments before independence due to various causes. Though there is no mention of type of party system in India in the constitution India is practicing multi-party system which resulted in the mushroom growth of national and regional political parties. Due to increase in the regional

political parties, ideology conflict, leadership issues, region and regional issues and mainly because of lack of majority of single party there is an existence of coalition governments in India. Till 1999 there was no coalition which completed its term. The paper analyses about the different strategies adopted by the political parties to complete the term too.

Objectives: The embodiment of provisions affords numerous ambitions for academic research. Accumulating this as a background, an endeavour is made to study the coalitions in India, its formation, working towards completion of the term and strategies adopted by the parties for its success and the stability of the coalition has been focused in this paper.

Scope of the study: The scope of the study is only limited to understand the coalition governments in India at the centre, its strategies and its stability including problems and challenges towards its successful completion of the term. Other parameters are excluded here so that the result of the study cannot be universalized to the problems faced by the coalition politics of the nation.

Methodology: The study is totally on secondary data considering the nature of the theme which helps to get an insight into the actual working of the coalition system and to get a feeling of the situation in which the democratic system operates.

Reasons for formation of coalitions:

There are various reasons for formulating coalitions. The main three main reasons are stated here

1. No single political party is able to secure a working majority in the popular house on account of the presence of multi-party system. Under the circumstances a number of like-minded political parties form the coalition to provide a workable majority and run the government. France provides a typical example of this type of coalitions.

2. Secondly, in a bi-party system a deadlock may be created due of even balance between two political parties. This may lead 'to one of the two parties allying itself with a minor group such as neutrals or detectors to fill the majority in its favour.

3. Thirdly, a coalition may be necessitated by a national crisis when the various political groups may suspend their political strife and collaborate in the general cause of protecting and promoting their national interests. In Britain coalition government was formed to deal with the abnormal conditions during the First World War. The various political parties sunk their differences to give a united fight to the enemies of Britain.

In India, the coalition governments have mainly because of multi-party system as no single party was able to secure the majority. Nation witnessed a single party dominance government till the split of congress party in 1969 and leadership was one of the most important strategy. BJP has been the first political party to understand the importance of creating a nation-wide political coalition. Irrespective of disagreements with the various political parties BJP was successful in forming the coalitions with 24 political parties which was remarkable in the year 1999 and first coalition government in India to complete its term.

Ideologies:

With the initiation of coalition politics, advocates of proportional representation suggested coalition government today lead to more consensus-based politics. Coalitions consisting of different political parties comprising their ideologies need to compromise for governmental policy. Whether the party is national or regional, big or small, powerful or not it plays a significant role in making and breaking the governments -The power structure, i.e., the role and the behavioral reaction (eg. Decision making) of leaders from all parties; Structure norms and role performance which includes Involvement and action-oriented pattern in Stabilizing the coalitions, coordinating in its structure.

Bidyuth Chakrabarthy in his book says, 'what seems crucial in the coalition process is not 'ideological purity' but 'the exigency of the situation', where the former seems to be a liability rather than an asset. Political parties have a clearly defined ideology, but these political parties started challenging, to form the governments and made compromises in the ideologies to reach their objective which is an appropriate and sustainable solution of every issue and not hasty out of emotional imbalance during the working of coalitions. The ideological differences are nothing to do in forming the governments as it happened in the Maharashtra while forming the coalition government.

Manifestoes and Common Minimum Programme:

Coalitions are mandatory in the present political situation. The important decisions are taken through the consultation of all party members, which is very difficult as they have different manifestoes and ideologies. CMP was a document which brought together the diverse set of political parties from national to regional, left to right in one platform.

To compare the working of coalition governments, CMP helps the research scholar to analyze the success of policy implementation and also to make the comparative study. The CMP includes the agenda of the political parties

which makes alliances among themselves. CMP is a common agreement or arrangement made by the political parties and also it is a promise or assurances made by them to public.The winning of elections depends on the CMPof politicalparties.Afterformingthegovernment,itistheresponsibilityofthegovernment tofulfillthe CMP. Thisincludesallthefactors,social,economic,politicalandforeign affairstoo.Thescholarmadeanendeavortoselectjustafewconsequencesandpolicies tocomparetheworkingofthecoalitions.

Splits and Defections: The party splits and defections are the other reasons for formations of coalition governments in India. Though the Ani-defection law has been enforced the members are finding their own ways to break the governments either through resigning to their membership or through withdrawing their support. The election commission has taken many measures for the problem.

Pre alliances/ post alliances:
Alliancesareatemporaryorganizationorunderstandingmadebythemainparties with smaller and regional partiesin parliamentaryproceduretomakethepower.Theconfederationisnotanovelconceptinahistoryofpolitics.Coalitionshav ebeenmade informally in the past which is also called outside support to the leading party. Any coalition is at its best, along with the regional political parties with primary or leadingpoliticalparties. Alliancesarealsocalledagreements.Thecomparisonsare producedhereonbothpre-pollalliancesandalsoonpost-pollalliances.Therewereno national level alliances, but only state specific ones. Both coalition makers - BJP and Congress,andalsoLeft,preferredalliancesonlytobridgeterritorialgaps.Neitherthe BJP nor the Congress, nor the Left was willing to concede space in their respective areasofstrengthtotheirallies.TheBJP managedtobuildalliancesofconvenience with state parties and mainly with regional political parties. BJP's alliances were like Communalismv/sSecularism,sotheBJPallianceisalsocalled'SecularAlliance'.

In the 1999 elections BJP party had kept aside the then Article 370 and Ayodhya issue. Though it won the elections in 1999, in 2004 it lost due to internal communal disturbances in the nation. Since 2004, the coalition makers are more appropriate, facilitating to cover-up of social movements and moved out of its path to accommodate its partners and forge coalitions."Bridgingalliancestrategy"oftheBJPprovedsuccessfulforitin1999.

Alliances are key factor for political parties to capture the power. The alliances might be pre-alliances or post-alliances or sometimes they may support from outside or inside. Alliances with political parties may make or break the governments. Most of the political parties will be opportunistic to capture the powers.

Popular programmes: The popular programmes introduced and implemented by the BJP led NDA and Congress led UPA is also a reason to continue the alliances either pre or post and form the government immediately after the elections. These programmes in respect to social security, economic reforms and prosperity some of popular programmes introduced by the coalition governments wereSarvaShikshanaAbhiyan, Swajaladhara, PMGSY, RTE, MNREGA,RTI, PradhanaMantriJandhanYojana, Ayushman Bharat, SwachBharath, Digital India, Make in India, Skill India, Mudra Bank Yojana. BetiBachaoBetiPadhao, Kisan SammanYojana, Pradhan MantriFasalBheemaYojana and so on.

Identity politics – The identity politics is gaining its importance in the Indian politics. The elections will be held on the basis of Identity which might be leadership, caste or religion. In 1999 the elections were held on the basis of party but in 2014 and 2019 it was on the basis of leadership or identity. In the earlier stages of elections between 1952-77 when Congress was dominating, the party was identified by Indira Gandhi. So coalition governments of 1999,2004, 2009 had a party role as well as the ideology concept but 2014 onwards it was on the basis of leadership and identity.

Opportunistic and power sharing – Political parties in India either national or regional are opportunistic to share power. The support may be by outside or inside the political parties will be awaited to grab the power and become opportunistic during the elections and sometimes even during the fractured verdicts.

Regional imbalances: When National political parties are failed towards balancing the regions in terms of social reforms, economic development or political conditions based on the situations national and regional political parties may have tie ups with the national parties through conditional alliances and may form the governments.

Regional political parties: As stated in India there is an existence of multi-party system, because of which there is a mushroom growth of political parties in India. Thousands of regional political parties have been started by the local/regional leaders to fulfil the demands of regional problems as well it focuses towards the development.

Lack of leadership qualities among the leaders: Lack of leadership among the political leaders also leads to defections and also to have an alliance with majority parties. As it happened in the year 1999, under the leadership of Vajpayee and 2014 and 2019 under the leadership of Narendra Modi. Though the BJP had a sweeping victory due to pre alliances with the political parties that was a coalition government. Leadership is one of the major strategy to complete its term.

Apart from all these strategies adopted by the coalition partners there are other factors which leads towards the coalitions. Caste is one of the major factor in the Indian society which is also a social problem. The voters chose leaders based on the caste and same with the political parties where the candidate will be chosen based on the caste and importance is also given to caste.

Dynasty politics: People blindly accept the candidate or the leaders based on the family/dynasty. This is one of the common feature in Indian politics, taking in to consideration of either Gandhi or Deve Gowda. The priority will be given to their own family members ignoring the workers of political parties who work for the sake of parties.

Religious factors: The relation between religion and politics goes far back into the history of mankind. Religious symbols, ides and institutions have been used by the ruling classes in order to perpetuate their control over political system. In politics religion is used to mobilize all sections and classed of a religious community for achieving political and economic goals. One of the most important strategy applied by the political parties during the elections to achieve their political goals. The religious factors had been kept aside during the elections and also while forming the governments since 1999. The pre-alliances by the political parties had an agreement about religious issues till 2014 in its manifestoes. Compromising nature of opportunistic political parties had developed a confidence among the ruling party leaders. Fear of losing the support of religious minded and obscurantist groups political parties even today giving priority for religion and even candidates will be allotted on the basis of religion in the for the loksabha and assembly constituencies. Political leaders openly identify themselves with places of worship for electoral gains.

Economic factors: The manifestoes released by the allied political parties witnesses the economic stability of each and every political party to attain the interest of the voter. The highest priority was given to development and expansion of physical infrastructure like roads, highways, ports, power, railways, water supply, investment in private sector and so on. Even the reform process was continued to ensure the growth of the national economy including eradicating unemployment problems under 'BerozgariHatao'. Coalitions have and had made efforts to stabilize the economy of the nation in terms of the development.

The coalitions governments are not the result of today. In a democratic country like India where there are several political parties involve in the common interest of acquiring power. In parliamentary democracies with proportional electoral systems, the necessity to form coalition governments regularly subjects the translation of party platforms into government policy to the uncertainties of inter-party platforms into government policy to the uncertainties of inter-party bargaining. This gives the situation for parties to involve in coalition governments which has to face challenges for its completion and success. The challenges are unavoidable and has and had overcome these and resulted with the stability of the coalitions.

II. CONCLUSION:

There are various challenges faced by the coalition governments in India in various factors. The parliamentary democracy in India has come of age. It has acquired maturity with the experience of past. The party system existing in India gives way for the coalitions and today coalitions are striving towards stability. None of the political parties have the confidence to face the mass on its own agenda or manifestoes. The national political parties are looking towards the regional political parties for alliances before the elections and some of the parties will be waiting for an opportunity to share the power and will become the part of the government through post alliances. So coalition system has become the order of the governmental system in India today. The responsibility of regional and national political parties is increasing day by day in Indian party system. To strengthen Indian democracy, the parties will have to play a crucial role in maintain and stabilizing the government.

REFERENCES:

[1]. M G Khanna; 2003, July – December: Coalition Government and Federal system in India; The Indian Journal of Political Science, vol.64, no 3-4

[2]. Arora,D.(2006).NatureofCoalitionPoliticsatthecentre.JournalofPoliticalScience,vol.II,No1, p.64.

[3]. Ashraf,T.(2010).Election2009:AcompleteDocumentationandAnalysisofIndianParliamentaryElectionsSince1952.V.I.UniversityofDelhi:Bookwell.

[4]. Azad(2008).Coalitiongovernmentnotgoodforprogress.IndoAsianNewsService,December.

[5]. Balveer&Arora(1999).PoliticalpartiesandthePartySystem:TheemergenceofnewCoalition.December.

[6]. Banerjee,S.(2004).'India'sHomeFront'Economicandpoliticalweekly,Oct.,pp4404

[7]. BhuyanD,MuniSimanchal(2010).DynamicsofCoalitionpolitics.NewDelhi:Abhijeet.

[8]. Bidyuth,C.(2006).Forgingpower.OxforduniversityPress.andpublicaations.pp172.

[9]. Bose,A.(2004).UPA'sfinancialwizardsatwar.Vijaya Times.5thOctober.

[10]. Chakrabarty,B.(2006).ForgingpowerCoalitionpoliticsinIndia.NewDelhi:Oxfordpublications. pp.170.

[11]. Chakravarthy,S.(2005).'Ademocracyinhurry'Frontline,V.22(07).March.

[12]. Chauhan,RS&Shailaja,V.(2011).CoalitiongovernmentinIndia:ProblemsandProspects.Deep andDeeppublications,pp.8

[13]. Chauhan,R.S.(2011).CoalitiongovernmentinIndia:problemsandprospects.NewDelhi,Deep andDeeppublications,p.88.

[14]. Chowdhury,N.(2007).Howtomakecoalitionswork?IndianExpress,26.11.2007

[15]. Chowdhury,N.(2010).Coalitionofcompromises.IndianExpress,05.05.2010

[16]. ChowdharyR.(1991),IdeologyandPoliticsofRulingPartiesinIndia,NewDelhi,Deep&DeepPublications.
[17]. Deepak,D.(et.al.)(1974).ThecoalitionGovernment:TheC.L.S.Madraspublications.SocialSciencesSeries-No.16