

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Coalition Governments in India: A Historical Overview

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Abstract:

Party System is indispensable part of a parliamentary form of democracy. The framers of the Indian Constitution were aware of the plural nature of Indian society hence, preferred a multi-party parliamentary democracy. Although multi-party system was prevalent from the very beginning in Indian Republic but presence of the Congress as dominant party overshadowed the importance of other political parties both at the centre and in the states. The Congress acted as the umbrella party which was characterized by its consensual and coalitional nature. However, the domineering character of the Congress party started to decline after the 1967 general election and the other political parties begin to assert themselves, and started to play a role in the formation of coalition governments at state level. The present work will look into the evolution of coalition government in India and identifies the reasons and circumstances in which coalition governments has become the virtual norm. In order to attain the above said objectives the descriptive and analytical methods have been employed. The study will utilize both primary and secondary data. Primary data will consists of parliamentary debates and other related government documents. The secondly data will consists of books, journals, newspapers, magazines and other relevant materials.

Keywords: *Coalition politics, Party system, Congress party, multiparty system, Indian Constitution, National Democratic Alliance and United Progressive Alliance.*

1. Politics of Congress Dominance (1947-1967)

Before India's independence, Jawaharlal Nehru headed the first coalition government of 1946. It was a coalition between the All Indian National Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League. However, the departure of Muslim League from the Indian electoral process after independence strengthened the Congress party further. The Congress party was unchallenged political force in first two decades after independence. The diverse nature of the Congress party was supplemented with internal competition. The unique feature of Indian political system in the first two decades after independence was a party system characterized by, dominance co-existing with competition but without a trace of alteration.ⁱ The different factional groups within the ruling Congress party played the role of opposition. Therefore, opposition to the Congress government were at two levels, one at intra-party level that was inside the *margin* and second at inter-party level that was outside the *margin*.

The Congress party had dominated both the Parliament and the state legislatures by means of its large numerical strength in the first two decades after independence. In reality it never won majority of votes in the Parliamentary election of 1952, 1957 and 1962, and its vote share hovered between 45, 48 percent of the total.ⁱⁱ The absence of unified opposition and thanks to the first past the post voting system, the Congress was able to maintain its dominance. But it will be wrong to say that the Congress has ruled the whole country in the first two decades after independence. In the first state assembly elections of 1952, the Congress won clear majority in all states except Madras, Travancore-cochin, PEPSU, and Orissa and managed a bare majority in Rajasthan. In 1954 state assembly election was held in Travancore-Cochin and coalition government was formed by Praja Socialist Party (PSP) with the support of the Congress. The Coalition government was also formed in Orissa between the Congress and Gantantra Parishad in 1957 which lasted till 1967. In Kerala from 1960-1964, coalition government ruled, It was the coalition between PSP, Muslim League and the Congress.ⁱⁱⁱ Therefore, Despite the Congress dominance coalition politics at state level was prevalent from the very beginning.

Prior to fourth general elections of 1967 the Congress party was beset with numerous problems like the death of two towering leaders, Nehru and Shastri; two successive wars which drained the resources of the country; two severe droughts that put the common man in hardship.^{iv} The big jolt for the Congress was the split of party which became rampant at state level in 1966 particularly in Orissa, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab. Different new political parties came into existence from the Congress and these new formations either contest election in alliance with the opposition or contested on their own, but in both the respects it gave the Congress a setback. The fourth general election assumes great importance in the Indian political history because two trends emerged: the erosion of the Congress dominance at state level and the formation of coalition governments by non-Congress parties. The single dominant party system was replaced by the multi-party system in which no particular party claimed absolute majority and the result

was that the model of intra-party coalition was replaced by the inter-party coalition system. The Congress hegemony was reduced in the nine states – Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, where the non-Congress governments were formed. The anti-Congress sentiment unites different non-Congress political parties, having different ideological orientations at the state level. Thus in Bihar the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal was formed by SSP, PSP, Jana Sangh, Janakranti Dal and CPI. In Punjab the Popular United Front was formed which consists of Alkali Dal (Sant- group), Alkali Dal (Master group), CPI, SSP, Republican Party and CPI (M). In West Bengal, the United Front government was formed which consists of CPI (M), the Bangla Congress, and the fourteen other parties. In Kerala United Front ministry was formed which consists of CPI (M), CPI, SSP, RSP, KTP, KSP and Muslim League. In Orissa, Swantra party with help of the Jana Congress formed government.^v Although these experiments of coalition governments at the state level did not last long but these experiments brought together the non-Congress political parties on a common platform which over the years never happened and gave the Congress party opportunity to take advantage of that fragmented opposition.

2. The Congress Split and First Coalition at the Centre (1967-1979)

The Congress debacle in the fourth general election of 1967 developed the internal contradiction in the Congress party. It was the Bangalore session of AICC held on July 1969, when Mrs. Gandhi's moves towards the Congress split as mean to assert her. In this session she eloquently spoke about radical economic policies that annoyed the conservative group in the Congress. But the immediate causes of contradiction between Mrs Indira Gandhi and the syndicates became the nomination of President of India and the outing of Morarji Desai from his finance portfolio because of his indifference towards her economic policies.^{vi} The result was split in the Congress party in 1969 between the ruling Congress (R) headed by Indira Gandhi and Congress (O) headed by Dr Ram Subhag Singh. After the Congress split in 1969, the party had to enter into an implicit coalition even at the centre with the Communists and the Dravida Munnetra Kazagam (DMK) party. No doubt it was the Congress government but it was a minority government and it had a legislative understanding with these supporting parties. But this experiment also did not last long and Indira Gandhi heading the minority coalition government decided to hold new elections so as to seek Congress majority.

The fifth general election of 1971 assumed great importance in the Indian electoral politics, because in this election the opposition political parties along with defected Congress group entered into an electoral alliance to face the Congress (R) as united front in the election. The Jana Sangh, the Congress (O), the Swatantra party, and the SSP formed the *National Democratic Front*. This experiment of electoral alliance did not bear fruit to opposition political parties because the Congress won the election in a comprehensive way by attracting the electorates through the radical slogan of *GaribiHatao*. Thus the Congress (R) under the leadership of Indira Gandhi formed the government at the centre. This was the beginning of new Congress dominance era which differs from the earlier Congress dominance era under Nehru and Shastri. The new Congress party under Indira Gandhi was characterised by the absence of internal factional competition which led to monopolistic dominance and the erosion of openness in the Congress system. Though Indira Gandhi was successful in defusing the internal party challenges to her authority by causing split in the Congress party but during the latter years of her rule she faced numerous political, social and economic challenges which threatened her government. The financial drain caused due to the Bangladesh war, decline in the food production due to failure of monsoons and the Arab Israel war of oct. 1973 brought international energy and fertilizer crises which resulted in the high inflation, widespread food shortage and unemployment. The impact of all these conditions and problems was profound, as the people rose against these conditions particularly in Gujarat and Bihar were the student's movement, soon joined by the opposition political parties protested against the steep rise of food prices, cooking oil and other essential commodities. Furthermore, the big jolt for the Congress was Allahabad High Court's Judgement which convicted Indira Gandhi for having indulged in corrupt campaign practices and declared her election invalid.^{vii} Jaya Prakash Narain who over the years had endeavoured to unite the anti-Congress forces took advantage of that surcharged environment and converted the discontent into political movement. These forces were challenge to Indira's government who responded by promulgating emergency.

The proclamation of emergency proved very costly for the Indira's Congress. The immediate result was the defeat of the Congress party in the sixth Lok Sabha election. The opposition political parties under the leadership of Jaya Prakash Narain decided to give a united front to the Congress in the election. The opposition political parties like the Congress (O), the Jana Sangh, the Bharatiya Lok Dal and the Socialist party merged into one political party and named that as Janta party. The biggest blow for the Congress was the sudden split in the party in which prominent leaders like Jagjivan Ram, H. N. Bahuguna, and Nandini Satpathy deserted the party and formed the Congress for Democracy. The Janta formation also came into electoral understanding with CPI (M) and regional forces like Alkali Dal, DMK to give the Congress a united front in the elections. The opposition political parties under a common flag highlighted the emergency and its excessiveness especially the forced sterilisation and restrictions on civil liberties in their election campaign. The election results gave the Congress a great blow as the Janta party emerged as a majority party with 330 seats and the Congress party managed to win only 154 seats, and its allies, 7 seats won by CPI and 21 by AIADMK.^{viii}

The cause of defeating the Congress party united the opposition political parties having different ideological orientations and social base, these political parties range from left to right and from secular to communal forces. After defeating the Congress party, the Janta party could not evolve consensus on policy issues and engaged into internal fighting. Before the coalition government was made the conflict arose on choosing the Prime Minister. Initially, it was Jaya Prakash Narain, who acted as conflict manager for the Janta government. But later the factional fighting became acute and one among them was the dual membership of the Jana Sangh members in the party who retained the RSS membership. Before this issues could have settled strong corruption charges were raised against Kanti Desai, son of Morarji Desai. This further intensified internal feud in the government. The biggest blow for the Janta government came when Raj Narain deserted the party and formed the Janta Secular. The Congress party in the opposition ponder upon the opportunity and brought a non-confidence motion against the government and got passed it and it was on 15th July, 1979 that Morarji

Desai submitted his resignation to the President of India.^{ix} Charan Singh tried to provide an alternative government with the help of Congress, but before he could have proved his majority Congress pulled out its support and the government fell down. The major cause responsible for the collapse of Janta government was its very base of its existence. Arshi Khan says that, "The formation of Janta party was based on the strategy to weaken and defeat the Congress. But their leadership failed to decide on crucial point that is how to provide a cohesive and stable government to the people."^x The Janta experiment, though short lived assumes great importance in the post independent political development in India. It laid the foundation of coalition politics in India at the national level which became evident after 1989 general election and continued till this 2014.

3. Revival of the Congress Domination (1980-1989)

The prospect of two party system soon collapsed as the Janta party faced defection and paved the way for the revival of the Congress rule under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi for ten years. In the Lok Sabha election of 1980 the Congress party won 351 seats and emerged as the majority party in the Lok Sabha and the Lok Dal emerged as the second largest party with 41 seats. When Indira Gandhi came again to power in 1980, she revived her old way of relying on a small coterie ignoring organisation apparatus of the party. Indira Gandhi did not pay heed to restructure the party organisation and the same was followed by her son Rajiv Gandhi, which led to the erosion of party's social base. After the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 Oct. 1984 the Congress leadership unanimously choose Rajiv Gandhi as her successor.^{xi} In the Lok Sabha election of 1984, the Congress got benefited by the *sympathy wave* generated by the assassination of Indira Gandhi. The Congress got benefited of this and result was the over whelming majority for the Congress party which won 401 seats which was largest in relation to its previous victories.

Rajiv Gandhi tried to revive Congress's old social support base of Muslims and Hindus. For this he played two cards, Muslim card by nullifying the *Shah Banoo Judgement* and Hindu card by permitting the *Shilanayasat Ayodha* which was the disputed site.^{xii} But both proved very costly for the Congress party, "... as it became the major cause for the Congress debacle in the 1989 Lok Sabha election." writes C. P Bhambhri. The major blow to the Congress government came when the charges of wrong doings related to the *Bofor scandal* got surfaced. The government was severely disfigured and this led to the resignation of V.P. Singh. After resigning from the cabinet V. P Singh formed the Jana Morcha by organising the dissident Congress members against Rajiv Gandhi. After this he united the opposition political parties on the issue of *Bofor scandal*. The opposition political parties in the parliament unitedly resigned from the Lok Sabha when the Comptroller and Auditor General of India in its report indicted the government on irregularities related to the *Bofor*. V. P Singh took the advantage of weak condition of the Congress party and of growing anti-incumbency sentiments, by forming a common united front against the Congress party. The National Front, the BJP and the Left Front formed an alliance in some four hundred constituencies to face the Congress, so that the opposition vote didn't split.

4. From the Coalition Instability to Stability (1989-2004)

The general election of 1989, were held under surcharged environment of two popular waves, the 'Hindu wave' and the 'anti-Congress wave'. The Janta Dal got benefit of the later and the BJP got advantage of both. The 80 seat victory of BJP in the 1989 Lok Sabha election was product of 'Hindu wave' and the opposition unity. It increased its percentage of votes from 7.73 percent to 11 percent as compared to the Congress party and the Janta Dal.^{xiii} In this election two trends became evident the emergence of BJP as an alternative to the Congress party and the decline of the Congress party.

Congress (I)	197
Janta Dal	143
Bharatatiya Janta Party	85
Janta Party	0
Lok Kranti Dal	0
Communist Party of India	12
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	33
ICSSR	1
Telugu Desam Party	2
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	0
Other major state parties	22
Others	22
Independents	12
Total	529

Table 1: Seats won by the various political parties in the 1989 Lok Sabha election

Source: N. Jose Chander. *Coalition Politics: the Indian experience*.

In the Lok Sabha election of 1989, the choice of electorate was somewhat different from the previous elections (1977, 1979, and 1984) as they have elected a Parliament in which no single party had a majority. It was an ambiguous verdict in which the Congress was the single largest party but not in a position to form the government of its own. The Congress declined to form the government and the

onus to form the government fell on the shoulders of National Front which was the second largest party after the Congress. The other political parties which decided to support the National Front from outside were the BJP and the Left Front which were naturally antagonistic to each other and that prevents them to be the part of the government. This very outside support by the BJP and the Left Front to minority coalition government was calculated, as it ensured them to keep the Congress party away from the power and secondly, it ensured them to use the minority government without the responsibility. The National Front government had to maintain this triangular balance which was very difficult and which ultimately became its cause of down fall. Furthermore, the internal contradiction in the main party of the National Front that is Janta Dal remained intact. Though, formally merger took place in the party but personal enmity among the leaders like V.P Singh, Chandra Shekhar, Devi Lal, Ajit Singh and Bahuguna remained intact. The novel experiment soon found itself in trouble when Devi Lal decided to organise a big farmer's movement against V. P Singh and the latter in order to counter the former took the haste decision to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. The sudden decision of implementing the Mandal Commission's recommendation (to give 27 percent reservation to OBCs) put other national political parties into back foot. BJP which over the years had garnered the support of the upper castes Hindus found itself in dilemma. It played the *Mandir Card* against the *Mandal Card*, so to mobilise the majority. The BJP withdrew its support to the National Front Government on October 23, 1990 when the Bihar government on the advice of the Prime Minister V.P Singh, arrested the BJP leader L.K. Advani during his spectacular *RathYathra*, from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodha in U.P, to mobilise Hindus for building Ram temple in place of the Babri Masjid.^{xiv} As the BJP withdrew its support to the National Front minority government, a non-confidence motion was passed against V.P Singh led National Front minority government on November 7, 1990. The fall of National Front led to split of the Janta Dal when Chandrasekhar who along with his 55 members formed the Janta Dal (Samajwadi), and staked the claim for forming the government with the outside support of the Congress. It was on November 10, 1990 that Chandra Shekhar was sworn as the Prime Minister and Devi Lal as his deputy Prime Minister who left him in cold at the time of selection of V.P Singh as the first Prime Minister of the National Front.^{xv} This novel experiment of minority coalition government did not last too long, because the Congress withdrew its support from the minority coalition government on the issue of surveillance of Rajiv Gandhi by two constables from Haryana and Chandra Shekhar had to submit his resignation to the President on the March 6, 1991.

The issue of the *Mandal* and *Mandir* brought chaos in India. The secular fabric which over the years was hall mark of India Republic got tarnished when the political parties for their electoral benefit played the *communal* and *caste cards*. The greater beneficiaries of this were the BJP and the Janta Dal somehow got benefit of it. But the both issues of *Mandal* and *Mandir* greatly cost the Congress party. In the general election of 1991, the *Mandir-Masjid* issue became the focal point and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in between the election gave new turn to election. The Lok Sabha election of 1991 again brought a hung parliament. In this election the Congress emerged as the largest party, with not too much strength to form the government on its own. The Narasimha Rao government first started as a single party minority government but during later half it strengthened itself when Ajit Singh's group merged with the Congress with JMM support.

The 1996 Lok Sabha election again produced a fractured mandate and hung-Parliament. The Congress once the dominant party was reduced to second position for the first time with 141 seats. The BJP with its pre-election allies came first with 187 seats but also failed to get the requisite numbers for government formation. Therefore, as a largest party in the Parliament, the onus to form the government fell on the shoulders of BJP which under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee took the charge of forming the government in May 16, 1996. The BJP leaders tried hard to look far and wide to muster some additional support to strengthen their position in the Parliament. However, they couldn't succeed and finally, the Prime Minister A.B Vajpayee on May 27, 1996 submitted his resignation.^{xvi} Therefore, the 13 day government led by the Vajpayee fell down. Thereafter, the President called upon H. D. Deve Gowda, to form the government as the leader of the United Front— a combination of the National Front and the Left Front, a coalition of 13 parties with the outside support of the Congress.

BJP and allies	Seats	Congress(I) & allies	Seats	NF-LF and others	Seats
BJP	160	Congress (I)	139	Janta Dal	45
Shivsena	15			CPI(M)	32
Samata	8			CPI	12
Haryana Vikas Party	3			FB	3
				RSP	5
				SP	17
				BSP	11
				DMK	17
				TMC	20
				TDP	16
				AKALIDAL	8
				AJP	5
				AICC(T)	5
				Others	19
Total	186	TOTAL	139	TOTAL	215

Table 2: Seats won by the various political parties in 1996 Lok Sabha Election

Source: N. Jose Chander: *Coalition Politics, the Indian experience*

The very outside support of the Congress party to the United Front government was politically calculated to halt the progress of the BJP which was becoming a major political force since 1989. A significant development related with the emergence of the United Front coalition government was the revival of the federal spirit of Indian political system. Within the United Front the regional actors like DMK, TMC, TDP and AGP formed the *Federal Front*. The United Front coalition government headed by the H.D. Deve Gowda, from the very beginning had to maintain a balance among the Left Front and the Congress and more importantly between the National parties and regional parties. It was the assertive role of the United Front government, which largely antagonise the Congress. The conflict became acute between the two when the United Front government allowed the CBI to question the Congress party President on his allegedly disproportionate assets and consequently, the Congress party withdrew its support to the government. It was on April 11, 1997 that the fate of the United Front government was sealed as the government could not win the vote of confidence.

In order to avert the dissolution of the house the Congress party came into an understanding with the United Front leadership and accepted the change in the leadership. The Congress again agreed to support the United Front coalition government under I. K. Gujral. He (I.K Gujral) was elected as the leader of the United Front on April 16, 1997 and sworn as the Prime Minister on April 21, 1997. But the experiment also did not last too long and the fate of Gujral led coalition government was sealed by the Congress party when the Jain Commission probing the Rajiv Gandhi assassination exposed the involvement of DMK into the act. The Congress party demanded the removal of DMK from the coalition government but the United Front did not pay heed to this demand and ultimately the Congress withdrew its support on 28 November, 1997 and the government fell down.

The election held in 1998 again gave fractured verdict, and 18 party coalition led by BJP's Atal Bihari Vajpayee came into power on 19th March, 1996. The failure of BJP to muster support for their government in 1996 made them realise that in order to form an alliances and form government it had to moderate its stand on contentious issues like the Uniform Civil Code, Article 370 and the Ram Janmbhoomi and it did the same in 1998 election which resulted in attracting more partners for their government. The fractured verdict and the subsequent emergence of coalition politics reflect the divergence in India along caste, religion, disparity of economics and so many divergences. The BJP was quick to ponder upon this and build alliances to control the political power. The mid-term election of 1998 took place in the back drop of governmental instability and fragmented party system. The BJP with its old allies and new partners emerged as the largest vote puller in the country, securing 31 percent of votes and captured 180 seats; more than 25 percent on the slogan of stable government and able leadership.^{xvii} On the one side BJP was building alliances, the Congress party was facing internal problem of splits. The Manipur State Congress (Manipur), the Loktantrik Congress (UP), the Trinamul Congress (West Bengal), the Himachal Vikas Congress (Sukhram) and later the Nationalist Congress party of Sharad Pawar splitted from the main Congress party. Furthermore, the Third Front which was combination of thirteen parties also lost its cohesion.

BJP and its Allies	251
United Front	96
Congress and its Allies	166
Others	22
Total	535
BJP and its Allies	
BJP	178
AIADMK	18
Samata Party	12
BJD	9
SAD	8
Trinamul	7
Shivsena	6
Lok Shakti	3
PMK	4
MDMK	3
TRC	1
JP	1
HVP	1
TOTAL	251

Table 3: Seats won by the various political parties in 1998 Lok Sabha Election

Source: N. Jose Chander: *Coalition Politics, the Indian Experience*

The message of 1998 Lok Sabha election was clearly peoples verdict for two party system to dominate the country's political scenario. Again the BJP formed the coalition government, and it ruled India for thirteen months. But from the beginning the AIADMK supremo Jayalalitha remained a headache for A. B. Vajpayee led government. Jayalalitha decision to join the coalition government was largely motivated to secure her demands of ousting the DMK from power in Tamil Nadu and getting the key portfolios. The situation became

sever between AIADMK and BJP when the Jayalalitha demanded the reinstatement of the Chief of Naval staff Admiral Bhagwat, and the constitution of a joint political committee to probe into his sacking as also the expulsion of George Fernandez. But BJP did not accepted her demands and the motion of confidence moved by A. B. Vajpayee was rejected by the Lok Sabha by the narrowest margin of one vote, the final tally was 269 in favour and 270 against the motion.

Before the Lok Sabha elections of 1999, the BJP was largely in advantage as because the manner of its defeat in the Lok Sabha by ditching was presented as institutional hurt, secondly, as a caretaker government it confronts itself with Kargil War and its victory gave it a chance to present itself as the saviour of the nation. And thirdly, the United Front disintegration and the Janta Dal split added strength to it as there was no other strong force to challenge it.^{xviii} Therefore, in 13th Lok Sabha election of September-October 1999 the BJP led NDA emerged as the largest alliance and secured 299 seats. The choice of people to brought back the NDA in power, was the positive endorsement of the coalition system. The BJP led NDA government consists of 24 political parties as some political parties like National Conference, Mizo National Front, Sikkim Democratic Front and other smaller parties were post-election allies. The NDA coalition government completed its full term and ends the decade long instability of the coalition government. The notion of coalition phase being an aberration was discarded and the message was clear that coalition politics will stay.

BJP and allies	Seats	Congress(I) & allies	Seats	Left parties	Seats	Other parties	Seats
BJP	182	Congress (I)	114	CPI	4	BSP	14
BJD	10	AIADMK	10	CPI(M)	33	SP	26
DMK	12	KC(M)	1	FB	2	NC	4
HVC	1	ML	2	KC(J)	1	Indep. and others	21
INLD	5	RJD	7	RSP	3		
JD(U)	21	RLD	2				
LOKTANTRIK	2						
MDMK	4						
MGRADMK	1						
MSCP	1						
PMK	5						
SAD	2						
SS	15						
TRINAMUL	8						
TDP	29						
IND.(Maneka)	1						
Total	299	TOTAL	136	TOTAL	43	Total	65

Table 4: Seats won by the various political parties in 1999 Lok Sabha Election

Source: N. Jose Chander: Coalition Politics, The Indian experience

The completion of tenure by National Democratic Alliance (NDA) discarded the notion that coalition politics is a transitional phase in Indian politics. The same trend which started in 1989 at central level also got reflected in the 2004 election verdict. The emergence of the Congress party as the single largest party in 2004 and 2009 Lok Sabha election had made it clear that voters of India voted for the coalition government. What was more important in 2004 and Lok Sabha election was the Congress's changed attitude towards the coalition governance. In the 1999 Lok Sabha election the BJP became successful in wooing the regional forces by shedding its hard-core ideology and struck the pre-poll alliance with the regional and state based political parties. On the other hand the Congress did not opt for the alliance and went to polls with not much allies that proved to be catastrophic for it, hence denied it a chance to form the government at the centre. However, in 2004 Lok Sabha and again in 2009 election Congress under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi shed its differences with the regional forces and struck pre-poll alliance with the important, state and regional forces like RJD, DMK, TRS (TRS was not part of 2009 election), JMM, LJP etc. The alliance with these forces made the difference in the election and ultimately the Congress formed the UPA-I government with the outside support of the Left Front, SP, BSP etc. The Congress party in order to sustain the government reconciled the election manifestos of the constituents of the UPA-I government and laid down a comprehensive policy document which was called the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP). The NCMP gave direction to the government and more importantly, sustained the Left Front support to the government for four years. In 2009 Lok Sabha election the people again voted for the UPA government and endorsed the achievements of NAREGA, Minority development programmes, high social sector investment and above all the high economic growth. But the UPA-II witnessed more policy paralysis than the UPA-I. The UPA-II though much stronger than the UPA-I did not succeed in full filling the promises it made to electorate during the election campaigning. The UPA-II was disfigured by the series corruption scam, high inflation, slow growth rate, and more importantly the slow growth rate in employment. All these resulted in the debacle of the UPA alliance and triumph of NDA led by Narendra Modi. The Emergence of BJP single largest party in 2014 Lok Sabha election strengthened the notion that coalition phase is now over. But the hypothesis will be tested in due course of time.

Parties	Seats	Votes (%)	Parties	Seats	Votes (%)	Parties	Seats	Votes (%)
Congress+allies	219	35.82	NDA	189	35.91	Left Front	61	8.34
Congress	145	26.69	BJP	138	22.16	CPI(M)	43	5.69
RJD	21	2.22	Shiv Sena	12	1.82	CPI	10	1.4
DMK	16	1.82	BJD	11	1.31	RSP	3	0.44
NCP	9	1.78	JD(U)	8	2.29	FBL	3	0.35
PMK	6	0.56	Akali Dal(B)	8	0.91	KEC	1	0.09
JMM	5	0.48	TDP	5	3.06	IND(LF)	1	0.08
THS	5	0.63	WBTC	2	2.08	Other Parties	70	19.93
LJNP	4	0.72	MNF	1	0.05	SP	36	4.33
MDMK	4	0.43	SDF	1	0.04	BSP	19	5.33
PDP	1	0.08	IEDP	1	0.07	RLD	3	0.64
MUL	1	0.2	NDF	1	0.18	JD(S)	3	1.48
RPI(A)	1	0.09	IND(BJP)	1	0.18	AGP	2	0.53
IND(INC)	1	0.02				SJP(R)	1	0.09
						NC	2	0.13
						Other Independents	1	3.79
						NIP	1	0.09
						MIM	1	0.11
						Others	1	5.56

Table 5: Results of Lok Sabha Election 2004/
Source: The Hindu- 20th May, 2004

UPA	262	NDA	159	Third Front	80	Fourth Front	27
Congress	206	BJP	116	BSP	21	SP	23
TMC	19	JDU	20	CPI-M	16	RJD	4
DMK	18	Shiv sena	11	BJD	14	Others	15
NCP	9	RLD	5	AIADMK	9	Independents	9
NC	3	Akali Dal	4	TDP	6	Assam united democratic front	1
JMM	2	TRS	2	CPI	4	Bahujan Vikasa Aaghadi	1
MLKS(C)		AGP	1	JD(S)	3	Swabhimani Paksha	1
IMMIM				Forward Block	2	Nagaland People's Front 1	1
BPF	1			RSP	2	Sikkim Democratic Front 1	1
KERALA CONGRESS(MANI)	1			MDMK	1	VCK 1	1
				Harayan Janhit Cogress	1		
				JVM(P)	1		

Table 6: The 2009 Lok Sabha Election Results
Source: Hindustan Times, May 17, 2009

5. Conclusion

India is multi-diverse country and the coalition politics reflects this diversity. After independence the all-embracing character of the Congress party had represented all shades of Indian society. But with the passage of time due the change in the socio- economic profile of the country new social groups emerged and looked for space in the political process. The Congress party could not accommodate and reconcile with the new groups hence new political formations came into existence around these social groups and made the political process more competitive and coalition governments became inevitable.

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