

An Analysis of Coalition Era in Indian Politics



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Abstract

Any party may gain majority in the lower house, if not, coalitions are formed by the political parties to gain a majority in the lower house for formation of government. This paper will analyze its nature, causes and prospects of coalition governments in Indian political process. The significance lies in this paper of multi-party system, growth of regionalism and its effect on the pattern of Centre-State relations. With the decline of the Congress party and one –party dominant system and with the emergence of various new political parties at various levels, the coalitions have gradually assumed a lot of significance in Indian political system. Every political party wants have its say in the policy making and implementation. The large scale bargaining power is realized in coalition politics.

Keywords: Coalition, Politics, Multi-Party System, Elections, Opposition.

Introduction

The term coalition is a Latin word which means to go or to grow together. Coalition is an act of coalescing, or uniting into one body. It is a combination of a body or parts into one whole. In the strict political sense, the word 'coalition' is used for an alliance or temporary union for joint action of various powers or States.¹ A coalition government is a government run by two or more political parties or one major party and other small or regional political parties on a minimum common programme.

A coalition government always remains under pulls and pressures of aligning political parties in a country like India. The coalition's partners always enter into bargaining with each other in the given situation and never give up unless they break or make. Hence, coalition often remains on tenterhooks unless every partner is taken on board. No partner comes on board unless given a fair share from the cake.² Such a government is usually organized, when no political party is in a position to get a majority of members in the Parliament A pre-poll coalition group always contests elections on the basis of common manifesto or an agreed programme and politics behind which all the coalition partners are united through a consensus.³

Emergence of coalition politics is a major development in India, particularly after independence, which is an outcome of multi-party system marked by the decline of the Congress. For earlier 20 years, Congress Party enjoy majority by wining about 45 percent of total votes. It was the General Elections of 1989 when India had entered the advance stage of coalition politics. The multi-party system in India is the main cause for the formation of the coalition government at the Centre and also in the States. It also paves the way for rise of numerous regional political parties.

Aim of the Study

The paper is an attempt to an analysis of coalition era in Indian politics during the time period of 1989 to 2014. The study as following objectives:

1. To review the coalition era since 1989.
2. To find the reasons of rise of colition politics

Coalition Politics in India: A History

The Congress Party was unchallenged political force in the first two decades after independence. The diverse nature of the Congress Party was supplemented with internal competition. The party had dominated both the Parliament and the state legislatures. During Bangalore Session of AICC held on July 1969, Congress Party divided into two parties: the ruling Congress (R) headed by Indira Gandhi and Congress (O) headed by Dr Ram Subhag Singh. After that the Congress Government had to enter into an implicit coalition with the Communists and the Dravida Munnetra

Kazhagam (DMK).⁴ But this experiment did not last long and Indira Gandhi government decided to hold new elections.

The fifth general elections of 1971 assumed great importance in the Indian electoral politics. 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 registered massive electoral victory 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. Indira Gandhi was successful in defusing the internal party challenges. But during the later years of her rule, the government had to face students's movements in Gujarat and Bihar who 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 Judgment which convicted Indira Gandhi for having indulged in corrupt electoral practices and declared her election invalid.⁵ Indira's Government responded to these situations by promulgating Emergency. But that Emergency proved very costly for the Party. Congress party defeated in the sixth Lok Sabha elections (1977).

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 formation as Janata Party. The Janata formation also came into electoral understanding with CPI (M) and regional forces like Akali Dal, DMK to give the Congress a united fight in the elections. The opposition political parties under a common flag highlighted the emergency and its excesses. The election results gave the Congress a great blow as the Janata Party emerged as a majority party with 330 seats and the Congress Party managed to win only 154 seats and its allies, CPI won 7 seats and AIADMK won 21seats.⁶

After defeating the Congress Party, the Janata Party could not evolve consensus on policy issues and got bogged down into internal fighting. The first conflict arose on choosing the Prime Minister. Initially, it was Jaya Prakash Narain, who acted as the trouble shooter for the Janata Government. The other issues include dual membership of the Jana Sangh members and corruption charges against Kanti Desai, son of Morarji Desai. The biggest blow for the Janata Government came when Raj Narain deserted the Party and formed the Janata Secular. The Congress Party in the opposition pounced upon the opportunity and brought a non-confidence motion against the Government and got it passed and it was on 15 July 1979 that Morarji Desai submitted his resignation to

the President of India.⁷ 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 Janata experiment though short lived but laid the foundation of coalition politics in India at the national level which became quite strong after 1989 general election.

Collapse of Janta party paved the way for the revival of the Congress rule under Gandhi family for the next ten years. In the Lok Sabha elections held in 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. After assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 Oct.1984 the Congress leadership unanimously chose Rajiv Gandhi as her successor.⁸

In the Lok Sabha elections of 1984, the Congress got benefited by the *sympathy wave* and won 401 seats. It was the largest so far victory. To revive Congress's old social status, Rajiv Gandhi played two cards, Muslim card by nullifying the *Shah BanoJudgment* and Hindu card by permitting the *Shilanayasad Ayodha* which was the disputed site. But both proved very costly for the Congress Party, "... as it became the major cause for the Congress debacle in the1989 Lok Sabha elections." writes C. P Bhambhri an authority on Indian politics. The major blow to the Congress Government came when the corruption charges related to the *Bofors scandal* surfaced. The government was severely disfigured and this led to the resignation of V.P. Singh the then Defense Minister. After resigning from the cabinet, V. P Singh formed the Jana Morcha by organizing the dissident Congress members against Rajiv Gandhi. After this he united the opposition political parties on the issue of *Boforsscandal*.⁹

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 *Bofors*. 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.

Coalition Era (1989-2014)

Since the 1989 elections, no single party has been able to get majority votes to form the government at the centre. Since 1989, six unstable and two somewhat stable minority/coalition governments have been formed in India. Table 1 shows the different coalition/minority governments formed at the Centre during 1989 to 2014.

Table 1 Minority/Coalition Governments Formed in India Since 1989 to 2014

Name of Coalition	Prime Minister	Alliance Partners	Outside Support	Duration
National Front	V.P Singh	Janta Dal, BJP, CPI(M), CPI, Congress (Socialist), RSP, DMK, AGP	BJP	Dec 1989 – Nov 1990
National Front	Chandra Shekhar	AIADMK, BSP, Muslim League, National Conference, Kerela Congress (M),SAD	Congress	Nov 1990– June 1991
Congress & Allies	P.V Narsimha Rao	Congress, JMM, Janata Dal (Ajit)		June 1991- May 1996
United Front	HD Devegowda and IK Gujral	Janta Dal, AIADMK, SP, TDP, CPI(M), CPI, AIFB, TMC, DMK, AGP etc.		June 1996- Nov 1997
BJP & Allies	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	BJP, AIADMK, SP, BJD, SAD, TC, Shiv Sena, PMK, Lok Shakti, MDMK, HVP, MNF, Janata Party		Mar 1998- Apr 1999
NDA	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	BJP, DMK, SP, BJD, SAD, TC, Shiv Sena, PMK, Lok Shakti, MDMK, HVP, INLD, Janata Party, MNF, SDF, RLD, Manipur State Congress Party	TDP	Oct 1999- May 2004
UPA-I	Dr. Manmohan Singh	Congress, RJD, DMK, NCP, LJSP, TRS, PMK, IUML	Left Front	May 2004- May 2009
UPA-II	Dr. Manmohan Singh	Congress, TC, DMK, NCP, National Congress, JMM, IUML, VCK, Kerela Congress		May 2009- 2014

Source: Subhendu Rajan Raj, Coalition Politics in India.

National Front (1989)

The general elections of 1989, were held in the surcharged environment of two popular waves, the 'Hindu wave and the 'anti- Congress wave'. The Janata Dal got benefit of the later and the BJP got advantage of both. Congress emerged as largest single party with 197 seats. Janta Dal was second (143 seats) and BJP third (85 seats). Congress declined to form the government and the responsibility to form the government fell on the shoulders of National Front. The other political parties which decided to support the National Front from outside were the BJP and the Left Front which was otherwise opposed to each other and that checked them to be the part of the government. This very outer support by the BJP and the Left Front to minority coalition government was calculated, as it ensured to keep the Congress party away from the power and secondly, it ensured the use of the minority government without responsibility.¹⁰

But as the days goes, National Front government had failed to maintain balance between coalitions and ultimately it resulted into its downfall. Furthermore, the internal contradiction in the main party of the National Front that is Janata 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 organize 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 recommendations (to give 27 percent reservation to OBCs) put other national political parties into back foot. BJP which over the years had acquired the support of the upper castes Hindus found itself in dilemma. It played the *Mandir Card* against the *Mandal Card*, so to muster 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 *Rath Yatra*, from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in U.P, to mobilize Hindus for building the Ram Temple in place of the Babri Masjid. As the BJP withdrew its support to the National Front minority government, a non-confidence motion was passed against the government on November 7, 1990.

The fall of National Front led to split in the Janata Dal when Chandrasekhar who alongwith 55 members of Parliament formed the Janata 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 in as the Prime Minister and Devi Lal as his Deputy Prime Minister who had left him in cold at the time of electing of V.P Singh as the first Prime Minister of the National Front.¹¹ This novel experiment of minority coalition government did not last 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 March 6, 1991. The issue of the *Mandal* and *Mandir* brought chaos in India. The secular fabric which over the years was hallmark of Indian Republic got stained when the political parties for their electoral benefits played the *communal* and *caste cards*. The greater beneficiaries of these new trends were the BJP and the Janata Dal. But the both issues of *Mandal* and *Mandir* heavily cost the Congress Party.

In the general elections held in 1991, the *Mandir-Masjid* issue became the focal point and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in between the elections gave new turn. These elections brought a hung parliament like the previous one. The Congress Party emerged as the largest party, with not too much strength to form the government on its own. P.V. Narasimha Rao formed the government which first

started as a single party minority government but during the later half, it reinforced itself when Ajit Singh's group merged with the Congress and also with JMM support. The Congress Government headed by P.V. Narsimha Rao was a minority government, enjoying support of some regional groups". The Congress was the leading party but it did not have the clear majority. So this was also a form of coalition. It, however, completed its full term in spite of being in minority.

The United Front (1996)

The 1996 Lok Sabha elections 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 at the top with 187 seats but failed to get the requisite numbers for government formation. Therefore, as the 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 on May 16, 1996. However, the leadership couldn't succeed and finally, Prime Minister A.B Vajpayee on May 27, 1996, submitted his resignation.¹² Therefore, the 13 day wonder created by Vajpayee disappeared. 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 from the Congress.

The outside support of the Congress Party to the United Front Government was politically calculated to halt the march of 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 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 provoked 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 supposedly unequal 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.¹³

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 to 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 heinous act. The Congress Party demanded the removal of DMK from the coalition government. But the United Front did not accede to this demand and ultimately the Congress withdrew its support on 28 November, 1997 and the government fell down.

The NDA (1998)

The elections held in 1998 again gave fractured verdict, and 18 party coalition led by BJP's Atal Bihari Vajpayee came into power on 19th March, 1998. The failure of BJP to muster support for their government in 1996 made them realise that in order to form 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 elections 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 deliberate upon this and build alliances to gain political power. The 1998 mid-term elections took place in the backdrop 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 180 seats; more than 25 percent on the slogan of stable government and able leadership.¹⁴

On the one side, BJP was building alliances, and on the other the Congress Party was facing internal problem of splits. The Manipur State Congress (Manipur), the Loktantrik Congress (UP), the Trinamool Congress (West Bengal), the Himachal Vikas Congress (Sukhrum) and later the Nationalist Congress Party of Sharad Pawar in Maharashtra split from the main Congress Party. Furthermore, the Third Front which was a combination of thirteen parties also lost its cohesion.

The message of 1998 Lok Sabha elections was clearly people's 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's remained a headache for A. B. Vajpayee led government. The situation became tense between AIADMK and BJP when 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 discharge of George Fernandes. But BJP did not accept 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 being 269 in favour and 270 against the motion.

Before the Lok Sabha elections of 1999, the BJP was largely in an advantageous position because the manner of its defeat by being ditched in the Lok Sabha was presented as institutional hurt. Secondly, as a caretaker government, it confronted 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 Janata Dal split added strength to it as there was no other strong force to challenge it.¹⁵

The NDA: Second Inning (1999)

In the Lok Sabha elections of September-October 1999, BJP led NDA emerged as the largest alliance by securing 299 seats. The choice of people to bring NDA in power was the positive endorsement of the coalition system. BJP led NDA government consisted 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, thereby ending the decade long instability of the coalition government.¹⁶ The notion of coalition phase being an aberration was discarded and the message was clear that coalition politics had come to stay.

The completion of tenure by National Democratic Alliance (NDA) discarded the notion that coalition politics is a transitional phase in Indian politics. In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections the BJP became successful in wooing the regional forces by shedding its hardcore ideology and struck the pre-poll alliances with the regional and state-based political parties. This was the first such coalition government at the Centre which completed its full term. There were many instances of in-fighting among the various parties of the NDA, but the BJP being the main party; it had to play the peacekeeping role. The success of the NDA alliance was largely due to its expert management of alliances by polite, humble and popular leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

THE UPA (2004): In May 2004, the fourteenth Lok Sabha elections took place which gave an unexpected mandate. The United progressive Alliance led by the Congress Party secured the maximum numbers of seats and managed to form the government with the outside support of the left parties. The emergence of the Congress Party as the single largest party in 2004 Lok Sabha elections had made it clear that voters of India voted for the coalition government. The most important fact to be noted in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections was the Congress changed attitude towards the coalition governance. The Congress during previous elections did not opt for the alliance and went to polls without a comprehensive alliance formation. Hence, Congress suffered miserably at the hustings. This time, the 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, JMM, LJP etc. The alliance with these forces made the deserved 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 had 145 seats, and together with the alliance partners, reached the figure of 219, with 61 seats of the left front giving it the majority. 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).¹⁷ The NCMP gave direction to the government and more importantly, sustained the Left Front support to the government for four years.

The UPA: Second Term (2009)

In the 2009 elections, the mandate came in favour of the UPA government for the second time. After Pt. Nehru and Indira Gandhi, Dr. Manmohan Singh became the third Prime Minister to get the verdict of people in his favour consecutively for a second time.

Table 3.7: Results of Lok Sabha Elections 2009

Alliance	Party	Seats Won	Vote %
United Progressive Alliance (UPA)	Congress	206	28.55
	TMC	19	3.20
	DMK	18	1.82
	NCP	9	2.04
	NC	3	0.12
	JMM	2	0.55
	MLKS(C)	-	0.20
	IMMIM	-	0.07
	BPF	1	0.16
	Kerala Congress(MANI)	1	0.18
	Total	262	36.89
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	BJP	116	18.80
	JDU	20	1.52
	Shiv Sena	11	1.55
	RLD	5	0.44
	Akali Dal	4	0.96
	TRS	2	0.62
	AGP	1	0.43
	INLD	-	0.31
	Total	159	24.63
Third Front	BSP	21	6.17
	CPI (M)	16	5.33
	BJD	14	1.59
	AIADMK	9	1.67
	TDP	6	2.51
	CPI	4	1.43
	JD(S)	3	0.82
	Forward Block	2	0.32
	RSP	2	0.36
	MDMK	1	0.27
	HJC	1	0.20
	JVM(P)	1	0.23
		Total	80
Fourth Front	SP	23	3.42
	RJD	4	1.27
		Total	27
Others	Independents	9	5.19
	AUDF	1	0.52
	BVA	1	0.05
	SP	1	0.12
	NPF	1	0.20
	SDF	1	0.04
	VCK	1	0.18
	Others	-	5.67
	Total	15	11.97

Source: Hindustan Times, May 17, 2009

The verdict was also a little unexpected, as it was being assumed that following recent trends, the national parties like BJP and Congress will further lose seats and would need the small regional parties more than ever. In this election, the Congress, after a long period of twenty years was able to cross the 200 seat mark on its own. The Congress secured 206 seats, the highest by any single party since 1991. This time around several old allies of the UPA left to join other alliances and some new parties joined in. In this election, apart from a second coalition of BJP led NDA, the Left Front revived the Third Front with support from BSP, AIADMK and some other smaller parties and there was even a fourth front comprising of RJD and SP.

The UPA government endorsed the achievements of MGNREGA, 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 fulfilling the promises it made to electorate during the election campaigning. The UPA-II was disfigured by the series of corruption scams, high inflation, slow growth rate, and more importantly slow

growth rate in employment. All these factors resulted in the failure of the UPA alliance.

The NDA: BJP Led Coalition (2014)

In the May 2014 elections, the mandate came in favour of BJP led NDA. Even on its own, Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) swept to power with a historic win, picking up 282 seats and 31% of the popular vote. It was clearly a singular triumph for its leader Narendra Modi. In six states, the party picked up every single seat. In north and western India, it won four out of every five seats it contested. Modi also turned out to be a great leveler: Almost every community (barring Muslims), rich and poor, voted for the BJP; and the party won two-thirds of the urban seats and more than half of the rural seats. This is the first time in three decades that any single party in India had won a clear majority. Some of the factors that played into the BJP's decisive victory over dynastic Congress Party were. Modi played the role of a Star Panchak and covered entire India with hundred of rallies. He made deep penetration in the hearts of the people which reduced Congress to the size of a nominal number that it could not even get the status of a recognized opposition party. The Emergence of BJP as the single largest party strengthened the notion that coalition phase seemed over.

Table 3.8: Performance of Alliances in 2014 General Elections

Alliance	Party	Seats Won	Vote %
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)	282	31.00
	Shiv Sena (SS)	18	1.85
	Telugu Desam Party (TDP)	16	2.55
	Lok Janshakti Party (LJP)	6	0.41
	Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)	4	0.66
	Rashtriya Lok Samta Party (RLSP)	3	0.19
	Apna Dal	2	0.15
	Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK)	1	0.33
	Swabhimani Paksha	1	0.20
	Naga People's Front (NPF)	1	0.18
	National People's Party	1	0.10
	All India N.R. Congress	1	0.05
	Others	0	0.89
	Total	336	38.56
United Progressive Alliance (UPA)	Indian National Congress (INC)	44	19.31
	Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)	6	1.56
	Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)	4	1.34
	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)	2	0.30
	Indian Union Muslim League (IUML)	2	0.20
	Kerela Congress (KC)	1	0.08
	Others	0	0.32
Total	59	23.11	
Left Front	Communist Party of India (Marxist) CPI(M)	9	3.25
	Communist Party of India (CPI)	1	0.78
	Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP)	1	0.30
	All India Forward Block (AIFB)	0	0.22
	Total	11	4.55
Others	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)	37	3.27
	All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)	34	3.84
	Biju Janata Dal (BJD)	20	1.71
	Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS)	11	1.22
	YSR Congress Party	9	2.53
	Samajwadi Party	5	3.37
	Aam Aadmi Party	4	2.05

	All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF)	3	0.42
	J&K PDP	3	0.13
	Janata Dal (United) JD (U)	2	1.08
	Janata Dal (Secular) JD (S)	2	0.67
	Indian National Lok Dal (INLD)	2	0.51
	All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM)	1	0.12
	Sikkim Democratic Front	1	0.03
	Bahujan Samaj Party	0	4.14
	Others	0	4.59
	Total	134	29.68
Independents	Independents	3	3.02
	None of the Above	0	1.08

Source: www.eci.nic.in statistical report 2014

India is 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 to 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.

Reasons for the Rise of Coalition Politics in India:

There are several reasons for the rise of coalition politics in India, some important which are:

1. **Lose of trust:** In early years after independence, our political leaders benefitted from hallow of our independence movement. These leaders commanded a certain degree of moral authority or public respect which stood them in good stead not only in winning elections, but also in keeping their parties united. The marked tendency of the national parties was to speak of national level issues, and to bring coherence in the politics and views on issues at odds with our extremely diverse population. During the initial years, the Congress party was able to accommodate regional and local interests and reflect their aspirations. It was possible for it to maintain a large single party identity. But over the years, regional and caste identities have begun to increasingly assert themselves in the political space.
2. **Inability to represent India's diversity:** Coalition politics also thrived because of inability of one single party or two national parties to continue to give a feeling to the diverse population in India, that they were able to adequately represent their varied interests. During the Nehru era, the vote share of Congress party was between 40 percent and 48 percent. Since the late 80s, the BJP has been a second credible 'National' party. This has resulted in fracturing of the votes between the two large parties.
3. **Degeneration in politics:** Combined with regional parties' ability to provide credible alternative to Congress Party in states led to a situation, where 'horse trading' became relatively common in unsettling state governments. This brazen manner led to the passage of Anti-Defection Law

in 1985. The Law said that MLAs and MPs, who disobeyed their party whip and defected, would lose their seat from the House they were elected to. While this law was hailed as a panacea to prevent the unethical behaviour of defections amongst elected representatives, it also gave enormous power to the leadership of political parties to force all the members to act strictly in accordance with party diktat. The lack of political voice of smaller groups within national parties continues to fill up the gap and spur coalition politics in India.

4. **Growth of Regional Political Parties:** Growth of regional political parties has been another reason for the emergence of coalition politics in India.¹⁸
5. **Inability of National Parties to take care of minor interests of states:** During the Congress rule and its dominating the central politics, people in the states were given to understand that Congress Party is mainly concerned with ruling at the Centre and it does not care for the interests of the states, welfare. So many regional political parties started coming up in the States to look after the aspirations of their people and region. People also thought that a coalition government was in a better position to reflect the popular opinion of the electorate in the country.
6. **Regional Parties as the best alternative:** People of India were in search of a substitute for Congress Party rule for a long time and regional political parties or State political parties came as the best alternative and replace Congress rule. Many state regional parties such as Telgu Desham, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Harayana Vikas Party (HVP), Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), All India Anna Dravid Kazhagam (AIADMK), Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Janata Dal United (JD)(U), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), and Lok Dal etc were formed on the basis of aspirations of the regional or local and thwart the monopoly of the Congress. In the meantime, BJP also emerged at the National level as a National substitute to the Congress.
7. **Success of regional parties:** The way the regional parties performed as coalition parties and helped the Congress in UPA or BJP in NDA as a proof on record that UPA I and UPA II and NDA would not have lasted so long had there been no support of regional parties to them.

Conclusion

In the end, coalition is here to stay in Indian politics as electoral dynamics clearly indicate that no single party will be able to dominate Indian politics, at least in the foreseeable future. Coalition has to be transformed from being a compromise to consensus; from confrontation to cooperation; and from bargaining to backing each other. Peace, progress and prosperity are the eternal and ultimate goals that any government should strive to achieve; And if a coalition is able to deliver on these fronts without sacrificing its stability, coalition can be the much awaited answer to the conundrum of multi party politics of India with a more collaborative and accommodative framework. All we have to wait and watch out for is whether coalition politics stands the test of time to redefine democracy or succumbs under whims of some power-hungry individuals.

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