INTRODUCTION

Forging coalitions have become a practice in many countries across the world for running governments. Present day India too is not an exception to this practice. Transformed party system and fractured mandate of the electorate have forced India to go in for a coalitional mood.

The etymology of the word 'coalition' stems from French coalition (1540s) meaning "the growing together of parts", from late Latin 'coalitus' meaning "fellowship", originally past principle of coalescere. Plainly speaking, the term 'coalition' originates from the Latin word 'coalesce'.

In politics, the term 'coalition' is used to mean an alliance or union between groups, factions or political parties, especially for some temporary and specific reason, during which they cooperate in joint action, each usually in their own self-interest. A coalition, thus, differs from a more formal covenant. Politically described as a joining of factions or clubbing together of forces, usually those with overlapping interests rather than opposing.

In a parliamentary form of government coupled with a multi-party system, political parties are forced to form a coalition when it is beyond the capacity of each one of them to form a government of its own because of the failure to gain absolute majority in the Lower House of Parliament. Such a situation usually does not appear in countries with a Presidential form of government where the cabinet is chosen by the executive rather than by the legislature, as in the United States. However, coalition governments are common in Brazil. In semi-presidential systems like France, where the President formally appoints a Prime minister but the government itself must maintain the confidence of Parliament, coalition governments are regularly found. Countries, which operate with coalition governments, include the Nordic countries of Northern Europe and the Atlantic, also known as Scandinavian countries, such as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden; the Benelux countries comprising Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg of Northwestern Europe and many other countries like Australia, Austria, Germany, Italy, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Kosovo, Latvia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand and Ukraine etc. Even in the United Kingdom, where distinct two-party system operates and single-party majority rule is the usual norm, a national unity coalition or grand coalition was seen to be formed during the Second World War. David Cameron formed a coalition government, comprising the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats, in Britain following the resignation of previous Prime Minister Gordon Brown on 11 May 2010. The Cameron Ministry is the first coalition government in Great Britain since the Churchill War Ministry of the Second World War.
India, a country full of diversity and heterogeneity, provides a myriad of choices to political actors to play politics with the governance, especially when the country is governed by a coalition government. Coalition politics is the basis of current governance in India. It has assumed immense significance in the ruling politics of our country and the process has been continuing since the emergence of coalition governments in the states in the early sixties and in the late seventies at the Centre. Earlier for about the first thirty years, governments were run by a single majority party, namely the Indian National Congress, following a certain trajectory of politics. This was made possible due to the pluralistic support base of the Congress coupled with the absence of viable opposition parties to challenge it.

Though the history of coalition governments traces back to pre-independence era, they loomed large in the states after the fourth general elections of 1967 and then graduated into a national norm of politics in the wake of the fizzling out of the Congress dominance. For its pluralistic support base, the Congress dominated the Indian political scenario for two decades since the first general elections of 1952. The Nehruvian Congress, despite the Kamraj Plan and the sacrifice and vilification of V. K. Menon, for the debacle of 1962, continued to have a pluralistic basis, but started to lose its electoral support. This was because of the gradual exit of the first generation of political leaders Nehru's Goa action yielded dividends in the 1962 elections, but the slow erosion of support for the Congress was clearly manifest. This resulted in severe losses in the fourth general elections of 1967 and then in a string of state Assembly elections from the Punjab to West Bengal where coalitions were formed. During this period, the party also lost its foothold in Tamil Nadu and since then, it is the two Dravidian parties that have been at the helm of power. From 1967, the Indian party system was transformed from 'the Congress system' or 'one-dominant party system' to a competitive multi-party system that dawned the era of coalition politics on the political horizon of the country. In that sense, the year 1967 may be regarded as a watershed in the history of coalition politics of India.

India got its first experience of working with a coalition government at the Centre in 1977 when the Janata Party came to power defeating the Congress. The Janata Party, held together by four parties – the Jan Sangh, the Congress (O), the Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD) and the Congress for Democracy (CFD) – started as a unique national experiment although it degenerated over a dubious question of dual membership in respect of the members of one of its constituent parties – the Jan Sangh. The return of the Congress to power in 1980 and 1984 cannot be considered to be a retrieval of the Congress dominance as it did not entail any fundamental shift to the on-going trends of the Indian party system. The trend of present Indian national politics is that regional parties form alliances with either the Congress or the BJP in order to cobble together a coalition government. The country has so far experienced a series of coalition at the Centre. These are the Janata government led by Morarji Desai (1977-1979), the National Front (NF) government of V. P. Singh (1989-1991), the two slots of the United Front (UF) government under the leadership of H. D. Deve Gowda and I. K. Gujral (1996-1997), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government under the Premiership of Atal Behari Vajpayee (1999-2004) and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government headed by Dr. Manmohan Singh (2004-2009).
Dr. Singh is heading the second UPA government which is likely to complete its full term in May 2014.

Coalitions have come to be enduring in Indian politics and single party majority rule is hardly to return here in near future. Scholars on the subject have made a detailed study in their books of various facets of coalitions including their formation, survival and termination, without paying much attention to the politics that constitutes the real driving force of coalitions. Ajay K. Mehra, D. D. Khanna and Gert W. Kueck's edited work Political Parties and Party Systems (2003) explains the evolution of political parties in the world's largest, most complex and volatile democracy reached a crucial stage at the turn of the century. The three general elections held in quick succession at the end of the nineties threw up three major trends: the decline of the Congress Party as the dominant pan-national party; the emergence of a 'federalised' party structure and coalition politics; and the apparent demise of the Third Front as a force in national politics. This volume is a collection of original essays by eminent essays drawn from diverse disciplines examines the wide-ranging changes in political parties – their leadership, ideological profile, support base and programmatic content – as well as in the texture of the party system in the country. In understanding these complex processes, this volume also provides a comparative framework by bringing in the experiences of Germany and the European Union which are also undergoing political transformation. The edited volume of Peter Ronald deSouza and E. Sridharan, India's Political Parties (2006), focuses on political parties of India. This book covers the exceptionally wide terrain ranging from a discussion of individual parties to their location in the context of nationalism and communalism, to more topical issues such as state funding of elections, party nominations, women's representation and defections. Zoya Hasan's edited book Parties and Party Politics in India (2002) brings together essays on wide-ranging issues that impinge on party politics and the challenges confronting the party system. Together, it presents an overall picture of party politics by focusing on important parties and their organisation and politics since independence. Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair edited volume How Parties Organize (1994) takes a close look inside political parties, bringing together the findings of an international team of leading scholars. Building on a unique set of cross-national data on party organizations, this volume sets out to explain how parties organize, how they have changed and how they have adapted to the changing political and organizational circumstances in which they find themselves. Michael Laver and Kenneth A. Shipley in their work Making and Breaking Governments (1996) offers a theoretical argument about how parliamentary democracy works. The authors formulate a theoretical model of the strategic interaction among parliamentary parties that creates new governments and either maintains them in office or replaces them with some alternative government, derive consequences, formulate empirical hypotheses on the basis of these and test the hypotheses with data drawn from post-war European experience with parliamentary democracy. Arend Lliphart in his study Thinking About Democracy : Power sharing and Majority Rule in Theory and Practice (2008) provides a frank and fascinating discussion of power sharing democracy, its different forms, alternative democratic institutions and other closely related topics. Paul V. Warwick's Government Survival in Parliamentary Democracies (1994) unravels the puzzling nature of parliamentary democracy and answers a central question of contemporary Political
Science: what determines how long governments survive in parliamentary democracies?

*India at the Polls: Parliamentary Elections in the Federal Phase (2003)* of M. P. Singh and Rekha Saxena attempts to explain the causes of frequent elections to the Lok Sabha since 1989. There have been four national elections, three in quick succession because of the transformation of the party system from one of Congress dominance to a multi-partisan system configuration reflecting the instability of minority and/or coalition governments and hung parliament. Building on their insightful work on India's 1998 and 1999 parliamentary elections, Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace in their edited work *India's 2004 Elections: Grass-roots and National Perspectives (2007)* have analysed the landmark elections of 2004. The three volumes together provide the most definitive scholarly treatment of post-independence Indian politics at the national and state levels.

Thomas Blom Hansen's study *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India (1999)* analyses Indian receptivity in the right-wing Hindu nationalist party and its political wing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which claims to create a polity based on 'ancient' Hindu culture. Rather than interpreting Hindu nationalism as a mainly religious phenomenon, or a strictly political movement, Hansen places the BJP within the context of larger transformations of democratic governance in India. The edited work of Katharine Adeney and Lawrence and Saez *Coalition Politics and Hindu Nationalism* (2005) examines the emergence of the BJP in India and the ways in which its Hindu nationalist agenda has been affected by the constraints of being a dominant member of a coalition government. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot edited *The BJP and the Compulsions of Politics in India (1998)* analyses the history of the BJP and its current strategies and dilemmas. The specific trajectory of the BJP at the regional level, the structure of its electorates and the specific challenges it faces in major parts of India are their concerns. This book also offers a condensed overview of the current position of the BJP at the national level, even as it discusses the party's ambivalent response to the challenge of lower caste mobilization and the globalization of India's economy.

John McGuire and Ian Copland edited work *Hindu Nationalism and Governance (2007)* covers a comprehensive range of issues pertaining to the role of the BJP in the governance in India. The essays in this book demonstrate how the BJP repackaged core elements of its ideology to establish a stable coalition government. They show how, in order to meet the multiple demands of coalition politics, the BJP built regional alliances, transformed its economic policy to welcome foreign capital, promoted a dominant Hindu discourse through the media and fashioned significant shifts in India's traditional foreign policy vis-à-vis Pakistan and Bangladesh. Bidyut Chakrabarty in his *Forging Power: Coalition Politics in India* (2006) attempts to explore a history of the growth and evolution of coalition governments in India both at the national and provincial levels. The phenomenon of political parties of diverse ideologies and affirmations coming together to share power has been highlighted as a prominent feature of Indian politics in the last few decades. N. Jose Chander's *Coalition Politics: The Indian Experience* (2004) offers an in-depth study of coalition government experiments in India with particular reference to the coalition politics at the Centre as well as in the states of Kerala and West Bengal. Focusing on the demands, stresses and constraints of coalition politics in changed circumstances, it covers political developments up to the end of the year 2000. Also it examines the impact of coalition politics on parliamentary institutions such as the executive, the legislature and the party system. Prakash Karat's *Politics and Policies: A
Marxist Perspective (2008) presents a Marxist perspective on certain policy questions, political developments and constitutional debates. It is an overview of the decade 1998-2007. E. Sridharan's recently published edited study Coalition Politics and Democratic Consolidation in Asia (2012) seeks to theorize on democratization and the sustainability of democracies has been carried out for Asian countries. The key question poised in this pioneering volume is whether and how coalition politics conduces to the consolidation of, and improvement in the quality of democracy. Lawrence Saez and Gurharpal Singh's edited volume New Dimensions of Politics in India: The United Progressive Alliance in Power (2012) undertakes a critical evaluation of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in the light of the UPA coalition government's policies and, by providing an understanding of the new innovations, evaluates the effectiveness of these policies against their aims and objectives.

Apart from these books, there are also a plethora of publications including a good number of articles published in various journals, periodicals and newspapers dealing with the issues concerning coalition politics from different angles. However, one feels the necessity of a comprehensive and in-depth study encompassing all the issues. The present study seeks to utilize the findings of all these authors in so far as they are relevant to its main concern, viz., the politics imbedded in coalitions.

The purpose of this study is to bring out the inner political games and its fallout on the governance of the country in the age of coalition politics. Two case studies, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), have been undertaken in the backdrop of State and Union coalition politics. The politics governing the coalition system became more and more intricate and confusing since the nineties with the emergence of a large number of regional parties which challenged the two major national parties, the Congress and the BJP, by exerting their ever-increasing bargaining capacity on a wide range of issues relating to governance, starting from making of government down to its collapse – thus brought national politics down to the periphery of States.

The thesis has been divided into five chapters

The first chapter deals with the theories of party and party system with special emphasis on multi-party system that makes the base for coalition politics in a parliamentary democracy like India.

Different theories of coalition have been undertaken for an elaborate discussion in the second chapter to show why and how coalitions are formed, sustained and terminated.

The genesis and transformations of the Indian party system are the basic concerns of the third chapter. This chapter seeks to explore the gradual metamorphosis that have taken place in the party system of India pushing her to go in for coalition politics.

The next chapter seeks to discuss state level coalition politics in the late '60s as it is the precursor of coalition politics at the national level.
The final chapter is concerned with national level coalition politics from its very inception in 1977 to the regime of the first UPA government.

The last two chapters will attempt to analyse the nature of coalition politics in India and its manifestation in the life of the country.

The concluding observations will endeavour to explore futuristic dimensions of India's coalition politics. In the light of the analysis, some probable prescriptions will also be attempted.

The methodology, that to be applied here, is neither exclusively historical nor analytical, but historico-analytical in the sense that I have studied the historical background of coalition politics in India and then tried to work out an analytical explanation on the subject side by side from the perception of the dynamics of politics that actually mould the modus operandi of coalitional governance.

For this purpose, I shall draw on various sources: primary sources among them are the statistical reports of the Election Commission of India on the results of the Lok Sabha and assembly elections of different years, government documents including reports of various Commissions and Tribunals, documents of political parties etc. As for the secondary sources, I am indebted to books on relevant subjects, journals, newspapers, newspaper articles and editorials, electronic media etc