CHAPTER – VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Basically there are two types of coalition theory-the first, power maximization theories and the second, 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 the coalition formation, ignoring ideological and policy affinities as factors. Policy based theories, on the other hand, 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 pay off is maximized.

Policy based theories predict minimum connected winning coalitions. That is, coalitions that are composed of member parties adjacent on the ideological scale and at least not incompatible on major issues, thus minimizing the ideological range and within this limiting condition the minimum member of parties needed for a majority. Empirical evidence from the comparative literature on coalition politics tends to support policy based theories and hence in importance of compatibility for coalition formation and even more for coalition longevity. About two thirds of majority coalitions in the developed countries in the postwar period have been ideologically connected. This is so especially in most European politics and in Israel where there are clear ideological and social divisions and where parties identified with particular ideological positions and social constituents have fairly stable support base. However, within these constraints, pay off maximization plays powerful behavioral role.
After the setback of the Congress party in many federating units of the country since 1967, some of the then Congress Union Ministers and some other politicians have been advocating the presidential form of Government of India by replacing the Parliamentary form of government with a view to ensuring continuous and coherent leadership, stability as well as strengthening the Centre’s authority to counter the divisive forces in the country, resisting impulsive popular pressures and strong regional aspirations in the interests of national unity. The strained and uncooperative centre state relations are also factors for coalition government leading to a demand of the presidential system. Undoubtedly, the Presidential form of government represents a type of representative democracy. In contrast of Parliamentary government, its feature in that the elected President and the Governor through electoral college holds office whether or not they are supported by the majority of the legislators, the elections can be managed by the government.²

Parliamentary form of government means government by consent or public criticism, ensuring election by popular vote and those who want majority rule and majority wishes to prevail and also to satisfy legitimate aspirations of the people, must stand for the parliamentary form of government over the Presidential. In the current political scene, the presidential form of government may easily degenerate into army dictatorship or totalitarian / autocratic governance that must be avoided at all costs. The framers of the Constitution have also rejected the American model of the Constitution have also rejected the American model of the Presidential system. What is required is a frank recognition of the changed political reality to make parliamentary democracy more meaningful. Country’s regional, cultural, ethnic and lingual diversities do
not permit to adopt the presidential system. Briefly, to seek unity and diversity in the country will be hampered by the adoption of the presidential form of government.³

To constitute a National Government as suggested by some seasoned politicians in parliamentary democracy with multiparty system having divergent, heterogeneous, regional views / opinions / policies / programmers and subjective considerations / personalized politics appears to be impracticable in a country like ours. Besides, there may be a problem for nominating the right / up right elected members of the national government by the President who lacks faith in the preamble to the Constitution of India – democracy, secularism and socialism, though the market economy adopted by the Government of India contradicts the preamble provision – “Socialism”. Above all, the Constitution has no provision of National Government.⁴ If the president is empowered by having such provision in the Constitution, the president is bound to indulge in Party Politics and personalized politics. All this needs structural shifts which are unsuitable to Parliamentary Democracy meaning a party rule. Therefore, the existing constitutional arrangement is better suiting that president should exercise his tact, wisdom, objective / impartial considerations in having an alternative and stable government keeping in view the established conventions.

The present political scenario is the outcome of centralized and authoritative administration and leadership in our federal system in the past (Nehru – Gandhi – Rao era). The behaviour of the political parties has much to do with the recent massive structural shifts in the political, economic and ideological spheres of the Indian society. Rapid expansion of market, extraordinary growth of communications and Infotech, new industrialization and
globalization are throwing up new social strata. At the same time, they have added new vigour to the traditional groupings of various classes, castes, and communities, the downtrodden social groups have become more vocal and active. The new middle class and working class sections have come into being and there is a considerable increase in the activities of the new small entrepreneurial classes. All this is reflected in the constant changes in the various political parties, formation of political groupings, increased factions and defection within the national parties and constant unprincipled shift in the policies of the parties. The most important aspects is the main conflict between secularism and communalism. This has demanded a unity of all secular forces however, loose and ill defined.\textsuperscript{5} It would be unrealistic to ignore these new realities. Owing to the plurality of the Indian society, social and culture heterogeneity and diversities in terms of classes, castes religious and regions and other reasons mentioned above, helping the growth of competitive multiparty system, it appears that minority governments and coalition government have come to stay in contemporary political situation though the coalition governments both at the central and state levels since 1967 were formed but the models of coalition politics except in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura was complete failure due to narrow selfish gains, vested interests, factions and defections, horse – trading, personalized politics, clash on personality cult and the lack of fair play among the coalition partners.

But the 1996 elections to the Lok Sabha were unique and historical as none of the political party or pre-poll combination of political parties (BJP, Congress and National Front – Left Front) could get a majority in the Lok Sabha. The must trumpeted dominance of the Congress Party on the Indian political
The verdict reflected a four fold division of the people’s preferences; one, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged a single largest party securing 161 members and with its allies Shiv Sena (13), Samata Party (8) and Haryana Vikas Party (3), it demon-started an impressive tally of 187. Akali Dal won 8 seats in Punjab and decided to support BJP in the formation of government. Second, the Congress Party won 140 seats even less than what it got in 1977 in the Janata wave. Third, National Front – Left Front combine is also loser in the elections. The Janata Dal secured 44 seats, Samajwaid Party, an ally of Janata Dal got 16 seats, making a total of 60 seats which the Janata Dal alone obtained in the 1991 Parliamentary elections. Similarly, in the Left Front, the CPI (M) Seats have been reduced from 37 to 32, CPI’s from 14 to 13, the forward Block remained constant at while RSP has added one seat taking its tally to 5. Presently, the National Front Left Front combine has 112 members in the Lok Sabha having its presence only in 11 states. Fourth, the various regional political parties performed very well. The DMK won 17 seats, the Telegu Desam (TDP) 16 seats, the Tamil Maniila Congress (TMC) 20 seats, the Asam Gana Parishad (AGP) 5 seats, the Indian National Congress, INC(T) 4 seats, in the elections adding the strength of 65 supported by 12 members of other political parties. Thus the verdict shows that India is not a monolith. 

The President invited Atal Behari Vajpayee, the leader of the single largest party (BJP) to form the Ministry and also asked him to prove majority support to the government on the floor of Lok Sabha by May 31, 1996. He was sworn in as Prime Minister on 15 May, 1996. He resigned on 27 May, 1996 without trying the strength of his Ministry on the floor of the Lok Sabha.
National Front Left Front combination persuaded the secular forces to unite against the communal forces (BJP and its allies) and thereby floated a united front of regional political parties such as TMC, DMK, TDP, AGP, INC(T) supported by 12 members of other smaller parties. All these take the strength of 190 at par with that of BJP group. The 13 parties united front formed the coalition government headed by H.D. Deve Gowda, the Janata Leader as Prime Minister, the Congress Party and the CPI(M) supported the government unconditionally from outside. It may be here kept in mind that the Congress party's support to the United Front Coalition government is a sudden and unique historical development it is also reported that the major cause for the United Front formation is to ensure a secular state, guarantee social justice and equality to the minorities and to prevent BJP from coming to power as it is a communal party. As the United Front government depends on the support of the Congress (I), it is believed that the policies of the Congress (I) have to be generally pursued by the United Front government without major changes. It is also important to note that a Federal front comprising regional parties (DMK, TMC, TDP, AGP etc). Was formed after elections which played a very active role in the formation of the United Front Government. For the first time, the regional parties joined the United Front Government at the Centre to share their responsibility and thereby participate in the decision making process. The Federal Front was formed to achieve a true Federal Indian State with strong states, strong centre and mutual strengthening. So, the government should attempt to meet popular aspirations for better governance.7

If a coalition government has to function successfully, the following observations / suggestions may be taken into consideration:
1. Coalition politics / system based on pre elections alliances of political parties with similar political orientations and ideological consensus / harmony may succeed and be stable. This may be possible with left parties only. Because the basis of their coalitions is democracy, secularism, social justice and economic equity. For instance, coalition governments in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura have become regular feature of Indian polity and these models have earned reputation.

2. Coalitions of pre–election alliances of national and regional political parities with divergent and heterogeneous policies / programmers based on an agreed minimum socio–economic programmers to be executed with strong will and determination in coordinated directions may function. But the government policy should be consensual and the group would not be at the whim and fancy of one leader, taking adhoc and arbitrary decisions. But the combination should come out with a platform for secular democratic alternative based on social justice and economic equity.

3. Post election coalition is a system of power sharing between coalition partners based on the number of seats won by the parties in their respective states. Such coalition governments were led by V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar and 13 Parties (National and Regional) United Front Coalition government led by H.D. Deve Gowda, this coalition spectrum from the left to the Congress is based on an agreed common minimum programme and also reflecting a socio-economic political reality in which no single policy and ideology dominates.
4. The realities of political governance of social and economic situation demands a concrete approach rather than blind criticism. The parties are increasingly realising that the questions of democracy, secularism, social justice, economic equity and new Indian needs demand mutual consultation and dialogue rather than head on collisions.\(^8\)

Coalition partners agreement to a power sharing formula and Prime Minister by rotation for the smooth functioning of such coalitions is suggested. Because the regional leaders representing geographically demarcated power bases constitute this inter-party coalition, the potential Prime Ministers are to be chosen from amongst them (regional leaders) securing the largest number of seats. If it were two, then for 30 months each, if three, then for 20 months each.

Once the two or three Prime Minister designates agree upon, it is better to follow the British system in which the Prime Minister does not hold a portfolio and devotes his time to leading the country with the assistance of his cabinet colleagues. The portfolios can be shared within the parties in order of their performance. For example, Home, Finance and External Affairs portfolios, which are considered weighty, would be claimed by more powerful parties and the others would have to be content with textiles, ocean development and the like.

Joint leadership, thus, reflects the plurality of political strength, federal in nature, closer to the people and better equipped to avoid the pitfalls, heavy handed central rule. This system would finish off the Delhi zamindari, the leaders, who have no power base and who do their politics through the media. The game of the most political parties is the rootless politician, who has little
connection with the people and has no idea about the needs and aspirations of anyone other than himself.⁹

Such a system of power sharing between coalition partners would have something for all the partners and although there is always scope for discontent. There is also a chance that such a system of sharing power and the perks of office could work. It is in any case worth trying. It cannot be a greater disaster than the eleventh months of disputations and disoriented governance that a similar combine delivered in 1989.

Power sharing is not a new concept. It has been tried in various forms with quite a lot of success in many smaller countries with lesser ethnic and regional diversities than that of India. Israel offers an example of successful power sharing and a Prime Minister by rotation. Israel had a coalition Government of the Likud party and the Labour party from 1984 to 1988. For the first two years Shimon Peres was the Prime Minister and Yitzhak Shamir, the Foreign Minister and for the next two years, roles were reversed. Despite their widely different backgrounds and political perceptions, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir ruled in the best interest of Israel. Germany is another country which has developed the concept of power sharing to an advanced degree. After 1957 when Government had a single majority government and the Christian Democrats were in power, there has always been a coalition Government in Bonn. The Government coalitions have been of different compositions in the states and at the centre since 1957 but they have almost always worked.¹⁰

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While entering into a coalition after the election, the coalition partners in Germany enter into a coalition contract. Once the coalition contract is in place, however, there is no aphorism about governance and bearing exceptions, no major disputes. The coalition contract lays the broad thrust that the government will take. It contains an agreement on all the laws that will be legislated during the period. This system ensures that despite political differences between coalition partners, the country has a stable government that provides coherent administration and leadership.\textsuperscript{12}

Switzerland has also institutionalized coalition system. It is a plural society like India where political parties represent the interest of the three major language groups (French, German and Italian) and the two religions (Catholic and Protestants). It is a tradition there for the four largest parties to come together after the elections and form a coalition.\textsuperscript{13}

5. The Constitution is silent on what the President should do if no party is in a position to command a majority in the House. The President’s goal is to get a viable government and that he should be free to call any person who in his opinion is able to provide for country. The Sarkaria Commission while laying down guidelines for the Governors in the choice of the party for forming the government, said, a combination of parties which is able to command a majority in the House, he should be given the next opportunity calling parties in order of their strength in the House will certainly be the most prudent and non controversial course of action.

In 1989, the Congress was defeated in the polls but it had the largest membership in the Lok Sabha. Rajiv Gandhi did not stake his claim to form the
Government. The President R. Venkataraman following the British precedent called on the next party Janata Dal in order of strength headed by V.P. Singh to form the Government.\textsuperscript{14} Again in 1991 when no party had a majority in the Lok sabha, the President invited the leader of the then largest single party the Congress and on his acceptance of responsibility appointed him as the Prime Minister. The President R. Venkataraman suggests that a convention be established by President and Government to follow the practice of inviting parties according to their strength adopted in 1989 and 1991 by the President. So, this is a grey area where a well defined convention on the line of the British convention should be established sooner or later either by judicial interpretation or by a political consensus in the areas where the Constitution is silent.\textsuperscript{15}

6. The political leaders of the coalition system want to survive by disrupting and disintegrating various parties by encouraging political defections and splits in political parties in the country. These are an expression of the ills of our economy and of a democratic behaviour of the people in any economically backward area and have to find their expression through individual defections. There will be no solution to the problems of splits and defections unless we conclusively solve our unending economic, political and social problems. There is no reasonable remedy to these problems under the present Constitution. The Constitution does not also provide for the recall of a legislators in the event of his defecting from the party on whose ticket he has been elected. So a system of recall of legislators to discoverage political defections and splits is suggested. Besides, the electors should be empowered to recall their representatives if by his performance in or out side the legislature he has lost their trust.
Now, such a provision cannot be included because of cumbersome procedures involving a heavy burden on the exchequer and unreasonable expectations from the illiterate voters.\textsuperscript{16}

7. The polarization of political parties is neither supported nor the replacement of the parliamentary system by any other means be suggested. Any of the steps which later has to be undemocratic even remotely must be shunted. Either two party system or three party system in not only feasible in such a vast country as ours but is also not efficacious for the growth of its diverse cultures which we want to nourish. The accommodation of divergent political opinions is possible only under a system that is not opposed to multiplicity of parties. The Constitution also allows these cultures and opinions a full play. We also seek unity in diversity. So harping on democracy as well as on crushing political opinion is either illogical or nothing short of hypocrisy. Since elections in India have failed to democratize politics in its true sense, there is need to change the concept of elections to canalize the multiparty system into desirable directions. The only course left with us is the multi party legislatures with a near proportional representation to each party commensurate with the number of votes cast in its favour.\textsuperscript{17}

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8. The present system has encouraged confrontationist politics so the politics of confrontation is to be replaced by consensual politics on a
secure – basis. Besides, it is also experienced that parties may have majority of electorate behind them but they cannot run the government because they have not obtained majority of seats in the Lower House / Assembly. Proportional representation seems to be remedy. It will strengthen party discipline and legitimate make that party rule which has obtained majority of votes in the elections. The government should represent the majority of voters. Any party or combination of parties, which have received more than 50 per cent of the votes polled, should be given the right to get the Lower House and assembly dissolved. Party discipline will increase in the system of proportional representation. A party should have a right to expel a member (who is elected on that party ticket), if he wishes to leave the party. If there is a direct co-relationship between the percentage of votes polled and party strength in the House, it will be more democratic than the present system. Majority principle is the quintessence of democracy as established in India. Proportional representation re-establishes the importance of votes and the role of political parties.\textsuperscript{19}

9. Dissolution of the House should be a device to resolve an acute political crisis in a country or a state.

10. The stability of a coalition government depends on the policies / principles guiding its formation and its cohesion and capacity for democratic decision making. A truly representative coalition should reflect the trends expressed in the elections. Besides, when different parties enter into coalitions, they must necessarily down play their differences and give up
all their majority criticisms, no matter how grave these might be. Briefly, consensus politics is the need of the hour.

11. The consensual style of the working of the Prime Minister of the coalition government may ensure longevity in office. The Prime Minister is not supposed to by pass the decisions of his Council of Ministers, knowing the fact that the coalition government is different from running a one party rule government. The Prime Minister should have a certain talent for keeping his team together. These should be more consultations and consensus or mutual discussions. This culture of running the government with common sense approach to problems, collegiate type of functioning, coordinated effort, and collective decision has to be evolved.

12. The coalition government has to strengthen the key institutions of federal government through the consensual style. Constitutional authorities, institutions/arrangements must be allowed to function. Bureaucracy, while controlling it should be allowed to perform the duties. It may be noted that people are more important, not the selfish politicians. So, the U.F. coalition government has to look to the latter for the survival of the former. The present government has to take care of the continuation of economic reforms with social justice, growth and equity.

Lastly, it is true that in many parts of the world, it has been established that one dominant party rule need not always be equated with stability. Nor should coalition governments be equated with instability. It is possible to have a stable and credible government under a coalition, based on an agreed Common Programmers executed with Will and Determination to keep the nation politically
stable, socially harmonious and economically vibrant. Those in search of stability must bear in mind this lesion of history which is quite relevant to India’s present situation.\textsuperscript{21}

Not only this, but India has entered a phase of coalitional politics. It appears that coalition will be a natural phenomenon in India in the years to come. The reality of a “Hung parliament” has ushered in a new era of coalition politics. The crisis of India polity in recent times is that structurally there is no one party or combinations of parties that would provide a stable and progressive government. In order to meet this challenge, Indian polity should learn how to organize a system of government that will enhance the level of people’s participation in a highly diver and plural society. Coalition of convenience will not endure as it will promote political instability in India. Political instability in states has a constitutional cure the form of imposition of President’s rule. But there is no constitutional cure for political readiness of political parties to subscribe to coalition politics. Indian political system has to evolve the culture of a coalition government.\textsuperscript{22} The 1996 Lok Sabha elections have left the political parties and groups with no choice but to evolve workable formulation of governance. The imperatives of coalition politics have to be recognized and accepted by all political parties. It is also relevant to conclude with Narasimha Rao, the former Prime Minister, who said at Behrampur on 20\textsuperscript{th} June, 1996 that the time has come to learn how we can work unitedly. He went on to term, the Deve Gowda Government as one of the strongest governments whose fall he cannot visualize.

The Westminster model of government in its operational form may be said to have three manifestations. First, it is, what Laski calls, parliamentary government in which the Parliament has its upper hand over the ministry.\textsuperscript{23} The
government is so weak that it, in the real sense of the term, lives on the pleasure of the legislature. Such a government may be easily thrown out as happened with the governments of V.P. Singh, Chandra Skhehar, Deve-Gowda, Gujaral and Vajpayee. The second is, what Jennings has termed, the cabinet government. It is a government which has solid majority behind it in the House and so it becomes responsive, though superficially responsible to the legislature. The Prime Minister is confident of his safe position and so Cabinet works in a manner that is sometimes deprecated as its ‘dictatorship’. There is hardly any scope for throwing it out by passing a vote of no-confidence. The governments of Nehru, Shastri and Indira Gandhi may be cited as its examples. Last, it is, what Crossman has designated, a Prime Ministerial government in which its head (Prime Minister) becomes all-powerful so much as that not only Parliament, even the ministers of the Cabinet, become like his palace-guards. What Indira Gandhi did during 1971-76 and then what Rajiv Gandhi did during 1985-89 bears ample testimony to this fact. Such a situation converts parliamentary government into presidentialised form of government.

As a result of the disintegration of the single-dominant party system established by the Indian National Congress, the era of coalition politics has ushered in. Hence, the operation of parliamentary form of government has witnessed some peculiar developments which are described as its aberrations and which may be noted as under:

1. Prime Minister is regarded as the ‘keystone of the cabinet arch’; he is taken as ‘first among equals’, or ‘a moon among the lesser stars’, above all in the words of Laski, he is ‘central to the life and death of the Cabinet’. Such a situation no longer exists. In a coalition system; it is the
coordination committee of the constituent elements which sorts out matters like selection of the ministers, distribution of portfolios, drafting of a common minimum programme and the like. Naturally, the position of the Prime Minister becomes very weak, rather pathetic, and he has to work during the pleasure not of the President but of the constituent elements. Facts show that in every delicate situation Vajpayee had to bank upon the cooperation of a lesser fry like Mahanta of Assam or Naidu of Andhra Pradesh. The chief of the coordination committee becomes a centre of power that controls the working of the government and may even peruse confidential documents without having taken the oath of secrecy.

2. Cabinet government is known for its solidarity. All ministers speak in the same voice. In case anyone differs from the official line, he should quit. But in our country now ministers may be seen speaking in different voices on any crucial issue as the construction of a temple in Ayodhya, the need for a POTA, the enforcement of a uniform civil code, communal riots in Gujarat and the like. The Prime Minister has no real control over his colleagues and he has to soften the tone or reinterpret the statements of his ministers so as to satisfy the critics having their place in the opposition parties.

3. In a democratic system power is wielded as a gift of the mandate of the people. But sharing of power automatically calls for shouldering the responsibility. Those who are in power, they must be accountable to the Parliament. But in our country a new development has occurred in the form of supporting the government from outside. A party having such a
stand does enjoy the fruits of power, but it never desires to shoulder any responsibility for a wrong action of the government.

4. In a coalitional set up minor parties having a local or petty regional base manage to hold ministerial posts. Their outlook is pitiably chauvinistic and so they struggle for the pork barrels. They hardly bother for national interest. Not only this, some elements are so mischievous that they threaten to quit and then the Prime Minster has to somehow satisfy them. Reference may be made to the role of Jayalalitha of the A-DMK who withdrew the support of his party as a result of which the government of Vajpayee had its abrupt end in 1998. Such a case presents the peculiar spectacle of the tail wagging the body.

5. Above all, there is the casualty of the principles on which a government works, or it should work. Pragmatism becomes the dominant ideology and all constituent elements throw their commitments to the wind. There is nothing like Rightism, Leftism, or Centrism. It is all a crude hotch-potch of expediencies. The government functions in a directionless situation. The fear of the morrow haunts it and so the power hungry politicians manage to pull on things as long as it is possible for them by any hook or crook.

These are aberrations if one studies them in the light of the operation of parliamentary government since 1952 under the towering leadership of Nehru, Shastri and Indira Gandhi. But those were the days when Congress alone was at the helm of affairs so much so that it was the party, the government, the state, even the country. Things have undergone a basic change now and any idea of restoration of the past would be like a wishful thinking. And yet we should not
take it as a sinister development. Our political system is in a melting pot. New things are coming up. Let us hope that in time to come, India would be able to have a model of its own parliamentary government that may be different from the English or the Continental models on account of the peculiar conditions of our country. No model of government can be suitable to another country unless it is carefully chiseled according to the urges and aspirations of its people.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


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