CHAPTER - III
CRISES OF GOVERNABILITY

There has been a long debate on the suitability of Parliamentary System in view of the growing problems of governability consequent upon the emergence of multi partism in India. An attempt will be made in this chapter to understand the nature and causes of the crises of governability.

India despite continuing to remain faces an acute crisis of governability. It is evident from the preceding chapters that an era of coalitional era, brought with it the inherent crises and foremost among them is the crises of governability. The evidence of eroding political order is everywhere. Personal rule has replaced party rule at all levels-national, state and district. Below the rulers, the entrenched civil and police services have been politicized. Various social groups have pressed new and ever more diverse political demands in demonstration that often have led to violence. The omnipresent but feeble state, in turn, has vacillated; its responses have varied over a wide range: indifference, sporadic concessions and repression. Such vacillation has fueled further opposition. The ineffectiveness or repression, moreover has highlighted the breakdown of the civil machinery intended to enforce the law and maintain order. In order to protest themselves, citizens in some parts of the country have organizing private armies of lumped elements. The growing political violence has periodically brought the armed forces into India's political arena, whereas the armed forces once were considered apolitical.

Over 50 years of democratic experience, India has undergone a transition from the one-party dominant system of the Nehru era to the coalition

Our Constitution provides sufficient provisions for a strong democratic system. In the formal senses it possessed all the ingredients of a democratic polity- Constitutional supremacy, a directly elected Parliament and accountable executive, and independent judiciary, rule of law, an uncommitted bureaucracy, free and fair elections, a bunch of civil rights and a fearless and uncontrolled press etc. In the period after independence, parliament happened to be the highest law making and deciding body and it was the pivot round which will current events revolved, people had great respect for Parliament and such law making institutions.

There were astute Parliamentarians at the time of the freedom movement and established certain good conversations and traditions and established certain good conversation and traditions and none violated the rules and procedures of Parliamentary procedures. Unfortunately the developments during the past, especially since the 1967 general elections, the rule of the President under the Constitution, the role of the Governors, formation of coalition governments at the centre as well as in states, dissolutions of non-Congress government, the relationship of the Prime Minister with the President on the one hand with the Cabinet Ministers and other categories of Ministers on the other, unruly proceedings in the legislatures the relationship of the Chief Minister with the Governor and his cabinet colleagues have caused difficulties
to working of the Parliamentary institutions effectively. All these repercussions are leading to the governance in the era of turbulence.

On the economic plane a mixture of Keynesian social liberalism, Fabian socialism, Soviet centralism and Ghandhian bias for village industries created the Indian doctrine of centralized planning in the early 50s. Over time, the commanding heights of the economy were handed over to the public sector particularly after the nationalization of banks and insurance companies. However, the net result was bonding the economy to a bloated, over-indulged, self-serving bureaucracy though a stultifying network of regulation and controls. India choose to remain isolated from the global economy and kept itself at a distance from the technological revolution of the years after World War II.

The basic endemic causes of inequality and poverty—grossly inequitable ownership of land and productive resource, entrenched caste hierarchies and natural resource-intensive industrialism that caused the improvement of millions dependent upon resources for subsistence—were only marginally addressed by the development plans of the early governments. As the intensification of industrialism and "green revolution" agriculture began to favour the middle and upper classes, the patterns of economic development began to gradually push equity and justice considerations into the background.

It is not that the planning process neglected the rights and aspirations of the poor. Numerous poverty alleviation programmes were designed and much of development planning and justified in the name of the poor. By the 1970s, however, most of the top-down programmes yielded, at best, marginal benefits. It was at this juncture that the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, was facing a major political challenge from politically mobile middle-caste groups as well as the lobbies of the wealthy classes. Anticipating widespread popular agitation and responding to the decline in support for her ruling Congress Party, she announced a new populist thrust—the *Garibi Hatao* (Abolish Poverty) programme. Gandhi promised to focus fresh attention on the bottom third of the population and institute policies that would curb the power of the wealthy (i.e., bank nationalization and the abolition of privy purses—special monetary and other privileges—to erstwhile rulers). However, these programmes ran into a wall endemic social and cultural barriers, most of which obvious and should have been addressed. The barriers included entrenched political and economic interests, complex patron-client relations based on ties of kinship, caste, linguistic or religious affinity, official graft; inefficiency; and a reluctance by those in power to grant the historically underprivileged classes an equal share in the country’s productive base.

Undoubtedly, as the economy expanded in the years after independence, many people from poorer classes and castes were able to benefit from increased opportunities. Their numbers, however, were marginal in comparison to the overall population in the country. Instead, the license-permit raj became the means thorough which small groups of business, landed farmers
and politicians were able to accumulate wealth at the expense of the majority. Even important was the nexus that developed between the state officials and the landed interests in the hinterland. Some researchers have argued that this system lowered productivity and "dampened the possible multiplier effects. On employment and incomes from expanded production, thereby denying underprivileged sections of society opportunities to improve their economic and social conditions."

The experience of first 40 years of independence thus highlights the fact that despite the idealism and the stated commitment to the establishment of an egalitarian order those with power and privileged in urban and rural areas contributed little is the establishments of a dynamic and decentralized society and economy. In fact the government became increasingly dependent upon internal and external borrowing, while programmes to transfer land and resources to the deprived and excluded populations were weekly executed. It must be acknowledged that post independence idealism as well as a diversity of progressive and radical political parties and other representative bodies at the national and state level led to the adoptions of several major welfare measures. Progressive labour legislation, limited land legislation the public distribution system the public health and subsides to farmers became major programmes of successive governments. Yet, except in a few notable cases most of these

5 The term "license-permit raj" refers to the bureaucratic web that institutionalized inefficiency and patronage by requiring elaborate procedure to seek licenses for almost any commercial activity and legitimated a huge, slothful governmental apparatus.

schemes were unable to significantly address the reality of social and cultural exclusion and economic marginalization.

The main thrust of the 1991 reforms was to allow for the operation of a so-called free market, where the forces of demand and supply could freely compete and the local and the national economy could be integrated into the global economy. By dismantling the elaborate structure of licenses, controls and regulation that had evolved during the four decades of independence, it was thus hoped that not only would production increases but that prices would decline due to an increase in efficiency and demand.

Those changes heralded a virtual explosion in the import of capital goods with three main consequences in widening of the age between imports and exports; a crisis in the capital goods industry in the public sector; and a more rapid export of primary resources, which led to a further deterioration in the living standards of millions of people. The following six years saw most of the imports and fresh investments in the productive economy oriented not toward satisfying the consumption patterns of the elite and plunged the country into a huge debt trap.

India's external debt trebled from about 1 trillion Rupees ($27 Billion) in 1990 to 3.3 trillion Rupees ($92.2 Billion) in March 1997, giving it the distinction of being the world's third most indebted country. According to estimate presented to Parliament in February in 1996/97 was 1.3 trillion rupees ($35 billion) almost 99.6 percent of the expected revenue receipts. Equally pressing but rarely acknowledged is the size of the internal debt, which at the end of March 1995 stood at 4.8 trillion Rupees (134 billion). The burden of
external debt this amounts to 3.800 Rupees ($105) per capita and of the internal debt to 5,400 Rupees ($150) per capita. In an article on India's macro-economic situation, Indian economists Arun Ghosh stated that, "like the proverbial Indian cultivator, mortgaging all his assets (and his future labour) to the indigenous money lender, the Indian state is indebted to the hill, its entire revenue being a remarked for debt repayment." India's level of debt is making it imperative for the government to great insulting concessions and dilute protective legislation it the name of attracting foreign capital and continued loans from the IMF and the World Bank. As Ghosh once commented, "The management of the economy over July 1991 to December 1995 appears to have increased the country's economic vulnerability and significantly reduced future policy options and maneuverability."

The secular dispersion proclaimed by the Constitution did not desperate the State from religion. It merely recognized equality of all religions. As time passed, society and politics became increasingly saturated with religion. and secularism tended to be merely a formal commitment of the State with decreasing substance.

It is on the bedrock of secularism that India visualized to build itself. Political parties with the objective of grabbing have resorted to sentiments of religion and thus have divided the country into "majority" and "minority."

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The concept of “Hindu Rastra” inimical to secular India has been widely and openly championed by BJP and its saffron brigade. There is support to the construction of “Hindu Rastra” from certain sections of the centrist parties too besides the rightwing groups. The fact that more than 21 parties claiming themselves as secular could align with the communal BJP to rule the country is an indicator that commitment to secularism is not deep in India. Religion belongs to the private sphere and yet religious sentiments are made use of in large measure in the public sphere in politics. Secularism thus has suffered a setback. BJP and the Sangha Pariwar have made it clear that they have no faith in India’s pluralism. “Unity in Diversity” is something that is foreign to the BJP ideology. Their goal and objective is to construct a nation with unity in uniformity than “unity in diversity”. Their manifesto loudly professes “one nation, one people and one culture”-opposite of what the Constitution enshrines. We are a country of many nationalities, varied people and diverse cultures. The Sangh Pariwar’s goal of creating a Hindu Rastra has created insecurity among minorities and other secular and democratic forces.

A Socialist State harbored without any visible anguish of conscience the largest mass of the poor and the deprived. Land reforms stooped with the creation of 20 million kulaka created by breaking up the large landed estates of the imperial years. Neither the Construction nor the tomes of successive five-year plans had a firm commitment to removal of poverty. The Directive Principles of statecraft included in the Constitution were mostly ignored in the governance of the people. Instead of building the nation with its diverse nationalities or sub-nations, the middle class, reared in the hothouse of
an elitist educational policy, resolved to build the State as an interventionist superstructure, directing regulation and controlling the economic, even the individual, life of over 800 million people.

**Per Capita Income of Some States**

Per Capita Income of Some States (Quick Estimates) 1996-97

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<td>Goa</td>
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The situation is made worse by the market policies of the ruling elite. They prefer the private to the public sector. Instead of being faithful to the
Constitutional norms of socialism and justice they are providing legitimacy to the neo-liberal agenda. As a result there is a shift from government provided services to market provided services. Subsides to the poor and the marginalized no more exist. Education is getting more and more privatized. The economic sector is being fast handed over to corporations. The process of privatisation and marketization is on at increasing pace but is not over. The marginalized groups have been questioning the withdrawal at the state. And yet the local and national governments in nexus with IMF, World Bank and WTO have been furthering the neo-liberal agenda of the markets, agenda of multinational and transnational corporations. The consequence is the increasing concentration of wealth, income, economic power and dominance of the MNCs and TNCs in the domestic economy.

Not only inequality among social groups have increased but also among states. There are developed states in the south have been doing better than in the North. Due to illiteracy and lack of basic infrastructure material inequality among states has increased. If Bihar per capita is only Rs. 3835/-, Goa has a per capita income of Rs. 19,719/-. (As shown in above table).

A New Federal Polity

The 1990s witnessed a series of economic reforms that began in right earnest in 1992 and have continued unabated despite governmental instability at the Centre. Its defining features are globalization and privatization, which a new role for the state characterized by an emphasis on liberalisation that would facilitates the operation of free market forces. It has three major
Crises of Governability

thrust areas: fiscal discipline, deregulation, and infrastructure development. For the operation of the federal system, these trends have brought to the forces new issues arising specifically from the globalization context, which lend greater urgency to the unresolved federal reforms agenda of the eighties.

With the federalization of the party system and the concurrent pressure of international financial to decentralize the economic regime, the focus has shifted to structural reforms at the state level. There is a close link between the administrative decentralization agenda and these ongoing economic reforms; the success of the letter is largely premised on the development of a decentralized federal democracy capable of providing effective initiative and governance at the state and local levels. As Montek Ahluwalia (2000), one of the architecture of the reform, observes: "We are a federal democracy in which the Constitutional division of powers between the Centre and the State makes the state pre- eminent in many areas and coequal the Centre in others. Governments at the state level are run by different political parties and competitive politics should take the performance of individual states a matter of high political and electoral interest. Liberalisation has reduced the degree of control exercised by the Centre in many areas, leaving much greater scope for state level initiatives."

Thus the economic reforms of the 1990s have further strengthened this trend by assigning a greater role and enhanced responsibilities to the states, though the Centre retains substantial powers in matters of

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international trade and finance. New elements of the division of power and responsibilities have begun to assume importance overshadowing to a certain extent the issues, which dominated the federal reform agenda of the Bighties. For instance, article 253 of the constitution relating to the power to Centre into international agreements has become a major area of possible conflict and contention between the Centre and the States. As long as international pacts and treaties pertained to political, defense and national security aspects of diplomacy, the states were quite happy to leave them to the Centre to handle. Today it is the economic dimensions of relationships in a globalize system of trade and commerce which dominates the scene. Thus the stats are affected in their vital interests by this power as never before.

Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer draws attention to this Constitutional lacuna in his inimitably evocative prose: “As the supreme law now stands, the Central Cabinet proceeds on a self-serving interpretation that, vis-vis international treaties, a Cabinet Minister can sign (and bind India) behind the back of Parliament, sans consultation with the states and avoiding even public debate, although the consequences of such an assent (...) may well be that the provinces will be victimized, that the agriculturalists and the small industries and the states' exchequer themselves may go bankrupt and the Central Ministry may be surrendering sovereignty to exotic powers and organizations. Can the Centre sign away swaraj and use that treaty as an empowerment to pass legislations in utter disregard of the state list and the concurrent list.”

In sum, the end of Congress Party dominance has ushered in an era of coalition of politics in the context of a fragmented party system. The growth in power and influence of state-based parties continues to shape the course of Centre-State relations primarily through the mechanism of coalition governments at the Centre. More importantly, some parts have engineered through the political process, an enhanced participation in National policy making that they could not achieve through formal institutions of cooperative federalism. In effect, federal coalitions have given them participatory opportunities that were earlier denied to the states in institutions such as the Planning Commission, the National development Council or the Inter-State Council. Economic reforms aimed at structural changes conducive to an increased role for the market have obviously had an impact on intergovernmental relations. As a result of the deregulation that has accompanied these reforms, some of the more developed states have also begun to enjoy de facto powers in economic policy areas, particularly when they are successful in attracting foreign investment and negotiating international business deals. This has prompted fears that the gap between the more developed and the less developed states could widen, with the latter being left behind in the competition for economic growth.

Numerous anti-democratic laws like the Maintenance of Internal Security Act and the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act, as well as the Colonial Official Secrets Act and the latest pregnancy of the BJP with POTO metamorphasising in the womb have been used to control the activities and protests of trade unions, farmer's organizations and grass roots movements.
Thus, while the democratic space of upper and the middle classes has simultaneously been a definite shrinking in the democratic space of those victimized by the New Economic Policy. Witness the significant expansion in the security forces to “deal” with internal dissent or to facilitate domestic capital or foreign exchange-bearing entrepreneur.

In fact increasingly, business interests have become associated with national interests, while social and cultural interests are relegated to a secondary position if not sacrificed altogether. One former Finance Minister, echoing this spirit of policy focus, stated recently that power should increasingly move from the state to the boardroom.\(^8\) Worse still, a recent official announcement stated that the Indian police would be trained by Western security experts to protect the “life and property of foreign investors”\(^9\) This growing convergence between the state and the market to promote narrow interests is one of the unfolding and unfortunate outcomes of the New Economic Policy.

Though the Parliamentary Democracy is accepted as one of the basic features in the Constitution and though it is so provided there in, in practice an erosion of the Parliamentary democracy is taking place on a massive scale.\(^10\) The political events at the Centre since 1989 have exposed the instability inherent in the Parliamentary form of government when it comes to dealing with coalitions. The last few years have seen a massive decline of

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\(^8\) *Hindu*, 1 October 1995.


Parliamentary democracy due to a spate of scams; an increase is the number of
history shelters who have entered politics and splitting up of parties not on the
grounds of ideology but of personalities and personal gains. Despite the fact that
the Parliamentary government in India plays a crucial role to strengthen the
democratic institutions, its image and influence have suffered a setback in
recent years. Several factors have contributed to this situation.

There has been a steady decline of the moral values and public
accountability in our political as well as public life. The moral values that
permeate the elected representatives, the executives, the legislative and judicial
wings of the Constitutional system; and the positive or negative influences
exercised by political parties, pressure groups, lobbies and extra-constitutional
authorities that very often spring up in the twilight zone of politics have a deep
and lasting impact on the character, direction, dependence, credibility and the
future of the system of representative government.

Government today is totally criminalized. It is estimated over
20% of our politicians have criminal cases pending against them. Politicians
have protected criminals and have been running government even with their
support. In the 1960s criminals remained in the background and were satisfied
to support politicians to get protection to their evil deeds. Since 1970s such
elements have directly entered politics. All parties have criminal elements
today. In fact, criminals and politicians are hand in gloves with each other.

Atul Kohli affirms that new challenges forced on India reflect a
crisis of governability. He observes, "Powerful leaders in India often have
proved to be enemies of institutions such as political parties. Because
institutions tend to constrain personal power, those who attain positions of power because of personalities traits usually show little interests in institutional development, or worse, actively seek to weaken existing institution... The stability of government is not the central issue of political process in India because the process has brought all major parties either in government or in opposition. The new challenge of political change in India is to evolve a multi-party consensus for governance this has not happened.\textsuperscript{11}

In his seminal work Politics of India, since Independence, American Professor Paul. R. Brass writes" It would be folly however to be sanguine about the future of India, to consider that the country is only going through a stage in its development and to fail to recognise that a grave systemic crises is in progress."\textsuperscript{12}

In the words of Achin Vanaik," India faces a basic paradox. On the one hand, the larger bourgeois democratic framework has shown remarkable durability since 1947".\textsuperscript{13}

Professor Myron Weiner, after surveying the three major theoretical perspective of political institutions, political sociology and political economy of India observed, "Whatever may happen in the future, these questions remain: how does one explain why India's democratic institutional structure persists, and how does one explain the paradox of a democratic system

consisting to function in the midst of sharp cleavages and large scale violence.”\(^{14}\)

According to Professor C.P.Bhambhri, “The real challenge to the modern Indian State is from organized religious groups which threaten is democratic and secular character. The state in India has to grapple with challenges from classes, caste and religious social groups internally and imperialism externally.”\(^{15}\)

Professor James Manor, an eminent British political scientist said” Corrupt, unconstitutional and willfully destructive acts have become more common acts within political institutions. At times, a kind of galloping normalessness has appeared to take over in the politics of particular Indian States and at the national level. This had bred exasperation among social groups, which seek responses from political institutions. Members of such groups come to regard politicians as unhelpful at best, and often as malevolent and unclean.”\(^{16}\)

Dr. Karan Singh, president of the India International Centre, while delivering the First Prem Bhatia Memorial Lecture in 1996 observed.” The sort of corruption, violence and mafia domination that we find in any parts of the country are a betrayal of democracy. Of the freedom movement, of every

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thing that our Constitution stands for and it is time people got up and confronted this."

Commenting of the multifarious flaws in the Indian political system, Prof. Rajini Kothari, a well known political scientists says, "Those at the bottom of the society still want the Indian State to fulfill their aspirations. But those at the higher levels do not Inevitably, by stages, economic reforms on the one hand and a bureaucratic-cum-business and banking class on the other, produced the series of scams involving corruption at the highest levels leading to a growing loss of faith in the system by all classes, new experiments in governance, presumably meant to provide social justice but in fact caught into their cobwebs of coalition and endless ‘parleys’ adjustments,’ compromises’ and ‘carrying on somehow’ but none of them able to deal with the basic malady of an increasingly communal and casteist political culture. The upshot of all is sharp decline in the legitimacy of the system and an equally sharp sense of both dismay add disenchantment on the part of the people of India."

Dr. P.C. Alexander, an experienced administrator and Governor of Maharashtra opines, "The concept of continuing accountability in the representative government has not developed adequately and this is one of the basic weakness of our democratic system."

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Nani A. Palkhivala, a leading constitutional expert, observes, "The greater problem of India is that its finest men—men of calibre and vision, knowledge and character—are not in position and stand little chance of getting elected having regard to the murky atmosphere in our political life."  

Vasant Sathe, a former Union Cabinet Minister wrote, "at present, there is growing tendency towards the criminalisation of politics, particularly during the elections when violence, booth capturing etc. are indulged in. The same applies to the functioning within the assemblies and Parliament. These dangerous and undemocratic practices have to be curbed, exercised as their growth will ultimately destroy democracy itself."

Since the 80s, collective violence of politically organized groups continue to proliferate in India, stemming mostly from the rulers' refusal to recognize demands for self government from politically mobilized ethno-political segments of the population. Consequently, violent insurgencies (or terrorist movements, as these are officially dubbed) rage in Kashmir and Assam and the small states of professedly revolutionary violence. The assassinations of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, two successive Prime Minister, in a span of mere seven years, together with the unforgettable assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, underline a violent streak in India's Political culture. From 1982 when the Khalistani rebellion broke out in Punjab and came into headlong-armed conflict with the powerful coercive machinery of the State to

20 Palkhivala Nani A., "We the Nation: The Lost Decades", UBS Publisher Distributor's Ltd., New Delhi, 1994.
21 Sathe Vasant, "Restructuring the Indian Political System - An Agenda", in D. Sunder Ram (ed.) op. cit., p.146.
the beginning of 1994, organized political violence killed more than 20,000 Indians. While at least as many have perished in communal riots including the anti-Sikh killings unleashed in Delhi after the gunning down of Indira Gandhi. Since 1990, the insurgencies in Punjab, Kashmir, Assam and in the North-Eastern Border States have been coating the exchequer perhaps Rs. 4 to 5 crore a day.

Indian scholars and analysts resistantly and continuously pointed to the decay and degeneration of the institutions and values of democracy and secularism; indeed many of them warned of an approaching apocalypse and offered numerous suggestions on how to avoid it, most of their labour being lost on the holders of power.\textsuperscript{22} Rajini Kothari, now finds the Indian State as an armed well against democracy, with an increasing proclivity to crush protects with force after giving them the bad name of disintegrative, secessionist and terrorist movements.\textsuperscript{23} Satish Saberwal wrote, “There is a sense of crisis in and about Indian society. The difficulty is not specific, local or temporary, it is general, widespread and persistent”.\textsuperscript{22} Shyam Lal, former editor of \textit{The Times of India}, who had dismissed Kothari’s State Against democracy as “tired rhetoric” later conceded, “As things fall apart and the centre is unable to hold, we can perhaps console ourselves with the myth that a new grassroots democracy will emerge from the ruins of the old elite democracy.” That should make at least the


\textsuperscript{24} \textit{The Indian Express}, July 7, 1983.
waiting for the apocalypse somewhat less painful. Similarly Ashis Nandy argued, "A growing number of Indians are looking skeptically at the given wisdom handed down by the first generation of independence ... There is a crisis of Indian's concept of a desirable society." Girilal Jain, another former editor of The Times of India, who was later converted to the ideology of Hindutva, wrote in the mid-80s, "The loss of moral authority has had a devastating effect. On the one hand, the people have become less and less inclined to obey those in authority, and on the other, the capacity of the machinery of the State to enforce its decisions has steadily declined. Brute force can work for a time; it can't work for ever, especially in democracy such as ours".

The roots for the decay and erosion of the national authority structure are to be found in a dilemma that consequently plagued Indira Gandhi: how to maintain her hold on power while either fending off or a accommodating the growing demands of power blocs in the polity. Democratic incorporation of such diverse new demands often would have meant a downward transfer of power. Indira Gandhi perceived not without some justification that such moves would weaken the Centre and thus both national integrity and the state’s capacity to steer economic development. As a consequence, she adopted a recalcitrant stance. Instead of accommodating power challengers, which might not have been she sought to block their access to power by undermining democratic institutions. Cancellations of elections within the Congress Party, a

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25 The Times of India, January 7, 1983.
26 The Indian Express, July 7, 1983.
27 The Indian Express, April 18, 1984.
appointment of loyal but weak chief ministers in the states, and personalization of general elections were all part of this ruling strategy.

The paradox is that the very strategy that possibly of using that power for constructive ends. Having reduced the significance of important institutions, she found that when she (and, later, her successor, Rajiv Gandhi) needed institutional support to implement desired goals, such support was not available. Personal control over a highly interventionist state has been maintained, but the interventionist arm of that state has gone limp; the trends toward centralization and powerlessness have run in tandem. As such important political institutions in India have been weakened, and power conflicts have multiplied. The result is that national leaders find it increasingly difficult to put together durable coalitions, to undertake major policy initiative, and settle political conflicts without violence. Consequently for India, its problems of governability have grown considerably more acute over the past two decades: India is fast catching up with the rest of the Third World. Instead of a strengthening of India’s democratic base, a steadily widening gap between institutional capacities and socio-economic problems are witnessed. The picture that emerged is that of an increasing authority vacuum. The organizational ability of the Congress Party has declined, and popular new parties have failed to fill the organizational vacuum. In addition traditional patterns in the social structure have been weakened; the capacity of the dominant castes and of other “big men” to influence the political behavior of those below them in the social hierarchy has diminished. These two trends – the growing democratization of traditional power relations in the civil society, and
the failure to create a rational basis for generating new leadership through formal political institutions— are at the heart of the increasing authority vacuum in Indian politics. That vacuum, in turn, contributes to many of the problems of governability: coalitional instability, the emergence of low-quality with demagogic rather than programmatic appeal, the growing significance of toughs and hoodlums as de facto brokers of local power, ineffective and corrupt local governments, and the increasing tendency to resort to violence to “settle” political conflicts, the deinstitutionalizing role of national leaders has thwarted the possibility of developing a new and stable set of political norms. The weak political institutions have encouraged undisciplined political competition, and that has politicized all types of social divisions. Including caste, class and ethnic cleavages. Numerous strategies, including the use of violence, have been used to gain access to the state’s resources, thus adding to the growing political chaos.

The Rudolph’s found two models of polity alternating in India since independence -- command polity and demand polity. “In the command polity model, the State is sovereign – differentiated autonomous and authoritative. Command polity can orient policy towards future societal benefits and public and collective good or towards the appropriation by State, political elites, officials, and employees of State-generated wealth, power and status. In the demand polity, citizens are sovereign, that is, the State is linked to societal values and interests by processes of representation and accountability. Demand
polity orients policy toward satisfying short run consumption needs services and
the input requirements of mobilized constituencies."

However, in due course of time with the weakening of the
command/ aspect of centrisn, the demand polity became more assertive and this
assertion was further reinforced by the consequences of liberalization in the
economy.

During the first fifteen or twenty years of independence, the
nation was sought to be built from above in the traumatic backdrop of the
partition of the sub continent and the creation of a hostile State in Pakistan. The
State took upon itself the arduous task of building the nation, modeling its great
diversities into a contrived centralized unity, sternly punishing and bringing to
the knees the geographically limited and population-wise minuscule attempts at
cessation or separation from the single nation. In other words the Indian State
was highly interventionist, and whether one approves of this or deplores it, it is
an important organizational feature in contemporary India that is not likely to
change soon. An interventionist state at low levels of economic development,
moreover, is a feature that India shares with many Third World countries, but in
contrast with past experiments in capitalist economic development, especially
those in the Anglo-American contest. Two important political implications of
that state-society macro-characteristic have been evident throughout this
analysis, but have not always been recognised in the literature.

28 Rudolph Lloyd I. and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political
First, an interventionist state in the early stages of development has difficulty establishing a separation between the public and private spheres in social life. That has many consequences. The most important from the standpoint of a study of governability is that an interventionist state cannot claim that distributive problems are social and not political problems. The co-existence of political equality with considerable economic inequality facilitated the establishment of proto-democracies in parts of nineteenth-century Europe. The interventionist welfare state developed only under resource-abundant, mature capitalism. In an Indian type of situation, however, a highly interventionist state is inherent to the overall design of state old versus new, social and economic. Thus, the accumulating distributive claims on the state partly reflect the state's attempt to penetrate and reorganize socio-economic life.

Another major characterizes of India's political structure is India's democracy. On balance, periodic elections and the existence of basic civil liberties are among India's most prized political possessions. Certain specific features of India's democracy, however, have also contributed to India's growing problems of governability. India's democracy has been democracy from above. For most of its existence, it has been more of a gift from the elite to the masses than something the masses have secured for themselves. There is no doubt that the longer democracy is practiced, the more difficult it becomes for him elite to take away basic democratic rights. Nevertheless a tremendous concentration of power in the hands of a few leaders is an undesirable feature of India's democracy.
This elite-dominated determined the patterns of political mobilization. Leaders have mobilized socio-economic groups more as power resources in intra-elite struggles and less to satisfy group aspirations. That pattern of elite-led mobilization is distinguishable from the more conventional concept of social mobilization that supposedly accompanies industrialization, urbanization, literacy and so forth. Whereas social mobilization is generally produced by economic development and “modernization”, elite-led mobilization often reflects patterns of intraelite conflict, thus, Indira Gandhi discovered India’s poor when she was pressed politically by other members of the Congress elite. The BJP similarly discovered Hindutva when it desperately needed to establish politically. The Akalis began stressing issues of Sikh nationalism only when thrown out of power.

The issues of whether or not the aspiration of the mobilized groups can be satisfied has always been secondary in the minds of the mobilizers. Indira Gandhi basically ignored the poor. The BJP ditched the fundamental Hindu. That is “normal” politics, but what has not always been appreciated is that mobilized but unorganized groups that are ignored by politicians once they have served their political purposes add considerable volatility to the polity. When “real groups” with “real interest” such as labour, are mobilized, there is a realistic chance that the mobilization will be accompanied by organization and that group demands can be accommodated after negotiations. By contrast, mobilization from above often attracts demagogues. Because it remains unorganized and really does not have concrete, even if incremental, gains for the mobilized groups as its priority, such
mobilization periodically tends to generate political turmoil. Thus the model that India has pursued has exacerbated existing inequalities along regional, rural versus urban, ethnic, class and caste lines. The resulting dissatisfaction provided the raw material for elite-led movements. The point, however, is that satisfied oppositional movements on their own. The pattern, instead, has been one in which opportunistic politicians have sensed some dissatisfaction and have mobilized it almost to the point of frenzy. Such mobilization, in turn, brings short-term partisan benefits at the expense of the political health of the whole.

Consequently “nations” within the Nation began to assert themselves with their demands for political and cultural recognitions. The hurt and humiliated pride in the Telgues gave birth to the regional Telegu Desham Party in the early 80s. It snatched power at the state level from the Congress-I in the election of January 1983. In Punjab, the Sikh raised the demand for an independent Khaklistan and came rapidly into armed combat with the State that claimed to be the Nation. In Assam, the State was defied by rebellious youth who won political power in an election after years of struggle, which at times violent and jeopardized a major oil-producing complex. Finally, in the Valley of Kashmir, the Muslims became deeply alienated from the State, which had not allowed them free and fair elections and taken them for granted. An armed insurgency broke out in 1990.

As such as Rajini Kothari put it, the state ceased to be an agent of egalitarianism and it lost and will reorder a society of gross inequalities. It is “increasingly becoming an agent of both the new ideology at privatization and the new ideology of a national security state, which often degenerates into a
personal security State whose resources are disproportionately devoted to the security and safety of a few... Increasingly, the responsibility of carrying on the democratic process is falling to the people who are becoming targets of all these distortions and the perversities and fears and insecurities – namely, the very poor and deprived masses at the grassroots and their mobilizes and catalysts, of whom the elite seem to be getting wary lest the turmoil from the upset the too finely and fragiley more applecart."

The cumulative anarchic image of conflicts, tensions and confrontations, together with the unresolved problem of mass poverty, raised in the minds of some scholars doubts about the governability of the Indian State. Atul Kohli in his book in 1991, "India's growing crisis of governability" argued that "sooner or later, all developing countries become difficult to govern, and over the past two decades has been moving in that direction." He concluded that there is a severe breakdown of authority structures in most parts of the country with the result that State's ability to govern as well as build an economic order in which eradication of mass a poverty will have the highest priority had dangerously declined.

The blame has been stoutly put on the quality and performances of post -independence leaders. Leadership signifies qualities that combine power with influence. Power without influence, influence of ideas and character of the leader, remains transitory. Influence is what makes for the sustainability

29 Kothari Rajini, "State Versus Democracy", op.cit, pp.46-64.
30 See, Kohli Atul, op.cit.
of public service established by democratic governance. Nehru had both and used them to good ethnic Jaya Prakash Narayan had no power of office but he was able to influence more than one generation and a broad spectrum of people across the generation gap, and across ideological divides. B.R.Ambedkar was able to reject the trappings of power and has remained more influential after his death. The post-independence products have confined themselves to seeking and enjoying power and missed the importance of their role in changing the minds of generations. India has failed so far to create opportunities for creative and enlightened leadership. At the national level in particular, the form and style has been imitative. There has been some admission only now that every time a charismatic leader cannot emerge. The emergence of coalition in Delhi provides the opportunity to build a consensus around the characteristics of such leadership.

After 50 years it appears that the letter and spirit of the Constitution of India does not reflect the value system and hopes and aspirations of the public as a whole. There has been a steady erosion of values in public life due to the murky atmosphere created by the selfish politicians. Political leadership is tottering and groping in the dark. People have thrown out the traditional hold of leaders. All existing political parties are rejected, be they rightist or leftist. They do not reflect the wishes of the people nor are they in a position to fulfill the aspirations of the people. People have lost faith in them. Of late, politics has come to denote the race for power and pelf. To some

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people, capacity to maneuver, prevaricate and befuddle the masses are its attributes. Such people do not hesitate to adopt even questionable degeneration of democratic institutions and erosion of the cherished values of our national life.\textsuperscript{32} Today, politics and political power have come to occupy the centre-stage, the value of which have started influencing activities in all spheres of national life including spirituality, which is lying low in the citizen. Unless politics is set right, nothing can be improved.\textsuperscript{33} India's political culture pathetically betrays the absence of high ethical preparation on the part of the people. Here, the power holding politicians commit grave wrong in the governance process but their crimes are forgotten in popular mind once they manage to win elections. Politicians of all and persuasions sail in the same boat.\textsuperscript{34} In this connection, the prophetic words of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, an architect of the Indian Constitution, are worth recalling. He said in the Constituent Assembly on 25th November 1949: "The working of a constitutions does not depend upon the nature of the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. The factors on which the working of these organs of the state depend are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics. We can how the people of India and their parties will behave?" Today, there are too many contradictory things going on in our polity and we are pausing through a crisis in our democratic institutions, including Parliamentary democracy.

\textsuperscript{33} Krishan Kant, "Indian Democracy Some Remedial Measures". in D. Sunder Rani (ed.). \textit{op.cit.} p.112.
If one examines our system of democratic governance in the context of enormous directions, it is moot point whether our democracy serves and promotes long-term, equitable, just and people-centered development. A complete absence and distortion of transparency and accountability in India makes a mockery of democracy itself.  

During these fifty years, and more notably during the last decade or so, optimism has given way to pessimism and sense of frustrations which can be noticed easily by any one who cares to see. The faith of the people in the institution brought into existence with great fanfare under the Constitution which we, the people of India, gave to ourselves has largely been eroded. On the other side, the country is caught in the throes of a deep turmoil. Day after day scandals break out; Parliament is in perpetual uproar and the country itself is engaged in an uncontrollable cathartic process. It appears that India is being transformed forever through an outburst of morality and is in the process of a major public purging. If this trend is not nipped now, there is no point in pur talking about parliamentary democracy, freedom and rule of people, for the people, and by the people. As Justice Alliadi Kuppuswamy said: "If parliamentary democracy has not functioned satisfactorily in India in recent times, it is not because of the defects in the system but due to the incomplete or inefficiency of those entrusted with the task of running it. The remedy lies not

in abandoning the system but in plugging the loopholes so that it may work satisfactorily.\(^8\)

The credibility of coalition governance has suffered a grievous blow in the last few years with the murky politics. Since the opportunistic alliances are sailing in different directions, the vulnerability of coalition government is attracting more attention than the future of secular, democratic plural India. Hence, the poll-eve opportunistic alliances with a view to capturing power cannot check the scourge of corruption. Nor do these parties come together with any genuine interest to serve the people of India.\(^9\) Viewed from this experience, it is doubtful about useful purpose of an unrealistic alliance of political parties. It would be better, if the respective political parties implement their own ideologies concerning the real issues of the country. It is time the political parties come out with an idea to dilute the politics of opportunities alliance. Two basic reasons have been caused for the credibility of coalition governance in India since 1989. First, the parties, which have fought against each other during the election- on an ideological basis or otherwise cannot from a visible combine afterwards and provide a credible politics. second, the fallibility weaknesses of coalition governance in the ‘outside support’ they depend on which means that the supporter contrives an arrangement by which he can enjoy the fruits of office without being responsible for any of its omissions and commissions.

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Although the Parliamentary system is passing through the turbulent times, there is a hope to streamline the system by introducing some reformatory changes and reforms. To strengthen the parliamentary system no solution can be durable unless solving the long pending social problems in the society, apart from the administrative and political reforms.

The crisis which was rooted in the genesis of the Indian state has finally come to a head, the State's institutional scaffoldings are breaking down, its ability to render reasonably good government for an exploding population of 900 million is now severely eroded. The power establishment has become hardboiled resisters to relevant radical change with the result that the polity is overloaded with cleavages and conflicts, which tend to become violent, at times directed against the authority of the State, itself. The political system has virtually lost its moral timber is saturated with corruption from top to bottom, and is increasingly coercive in dealing with the legitimate demands of a vastly politicized people with a huge chunk of illiterate or semi literate youth subsisting on the periphery of the frontiers of development. Kothari lists five major crisis of the political process. First, power struggles at the top are fragmenting and tearing apart the governmental system, its institutions as provided by the Constitution and the moral fiber it inherited from the freedom movement. Second, deep-seated social turmoil is drawing institution like caste and ethnicity on the one hand and modern structure of the political economy on the other. The result is tremendous of a psycho-social type, growing schisms.

See Sunder Ram D., "Reforming the Parliamentary System: Search for a New Look", Politics India (Accepted for Publications).
between communities, regions and identities—overload of conflicts, which prevent class struggles leading in the empowerment of the poor. Thirdly, centralized governance and the power structure’s ideology of national unity from above at all costs are clashing with growing demands for pluralism, self-determination of each ethnic identity, human rights and equality. Fourthly, a total lack of consensus on the meaning of justice and a just social order of equity and diversity. These concepts are pitted against the ruling classes’ ideas of unity, holism, integration and interdependence. Finally, the struggles against the iniquitous State-sponsored model of development are either themselves getting fragmented politically and ideologically or getting marginalized are” brutally suppressed.” A new fundamentalism, often-misnamed development, pulverizes ‘movements’ that are opposed to ‘the mainstream’. The combination of the five crises is eroding the State itself and crusting a large space for religious fundamentalism and political conflict.41

The worsening role of bureaucracy in fueling the fire of turbulence in Indian society is amply explored by M. K. Kaw. The IAS Says Kaw has become the Burra Sahiba of Independent India modeling themselves largely on the lifestyle of the ICS. The bridegroom price or a young IAS officer is highly comparative and way above the price of engineers, medical doctors and IPS and probationers. There is also what Mr. Kaw calls a “Dharmendra Effect” which he defines as “acquiring a new fashioned second wife, while the first model is still running order.” Most IAS officers have got their godfathers

and many of them are Godfathers to their juniors. One result of this is a wholesale reshuffle of Joint secretaries when a new Secretary takes over from a superannuated one. The godfather – godson syndrome is responsible for many cataclysmic upheavals of personnel are the bureaucracy from the top layer through the middle to the lower layers when a godfather minister loses his job.

The police is an equal partner of the nexus that is growing among mafia gangs, politicians and highly placed bureaucrats. In a climate of pervasive corruption, no agency of government is as corrupt and insensitive to the dignity of man and woman as the police force. Some of the basic wrongs of the police system have been underlined in the reports of the Administrative Reforms Commission as well as in that of the Police Commission appointed in 1981. Few of the reforms have been seriously implemented. On the contrary, with the ubiquity of government in Indian life since independence, the police have become the symbol of the malevolent face of coercive power. Rapid expansion has led to the recruitment of people of sectarian and communal loyalties. The police force, the majority of officers included, has learned to serve their political masters and not the people. In many communal riots, the police have been found to be taking partism positions, their punitive arms flung at certain communities and kept away from others. Many inquiry reports on riots have

found the police either inadequate or partisan or both, apart from being inefficient. In the massive rioting in Bombay in 1993, after the carefully synchronized bomb blasts in which the underworld mafia elements as well as agents of Pakistan were reported to be involved, the police was found to be guilty dereliction of duty. The police remained dismayingly passive during the anti Sikh riots to Delhi immediately after the assassinations of Mrs. Gandhi. During the Ayodhya incidents in December 1992, many politicians joined up BJP led Hindutva movement and celebrated the demolition of the Babri mosque which they were supposed to protect. In the serious communal riots in Bhagalpur, Baroda, Ahmedabad, Moradabad and other places, reporters as well as civil right organisations found the police partisan, brutal, corrupt and at times in league with criminals. The use of third degree methods to torture arrested people to confuse to their alleged crimes, with increasingly sophisticated tools placed at their disposal by governments, had led to hundreds of custody death in the last decade, earning India a bad name internationally.\(^{43}\)

The police have the role of maintaining the humane face of democracy. In India, the police do just the opposite. They often consciously violate the poor ignorant citizen’s lawyers or relatives. Women are raped in police custody even though the Supreme Court ruled several years ago that no woman was to be taken to a police station after dusk. Numerous judges of sessions courts, high courts and justice of the Supreme Court have no scores of occasions passed strong strictures against police atrocities on men and women

Crises of Governability

illegally taken in custody. Investigations of crimes have been found tardy, investigating officials often seemingly acting on the wishes of men and women power. Even the CBI, the nation’s premier investigating authority, which is supposed to enjoy a lot of autonomy has been found grossly wanting in its role in the Bofors scandals as well as in handling the bank and secularities scam.

India has to make a new beginning. The thrust to the unity and integrity of the nation does not come from disciplined groups sharing the present burdens of government in the sphere of their activity. It does not come from re-establishing the command structure of the administration. It will get a boost if the police forces are brought under consultative discipline with the people they are meant to offer protections. The problem in the government itself; it has to sustain the unsustainable structure of leadership. Leadership is the sense positive influence, has to grow. There has to be a climate of tolerance towards such leaders in every walk of life; an institutional framework to engage them to contribute to national endeavor. There is reluctance on the part of the professionals in every of life to partake in political activity; there is fear the present crop of leaders. A cleansing operation to make politics a desirable activity of good people has to be undertaken. People will welcome this. It is doubtful on present indications if the present political power structure will favour such a change. But without such a change the crisis of the state will persist and the instability of governments will become more persistent.
DYNAMICS OF COALITION POLITICS AND GOVERNABILITY

With the emergence of coalitional politics new experiments and experiences in the nature and style of governing are witnessed. This Chapter will try to understand these emergent trends in the process of governing.

The Indian political system has been passing through a critical phase of change and transformation. During the period of the first twenty years from the adoption of a written constitution for India, differences in the ruling party used to come to the surface now and again but disappeared largely because of the magnetic personality of Nehru. After his death, the position has become normal and now it appears that we shall have multiple-party system. The emergence of a trend of coalition government in our country has assumed the importance of not only a possibility but also of a reality after the 1967 General Elections. As it could be said that Politics is a game of capturing political power for the purpose of running the machinery of government in accordance with a definite and specific policy systems from monarchy to oligarchy and then to democracy.¹

It is now realized in both intellectual and political circles that the much wanted one-party-dominance of the Congress was not a systemic characteristic but a passing phase of dynamic politics of a developing democracy. The one-party-dominance era of Indian politics has come to an end², and the coalition government has come to stay in India. Coalition

government is an exception and not a rule in Parliamentary System. It occurs only when the process of representation fails to produce a majority party in the legislature. It is a kind of solution to the problem of the formation of a cabinet or a ministry when no party secures a majority in the legislature at the end of a general election. Such situations arise only where there is a multiplicity of political parties participating in a general election.\(^3\)

The coalition experiment is not new to India. An era of coalition governance in India first began in 1946. When the interim government was formed under the leadership of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, Consisting of the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. After the new Constitution of India came into farce since 26, January, 1950, there have been more cases of coalitionisms in the state than at the centre. At state level, even before 1967, there were experiments of coalition government. They were in PEPSU, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Kerela, all short lived and did not run smoothly. In 1967 there were a spurt of coalitions in eight states (Kerala, W. Bengal, Orissa, Punjab, U.P, H.P, M.P, Bihar). There were Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD) governments. They were based on negativism – anti-Congressism and hence, these unprincipled governments were short lived.\(^4\). The coalition government in the states after the fourth general election (1967) shown in table I, that throughout the country opposition parties began to take the chance of forming governments in the states by establishing anti-Congress coalition.

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\(^4\) Dighe Sharad, "Coalition Government Suitability for India", (ed.) Dr. D. Sunder Ram, "Coalition Politics in India Search for Political Stability", National, Jaipur and New Delhi. 2000, p.56
Table - I
Coalition Governments in states 1967 - 71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>No. of Govts.</th>
<th>Average life of Govt. (in months)</th>
<th>No. of time of Presidents rule</th>
<th>Average period of President rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>04.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>03.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>08.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pradesh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.P.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>07.8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.Bengal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>08.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The opportunistic bargaining by the minority Bengal Congress holding Chief Minister- ship of the State and an abrasive attitude of the dominant CPM which forgot, it was the largest constituent of the government failed the coalition which had started with high hopes. This made some of the parties take a more discerning approach to coalition - making. In the mini – general elections of February 1969, their attitude crystallized some of the perceptions acquired while running the coalitions. In west – Bengal, U.P, and to some extent in Bihar, electoral alliances were forged most of which attempted to assume a more cohesive character. The alliances also were made with a view to possible sharing of power after the elections. In this election, the Indian electorate also showed a large degree of awareness and sophistication and severely punished both the Congress and the anti-Congress parties like the
Jana Sangh and SSP in U.P, and Bihar, when they failed to provide stable and purposive government.\textsuperscript{5}

However, the coalition history at the national level first began when the Congress under Smt. Indira Gandhi during 1969–70 was minority government kept running by the support extended by the communists. After then, the Janata government led by Sir Morarji Desai (1977–79); the Charan Singh led Samajwadi Janata government (August 1979 – January 1980); the V.P Singh National Front government (December 1989 – November 1990); a short term by Sri Chandra Shekhar’s government (November 1990 – June 1991); the United Front Government (June 1996 – March 1998) led by Sri H.D. Deve Gowda and Sri I.K. Gujral were minority governments surviving for a while, with a tenuous support from outside. But these coalitions were not a true coalition government because the parties had merged together and others were minority government supported by the largest parties / party from the outside. And the present BJP led coalition (March 1998 to Present date) is different from other coalitions because the largest party is supported by 18 to 22 supporting parties. First time in the post Independence history of India, different ideologies both regional and national comes together to form the governments and sharing the power at the national level.

India has the experience of coalition government in the states as well as at the Centre in recent times.

\textsuperscript{5} Sheth Praveen, “India 50, Political Development and Decay”. South Asian, New Delhi, 1998, p.88
Table – II
Coalition Governments at the Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Prime-Minister</th>
<th>Duration of the coalition</th>
<th>No. of Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sri Morarji-Desai</td>
<td>24.03.1977 to 28.07.1979</td>
<td>11 parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sri Viswanath Pratap Singh</td>
<td>02.12.1989 to 10.11.1990 (with the outside support of BJP &amp; Shiv Sena)</td>
<td>09 parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sri Chandra Shekhar</td>
<td>10.11.1990 to 21.06.1991 (with the outside support of Congress)</td>
<td>09 parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee</td>
<td>15.05.1996 to 28.05.1996 for 13 days</td>
<td>13 parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sri I.K Gujral</td>
<td>21.04.1997 to 19.03.1998 (with the outside support of Congress)</td>
<td>13 parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee</td>
<td>19.03.1998 to 00.03.1999</td>
<td>18 parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee</td>
<td>26.04.1999 to 10 oct.1999 as Caretaker PM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee</td>
<td>Oct. 1999 to Present date</td>
<td>22 parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is truly said that, after 54 years of Independence, when Congress has lost its National and hegemonic character and we have entered an era where coalition has become a political necessity in India today, because no single party is getting absolute majority due to the fragmented and pluralistic nature of the Indian electorate leading to multi-party system. It is a natural phenomenon in plural society. Society needs political socialization. Political culture is the outcome of social culture and our social culture is of conflict, rivalries, warring factions in the society in few states. In this situation, the
negative voting prevails. Hence, the social pluralism and regional patterns of Indian politics also provided the basis and a need for coalition making. But the success of the coalition governments depends upon the nature and character of parties which form alliance for forming governments. The only snag is whether such an alliance or coalition would be able to make for stability—the most essential pre-requisite for carrying out any long-range programme of economic and social development and providing a clean and impartial administration. It is easy to say that, if the purpose of forming a coalition is to topple the existing government, without any common programme of action or approach, the coalition howsoever cohesive it may be, would not provide for stability. But such a coalition is formed with a definite minimum action-oriented programme and if such programme is executed in a spirit of mutual concession by the groups joining the coalition, it might in the long run provide an alternative stable government which is rarely seen in present coalition era.

In the vacuum created by the eclipse of the well-knit dominant Congress party and absence of a towering leader the social pluralism and regional partners of Indian politics provide the bases and need for coalition making. At party and government level they found themselves institutionalized in the Congress system that prevailed in the country for almost two decades. It served as an example of a great coalition and a great consensus, which provided the structural basis of interest aggregation between various factions or sub-

parties. As it reflected the pluralism of Indian society, its function of intra-party interest aggregation was greatly helped in the process. The break-up of the Congress party in 1969 externalized the coalitional politics so far institutionalized within the Congress during the period of the one-party dominance system. Coalitional politics however has acquired a new dimension a new urgency and a new context in the present phase of India's political transition. The coalition experiment was approached with some degree of seriousness in 1977, 1991 and aftermath of the 1996 Lok Sabha elections. On these occasions, the parties concerned were either serious on agenda of alternative governance or were keen to avoid going to the polls. The Lok Sabha elections of 1989 signaled the end of the era of Congress-centric one party dominance system. Coalitional government and competitive party system have finally emerged and routinised by three successive Lok Sabha elections of 1989, 1991 and 1996. Along with Assembly elections in 1990s, such an electoral pattern has changed the landscape of Indian politics with regional actors (parties) occupying the center of power in different States. It is clearly seen that Political parties in India may give any interpretation to their political and electoral arrangements with one another, but no party is in position to face the electorate single-handedly in mid-term elections as it's a need for coalition to the parties.³

Need for Coalitions

1. The recent process of fragmentation and fractionalization of the party system could also be arrested if polarization could get accelerated by the

³ Sheth Pravin, op-cit., pp.84-86.
constellation of the parties on the basis of same policies and programmes at electoral and governmental levels. Institutionalization of this process in the form of a viable and sustained coalition, in the process could help our political system in stabilizing itself at the state and central levels. The experience with coalition (and United Front) government in India and outside could also be of great help in evolving certain conventions that could stabilize and stimulate the coalition governments in India.

2. The compulsions of politics taking shape around the breakup of the one-party-dominance-system and the fragmentation of the congress system began giving shape to political parties which are not hierarchically ordered but in multiple points of contacts with another as different parties possess different resources. Politics in the new context will now much proceed along the stenous path of coalition-building with its sub-processes of bargaining, compromise and consensus formation.

3. The power structure in the Indian legislatures is becoming more and more polycentric with the growth of political pluralism. Multiplicity of parties or mini-parties, multiplicity of support bases and multiplicity of support bases and multiplicity of access or checkpoints—all have given the need to adopt coalitional style.\(^\text{10}\)

4. There is no possibility of our returning to one-party dominance any more, one has to analyze future coalition more explicitly.

5. There is no rule or law by which one-party dominance would always yield a democratic coalition. Even the Congress party under J.L. Nehru was a half-way house between a democratic coalition and authoritarian coalition and as it increasingly acquired the character of the former, its dominance was undermined.\(^{11}\)

6. A national crises necessitating the suspension of party strife and the concentration of all forces in a common direction for the common safety. \(^{12}\)

7. There is nothing inherently wrong with a multi party system. Multi party systems have functioned successfully in other countries also. \(^{13}\)

In India, there were nine coalition governments at the national level but no one proved to be stable. Here, it discussed the nature and style of governing of the different coalitional governments.

**First Coalition Experiment under Morarji Desai & Charan Singh**

There was, however, a gradual shift from the pattern of one dominant party rule. The growing political, social, economic and regional tensions gave rise to the emergence of different parties, which wielded varying influences in states and center. In course of time an uneven political pattern was evolved. 1967 saw the rise of coalition governments in several states. But central government continued to be under the dominant Congress party rule.

Many political analysts had persistently pleaded that the non-Congress coalition

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\(^{13}\) Siniskar V.M. *op.cit.*, p.140
governments ruled in several states, it was not so easy to change the political scenario at the center. However, one single event that bought about a cataclysmic change in the political scenario at the center, was the declaration of National Emergency in India in 1975 and detention of many political leaders and activists including MPs. Through this action, opposition to the amendments in the constitution encroaching upon the citizen’s civil liberties, freedom of the press and of the Judiciary was sought to be throttled. These repressive actions were a desperate response to the agitation against corruption symbolized by the JP movement in Bihar, Gujrat and elsewhere.\(^\text{14}\)

These anti-democratic actions initiated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi caused an unprecedented anti-Congress wave against the Union Government. In the election of 1977, for the first time the Congress lost its power and the first non-Congress government of the Janata Party took over.

The Janata Party, though it appeared to be one party, was not a unified party. It was a condominium party. Congress (O), Socialists, Jan Sangh, Swatantra and Bhartiya Kisan Dal and the group of dissident Congressmen led by Jagjivan Ram and H.N. Bahuguna came together to form a party, just by way of coalition, to oppose the emergency.\(^\text{15}\) They all had come together on a single anti-Congress platform, merged into a single party. The Janata Government, committed to a common progressive election manifesto ‘Bread with Freedom’ had caught the imagination of the people and had roused their hopes and aspirations. Except opposition to emergency they had nothing in common. The

\(^{14}\) Dandavate Madhu, “Coalition Politics in India”, (ed.) Dr. D. Sunder Ram, op-<em>cit.</em>, pp. 43-44

\(^{15}\) Dighe Sharad, <em>op-cit.</em>, p. 57.
constituents were intellectually and emotionally integrated and behavioral identities derived from their old parties. Some of them even retained their separate organizational outfits. As a result, Break up the Janata party’s government which in reality was a coalition government. The split up group of Janata Party headed by Chaudhary Charan Singh formed an alternative coalition government which proved to be still-born since Indira Gandhi, who had lent support to the Charan Singh Government, withdrew it on the day Prime Minister Charan Singh was to seek confidence vote for his coalition government in the Lok Sabha.

The earlier states and center government did not last long it marked the beginning of a new era of serious challenge by farmers, backward and lower caste people to those who had gained power after the independence. It was a very important landmark, which changed the course of the Indian politics and even influenced future coalitions.

The early coalition government failed because of the following reasons.

- Inherent strength of the Congress party which other parties were trying to dislodge.
- Inherent weaknesses of the parties which were posing the challenge.
- The highly individualist Indian character and the prevailing socio-economic conditions.

The Coalition government at the center in 1977 could not function well because of the antics of Raj Narayan and the ego of Charan Singh, and fell because of Madhu Limaye's unnecessary insistence on dual membership issue.

The party had come into existence on a wave of opposition to Indira Gandhi because of the high handed rule she imposed. Consequently, once the government of Indira Gandhi was removed, the main purpose was lost and the party began to loose its cohesive force.

The party was never unified as a single political group. It began and it remained as a group of separate parties with separate aims.

The alliance of separate parties did not develop a cohesive force and leaders of party often criticized and blamed each other and also, the personal ambitions of the leaders of various parties at variance to each other.

Second Coalition Government under the Leadership of V.P Singh and Chandra Shekhar

The next non-Congress government at the center was a minority Janata Dal Government in 1989. It was supported by a kind of front of different parties which had come together on the anti-Congress wave created by some of the alleged scandals of the Congress regime particularly the Bofors Scandal. Articulating this issue through the election campaign, the National front got only 143 seats (as against 197 of the congress). But managed to form the government with the external support of C.P.I. and B.J.P. V.P. Singh became the symbol of struggle against corruption. Even though the central government
of National Front was better organized than the coalition government of the Janata Party, but it suffered from the same inherent weaknesses. The Janata Dal, the largest constituent of the National Front — was basically unstable. The egoistic personality clashes surfaced from the beginning. Bahuguna and Chandra Shekhar were against V.P. Singh becoming the leader.\textsuperscript{17} To eliminate Chandra Shekhar from the context, the name of Devilal was proposed and accepted. The episode left the bad taste particularly in the context of person who had come up in the name of high principles, honesty in public life, value based politics etc. Chandra Shekhar for one did not recognize V.P. Singh as his leader and never forgot the betrayal practiced on him. It was a clear cut personality clashes among V.P. Singh, Devi Lal, and Chandra Shekhar.

The break-up of the coalition led by V.P. Singh is a classic example as to how disparate elements like the Congress opposing, the coalition governments, decision to implement the Mandal Commission recommendations Mandir-Masjid controversy and dissidence within the Janta Dal etc. destabilize the coalition government. As it can be said that, internal struggle for power is there. When Devi Lal planned to organize a massive Kissan rally in New Delhi in August 1990, to this, counter reply. V.P. Singh accepted Mandal Commission recommendation to reserve 27% of jobs in the central government for backward classes.

The Mandal Commission was actually the second commission appointed by the national government to investigate what, if anything, it could

\textsuperscript{17} Narayana I.A., "Coalition Politics in India: An Appraisal of the United Front Experiment", (ed.) Dr. Sunder Ram, op. cit., pp. 145-146.
do to help the backward classes in India. The first, known as the Kaka Kalelkar Commission was appointed in 1953, by the Congress government. The notion that there were distinct backward classes in Indian society and that the government should adopt policies to look after these classes was written into the constitution. The Kaka Kalelkar Commission, which submitted its final report in 1955, was divided in its recommendations. Each member of the commission apart from the chairman, Kaka Kalelkar, gave dissenting opinions. Much of the dissent centered on whether caste was an appropriate basis for categorizing who belonged to the backward classes. The Kaka Kalelkar report was submitted in 1955. The Congress government at the time was not interested in referring to the issue of backwardness in caste terms. Its reluctance to do so could have been either because the government was composed mostly of members of the forward castes or because the socialist orientation of the Congress’s Leaders made them more concerned with class than caste.18

Mandal Commission Report which had proposed further reservation for the members of the backward castes. This proposal of reservations was regarded as an attempt to divide Hindu community on the basis of castes. But the number of castes in the backward group was large and numerical strength of the castes in this group was large and numerical strength of the castes in this group created a very large chunk of the voting strength of Hindu a whole. Consequently, Janata Dal created a new “vote bank” consisting of the lower castes generally regarded as the exploited group of castes or the

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18 Chhibber Pradeep K., “Democracy Without Association: Transformation of the Party System and Social Cleavages in India”, Vistar, New Delhi, 1999 pp. 142-144
Dalits. The emergence of the Janata Dal in 1989 is recognized as the creator of a new form of conflict arising out of the extreme caste distinctions. The lower group of castes consists generally of the poorer section of the society so that the terms 'Caste' and 'Class' were made to coincide at that level of society. Therefore, the grouping of castes in a general 'backward' group and the proposal of the grant of reservation in the all public services became a very strong determination of electoral behavior at this juncture. Caste had always played an important role in the determination of electoral performance both at the level of states and at the level of the central government because almost all political parties had by now established a general practice of setting up candidates by the consideration beyond all proportions mainly due to the acceptance of the Mandal Commissions recommendations regarding reservations.¹⁹

The politically motivated but ideologically veneered more of V.P.Singh made him the popular idol of the OBC's and created a large support base of social justice forces for him. Thus politics of National Front led to social-political polarization of the Indian society on an unprecedented scale. So compulsive, however, was the vote bank politics in Indian democracy that other parties gradually had to prefer reservation for the OBC’s on the Mandal line. Mandelisation of the Indian polity gathered momentum at the center and in the states during the subsequent five years under the compulsive political consensus and this vital issue effecting India’s society and polity.²⁰

In reply to the declaration of the implementation of the Mandal report the BJP came out with a counter attack and raised the Ayodhya issue, to gain sympathy and attract the particular strata of society. Atal Bihari Vajpayee is on record to say, “Tum Mandal Kiya, To Hamne Kamandal Kiya.” Thus, this was the beginning of the era of the caste and class war. Actually BJP was more interested in electoral mobilization than in governance.

The BJP sensed that such a process will divide the Hindus society on caste lines and blunt its Hindutva platform, which was built with the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy in late 1980’s. The BJP President L.K. Advani started his Somnath-Ayodhya Rath Yatra in September 1990. The Rath Yatra evoked tremendous response from the majority community during its course. Meanwhile the government of India under an ordinance acquired the disputed and the adjoining land at Ayodhya. In the same month when the Rath Yatra reached Samsthipur in Bihar Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav arrested Advani. This must have been done with the consent of the V.P. Singh government, which made BJP to withdraw its support to his government. Laloo Yadav’s step made him very popular among the Muslim Community in Bihar as well as in the rest of the country.21

There is no doubt that our democratic governance has done away with the authoritarian and feudal rule, but this democratic movement does not mean that we are at the end of feudalism and casteism. The elements of feudalism, casteism and fundamentalism are still alive to threaten the

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democracy in India. We are still far away from people’s democracy as the casteist and communal politics in India has a dominance over the forces of true democracy. 22

Here, it could be said that, at Independence, the governing regime in India believed that religion was a force that would thwart the process of nation building, that is, that religion would stand in the way of citizens developing a primary identification with nation state. An important component of this vision was a belief in the need to create a citizen identity that saw traditional social identities such as religion as inimical to the creation of a viable nation – state. Religion was perceived to be a backward – looking ideology, an element of traditional society that had to be shed so that citizens would owe primary allegiance to the nation – state. According to Subrato Kumar Kenar Mitra, Nehru “had no inclination to give institutional shape to what he saw as a vestige of tradition destined to obliteration through the operation of the inexorable laws of history.” (1993,756). A segment of the Congress Party at independence was willing to accommodate the creation of a legal code to govern social policy, however, sparked a debate among Hindu traditionalists and secularists within the ruling Congress Party (Graham,1990). Evidence for the unwillingness of congress to accommodate Hindu religious groups within its fold also comes from the efforts of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, an openly Hindu organization, to create a role for itself within Congress at the local level. Despite initial sympathy to these overtures, Congress reversed its position and decided not to allow its members to hold joint membership with the RSS.

The division between the Hindu traditionalists and liberal secularists within the Congress was highlighted in the election for party president in 1951 -- an election contested between the more traditional Purshottamdas Tandon and a more secular J.B. Kriplani. Nehru's support for Kriplani, as well as his decision to force Purshottamdas Tandon to resign once he was elected, was a clear indication that powerful national leaders, of which Nehru was the most prominent, would ensure the dominance of the secularist position within the Congress Party. This intra party division ultimately led to the formation of a political party that promoted itself as the protector of the interests of the Hindus -- the Jana Sangh. Its main architects were former Congressmen who rejected the Congress's secular policy preferences (Brass 1961. Graham 1990).23

As, it clearly shows that, seed of the secularism could seen in Congress, which later come out as communalism, took deep root in the Indian Political System. Communalism is the most intractable problem of the Indian polity and society. It is a many-faced phenomenon with diverse causes and reveals itself in difficult forms under different sets of circumstances. Many a time the problem of communalism is seen as an inevitable result of the plurality of religions, cultures and traditions in Indian society. More often these are described as the causative and determining factors of communalism and communal ideology. It is argued that the existence of different religious communities naturally and inevitably produces communalism and communal politics. The burden of the argument is that in India a religious community is at one and the same time an economic and political community. Therefore.

secularism has a very limited scope in society. The state, which is described as secular in our constitution has to accept these hard realities and make an uneasy adjustment with them. An abstract ideal of secularism in the Indian context is utopian and impracticable. Communalists justify their ideology or belief by an appeal to their religion and history and seek to reinforce it by stressing the 'uniqueness' of their culture, 'distinctness' of their interests – social, political and economic and the historical importance of their community.²⁴

Communalism, both of the majority community or minority communities, is in consonance with the interest of the ruling class / classes. Its pre-supposition of well-knit and homogeneous communities, its association of Hindu-Muslim, Sikh or Christian interests and its reliance on religion for mobilizing people comes in the way of changing the political status quo and the property relations. The opposition to socialism or communism is a salient feature of the communal economic doctrine. The communal concept of individual and society is very much in keeping with that philosophy which sustains and promotes capitalism. The communal organizations hold private ownership as the law of nature; planning leads to totalitarianism; economic class consideration are unsuitable; and competitive enterprise should be guaranteed freedom. They also uphold the nation that the government’s job is not to interfere in the economic sphere but it should merely provide guidance to industrial policy. All these principles are those of capitalist system, which produces exploitation, poverty and inequality. It is very difficult to understand

as to why the communal organizations consider right to property and competitive private enterprise so sacrosanct if they have the welfare of the poor Indian in their mind. It betrays either their ignorance of the nature of economic system or a deliberate attempt to make politics subservient to the interests of the few in the name of community. Communalism is not an autonomous development. It is a part and parcel of the existing socio-political and economic reality. Secular rhetoric’s and the ‘Constitutional guaranties’ do not and cannot render communal doctrine ineffective and inoperative. The fight against communalism is a part of fight for consistent democracy and of class struggle which implies the completion of anti – feudal and anti – bourgeois revolution.  

It could be concluded here that, National Front coalition was on the plank of fighting Corruption and probity in public life. V.P. Singh was installed in a dramatic way to the Prime Ministerial throne. But just about ten months, BJP Broke the alliance, withdrew support from the NF government rejection of the BJP – VHP demand for the Construction of a Ram temple at the site of the Babri Masjid. The BJP missed the power cake at the center for diluting V.P Singh’s Mandal politics, the BJP raised the saffron flag Hinduism. No doubt his end was no less dramatic in the wake mandalisation having shorter span of life.

Here, it could be said that, the national front government in 1989 had its following special features :-

- The Regional Parties hardly had any Member of Parliament.
- It was the episode of the national level opposition parties.

25 Ibid., pp. 262-263.
Representation in the Lok Sabha on the regional basis was not uniform. The south was hardly represented in the front in terms of Lok Sabha members.

The coalition was made before election and the members were the same who were in the government.26

Fourth Coalition Experiment after the downfall of 13 days BJP Government, under the Leadership of H.D Deve Gowda and I.K Gujral.

The 1996 Lok Sabha election in India had two unique characteristic features. Primarily there was more than one clear challenger to the incumbent Prime Minister. Secondly, for the first time the Congress party fought an election without a member of the Nehru family/dynasty, at its head. Every election from 1952 onwards had been dominated by the members of Nehru family, who became a symbol of love and hate. In 1952, 57,62 it was Jawahar Lal Nehru, in 1967, 71, 77 and 80 it was Indira Gandhi, in 1984, 89 and 91 it was Rajiv Gandhi who spearheaded the poll campaign. It was the first election which had been preceded by a long period of calmness on communal and caste front. There were riots just before the 1979 general elections during the Janata regime. Again in 1984 there was communal violence in Punjab and other parts of the country followed by Indira Gandhi’s assassination and then the anti – Sikh riots. Again 1989 there were the ugly communal riots in Bhagalpur before the general elections. Moreover, the country was rocked by the violence arose out of the Mandal and Masjid issues before the 1991

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elections. The initial years of Rao also witnessed the bitter communal violence unleashed by the Ayodhya demolition. But it was followed by a calm period—1994—95.\(^{27}\)

In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections, there were three political formations of all India significance. First was the Congress (I) and its Tamil Nadu ally, the AIADMK and mirror allies in few states like Kerala. The second major formation was the BJP and its Maharashtra based ally, the Shiv Sena, the Samata Party and the Haryana Vikas Party. The third force comprised of the symbolic National Front whose sole confirmed member was Janata Dal, a number of other non-left Secular Parties, the two TDP, S.P, AGP, MDMK, RPT and PWP and the left parties led by C.P.I end C.P.I(M). The result of the 1996 general elections have propelled regional political forces to the center stage of Indian politics. The emergence of regional parties on the national scene has charged both the canvas and the context of the sovereign power of the people. The first obvious aspect of the 1996 general election was the complete rejection of the Congress party by the people at the same time it has to be mentioned that, no single party garnered this discontent and received the people's mandate to rule the nation. Second major outcome in the 1996 poll was that, the people of the country had extended their support to different parties in different regions. It only reflects pluralism and diversity of India's social fabric. In the absence of a powerful democratic leadership at the center, regional political formations emerge and win the confidence of the people.\(^{28}\)


\(^{28}\) ibid., pp.49-50.
Hence, the fractured mandate or indecisive verdict reflects more accurately the present situation and social reality of our polity. But successively, as a result of the eleventh Lok Sabha election, the United Front was formed, after the fall of 13 days Vajpayee's government. The National Front gave way to the United Front, which included Federal Front also. As many as 13 parties with diverse ideological and political positions chose to form a United Front irrespective of their differences and contradictions. This was an important feature of the political layout in the county. It is important to mention here is that, the installation of UF ministry was possible only on the support of Congress (I) from outside. After the demise of short lived BJP government Deve Gowda was invited to form the government only after the Congress President Narsimha Rao gave in writing to the President pledging the support of his party's 138 MPs. The conglomeration of motley parties and splinter groups is based mainly on the proposition to keep BJP out of power, name it as communal. The main difference between the UF Coalition and the previous coalitions is that the UF Coalition is Anti – BJP while the earlier coalitions were product of Anti-Congressism.29

The Congress (I) Party had to concede the leadership of the non - BJP coalition to H.D. Deve Gowda for three reasons. First, the congress had been defeated at the polls and had lost the moral right to lead the successor government Secondly, P.V. Narsimha Rao, the then President of the Congress (I) and the leader of the Congress (I) Parliamentary Party, had fought the

elections more against the Congress than against the BJP. Thirdly, the Congress preferred H.D. Deve Gowda to Jyoti Basu, who was the United Front’s first choice for the top job but was prevented from taking it by a majority of his own party’s central committee.30

The another important feature of the UF coalition is that there were no pre-election alliance or adjustment among the constituents rather they contested elections against one another or bitter enemies. They suddenly came together after the election having grand alliance for the formation of ministry. They even evolved CPM (Common Minimum Programmes) after the election as also the steering committee. It is clear that the UF was much more heterogeneous and inchoate than the former ones. Here it should be noted that, the coalition has been dubbed as an opportunistic alliance only for the lust of power devoid of strong ideological bases and commitments at best the bundle of contradictions. On the other it has been termed as a rainbow of real India representing all the social, cultural and political colors based on social justice and secularism whose sale and endeavor is to banish the hunger, disease, illiteracy, unemployment etc, and of course, eradicating the poverty from this land. However it is post election programmatic coalition where every constituent has to compromise on some points of other at the same times, shedding some of its programmes.31

But unfortunately, the United Front constituents were haggled even on issues which have been decided upon in the Common Minimum

30 Dr. Sunder Ram D., op-cit., p.274.
Programme (CMP). Decisions on a number of issues have been deferred only because, they do not suit the political interests of some partner or the other. Thus, H.D. Deve Gowda has become a prisoner of both the left ideologues and the manipulative Mulayam Singh Yadav. They have stripped him of all moral ascendancy and turned him into a figure of fun.\textsuperscript{32}

The expulsion of the founder member of Janata Dal Hegde and Mrs. Menaka Gandhi, and the resignation of Mufti Md. Sayed. revolt in Orissa. J.D against central leaders were the pointer of days ahead. Similarly the declaration about Uttarakhand for statehood and the meeting of PM with Bal Thackeray created flutter in U.F. Above all, the very working of JD raised suspicion about the effective governance. The Janata Dal is national party only in name. It essentially consists of autonomous state units controlled by powerful satraps Laloo Prasad Yadav in Bihar, Biju Patnaik in Orissa – who run the respective party unit as it were their fiefdom. So party high command consists largely of autonomous individual. So it is true that, the position of PM in JD is weak as hi constitutes only 15 MP'S. But the survival and continuance of UF government is woefully dependant on the critical support of the Congress (I). The statement of Mr. Narsimha Rao from Orissa that the support of the Congress (I) for UF government cannot be taken as granted on all occasions. It was not a blind support and when necessary, it can be withdrawn. In is alleged that he made this statement in the contest of the CBI zeroing against his kith and kin in the urea scam.\textsuperscript{33}


\textsuperscript{33} Singh Gopal Prasad, \textit{op-cit.}, pp. 222-224.
And at last in a dramatic development, the Congress (I) Party led by Sitaram Kesri withdrew its support to the United Front government on 30 March, 1997 and has also staked its claim to form the alternative government. It was observed by many that Mr. Kesri was in hurry to become Prime Minister. But the Congress (I) does not have the arithmetic on its side to form the government. Sitaram Kesri has explained that the very basis of the support of the congress party to the United front government led by H.D. Deve Gowda was to contain the communal forces and consolidate the secular forces but now UF pursuing an agenda to “finish congress.” With this, as expected, H.D. Deve Gowda has resigned as Prime Minister, following the defeat of confidence vote in the Lok Sabha on 11 April, 1997 and a 11 month - old United Front government was collapsed in the context of coalition era. After making efforts to avert dissolution of the Lok Sabha, the Congress (I) leadership chose to continue with the earlier support pattern under a new Prime Minister I.K. Gujral. Following the bitterness over the departure of Deve Gowda in April, 1997 both the Congress (I) and the United Front found themselves having to do business with one another and Kesri had built a good rapport with the affable United Front Prime Minister Indra Kumar Gujral. But within months he started imposing conditions and balking them up with threats to bring down the United Front government led by I.K. Gujral on a variety of grounds; that the government must respect the Congress (I) more and consult it more often; that a mechanism must be set up for close co - ordination between the Congress (I) and the government and so on. On the other hand, trouble was brewing in the United Front was constrained to leave the Janata Dal. The formation of the
Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar strengthened those within the Congress (I) who wanted a recasting of the political equations in north India. Indeed, with or without prompting from Sitaram Kesri the United Front crowd had a difficult time appreciating one another.\textsuperscript{34}

It could be said that, the withdrawal of support to the Gujral Government was attributed more to the internal power struggle within the Congress party than anything else. The UF government collapsed at the altar of the personal ambitions and egos of the leaders of the Congress (I). The reckless of Sitaram Kesri first and later some of the leaders like Arjun Singh, in withdrawing support to the UF has not just wrecked the UF government but also finished for all practical purposes, the first genuine coalition of the national and regional parties in independent India. The uneasy equations among the top leaders prevented the party from taking a politically sound approach to the revelations of the Jain Commission. But it had, thus become clear after the resignation of Gujral government that either of the Congress (I), the B.J.P and the United Front was not in a position to form government on it own. The realignment of political parties was not possible. Hence, the president dissolved Lok Sabha and ordered for fresh elections.\textsuperscript{35}

**Reasons for the Failure of the United front Government**

- The UF rested on the prop provided by the Congress (I) from outside.
- This party had no interest in the stability of the government, which was allowed to function as long as it suited the Congress (I) interests. As an

\textsuperscript{34} Dr. Sunder Ram D., op-cit., pp.276-277.
\textsuperscript{35} Narayana E.A., op-cit., pp.151-152.
outside ally of the ruling front, the Congress (I) could not be denied the
right to change its strategy and adopt a course intended to help its return
to power.

The manner in which the Congress (I) raised the Jain Commission
Report issue was also a major factor which forced the hands of the UF.
The Congress (I) staked everything on the DMK issue with the hope of
that the UF would come round and dump the DMK ministers to save the
government. The UF replaced Deve Gowda in April, 1997, to save the
government. But in the second time a variety of factors and compulsions
forced the UF to sink or sail with DMK. In a unique display of unity, the
UF stood its ground and gave up the government rather than give in to
the blackmail of the Congress on removal of the DMK ministers from
the Gujral government.

The nature of UF is another reason for the end of the experiment. The
United front consists of parties whose raison de'etre is an
uncompromising hostility to the Congress. To the extent that most of the
UF constituents have had a long history of unrelenting struggle against
the once-dominant Congress it is only natural that anti-Congressism
should be a matter of reflex action for many of them. It is also a fact that
for most of these parties the Congress still remains the principal rival in
their states. The Congressmen too reciprocated this feeling of rivalry and
competition.
Lack of proper mechanism for coordination between the Congress (I) and the UF is another reason for misunderstanding and tension.36

It is concluded that, we have reached a crucial stage in the political life of India. For a long time after independence the Congress dominated in national politics. But her inherent weakness, over centralization, power and rampant corruption led to the departure of Congressmen to form separate parties and the emergence of regional parties. The Congress of the old days is gone forever. It is almost Dear that whenever, the Congress, if at all, wants to form the government, will have to form a coalition government.

**Sixth Coalition experiment under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee:**

It was for the fourth time the House of People was dissolved in India on 4 December, 1997 before completing its full tenure. And the official announcement of the poll came on the new year's day of 1998.

Future Generations will remember the 1998 election as the election in which the inevitability of alliances and coalitions was finally accepted in Indian politics. For the first time all political formations, including the Congress, are looking at alliances as the key to electoral success. The much-maligned khichri has become the staple of politics today. The nature of alliances has also undergone a dramatic shift. Gone are the days of grand nationwide alliances build around are central slogan – this is the era of local alliances, short-term relationships and ideological amnesia.37 In this election,

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36 *ibid.*, pp. 152-154.
temple construction is not a top of the mind concern not even the BJP's priority. By laboring too hard on this natural shift, Advani is sending confused signals and even getting reporters confused. In 1991, Ayodhya was a BJP issue; today it is the last refuge of the secular forces.38

The announcement of the poll had stirred both the political parties and the people alike. The 1998 pre poll period witnessed the formation of an unprecedented number of alliances. Broadly three major political formulations came into force at the national level – one was led by Congress, the other was the BJP and the third was led by the U.F. (Shown in table - III)

As the results from the twelfth Lok Sabha Elections, The biggest gainer in the 1998 poll was none other than the BJP. The party clambered up from two seats at the end of the 80s to 120 in the 1991 poll and it had again increased to 161 in the 1996 poll and 177 in 1998. In percentage wise the BJP had bagged 20 percent of votes in 1991 and it had increased to 20.3 percent in 1996 and 25 percent in 1998. The allies of the BJP captured 4 seats (0.8%) in 1991, 26 seats (4%) in 1996 end 73 seats (11.2%) in 1998 percentage as shown in table - IV.39

### Table - III
Alliances: 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress (I)</th>
<th>BJP</th>
<th>United Front</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samajvadi Party (Maharashtra)</td>
<td>Haryana Vikas Party</td>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Party (Maharashtra)</td>
<td>Lok Shakti</td>
<td>Telugu Dcsam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhasithiya Kissan (Karnataka)</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamgal Party (U.P) (T. Nadu)</td>
<td>(T. Nadu)</td>
<td>(T. Nadu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashtriya Janata Dal (Bihar)</td>
<td>Samata Party (Bihar)</td>
<td>National Conference (J&amp;K)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahujan Samaj Party (Punjab)</td>
<td>Shiv Sena (Maharashtra)</td>
<td>AGP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura Upajathi Juba</td>
<td>Akali Dal (Punjab)</td>
<td>Samajvadi Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samithi (Tripura)</td>
<td>TDP (NTR)</td>
<td>CPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Communist Party of India (T. Nadu) (Andhra Pradesh)</td>
<td>(Andhra Pradesh)</td>
<td>CPI(M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Union Muslim League (Kerela)</td>
<td>Trinamul Congress (West Bengal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerela Congress (Mani) (Kerela)</td>
<td>Biju Janata Dal (Orissa)</td>
<td>RSP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table - IV
Voting percentage
(1952 – 1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Voting Percentage</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>66.6</td>
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<td>56.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>62.2</td>
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The salient features of 12th Lok Sabha are as follows:

- In the 12th Lok Sabha the number of member parties in the coalition government who joined the government and those who supported from outside, was all time greater.

- The coalition with majority members was formed prior to the election.

- While forming the government the individual party manifestoes were set aside and a consensus ‘National – Agenda’ was made by the participative and supportive members of the coalition.
- Before forming the government the coalition had its first shaking not from any outsider but from one of its main ally AIADMK.

- The coalition has alliance with a number of 'One Man – Demolition Squad' who will remain as never ending threat to the coalition.

- BJP, the first largest political party having the highest individual strength in respect of Lok Sabha seats, has led the coalition government.

- Political bargaining by the regional parties would always exert pressure and tension on the coalition.

- Haryana Lok Dal of OM Prakash Chautala and Haryana Vikas Party of Bansilal are hardly friendly in their state Haryana. But both of them have supported the BJP – led coalition government.

- No political party will be interested to face election within a short span of time. As such, though there may be conflicts in between the members of the coalition, but it will not reach to the point of 'no – return'.

- Even in the state level politics, the regional parties will not be in a position to and the relation with BJP, as both BJP and regional parties have some symbiotic effect in the state level politics.

- Both co – operation and conflicts would exist amongst the members of the coalition on different issues and the same would be continued till a climax is reached.40

With the 1998 elections, the BJP became a full fledged all India party. The party had established a strong presence in the south and in the cast

and is no longer a party solely of the Hindi heartland. Secondly, the 1998 poll also brought to the fore another dimension of diversity — intra — regional diversity in the initial years. Regionalism was an attempt to project a regional homogeneity, on the basis of language and culture. In 1996 two national parties went to the polls hoping to be able to capture power without the support of any other party. In the event neither had the required numbers one tried to achieve a post poll coalition where as the other made a virtue of the situation and decided to be supporting partner of a coalition essentially regional parties which came together on the basis of a common minimum programme. This post – poll coalition was criticized as opportunistic attempt for power. But the pre – poll formation by the BJP, simply came to power without any common minimum programme was no less opportunistic. The BJP and its allies have adopted and accepted a “National agenda for governance”, which assumed office at the center on the very next day.\[^4\] Next table - V, amply demonstrate, Party wise position in the 12\(^{th}\) Lok Sabha.

It could be said that, the 1996 elections broke the single party dominance in Indian politics. The 1998 poll had converted the polity to a largely two person game with smaller players brought in a position to play a balancing role. The 1998 poll also demonstrated the advantages of pre – poll coalitions. With this, the country is shifting from ideology based politics to identity and interest group based politics. All India democratic governance requires two large coalitions, competing with each other.\[^4\]

\[^4\] Biju M.R, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-32.