CHAPTER -II
CONCEPT OF COALITION AND ITS THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE
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The subject of coalition Governments is one which is of great interest and importance to the contemporary world. To us in India, the subject has a special significance and relevance in the context of current political trends and developments. An objective and scientific study of the various aspects of the system of coalition governments, and academic elucidation of the principles underlying the system will be invaluable in helping to identify the problems confronting coalitions and to discover solutions.

So by keeping all these aspects in mind, an attempt has been made in this chapter to analyse the concept of coalition. Definitions associated with the term coalition, Nature of coalitions, Types of coalition, Theories and concepts associated with the formation and working of coalition, coalitional behaviour and Models of coalition for over all understanding of the term coalition.

The term 'coalition' is derived from the Latin word coaliitio which is the verbal substantive of coalesce. Co means together and alescere means to go or to go together. According to the dictionary meaning, coalition signifies a combination or alliance short of union specially of states or political parties. Indeed 'coalition' and 'alliance' are occasionally used interchangeably; thus, the wartime unity of the United States, the Soviet-Union and Great Britain is
sometimes referred to as a coalition while sometimes as an alliance. The word 'bloc' is also at times called coalition, as it results when certain individuals or groups in a legislative assembly are merged into a formation which intends aggressive political action. In France where the bloc has had its largest and most continuous history, it was regarded on several occasions as coalition. The term compromise as a form of accommodation in the political process has now and again, been placed quite close to the term coalition. But in the strict political sense, the word "coalition" is used for an alliance or temporary union for joint action of various states and also of the Union into a single government of distinct parties or members of distinct parties. According to F.A. Ogg ".....the term 'coalition' as employed in a political sense, commonly denotes a cooperative arrangement under which distinct political parties, or at all events members of such parties unite to form a government or ministry " It is a combination of political parties none of which has an absolute majority in the legislature and which put aside their political differences to form a government with a minimum programme acceptable to all of them.

In its ordinary usage, coalition refers to a group of people who come together to achieve some end usually on a temporary basis. In politics it signifies a parliamentary or political grouping of different parties, interest groups or factions or formed for making and influencing policy decisions or securing power. The parties to the coalition do not lose their identity and can withdraw from the coalition as and when they find it difficult to continue as partners. As a result of such a withdrawal the coalition may break up or some other group make the coalition or lend support to it. But if the member groups of a coalition
decide to merge themselves and form a new party, it ceases to be a coalition. For example, when in January 1973 Jan Sangh, Congress (O), Bharatiya Lok Dal and Socialists decided to merge themselves and form the Janata party they lost their individual identity. This combination of the various political groups was not a coalition but a new political party.

**IMPLICATIONS OF COALITIONS:**

The system of coalition has certain important implications.

1) Coalitions are formed for the sake of some reward, material or psychic.

2) A coalition implies the existence of at least two partners.

3) The underlying principle of a coalition system stands on the simple fact of temporary conjunction of specific interest.

4) Coalition politics is not a static but a dynamic affair as coalition players and groups dissolve, and form new ones.

5) The keynote of coalition politics is a compromise and a rigid dogma has no place in it.

6) A coalition government works on the basis of a minimum programme, which may not be ideal for each partner of the coalition. After all, politics is the act of the possible and coalition politics is its highest expression.

7) Pragmatism and not ideology is the hallmark of coalition politics. In making political adjustments, principles may have to be set aside and in this process ideology is the first casualty.
8) The purpose of a coalition adjustment is to seize power, it may seek to stake its claim for the formation of a ministry or for pulling a ministry down. As the former Governor of Punjab D.C. Pavate visualized; if the purpose of forming a coalition is to topple the existing government without any common programme of action or approach, the coalition, however, broadbased or cohesive it may be, would not provide for stability and would in its turn be the victim of the same process of defections.  

REASONS FOR FORMATION OF COALITIONS:

Commonly speaking the coalitions are formed on account of one of the following three reasons:

1) No single political party is able to secure a working majority in the popular house on account of the presence of multi-party system. Under the circumstances a number of like-minded political parties form the coalition to provide a workable majority and run the government. France provides a typical example of this type of coalition.

2) Secondly, in a bi-party system a deadlock may be created due of even balance between two political parties. This may lead to one of the two parties allying itself with a minor group such as neutrals or defectors to till the majority in its favour.

3) Thirdly, a coalition may be necessitated by a national crisis when the various political groups may suspend their political strife and collaborate in the general cause of protecting and promoting their
national interests. In Britain coalition government was formed to deal with the abnormal conditions during the First world war. The various political parties sunk their differences to give a united fight to the enemies of Britain.

In India, the coalition governments have mainly been the result of multi-party system. When no single political party was able to muster clear-cut majority in the Legislative Assembly the parties were obliged to seek support and cooperation of other groups to form the government. Sometimes coalitions are also formed before the elections and a number of political parties chalk out an agreed programme and contest elections on the basis of the programme from a common platform. This type of arrangement has an obvious advantage in so far as it smoothens the radicalism the parties joining the coalition without in any way effecting the existing image.

DEFINITIONS:

1. William Gamson has defined coalition as “the joint use of resources to determine the outcome of a mixed-motive situation involving more than two units.” A mixed-motive situation is further defined as one in which “there is an element of conflict since there exists no outcome which maximises the payoff to everybody. There is an element of coordination since there exists for at least two of the players (or actors) the possibility that they can do better by coordinating their resources than by acting alone.” The definition, first proposed by William Gamson and widely accepted in coalition research, deserves a fresh look and a broader point of view.
2. According to Riker "the central activity of politics is decision-making; decisions are made either by individuals or by the quasi-mechanical or conscious processes of groups; and decisions made by the conscious actions of groups are made through the process of coalition formation." 

Political scientists have tried to look into the formation of coalitions from different perspectives and on that basis they have tried to predict which coalition would be more stable and durable. Here we would like to point out that, since coalitions have played an integral part in the governmental processes of many Western European countries, most of coalition formation are specific to those countries. So it would be highly fallacious to assume that the universe of all government formation situations is homogenous and that there is nothing about, for example: the Indian political system is different from other countries. It is, therefore, necessary that we distinguish between types of political systems because differences do exist between them and "any general theory that ignores them must be cast in such abstract terms that would render it weak in prediction and superficial in explanation." 

Gamson and Riker both predict that winning coalitions possessing the minimum necessary resources would form. Assuming a coalition situation with these political parties, namely x,y and 'z' in which the distribution of resources among the parties is: x>y>z and x+y+z. Here both political scientists predict that the coalition between y and z is most likely to happen because each partner needs to maximise its share of success. Here 'y' prefers a coalition with 'z' in such situation 'y' would have a larger percentage of the profit (total resources)
than it would have in coalition with 'x'. Likewise 'z' thinks that it would have a larger percentage of total resources if it would have a coalition with 'y' than 'x'. In such a situation usually what happens is that no one prefers to have a coalition with 'x' and it resulted in a coalition of 'y' and 'z' and automatically 'x' is the loser.

NATURE OF COALITION:

A coalition is a system of government in which actual policies are the result of an attempt to synthesize the conflicting views of different parties. Coalitions which have political objectives of contesting elections, capturing the reins of power, implementing particular ideologies and programmes, blocking particular legislations and undoing specific policies of a government, are political coalitions. It has been said that politics is the art of the possible; coalition politics is its highest expression. This art of forming a coalition involves passing through various bargaining counters, continuing the coalition by extremely careful upholding principles for which the coalition is formed and ultimately destroying the coalition at some suitable moment.

The stability of a coalition government depends on the principles guiding its formation and its cohesion capacity for democratic decision making. A truly representative coalition tries to reflect the trends expressed in the election. A good first principle would be to exclude those who cannot accept, this democratic development as being positive but move, in with aim of proving its unviability by destabilising it to reinforce the case for a return to one party rule.  

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When different parties enter into coalitions, they must necessarily downplay their differences, no matter how grave these might be. They are likely to be more representative of diversity. The phenomenon is relatively obvious and follows from the very nature of the situation that necessitates a coalition minority situation in which no single party gets a majority in parliament. This situation dictates a politics of compromise in which smaller parties and less powerful interests get a voice in government and public policy. There can be a threat to the stability of the country of great diversities, if some regions or groups start nourishing the grouse of being un or under-represented.

The partners in the coalition will have to be broadly in the same wave length politically with the central political force. If that does not happen, then the coalition cannot carry on very long because in politics new situation will be arising and it depends on the political wave length, similarity between parties who are in it, which alone will guarantee a sort of sound reaction to those situations that arise from time to time.

The policies that are adopted by the coalition government are made by the coalescing parties and merely finalised by the Chief Minister. But in a conflictual coalition game, each party opposes every other party, each party seeks its own maximum ministerial advantage. Therefore, the Chief Minister's ability is much counted in the working of a coalition government. The leadership must be able to solve the differences between parties in the coalition.

In the ultimate analysis, the success of a coalition depends on the commitment of the coalition parties to a common Minimum programme, the
self-restraint on the part of the constituent parties in not trying to push their partisan interests at the expense of the common interest and above all the ability of the leader of the coalition is in resolving amicably the intra-party and inter-party conflicts, which come under the nature and also function of a coalition.

Quite often coalitions are formed to prevent a common enemy from capturing power. In this context the coalescing parties having ideological differences are compelled to come to an understanding, as they have to choose the lesser of the two evils. There have been instances of the Rightist and Leftist in India, coming together to challenge the citadels of the ruling party. Equally interesting is the instance of the communists and anti-communists forging an alliance to face a common enemy. A coalition devoid of ideological morrings survives till the enemy is humbled. Once the euphoria victory is over, differences come to the surface and the structure collapses like a pack of cards.

There are a good number of instances of parties shifting their alliance in search of fresh pastures. If power is the only motive behind joining a coalition, realignment will be a regular feature. Indeed, in a coalition set-up alliance on changing like the sand dunes of a typical desert. No coalition partner has permanent friends or enemies, it has only permanent interests.

In India since independence for quite a long time we witnessed the dominance of a single party which had a vast majority. Except for 1971 and 1984, the popularity graph of the dominant party has slowly but steadily declined. On the other hand, we see the rise of regional parties. Gradually, the number of political parties represented in the Lok Sabha has increased from
22 in the First Lok sabha to 38 in the Thirteenth Lok sabha. Due to the increase in the number of political parties, there is a need for coalition government.

Previously, coalitions were confined to part electoral power sharing between parties who fought the elections on their own. Now, pre-election coalitions are emerging slowly. Even the Congress is aligning with other parties. Even if tomorrow elections are held, there will be two or three coalitions and some parties may join one and some may join the other group. But finally it will be stabilised.

As far as the nature of coalition politics of India is concerned it is in a state of flux uncertainty and change. It has perhaps already gone through the following three phases of development.

i) the phase of anti-Congress non-ideological coalitional politics (1967-1969);

ii) the phase of anti-Congress programmatic coalitional politics (1969: from mid-term poll to the Congress split); and

iii) the phase of politico-programmatic coalitional politics (1967-70: the Congress split and after)

In spite of the twilight character of the key attributes of the phases of development, the attempt at phasing goes to show that no characterization of coalitional politics in India can be attempted with a sense of finality, all the more because there is not one but several patterns of coalitional politics at times within one and the same state, let alone the question of state wise variations. It is therefore follows that no generalised and final stand can as yet be taken on the issue of the compatibility of coalitional politics with the political system.
Following is the description of the nature, typology and style of coalitional politics in India, which may be useful as analytic categories:

i) Coalition politics in a democratic polity is a reflex of a living and continuous interactions between a party’s natural and hence ultimate quest to come to power by itself and the expedient, perhaps essentially transitional, inter-party collaboration to capture the reins of government. Thus by its very nature coalitional politics is subjects to contradictory motivational pulls and pressures as the ultimate and the expedient goals of parties do not merely co-exist in the coalitional framework but, more often than not, they are juxtaposed against each other. It is, therefore, not surprising if parties tend to use the coalitional expedient to fulfil the ultimate objective. It is, therefore, not surprising if coalitional politics in India has thus far tended to be more a bargaining counter than a partnership concern.

ii) If may also be added that coalitional politics in India is a direct legacy of the period of one-party dominance in the country, when Congress politics was ideologically fluid and party discipline rather weak and when dominance of one party was itself dysfunctional to the growth of parties with alternative power potential in terms of organizational net work, political finance and people’s following. Coalitional politics in India can thus be said to represent a some what a typical situation of political change in which major political parties are at one and the same time trying to enter into coalitions with a view to fill jointly the political vacuum created by the Congress eclipse and also to forge a viable independent identity to avail themselves singly of the newly created prospects of alternation of power.
iii) If we turn from nature of coalitional politics to typology of coalitions, we can see not only one but several patterns of coalitions and one pattern may be more compatible with parliamentary government and federal policy than the other. It may be pointed out at the outset that all governmental coalitions are, by and large, party coalitions and as such party is the key variable in any typology of coalitions. Then there is a set of allied sub-variables which can operate singly as also in conjunction with other sub variables as bases of coalitional types.

From the table shown below we can find the coalitional types with their sub variables together.

**TABLE -I**

**Coalitional Types by Sub-variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub variable</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. By time sequence of coalition</td>
<td>i) Electoral Alliance turned governmental coalition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formation : pre election or post</td>
<td>ii) Post-election governmental coalition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>election</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. By mutual strength of</td>
<td>i) One party dominant governmental coalition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coalitional partners</td>
<td>ii) Major party dominant governmental coalition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. By strength of coalitional partners vis-a-vis legislative

| i) Majority governmental coalition |
| ii) Minority governmental coalition strength. |

4. By ideological orientation of coalitional partners

| 1) i) Ideologically homogeneous governmental coalition. |
| ii) Ideologically heterogeneous governmental coalition. |
| 2) i.Leftist governmental coalition. |
| ii.Rightist governmental coalition. |
| iii. Centrist governmental coalition. |
| iv. Ideologically neutral government coalition. |

5. By number of coalitional partners

| i) Multi party governmental coalition. |
| ii) Two party governmental coalition. |
| ii) Few party governmental coalition. |


| i) Infra-structure dominated and politics. |
| ii) Secular coalition. |

An explanatory note on the above mentioned essentially tentative typology of coalitions may not be out of place here. The classification attempted here is single sub-variable based; a much more sophisticated classification is possible with a combination of the sub-variables. Further, the types identified here do not admit of a neat water-tight compartment, in fact they, more often then not, overlap. And moreover, most of the types identified above can be treated as operational types in Indian context. Some how the purpose of hinting at this typology here is only to show that any generalisation about the compatibility of the coalitional politics with the political system will be a case of oversimplification because there is not one but several types of coalitional politics that can be hypothesized and that different types vary in operation. In fact, some variance is already borne out by the Indian experience.  

**TYPES OF COALITION IN INDIA:**

India’s protracted trysts with coalitions have brought forth three different categories of them- "combative", "cooperative" and "cohesive". A part from the quality, stability and dependability, the very style of functioning and inter constituent relationship differ substantially between the three categories.

The 'combative' types are based on the short-term opportunistic objective of obstructing the chances of a common adversary. From the outset, their whole purpose would not be strengthening the coalition and making it credible. Instead, the partners would constantly seek to gain partisan advantage and settle scores with each others. The two BJP-BSP coalitions in Uttar Pradesh
provide the case study of a combative coalition. Pampering of the respective interest groups with state resources, political poaching into the rivals influence base, mutual sabotages and engineering defections from each other all this makes the combative coalition unstable and administratively irresponsible.

The "cooperative coalitions" however, rule on compulsions of survival. The constituents here avoid poaching and ditching, avert showdown and play down controversies. Despite their ideological contradictions, organizational structure and clash of interests, cooperative coalitions of such divergent groups as the BJP and Akalis and BJP and Bansi Lal (HVP) have displayed their ability to continue the tie-up for a longer period. This is not only due to the recognition of each other's strengths but also the general coalitional pressure under which even if one party shuns the tie-up, the rival group will jump into fill the vacuum.

The 'cohesive' coalitions are the example of West Bengal and the Kerala experiment. The West-Bengal Left coalition has been more durable than the single party rule in the state. The very concept of the Left Front, whether in government or out of power, has been part of the political programme of the partners who have a broad ideological affinity and organisational style. They have built up a functioning consultative system and a minimum programme which together have developed a coalition culture. The Kerala experiment of coalitions have proved to be a success because the socio political forces are polarised almost equally between those led by the Congress and the left parties (CPM and CPI). Both the coalition led by Congress and Left parties realised its limited strength and therefore not only agreed to share power but also
supported each other in the interest of the state. It is the functional and ideological cohesion and conscientious efforts to evolve a coalition culture that makes such an experiment a success.

THEORIES OF COALITION:

With the help of the theories which associated with the formation and working of coalition, we can know more about the characteristics and fundamental tendencies of a coalition. There is no sanctity behind the categorization but for the sake of convenience we have tried to divide these theories and concepts into three main categories.

1) Constitutional

2) Institutional

3) Political

1) Constitutional:

Under this broad sub-head we can discuss the following three theories which generally describe the impact of coalition government on the constitutional scheme.

i) It makes separation of powers more real and effective

ii) It superimposes a second separation.

iii) It weakens the government in a parliamentary regime and strengthens it in a presidential regime.
i. It makes separation of power more real and effective:

In a parliamentary regime, coalition parties always suffer from uneasy solidarity. Behind the facade of solidarity each party in the coalition tries to hatch intrigues to break the alliance and replace it by one where it will have a dominant position or more effective say. This results in anxiety on the part of the coalition government to adhere to a common agreed line of action so as not to alienate any of the constituents and thereby also avoid concentration of power in the hands of a party or a group. This kind of separation of powers and the element of check and counter check of one party over the other party is not possible in a two-party system where the majority party often having formed the government is certain to get its programme through despite the severest opposition from the minority party unless, of course there is a split in the ruling party it self.

ii. It superimposes a second separation:

M.Durverger has advanced an argument that coalition government tends on occasion to superimpose a second separation of powers upon that resulting from the constitution or nature of institutions. The classical theory of separation of powers divides the function of the government into three organs Legislature, Executive and Judiciary and pleads that all the three powers should not be concentrated in one hand. These three spheres of government activity should enjoy a reasonable amount of autonomy so that government may not turn in
to an absolute autocracy. If one organ of the government tries to be over powerful, the other organs can put a check on it thereby reducing the chances of distortion of constitutional democracy. Against this, separation of powers based upon material and organisational functions of the state like financial, economic, social, police, judicial, military and diplomating has been conceived of and it has been argued that a horizontal classification of state activities can be established by regrouping the above mentioned duties of the state into Economic sector, the social sector, the ideological sector, the Diplomatic sector and soon. In a coalition government each party associated with the functioning of government tends to demand a well defined sector of activity which has some affinity with its electoral support or which will enable it develop its political strategy. This point can be better understood from the recent experiences of coalition governments in Bengal and Bihar, that is CPM’s insistence on retaining the Home port-folio in West Bengal and CPI’s insistence on retaining Revenue and Land Reforms portfolio in Bihar, of course this may not always happen. The insistence of particular party representative on having a particular portfolio may be governed entirely by individual considerations. Also in some governmental combinations constitutions to the coalition may practice neutralization tactics by disallowing the monopoly control of one party over one branch of the government as it happened in West Bengal when Bengal Congress mounted pressure against CPM in regard to the latter’s growing control over the police machinery.
iii. **Coalition Government Weakens the government in a parliamentary regime but tends to strengthen it under a presidential regime:**

Party solidarity is the strength of the government in a two party system because a party solidly united behind a government makes functioning of the government safe and effective and enables it to run smoothly. In a coalition government the concept of party solidarity works against government solidarity because each party of the coalition maintains its distinctness by not merely being alert against its political opponents but also against the other allies. Each party attempts not only to score a point against its political opponents but also to see that its allies do not take more advantage of the coalition which may weaken its position. In short, there is, an almost unavoidable element of distrust and rivalry against one another in the alliance. This result in constant bickerings and almost never ending differences in the working of the government. And at the same time it is difficult for the government particularly when there is a minority and resulted in dissolution of the Assembly and this may resulted in dissolution of the Assembly and this may affect the government because the electorate may not give a clear verdict, tilting the existing balance of forces. After the election, the same groups re-emerge sometimes with modified strength but basically there is little scope of alterations in probable government combinations. The same groups more or less come together to form the coaltional government again. Thus the dissolution of Assembly and subsequent election hardly solve any problem.
On the other hand in a presidential regime, a coalition of parties tends to strengthen the authority of the government, its stability and homogeneity. Inter-party conflicts in the legislature provide greater scope for increase in governmental as authority and personal character of the presidential regime. Unlike parliamentary regimes where the legislature enjoy the power to overthrow the government and thereby making it weak, but in Presidential regimes, the executive confronted with a heterogeneous coalition finds scope for dividing and destroying the coalition parties particularly when their internal discipline is poor. It cannot be lopped. The government can create dissension in the ranks of coalition parties in the parliament and striking at their solidarity and forcing them to try new combination. It increases the personal character of presidential regimes in the sense that in a multi party system no party can claim to represent the nation but the president by virtue of his election can claim so because he is only continuous authority in the midst of changing coalitions. This of course does not mean that the president can do what he likes. In fact his official authority and powers are considerably circumscribed by the fact that he does not have the powerful backing of a single party and has to look to a combination of parties to get his measures through and also he cannot function independently of the legislature. But on the whole, the power to overthrow the government which we find in multi-party character legislature is absent in a presidential regime. Further there is possibility of people looking to the president as something different from the various party groups and the personal image of the president gets strengthened at the expense of the party image.
2. INSTITUTIONAL:

Under this broad sub-head we can discuss two theories.

i) Nature of Electoral System.

ii) Character of Political Parties.

i) Nature of Electoral System:

The formation of coalition government is closely associated with a particular system of electoral law. While the simple-majority single ballot encourages the two party system, multi-partyism is the natural consequence of a number of different parties does not affect the total number of seats they gain since in this system they can always regroup for the second ballot. The case studies of Imperial Germany, the Third Republic in France and that of Halland in the first two decades of twentieth century and so on. (with the exception of Belgium till 1894) lead to the conclusion that in a second ballot system (which is not in vogue these days), the tendency towards multi partyism is obvious. In most of the countries, second ballot has been replaced by proportional representation but both systems have the same effect on the formation and growth of parties. Though Prof. Dahl feels that the view that proportional representation is a necessary condition of multi-party system is definitely untenable, he admits in the very next sentence that “yet proportional representation does seem to be a sufficient condition for more than two parties, none of the nations using a complete proportional Representation system for national elections has a two party system”17
An analysis of the intimate relationship between proportional representation and multi party system and coalition would reveal that a system of proportional representation does not discourage the emergence of factions and splits. But "proportional Representation decreases the concentration and distinctiveness of opposition; reduces strict competition and increases the need for cooperation, and thereby increases the rewards to be gained from bargaining strategies of various kinds. Thus while the operation of proportional representation encourages the growth and multiplication of parties generally, at the same time in a system of multi party coalition, there is a general tendency to move towards proportional representation because this alone gives them a leverage to survive effectively as small groups. However, the growth and emergence of new parties and factions even in a political system where proportional representation is in operation can be greatly reduced and sometimes avoided, by adopting a system whereby a party’s list is not eligible for the distribution of the remaining seats unless it has obtained least the electoral character.

ii) Character of political parties:

Epstein has argued that in a genuine multi party system coalition there is no alternation actual or potential between one party and another or even between a group of parties. The nature of this party system is such that no one party is in a position to form the government. The governments are formed by a coalition of different parties and groups each of which has secured a percentage of seats. In such a system even if fresh elections result in changes in
the respective strength of the parties, this is hardly followed by a different and alternative coalition. Basically the same constituents return with modified strength to the coalition. The results of electoral competition may result in a shift of coalition towards group than the other and there may be marginal adjustments in the strength of the partners of the coalition in the government but there is hardly ever a new and a completely alternative coalition. In this way, coalition governments hardly ever alternate. In most cases, old coalitions continue with minor variations. The Israel case have been quoted to support this.19

Further in a coalition of multi party system, the party acts more like an interest group even though at the same time performing the functions of a political party. This point has been made by Prof. Gabrial Almond in the "politics of Developing Areas' particularly by drawing a contrast - between Britain and France. According to him, British parties aggregate interests of a large number of groups and thereby offer acceptable choices of political personnel and public policy.20 "The party system aggregates interests and transforms them into a relatively small number of alternative general policies"21

The argument of aggregation of interests cannot be applied absolutely to the distinction between a two and a multi-party system, nonetheless it has been held that non-aggregation of interests is more characteristic of a multi party rather than a bi-party system. 22

It has also been argued that coalition government in a multi party system do not produce cohesive parties in sharp contrast to a two party system. This
is so because in a multi-party system, since no single opposition party is in a position to form the alternative government.

Epstein has, however, agreed that except in France of the Third and Fourth Republic, political parties have exhibited cohesion even in a multi-party system. He also agreed that German experience under different regimes to show that cohesion has been characteristic even in a multi-party system. Even Belgium and the Netherlands have been shown as clear illustration of a strong parliamentary party cohesion in multi-party circumstances where no party of a near majority status not to speak of those countries where multi-partyism verges on two-partyism. Thus “there are numerous instances to disprove any notion that multi-partyism precludes party cohesion found in two-party parliamentary system”. Yet one will have to account for parliamentary systems inability to produce cohesive parties in France where such parties are thought to be the expected and usual result of the system.23

3. POLITICAL:

Under this sub-head, we shall discuss political ideas and theories associated with the formation and working of coalition governments. The following points deserve discussion:

i) Line of demarcation between Government and Opposition is not clear.

ii) Coalition Governments are unstable-instability becomes their characteristic feature.

iii) Relations between parties to the coalition.
i) Line of demarcation between Government and Opposition is not clear:

The position of the government in a coalition is fluid. Despite the final agreement on a common programme, there is an ever continuing threat of defection and some ally failing to support the government. On the other hand, ranks of the opposition are equally fluid. If there is an existing danger of a partner of coalition government voting with the opposition on a particular measure or a bill, there is an equal readiness on the part of certain groups in the opposition to side with government in securing the passage of a bill. In fact, the coalition government in the wake of split within its own ranks encourages defection in the ranks of opposition to secure success on a particular issue and save the government from toppling. Moreover, there are continuing intrigues and plans to subvert the existing alliance and to replace it by a different combination. Members of the ruling coalition join such intrigues as much as the opposition groups. The opposition itself is a loose assemblage of groups wedded to different doctrines and political programmes. Therefore, there is no organisation and solidarity in the camp of the opposition to put up a united fight against the government. There is so much of bickering, conflict and rivalry even within the ranks of the opposition that they are hardly ever in a position to arrive at an agreed decision on any point. In such situations, the chances of such and opposition ever discharging the duties of a constructive and competitive organisation capable of providing an alternative to the existing government are absolutely remote. The confusion it exhibits in its conduct is far worse than the loose alignment of the government coalition.
On the other hand, there are factions and opposition groups even within individual ruling parties which pose a danger. These dissident groups always threaten to crossover if their point is not being accommodated on a particular issue. As a result, either the government decisions that are arrived at, are patchworks and compromises aimed at not alienating any group too greatly or the character of the coalition itself changes by the exist of a group from the coalition to the opposition and the entry of a group from the opposition to the government. Even when compromise is arrived at, the constituent parties to the coalition insist on defending their party stand before the electorate and retaining the freedom of criticising the compromise arrived at as either being too radical or too mild and shifting the responsibility for unpopular acts to the other parties and so on. In such a coalition it would be difficult always to determine clearly where government ends and opposition begins. The opposition of today may be a partner in the coalition government of tomorrow. Alternatively a constituent of the coalition government today may be found voting with the opposition tomorrow. Any how the structure of present day party system even though a multiple one, acts as "built in stabilizers in the system"\textsuperscript{24} The situation has been described as one of "stable deadlock".

This does not mean that the general characteristics detailed earlier regarding the status of the opposition 'generally' do not hold good. But it can mention in some other context, that no characteristics of coalition government can perhaps be applied uniformly to all countries. The contextual setting of a country affects substantially the politics and institutions of the coalition government there.
ii. Instability of the system:

There is a common opinion that coalition governments give rise to political instability and in this background the experience of the Third and Fourth Republics of France is mentioned. When there are too frequent changes in the government and when despite fresh elections clear cut alternatives do not emerge, the political system acquires instability and the confidence of the people in the existing political institutions greatly diminishes. This is the familiar description of a multi-party coalition by and large. As has been pointed out "whether or not multi-partyism can be blamed as a casual factor of instability, the association with failure is clear" 25 Apart from Third and Fourth Republic of France, Weimar Germany and Italy before and after Mussolini would come under this category.

Despite the clear association of coalition governments with instability (and one may only quote examples from the French Third and Fourth Republic to prove the point), some nations have had fairly stable regimes even with multi-party systems. The Israel experience is significant in this regard. Yet the association of instability with multi-party coalition has been borne out in many cases and the few case studies to the contrary cannot controvert it. To examine it more thoroughly we can see first how this instability is reflected. Since the system is unable to produce a majority party, the factions concentrate on the centrifugal forces of special interest groups and may easily be directed at peripheral forces. 26 So this kind of diffusion of power does not hold promise for effective policy formulation. Second, "by its very nature, it must transfer
crucial decisions from a much divided electorate to the parliament. Thus
representative body in turn must content itself with a government by the
formation of a coalition attaining after extended bickering, the compromise
which in two party system is largely the voters business to achieve within his
own mind and primordial wisdom” 27

Instability of the government further result in immobility. 28 Where the
executive leadership is timid and incapable of facing fundamental social,
economic issues and drawing up a plan of action, even if unpopular. Because
in the first place, the duration of governments is brief during which it is virtually
impossible for it to take decision on important issues let alone ensure their
implementation. Secondly due to constant danger of split within its own ranks
and attempts of the opposition to topple it, it tends to avoid any commitment
on explosive issues. This is the terrible price paid for sheer survival of the
government in power. David Thomson has described this phenomena in the
French context in the following words:

“The centre parties, although disagreeing among themselves about
domestic issues, were forced to shuffle and reshuffle in a series of uneasy
coalition in order to carry on the government. Constant compromise was
unavoidable if they were not to risk the whole regime being defeated and
overthrown and positive legislation could be no more than the highest common
denominator of their agreement. The system survived and worked only so far
as these centre groups could agree to make it work, and perpetual half measures
were the price paid for making it work. Every government and every measure
which got through both houses of the parliament had to be a half way house” 29
The result was that "the general atmosphere of politics and the tone of nearly all legislation was one of the half-hearted, timid compromise of which the fruits were usually too little and too late." 30

Though this kind of instability does not necessarily result in total discontinuity of government, particularly if a well organised civil service exists to carry on the routine duties, such a state of affairs, if it survives over a long period, may have disastrous results-sometimes giving rise to autocratic and dictatorial regimes. In fact the emergence of one party situation in the west has been associated with the failure of competitive party system after modern parties had materialised.31

iv. Relations between constituents of coalition:

While discussing the relationship between allies in a coalition government, a distinction has to be made between their formal relationship and their actual relationship. Formally they are bound by certain institutions in the government where they try to establish common attitudes-say for example, all constituents swear their support to the common programme arrived at, they co-operate in the matter of voting inside the parliament and they are also united against their opponents in the opposition and for carrying out all these promise over which agreement has been reached. If an electoral alliance has been effected along with the government alliances, this formal relationship is generally extended to the level of pooling of votes, supporting a common candidate and so on.
But behind this façade of formal relationship is the complex actual relationship where each party wants to preserve its independence, individuality distinct entity and freedom of action as different form the collective assembly of the coalition. In the actual power-relationship, it outlines its independence, by pulling emphasis on its party programme of the coalition. it does not want to get submerged in the totality of the coalition. In the actual power relationship, it is guided by the consideration of elections and its popular image. Each and every move of these parties, whether inside the coalition or outside, is motivated by the desire to influence the electorate. While the inter-relationship of allies inside the coalition reflects the respective strength of the party, their actual relationship outside the coalition is governed by the desire to gain politically at the expense of others. Since the parties to coalition retain the freedom of political propagation in consonance with their electoral programme (as different form the common programme) it gives them sufficient latitude to criticise the government for unpopular acts and for taking either too radical or too mild an action over a particular issue. Outside the coalition, these parties are anxious to show to the electorate that they are sincerely wedded to the tenets of their electoral programme and that it is due to intransigence of the other parties in the coalition that they are unable to get their programmes implemented.

Inside the coalition, each constituent party is keen to wrest as much concession in favour of its party as it can. Naturally, quite extreme stands are taken during the discussion within the cabinet. In such a situation, the centre
party or group (this is particularly so in a triangular coalition) or the most moderate party is able to influence the ultimate decisions and acts as a bridge between the extreme allies. This duality of the attitude of the constituent parties in a government coalition is typical of the coalition government.

**COALITION BEHAVIOUR:**

Political scientists have also projected a theory of coalition behaviour. They have raised questions like: under what circumstances do political parties join coalition? why are coalitions with some parties preferred to coalition with other parties? what benefits can a political party derive from membership in a coalition? The answer to these questions are far from clear. However, based on the assumption that each partner in the coalition wants to maximize their long term influence over decision-making process, one of the studies relating to India (Bruce Bueno De Mesquita) has observed. 32

1. The political resources that determine political influence may be redistributed as a consequence of participation in political coalition.
2. Participants in coalition are aware of the opportunity they have to increase their political influence.
3. Because of the awareness of politicians concerning the redistributive consequences of a coalition, members of political coalitions often compete with each other over the allocation of redistribution benefits.
4. The competition among coalition partners is restricted by the degree to which each partner is willing to tolerate competitive demands on the part of its allies.
5. Where tolerance is very high, competitiveness is rewarded with disproportionately large increases in political influence.
To sum up, we can say, in the context of contemporary political realities, coalition government, it seems, has come to stay as an essential feature of Indian polity. In the light of the experience, both in India and elsewhere, question about the prospects of coalition government is being raised. The word "coalition" generally refers to a group of people who come together (usually on a temporary basis) to obtain some end. It is less permanent than a party or faction or an interest group. Coalition implies co-operation between political parties.

MODELS OF COALITION:

Experience of different countries including India (both at centre and states) reveals that co-operation can take place at one, or more than one of three different levels, viz., parliamentary, electoral and governmental. The way in which these coalitional relationship are expressed will depend upon the constitutional framework and electoral system of a country.

i. Parliamentary coalition:

This model of coalition may occur in a situation when no single party enjoys an overall majority. The party asked to form a government prefers to rule as a minority government, relying upon an arrangement with another political party or parties to secure its survival. Most probably such arrangement can be for a limited period, with a definite date of termination or for the entire tenure of the government. It may happens sometimes that, a government may seek support from different political parties for different items of legislation.
And this is known as government by "jumping majorities" There can also be a situation in a parliamentary coalitional model, when a government may survive without outside support on a basis of tactical reasons by the opposition parties. The opposition parties may not like to defeat the government either to gain political advantage or not to be deprived of the existing political base.

ii. Electoral coalition:

In the electoral coalitions two or more than two parties seeking to cooperate may have agreement to avoid splitting of votes. Generally, it is difficult to achieve where the parties having strong local base and organisation are unwilling to surrender their rights to put up a candidate. This form of electoral adjustment has been quite common in India.

iii. Governmental Coalition:

At the governmental level, there are different models of coalition. The first model is the National Government which had been existing in Britain and was suggested for India. In the government of national unity, most, if not all, of the main parties join together to meet a national emergency arising out of war or economic crisis. This model of government is rare in normal peacetime conditions. It can only operate effectively when the whole nation is agreed upon some fundamental issues. It should be established only for a limited period and dissolved as soon as the crisis is over. The other model of coalition is that which is a prelude, to the fusion of parties. Coalitions of this form can play a suitable role in securing party realignment. At times, this model of coalition may result into political parties becoming more responsive to contemporary national issues.
It is important to note that, what we are witnessing in India, currently, is yet another model of coalition which is quite familiar to many continental countries, but comparatively unknown in Britain. This model of coalition may be called ‘power sharing’ coalition. It occurs when two or more than two political parties not able to gain majority on its own, combine to form a majority government. It is noteworthy that power sharing coalition differs from the concept of National Government as the former does not embrace nor even attempt to embrace all political parties. On the contrary, they only implement such policies and programmes as agreed between coalitional partners. The partners in such a coalition do not surrender their separate political identity. The parties forming the coalition generally do not join any electoral pact, but continue to compete electorally with their coalition partners.

Coalition Experiences in the Western Europe:

Coalitional at building has been tried in many smaller countries with lesser ethnic and regional diversity than that of India with considerable success. The situation in India differs fundamentally from the conditions that spawned coalitions in Italy, Germany, France, Israel and other European democracies.

The Italians have been stout hearted in their persistence with coalition politics. Despite the high turnover of failed coalition-54 governments in 50 years their enduring faith that experiments in democracy can only deepen it has given the country a new start in the 55th post-war government led by Ramano Prodi of Olive Tree Alliance. There is hope of ‘something new’ with the coming of the first Centre Left Government in 50 years.33
The Olive Tree coalition is significant for more than just the unprecedented compromise between the Catholic Church and the Communists. Earlier governments were unstable because the coalition that went to the polls was not the same that took office. Parties moved in and out of alliances before, during and after elections and the coalitions were with a view to keeping the communists out of power.

In Germany, coalition politics has been changing through successive governments beginning with the grand coalition of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in the 1960's. Subsequently, the CDU and SPD have led stable coalitions though the CDU has been a more durable alliance partner with its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union, and the Free Democrats. The foreign affairs portfolio being held on an almost permanent basis by Free Democrats Hans-Dietrich Gensher and Klaus Kinkel, is a notable feature. The German coalition is an example of success and stability, and of familiarity not breeding contempt among partners. 34

The post-war fourth Republic of France, was a succession of short lived and shaky coalitions. This climaxed in the return of Charles de Gaulle in 1958 to lead the last phase of the churning which ended with his founding of the relatively stable Fifth Republic. Elsewhere in Europe, Centre Left or Right Coalitions carry in their train regional parties and interest groups of peasants, farmers and workers to ensure stability of multi-party government.

Israel offers an example of successful power sharing and a Prime Minister by rotation. Israel had a coalition government of the Likud party and the Labour
party from 1984-1988. For the first two years, Shimon Peres was the Prime Minister and Yitzhak Shamir the Foreign Minister. For the next two years, roles were reserved. Despite their widely different backgrounds and political perceptions, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir Ruled in the best interest of Israel. 35

Switzerland has also institutionalised coalitional system. It is a plural society like India where the political parties vigorously represent the interest of the three major language groups (France, German and Italy) and the two religious (Catholics and Protestants). It is a tradition there for the four largest parties to come together after an election and form a coalition.

Thus to sum up, as for as the concept coalition is concerned, "the word coalition is used especially in a political sense, of an alliances or temporary union for joint action of various powers or states"36 Further it has been defined as "An alliance for combined action of distinct parties, persons or states, without permanent incorporation into one body"37 And the term coalition form of government is a quick fix government formed on the floor of the parliament when no single political party gets the absolute majority and two or more numbers of political parties unite together to gain majority and to form the government. The concerned political parties share the power in the government on the basis of certain adjustments and implementation of certain common agendas. The ally political parties do not merge into one party, rather they maintain their individuality and remain as separate political entity. They keep aside their political ideologies, as long as they remain in power. Perhaps it is in
the line with the parliamentary form of Government. The coalition government
can be formed anywhere in the parliamentary Democratic country. In the
western European countries coalition government have become a common
feature and single party majority government has become some how exceptions.

The definitions on coalition is concerned, the claim, then, for applying
coalitions to politics rests on the persuasiveness of the definition. To define is
to make both determinate and distinctive to supply the boundaries of something
as well as to specify its distinctive character or constituents.  

As the nature of coalitions are concerned coalition government are
necessarily non-durable and countries seeking durable cabinets must achieve
majority party government and hence a majority party system. Life-span
frequencies for all Cabinets in the European countries during 1918-1974 proved
that Cabinets in majority party systems are generally durable. It is not true
that, Cabinets in multi-party parliaments are necessarily transient. There is a
wide variation in Cabinet durability among multi-party parliaments, with 23
percent of all Cabinets in multi-party parliaments lasting forty months or
longer. Multi-party politics has been described quite aptly by Maurice Duverges
as a "parliamentary game. The object of the game is to form and control the
government. The actors in the game are parliamentary parties. These parties,
as cohesive units, behave in a rational manner. Specifically, parties act to
maximise their power within the government; thus they attempt to attain and
maintain Cabinet status. In their efforts, parties are constrained by the apriori
ideological or cleavage commitments they have made to their constituents. 

In relation to nature of coalition a brief review of literature is given below.

**Lawrence Lowell School:** Except under very peculiar circumstances, coalition ministers are short lived compared with homogeneous ones. He argued that the parliamentary system will give a country strong and efficient government only in case the majority consist of a single party. 40

**Leiserson School:** Leiserson and his followers were instrumental in developing game theoretic models while others, particularly the initial works of Michael Leiserson have emphasized the potential utility of game theoretic models in the study of multi-party parliamentary settings. 41

In relation to nature of coalition it has also been argued that, an administration formed by a coalition of parties is usually weak, not merely because the combination is unstable, but because men whose professed principles differ are likely to be entangled in inconsistencies or driven to unsatisfactory compromise. 42 The multi-party system will make coalition governments, with its inherent erosion of principle or minority government, which is always likely to be weak. 43 In contrast to one-party governments, Blondel pleaded that coalition, whether small or large, appears directly antagonistic to stable government. 44 Hence there are different views related to nature of coalition. But it is also true that coalition governments may became a natural phenomenon in India in future.

As the theories and concepts associated with the working of coalition governments are concerned they do not uniformly apply even to all the multi-
party coalitions in European countries. As for as the models of coalition are concerned the Olive-Tree coalition of Italy is worth mentioning for its unprecedented compromise between the communists and the Catholic Church. In Germany the coalition politics has its beginning in the 1960’s with the coalition between the Christian Democratic Union and Social Democratic party. The Swiss coalition is based on plural society like that of India comprising different religion groups and language diversities. Israel and France have also experienced the coalition form of government. However India is not an exception to this type of coalition set up, in necessity, since it obeys the rules of the parliamentary democracy.

Infact there are different views on whether Indian politics is going the Italian way or is caught in a transition tunnel akin to France’s fourth Republic. But such a debate is irrelevant. What is central to finding direction in the Indian context is to accept that democracy harkens us to fulfil the electoral verdict in new and realistic settings suited to today’s conditions with earlier visions and arrangements eclipsed. Distorted party structures and ideological blockages which are impending the emergence of a stable and secure political future need to be done away with.

Any how lastly we can say that in India Democratic transition from Congress dominated multi-party politics to multi-party system has strengthened and widened the base of a representative system in India. In other words, multiplicity of parties is a reflection of the attributes of social federation-an existing reality of Indian society. The purpose of democracy is
best served when social plurality is adequately represented in elected bodies. Coalition governments and power sharing in the national executive are some of the important means to strengthen the representative system. Over the years, particularly after 1967, coalition governments came into existence first at the state (province) level. This assertion at the ‘periphery’ gradually spread over to other states and finally struck at the national level. This happened in 1977 when the Janata Party coalition government worked for little more than two years. Later, other coalition governments were formed during 1989-90, 1996-97 and 1998-99 and now, when a number of parties temporarily agreed on a common programme and power-sharing arrangements.

But it has been a bitter fact that almost all the coalition government at the national level during 1977-1999 collapsed prematurely, and it has been believed that, one of the main reasons for weak coalition government or prematuresd collapse of these coalition governments is extreme anti-congressism and emotional issues which have been raised by the BJP and other parties. In fact the issue should have been related to the improvement of secular democratic norms and consociationalism in Federal India.

But now situation is changed, all parties, including the Congress, have now realized their responsibility to accept emerging political reality paving way for the coalition government. However, the Congress seems to have reluctantly agreed on the acceptance of coalitional arrangement. On the other hand, the BJP which is now the largest party, has finally submitted to pre-electoral alliances and coalition government. This attitude provides more strength to
the BJP by the following support of regional parties. Because the role of the regional parties to form the coalition government at the centre in India is a new political dimension. But the greater regionalism feeling does not always aim at positivism. It may lead to parochialism, thus endangering the law and order situation and thereby may disturb the social equilibrium. The instances of the different movements in the names of Jharkhand, Uttarkhand, Gorkhaland, Bodoland and so on, compel us to realise the importance of proper handling and control over the regional parties by the central government.

However the concept of coalition theoretically is same but distinct in practice in different countries according to their political situation. And this concept of coalition being a concise term becoming an integral part of Indian political set up. In fact serious discussions are taking place on this subject and it is important to note that federal structure during the coalition governments is yet another field where serious discussion can take place. So in order to fill this gap on attempt has been made to analyse the coalition politics and federal process in India in the fifth chapter.
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38. To "define", according to webster's Third New International Dictionary, is "to mark the limits of: determine with precision or exhibit clearly the boundaries of .... determine the essential qualities of" determinately; to specify; to state exactly what (a thing) is; to set forth or explain the essential nature of...

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