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CHAPTER- IV

COALITION GOVERNMENT AT WORK IN INDIA

4.1 : COALITION GOVERNMENT DURING PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD.

The history of coalition politics in India can be traced from pre independence years. After the 1937 Elections a sort of Coalition Government was formed in Punjab and Assam. The Interim Government established in India in 1946 was also a sort of coalition government as it included the representatives of the congress, the Muslim League, the Akali Dal and some other small parties.

The interim government of India, formed on 2 September 1946 from the newly-elected Constituent Assembly of India, had the task of assisting the transition of India from British rule to independence.

4.1.1: Formation

Wavell wrote identical letters to Nehru and Jinnah on July 22, 1946 asking them whether the Congress and the Muslim League would be prepared to enter an interim government on the basis that six members (including one Scheduled Caste representative) would be nominated by the Congress and five by the Muslim League. The Viceroy would nominate three representatives of the minorities. Jinnah replied that the proposal was not acceptable to the Muslim League because it destroyed the principle of parity. At Nehru's invitation, he and Jinnah conferred together on August 15 but could not come to an agreement on the question of the Congress joining the interim government.

The Working Committee of the Muslim League had decided in the meantime that Friday 16 August, 1946 would be marked as the 'Direct Action Day'. There was serious trouble in Calcutta and some rioting in Sylhet on that day. The casualty figures in Calcutta during the period of 16-19 August were 4,000 dead and 10,000 injured. In his letter to Pethick-
Lawrence, Wavell had reported that appreciably more Muslims than Hindus had been killed. The "Great Calcutta Killing" marked the start of the bloodiest phase of the "war of succession" between the Hindus and the Muslims and it became increasingly difficult for the British to retain control. Now, they had to cope with the Congress civil disobedience movement as well as furious Muslims that had also come out in the streets in thousands.

The negotiations with the League reached a deadlock and the Viceroy decided to form an interim government with the Congress alone, leaving the door open for the League to come in later. A communiqué was issued on August 24, which announced that the existing members of the Governor General's Executive Council had resigned and that on their places new persons had been appointed. It was stated that the interim government would be installed on September 2.

Jinnah declared two days later that the Viceroy had struck a severe blow to Indian Muslims and had added insult to injury by nominating three Muslims who did not command the confidence of Muslims of India. He reiterated that the only solution to Indian problem was the division of India into Pakistan and Hindustan. The formation of an interim government consisting only of the Congress nominees added further fuel to the communal fire. The Muslims regarded the formation of the interim government as an unconditional surrender of power to the Hindus, and feared that the Governor General would be unable to prevent the Hindus from using their newly acquired power of suppressing Muslims all over India.

After the Congress had taken the reins at the Center on September 2, Jinnah faced a desperate situation. The armed forces were predominantly Hindu and Sikh and the Indian members of the other services were also predominantly Hindu. The British were preparing to concede independence to India if they withdrew the Congress was to be in undisputed control, the Congress was to be free to deal with the Muslims as it wished. Wavell too, felt unhappy at the purely Congress interim government. He genuinely desired a Hindu-Muslim settlement and united India, and had worked hard for that end. Wavell pleaded with Nehru and Gandhi, in separate interviews, that it would help him to persuade Jinnah to cooperate if they could give him an assurance that the Congress would not insist on nominating a Nationalist Muslim. Both of them refused to give way on that issue. Wavell informed Jinnah two days
later that he had not succeeded in persuading the Congress leaders to make a gesture by not appointing a Nationalist Muslim. Jinnah realized that the Congress would not give up the right to nominate a Nationalist Muslim and that he would have to accept the position if he did not wish to leave the interim government solely in the hands of the Congress. On October 13, he wrote to Wavell that, though the Muslim League did not agree with much that had happened, "in the interests of the Muslims and other communities it will be fatal to leave the entire field of administration of the Central Government in the hands of the Congress".

4.1.2: Viceroy's Executive Council

The Viceroy's executive council served as the executive branch of the interim government. Although originally headed by the Viceroy of India, it was transformed into a council of ministers with the powers of a prime minister bestowed on the vice president of the Council, a position held by the Congress leader Jawaharlal Nehru. With the exception of the Viceroy, who would hold only a ceremonial position, and the commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, all members would be Indians.

The senior Congress leader Vallabhbhai Patel held the second-most powerful position in the Council, heading the Department of Home Affairs, Department of Information and Broadcasting. The Sikh leader Baldev Singh was responsible for the Department of Defence and Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari was named to head the Department of Education. Asaf Ali, a Muslim Congress leader, headed the Department of Railways and Transport. Scheduled Caste leader Jagjivan Ram headed the Department of Labour, while Rajendra Prasad headed the Department of Food and Agriculture and John Mathai headed the Department of Industries and Supplies.

Upon the Muslim League joining the interim government, the second highest-ranking League politician, Liaquat Ali Khan, became the head of the Department of Finance. Abdur Rab Nishtar headed the Departments of Posts and Air and Ibrahim Ismail Chundrigar headed the Department of Commerce. The League nominated a Scheduled Caste Hindu politician, Jogendra Nath Mandal, to lead the Department of Law.
4.1.3: Members of India's Interim Government 1946

Government officials outside the Council Room in the Viceroy's House, New Delhi, shortly before their swearing-in ceremony. (L to r) Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose; Mr. Jagjivan Ram; Dr. Rajendra Prasad; Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel; Mr. Asaf Ali; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru; Mr syed Ali Zahee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interim Government</th>
<th>Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations</td>
<td>Jawaharlal Nehru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>Baldev Singh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home (including Information and Broadcasting)</td>
<td>Vallabhbhai Patel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Liaquat Ali Khan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posts and Air</td>
<td>Abdur Rab Nishtar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Agriculture</td>
<td>Rajendra Parsad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>Ragjivan Ram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Railways</td>
<td>M.Asaf Ali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industries and Supplies</td>
<td>John Matthai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Arts</td>
<td>C. Rajgopalacharia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works, Mines and Power</td>
<td>C.H. Babha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>I.I. Chundrigar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Jogindar Nath Mandal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Ghazanfar Ali Khan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.4: Activities

Although until August 1947 India remained part of the British Empire, the interim government proceeded to establish diplomatic relations with other countries, including the United States. Meanwhile, the Constituent Assembly, from which the Interim Government was drawn, struggled with the challenging task of drafting a constitution for independent India. It remained in place until 15 August 1947, the date of the independence of the two new nations of India and Pakistan.

4.2: COALITION GOVERNMENT AT THE CENTRE DURING POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD.

After the dawn of independence, coalition politics was practiced in a very limited way during 1952-1989. The Congress party played a dominant role in Indian politics and therefore there was very little scope for coalition politics. However, after 1989, the political scenario of the country is changed and the organization of Coalition Governments have become a regular feature of India political system and at present coalition politics is in operation both at the centre and in some states including Assam.

4.2.1. First Coalition Government at the Centre 1977

In January 1977 four political parties- Bhartiya Lik Dal Congress (O), Jan Sangh and some rebel Congressmen united to form the Janata Party. It was designed to bring at one platform all anti-Congress parties and to work for the defeat of the Congress in the next elections. The Janata Party constituents contested these elections under the one symbol and a common manifesto. In these elections the Congress (I) suffered a defeat and Janata Party and its supporters won as many as 300 seats in the Lok Sabha. It formed the first non Congress government at the centre and it was a coalition government in the sense that its constituents had maintained their individualities even after forming the government. However, during its rule from 1977-79 Political instability and inefficiency continued to characterize the Indian Political System. In 1979, it suffered a split and in its place Lok Dal became the ruling party.
as the Congress extended to it support from outside. However, this government also failed to remain in power for more than six months. It failed to face the Parliament even for a day. In 1980, elections to the Lik Sabha were held and in these the Congress scored a victory and ended the first era of coalition experiment, and this situation continued up to 1989.

4.2.2: Second Coalition Government – National Front Government 1989

In 1989, several congressmen resigned their membership and formed a Jana Morcha to oppose the Congress and provide an alternative to it. The Jana Morcha leaders joined hands with some other parties like Janata party and Lik Dal. A National Front was formed to contest 1989 elections. Particularly for opposing the Congress. In these elections, no party was in position to win majority and yet National front emerged as a potent Political force. It formed the government at the centre under the leadership of V.P. Singh with outside support from the BJP and the Left Parties. The National front Government worked as a coalitions government for about 18 months. It was characterized by inefficiency and instability due to the presence of strong differences among its partners as well as due to its dependence on the BJP and the left. It was replaced by the Jnata Dal (S) government which was supported by the congress.

However, this government could work for only six months. This experiment of coalition politics also almost a failure. In 1991 elections to the Lok Sabha, no Party was in a position to secure a majority. The Congress got 225 seats and emerged as the single largest party. The BJP came second with 119 seats. In June 1991, a minority government of the Congress was installed in office and it was in a position to hold power up to 1996. The 1996 and 1998 elections produced Hung Lok Sabha and between 1996-98 four government were formed and each one was a coalition government.

4.2.3: Establishment of United Front Government 1996-98 and Coalition Politics

In the 1996 elections the BJP emerged as the single largest party with 161 Liksabha seats and the Congress com second with 140 seats. The President invited the BJP to form a
Government, which was done but this Government could last for only 13 days. Thereafter several political parties (JD, CPI, CPM, Congress (Tiwari), DMK, TDP, TMC, ML) organized a United Front and elected Shri H.D. Deve Gowda as its leader. It also prepared a Common Minimum Programme (CMP). After the resignation of the BJP government on 28th May 1996, the United Front staked its claim to form the government. The Congress decided to extend to it support from outside. Consequently, the United Front formed its government and it was a coalition government. The CPI joined this government while the CPM decided to give it only outside support.

The United Front government of Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda could last for about a year and during this period it to implement the policies and programmes contained in the CMP. However, dependence upon the congress support and due to some internal contradictions, it could not work very effectively. In April 1997, it had to be replaced by the second United Front government under the Prime Ministership of Shri I.K. Gujral, under pressure from Congress in favor of change of leadership.

The Second United Front government was again a coalition government and dependent upon the Congress support. It could work smoothly for only six months and after the withdrawal of support by the congress in November 1998, it became a caretaker government. During June 1996 to March 1998, coalition politics remained operational. As constituents of the United Fronts, regional parties like the TDP, DMK and AGP became very active and played and played a key role, both in decision making as well as in the selection of the leader of the coalition. However, lack of co-ordination among the coalition partners and the pressure tactics adopted by the Congress kept the activities and functions of the two coalition governments Circumscribed.

4.2.4: BJP led Coalition Government (March-1998 to April 1998)

The 1998 elections again produced a Hung Lok Sabha with BJP as the single largest party with 182 seats and its alliance got a total of 253 seats. The Congress got 140 seats and came second. The BJP led alliance (BJP, SAD, Shiv Sena, ALADMK, BJD, Lok Shakti, DMK, Janata Party, JP, and others) formed a coalition government under the Prime Ministership of
Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The TDP and Trinamool Congress extended it support from outside. On 19th March, 1998, the BJP-led alliance formulated and adopted the National Agenda for Government (ANG) listing the agreed policies, programmes and decisions of the alliance. Right from day one, this coalition government found the going difficult both because of the problem of co-ordination among alliance partners in general as well due to the pressure tactics and irresponsible attitude of its ally AIADMK and the Janata Party.

The government found it difficult to have a smooth sailing and consequently found it problematic to implement the NAG. It however, took the decision to make India a unclear power as well as a missile power (Five Nuclear tests were conducted on May 11 and 13, 1998).

By April 1999, there developed serious differences between it and the AIADMK. The latter decided to leave the government and withdraw its support. Consequently the coalition got reduced to a minority. The President called upon the government to seek a confidence vote in the Lok Sabha. The BJP-led coalition government failed to secure the confidence vote on 19th April, 1999. This led to the resignation of the government. The failure of other parties to form an alternative government paved the way for the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. The BJP-led coalition government, thereafter became a caretaker government. It continued to perform this role up to 12th October, 1999 had to lead the country during the Kargil War (May-July, 1999). This Coalition exercise was neither a fully successful operation and nor even a fully unsuccessful exercise.


The elections for the 13th Lok Sabha were held in September-October 1999. Prior to these the BJP formed an alliance-the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with 23 other Parties and adopted a common election manifesto. Later on the Janata Dal (united) also joined this alliance. The Congress made electoral arrangements or understanding with some Political Parties (CPI, BSP, RJD, RPI and AIADMK) in different states, but did not try to forge a full alliance. The left front particularly the CPM tried to revive the Third Front, but with little success. The emerging Indian Political scene reflected the possibility of the rise of
three groups in the Indian Party system. In these elections, the NDA was in a position to secure a simple majority- 296 seats in the 13th Lok Sabha. Later on, the National Conference and some other elected MPs decided to join it and its majority improved to 304 seats.

ON 13th October, 1999, the NDA government the BJP-led NDA government under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, came to power. Initially 70 minister were inducted in Council of Ministers, but a few days later 4 more ministers were added. The jumbo size of the ministry reflected fully the large number of constituents of the NDA- a coalition of 24 parties.

The NDA coalition government tried to rule the country by implementing the policies and programmes contained in the NDA election manifesto. The NDA was a large sized alliance and it had to remain face to face with the problem of co-ordination among all the alliance partners. The coalition politics remained at work and it reflected the problem of government by a large coalition alliance. The regional parties always tried to get more and more doles/advantages-TDP for Andra, Trinamool Congress for West Bengal, DMK for Tamil Nadu and SAD for Punjab. The NDA coalition did provide stable government to the country but at the same time it had to face repeated challenges and threats from its coalition partners, even from the Shiv Sena. It tried to rule by consensus but the exercise was always difficult. It got reflected over such issues as CTBT, Women Reservation Bill, Bofors, Ayodhya Ram Mandir, the need to contain communalism, terrorism, violence and corruption.

### Post General Election Alliances of Congress (before 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Year</th>
<th>Prime Minister Candidate</th>
<th>Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Indira Gandhi</td>
<td>Indian National Congress (Indira)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communist Party of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir National Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indian Union Muslim League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kerala Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Revolutionary Socialist Party (breakaway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independents (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Indira Gandhi</td>
<td>Indian National Congress (Indira)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam  
Jammu & Kashmir National Conference  
Indian Union Muslim League  
Kerala Congress (Joseph)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Coalition</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1998</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2.6: Congress led United Progressive Alliance 2004

The **United Progressive Alliance (UPA)** is a ruling coalition of center-left political parties heading the government of India. The coalition is led by the Indian National Congress (INC), which is currently the single largest political party in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of the parliament of India). The Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, and the Council of Ministers are drawn from members of the UPA. INC’s President, Sonia Gandhi, serves as the Chairwoman of the UPA.

The UPA was formed soon after the 2004 general elections after it became clear that no party had won majority. The NDA has won only 169 MP in the 543 member 14th Lok Sabha, as opposed the UPA tally of 222 seats.

The Left Front with 59 MPs (excluding the speaker), the Samajwadi Party with 39 MPs and the Bahujan Samaj Party with 19 MPs were other significant blocks that opted to support UPA at various phases of its rule. The UPA did not enjoy a simple majority on its own in the parliament, rather it has relied on the external support to ensure that it enjoys the confidence of the Indian parliament similar to the formula adopted by the previous minority governments of the United Front, the NDA, the Congress government of Narasimha Rao, and earlier governments of V P Singh and Chandrashekhar.

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372 Small parties, independents in great demand.  
373 Originally the SP had 39 MPs, 6 MPs defied party whip and have been expelled from the party.
An informal alliance had existed prior to the elections as several of the current constituent parties had developed seat-sharing agreements in many states. However, it was only after the election that the results of negotiations between parties were announced. The UPA government's policies were initially guided by a common minimum programme that the alliance hammered out with fruitful consultations with Jyoti Basu and Harkishan Singh Surjeet of the 59 member Left Front.\textsuperscript{374} Hence, government policies were generally perceived as center-left, reflecting the centrist policies of the INC. The congress party is today more closely aligned with the neoliberalism, strongly advocates social democracy and social liberalism. During the tenure of Jharkhand CM Madhu Koda, the constituents of the UPA were, by mutual consent, supporting his government.\textsuperscript{375}

At present the UPA is no longer supported by the Left parties. It survived a vote of confidence in the parliament on 22 July 2008 which was mostly because of the Samajwadi party supported them.

**Cabinet Rank Ministers of UPA Government**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SlNo</th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Portfolios</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sri Mon Mohan Singh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sushil Kumar Shinde</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A R Antulay</td>
<td>Minority Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vayalar Ravi</td>
<td>Overseas Indian Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Murli Deora</td>
<td>Petroleum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ambika Soni</td>
<td>Tourism and Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Saifuddin Soz</td>
<td>Water Resources)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Shibu Soren</td>
<td>(Coal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{374} “Congress pins hopes on Jyoti Basu”. *The Times Of India*. 

\textsuperscript{375} Madhu Koda to be next Jharkhand CM. Retrieved on March 26, 2007.
In the Indian General Election in 2009, the UPA won a convincing 262 seats with INC alone winning 206 seats. The UPA is now all set to form a stable majority government beating an anti-incumbency factor. All inclusive and populist policies along with a younger leadership h

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At present the UPA is no longer supported by the Left parties. It survived a vote of confidence in the parliament on 22 July 2008 which was mostly because of the Samajwadi party supported them.

4.2.7 : Congress led United Progressive Alliance 2009

On the eve of the Election the Indian National Congress Party made the strategy to form pre election coalition and thus received the support of the following parties:

Before the election, the UPA comprised the following constituent parties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All India Trinamool Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist Congress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir National Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Union Muslim League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala Congress (Mani)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim Democratic Front</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telangana Rashtra Samithi (joined the NDA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (joined the Third Front)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattali Makkal Katchi (joined the Third Front)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People's Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samajwadi Party (joined Fourth Front)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rashtriya Janata Dal (joined the Fourth Front)
Lok Janshakti Party (joined the Fourth Front)
Republican Party of India (Athvale)

The 2009 General Elections held in the Country. UPA won the general elections with the Congress winning 206 seats, 61 seats more than the 2004 election tally. The pre-poll coalition of UPA, which did not include Lalu Yadav's RJD, Ram Vilas Paswan's LJP and Mulayam Singh Yadav's SP, won 262 seats, and needed the support of 10 MPs to get a simple majority in the Lok Sabha. Manmohan Singh continued to be the Prime Minister and in doing so became only the second Prime Minister of India after Jawahar Lal Nehru to return to power after a full five year term in office. RJD, SP, BSP, JD (S) and other smaller parties and independents provide external support to the government.

**Current members for Lok-Sabha 2009**

- Indian National Congress led by Sonia Gandhi (All India)
- All India Trinamool Congress led by Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal)
- Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam led by M. Karunanidhi (Tamil Nadu)
- Nationalist Congress Party led by Sharad Pawar (Maharashtra)
- All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen
- Indian Union Muslim League led by E. Ahmed
- Kerala Congress (Mani) (Kerala) led by Jose. K. Mani
- Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) led by Pravash Ghosh (West Bengal)
- Jammu & Kashmir National Conference led by Farooq Abdullah (Jammu & Kashmir).
- Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajatantrik) led by Babulal Marandi (Jharkhand)

**Supporting parties for Lok-Sabha 2009**

- Samajwadi Party led by Mulayam Singh Yadav (Uttar Pradesh)
- Rashtriya Janata Dal led by Lalu Prasad Yadav (Bihar)
- Lok Janshakti Party led by Ram Vilas Paswan (Bihar)
- Jharkhand Disom Party (Jharkhand & West Bengal)
Cabinet ministers in the government

As of 9 May 2009 the UPA had the following cabinet ministers in the Indian government[^20]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manmohan Singh</td>
<td>Prime Minister; Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; Atomic Energy; Space; Textiles; Culture Chairman of the Planning Commission</td>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pranab Mukherjee</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dinesh Trivedi</td>
<td>Railways</td>
<td>Trinamul Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A. K. Antony</td>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>P. Chidambaram</td>
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21 Ambika Soni  Information and Broadcasting  
22 Mallikarjun Khagre  Labour and Employment  
23 Kapil Sibal  Human Resource Development, Ministry of Science & Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences  
24 B.K. Handique  Development of North East Region and Mines  
25 Anand Sharma  Commerce and Industry  
26 Vilasrao Deshmukh  Rural Development and Panchayati Raj  
27 Kumari Selja  Tourism, Culture, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation  
28 Subodh Kant Sahay  Food Processing Industries  
29 Ajay Maken  Youth Affairs and Sports  
30 G.K. Vasan  Shipping  
31 Pawan Kumar Bansal  Parliamentary Affairs  
32 Mukul Wasnik  Social Justice and Empowerment  
33 Kantilal Bhuria  Tribal Affairs  
34 M.K. Azhagiri  Chemicals and Fertilizers  

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Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam  

This way the Coalition Government has been continuing in the Country since 1977. The Federal Character and the Multi Party System of Indian Politics can survive only through the formation of healthy Coalition Governments.
4.3: EVALUATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT

4.3.1: Common Minimum Programme

The "Common Minimum Programme" is a document outlining the minimum objectives of the coalition government.\(^{376}\)

4.3.2: Initial support

Initially, the United progressive alliance (UPA) was given external support from the Left Front which totaled 59 MPs. Similar external support was also promised by several smaller parties that were not a member of any coalition, including the Samajwadi Party with 39 MPs, the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam with 4 MPs, the Janata Dal (Secular) with 3 MPs, and Bahujan Samaj Party with 19 MPs, who promised to support the government if it faced a vote of confidence. Nevertheless, these parties were not a part of the government. The UPA thus had at least 335 MPs out of 543 supporting it at the time of its formation. The Left parties, despite ideological differences with the Congress, supported the UPA to ensure a secular government.\(^{377}\)

Outside support is currently being offered by the Samajwadi Party (33 MPs), the Bharatiya Navshakti Party (1 MP), the National Conference (2 MPs) and by the National Loktantrik Party (1 MP). In addition, rebel MPs from Biju Janata Dal, the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Janata Dal (United), and the independent MPs take the tally of UPA supporting MPs to 275.\(^{378}\)

4.2.1: Controversies

During the discussion for the vote of confidence, BJP MP's produced cash in the parliament, as viewed on Lok Sabha TV, alleging a bribe by the Samajwadi Party to vote for the


government. The BJP claimed to have documentary evidence in a "cash for vote" scam and submitted a report before the parliamentary committee probing the matter. The BJP also wrote a 17-page letter to the Parliamentary committee headed by Congress member V Kishore Chandradeo in this regard. Arun Jaitley said Samajwadi MP Reoti Raman Singh had offered his party's MPs the cash on the night of July 21. He also alleged that SP leader Amar Singh was behind the entire episode. Jaitley said: "The investigating agencies did not do their job. So we inquired into the matter and gathered documentary evidence in the case." He alleged the 'cash for vote' scam reflected the subversion of the Indian Parliament, as well as a section of the media.379

The winter session of parliament in October 2008 came under intense criticism from the Left parties and the BJP to demand a full fledged winter session instead of what was seen as the UPA to having "scuttled the voice of Parliament" by bringing down the sittings to a record low of 30 days in the year. The tensions between the UPA and the opposition parties became evident at an all party meeting convened by Lok Sabha speaker Somnath Chatterjee when the leader of opposition, LK Advani questioned the status, timing and schedule of the current session of parliament.

In early November 2008, months before a new general election, RJD chief Laloo Prasad Yadav, along with other MP's from Bihar, threatened to resign en masse from the central government as well as with their MLA's in Bihar and Jharkhand if the central government did not take steps to arrest Raj Thackeray under the NSA for the recent actions against north Indian students in Maharashtra, as well as to initiate a CBI inquiry in the killing of a Bihari in Mumbai. The opposition BJP termed this "another spell of rhetoric" on the issue of attacks on North Indians in Mumbai.

Under such circumstances the tenure of the UPA Government over. Fresh Election was conducted in the Country, but the same episode of Coalition Government has ben repaeted. UPA Government came back with new dimensions and enthusiasm to rule over the Country for the next 5 yezrs.

4.3.3: WITHDRAWALS

4.3.3.1: Telangana Rashtra Samithi

The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) was the first party to quit the alliance, first when its ministers quit the Andhra Pradesh government, and finally when an official withdrawal was done at the national level by its president K. Chandrashekar Rao, who resigned his Lok Sabha seat.\textsuperscript{380}

4.3.3.2: Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), began its drift when it tied up with the UPA's rival All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) during the Tamil Nadu elections, and on March 16, 2007 officially withdrew support from the government.\textsuperscript{13}\textsuperscript{14}

4.3.3.3: Bahujan Samaj Party

On 21 June 2008, the Bahujan Samaj Party, or the BSP, with 17 seats, announced withdrawal of its support after the Congress starting opposing the UP govenrnmnt where the BSP was the ruling party. Their leader Mayawati said that she wouldn't enter an electoral alliance with either the Congress or the BJP. She also accused both parties of misusing the Central Bureau of Investigation or the CBI and attempting to implicate her in the Taj Corridor Case. She also accused Congress of making false promises to help the people of Bundelkhand and Poorvanchal regions as they were suffering from drought.\textsuperscript{381}

4.3.3.4: Left Front

On 8 July 2008, Prakash Karat, the general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (or the CPI (M)), announced that the Left Front would be withdrawing support

\textsuperscript{380} TRS withdraws support to the UPA. Retrieved on March 26, 2007.
\textsuperscript{381} Mayawati withdraws support to UPA government. Retrieved on June 21, 2008.
over the decision by the government to go ahead with the Indo-US nuclear deal, a Section 123 Agreement with the United States.\textsuperscript{382}

\section*{4.3.3.5: People's Democratic Party}

On 4 January 2009, Mehbooba Mufti, president of the People's Democratic Party announced the withdrawal of the PDP from the UPA given that the Congress had decided to support the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference Government in Jammu & Kashmir after the 2008 state elections.\textsuperscript{383}

\section*{4.3.3.6: Pattali Makkal Katchi}

On 26 March 2009, PMK declared that it would join the AIADMK led front and withdrew from the UPA and the party president declared that two union ministers of his party will resign shortly.

On October 17, 2008 14 DMK MP's, including central ministers T.R. Baalu and A. Raja, handed in their post-dated resignation letters to the head of the party, TN CM M. Karunanidhi in demanding an end to the violence against civilians in Sri Lanka. There were consequently 16 DMK MP's left in the 14th Lok Sabha. All 4 Rajya Sabha MP's had also submitted post-dated resignation letters, including Karunanidhi's daughter, Kanimozhi had handed in her resignation on October 14, A. A. Jinnah, Tiruchi Siva, and Vasanthi Stanley. All 40 Lok Sabha MPs of Tamil Nadu and the union territory of Puducherry had also threatened to quit the government if it failed to take action on the Sri Lankan issue. Lawyers in Coimbatore joined their Tamil brethren in burning an effigy of Union Defence Minister A.K. Antony within the court premises earlier in the day, alleging a conspiracy by bureaucrats of Kerala origin to keep the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka on tenterhooks.\textsuperscript{384}

Following these actions, the TN CM Karunanidhi said, on November 4, that he was "satisfied" with the measures taken by the UPA government in the center on the Sri Lankan Tamils issue. A statement said: "we have a Centre, which realises the plight of Tamils in Sri

\textsuperscript{382} \textit{Left pulls out, will meet President Patil on Wednesday}

\textsuperscript{383} \textit{PDP withdraws from UPA, The Indian Express, January 5, 2009}

\textsuperscript{384} \textit{http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?newsid=1199083}
Lanka, and the leaders there respect our sentiments," and that they were doing their best to mitigate the sufferings of the Tamils of Lanka. He added that, "We have to raise our demands to increase their action."385

4.4 : COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COALITION GOVERNMENT AT THE CENTRE

To put it simply, a coalition government is a cabinet of a parliamentary government in which several parties cooperate. Coalition governments are usually formed as no party can individually achieve a majority in the parliament. However, a coalition government may also be created in a time of national difficulty or crisis. If a coalition collapses, a confidence vote is held or a motion of no confidence is taken.

India has had coalition governments at the Centre as well as in individual states since the last two decades. Since India is a diverse country with different ethnic, linguistic and religious communities, it also has diverse ideologies. Due to this, the benefit that a coalition has is that it leads to more consensus based politics and reflects the popular opinion of the electorate. The current UPA-Left arrangement had been formed after parliamentary elections in 2004. Though they have main adversaries in three states, this government was still a stable one till Left withdrew support on matters of nuclear deal.

In order to have stable coalitions, it is necessary that political parties moderate their ideologies and programmes. They should be more open to take others’ point of view as well. They must accommodate each other’s interests and concerns. But this is not what is happening in India. In India, parties do not always agree on the correct path for governmental policy. Different parties have different interests and beliefs and it is difficult to sustain a consensus on issues when disagreements arise. They often fail to see eye to eye with the government on many public policies. However, this is not to say that we have never had successful coalitions. Governments in Kerela and West Bengal and NDA at the Centre have

been sucessful coalitions. Other coalitions should learn from these because it is difficult to operate in an environment full of disagreements.

The fact of the matter is that India has had coalition governments in the past and it will continue to have in the future as well. Therefore, it is in best interest for all that parties develop a sense of understanding and do not play games of power politics and bad politics. It is high time that the MPs realize how bad India fares on other economic variables in the world, and it is time they put their energy in improving those than just catering to their selfish interests.

If political parties feel that coalitions are too much of a compromise and always lead to unstable governments, then India can think of alternative forms of government, the presidential system can be one but it has its own cons. It is very important for the political parties to moderate their ideas as there are no ready made formulas or easy solutions to make coalitions work in a smooth manner.

India has had the experience of coalition governments in the states as well as the Center in recent times. As we analyses the coalitions in India we have to keep in mind the background of various experiments of coalitions in different parts of world. While in countries like France, Italy, and Japan there have been unstable coalition governments Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden have witnessed fairly stable coalitions. Thus all coalition experiments have not displayed a uniform pattern.

By and large both at the Center and in all the states (except Kerala), from 1952 to 1967, India witnessed one dominant party rule of the congress, with the non-congress parties remaining in the opposition. In some states, the political picture in the parliamentary from of government was so unbalanced that the opposition parties were pushed almost to the fringe. This was the hangover of the political climate that emerged from the freedom struggle in which the congress had occupied a pivotal position and had retained its board political appeal.
There was however a grateful shift from the pattern 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. In course of time an uneven political pattern was evolved. In those states where non congress parties mustered enough combined strength to have the working majority in states legislatures, coalition governments were formed in Punjab, Bihar, UP, WB, Kerala, Orissa and MP. The year 1967 turned out to be a watershed in Indian politics, riding on the crest of mounting non-congressism, non-congress coalition in the form of Samyukta Vidhayak Dal, Government were formed in several states. They had ideological heterogeneity. The exceptions were coalition in west Bengal was an analysis of left parties where as in Kerela there was a coalition Government of Left and Democratic Front.

The Samyukta Vidhayak Dal coalitions in States collapsed in course of time, as a result of there inner contradictions in the realm of ideology and political orientations of the constituents. Because of relative ideological, political and programmatic homogeneity, the coalitions mainly of the left Parties in WB and of left and Democratic force in Kerela had a grater degree of stability and as such they could survive and revive.

The Central Government continued to be under the dominant Congress party rule. Many political analysts had persistently pleaded that though the non-Congress coalition governments ruled in several States, it was not so easy to change the political scenario at the center. However one single event that brought 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 Members of parliament. Through the action opposition to the amendments in the constitution encroaching upon the citizen’s civil liberties, freedom of the press and 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.

These anti-democratic actions initiated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi caused an unprecedented anti-Congress wave against the Union Government. In the elections to the
Lok Sabha held in March 1977, the Congress faced its worst rout. For the first time the Congress lost its power at the center giving room to the government of the Janata party. The Janata party was apparently a single party, but in reality it was a combination of the Socialist party, Bharatiya Jan Sangha, Congress(O), BID and the group of dissidents Congressmen led by Jagjivan Ram and H.N Bahuwia. 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. But temperamental incompatibility of some leaders and fierce controversy over the dual loyalty of the Jan Sangh activists to the Janata Party as well as the RSS wrecked the Janata Party and its government and paved the way for the break up of the Janata Party’s government which in reality was a coalition government. The split up group of the Janata party headed by Chaudhary Charan Singh formed an alternate government which proved to be still-born since Indira Gandhi who had lent support withdrew it on the day Charan Singh was to seek confidence vote for his coalition government in the Lok Sabha.

There are occasions when a particular issue becomes a focal point of public indignation and agitation. The corruption involved in the alleged payment of commission to secure the contract for guns by the Swedish Company Bofors was exposed in the press and Parliament. VP Singh played a crucial role in giving a sharp edge to the fight against this corruption issue and had to resign from the Cabinet headed by Rajiv Gandhi only to mount a fearless attack on corruption in high places.

In 1989 corruption become the central theme of the elections. It touched theme of the elections. It touched the innermost chord of the electorate. The government formed under the leadership VP Singh be came symbol of struggle against corruption. In this coalition experiment, history repeated itself and dissidents from the Janata Dal lead by Chandra Shakhar formed a new government with the support of the congress. Thus, the National Front’s coalition’s government was destabilized only by the power motivations of dissidents in the Janata Dal. Its is a classic example of how disparate elements like the congress
opposing the coalitions governments decision to implement Mandal Commission recommendations, the JP which with its pronounced communal stance wanted to settle its score on the issue of Mandir Masjid controversy in Ayodhya raised to sidetrack the Mandal issue and Chandra Sheakhar who wanted to avenge the election of VP Singh as the Leader of the Janata Dal in parliament in the waked of his total opposition, had Forged an unholy alliance to break up the coalition headed by VP Singh this are the destabilizing manipulations about which those who run and sustain the coalition government at the center must remain vigilant.

As a sequel to the communal frenzy released by the demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya by the BJP, and its allies, a coalitions governments consisting of BJP Shiv Sena and rebel congress men who own the elections and supported the BJP-Shiv Sena combination after their election, came into existence in Maharastra.

Though the secular forces in Maharastra secured higher percentage of votes than the BJP Shiv Sena combine, the rebel congress men made the formation of BJP Shiv Sena coalition in Maharastra possible.

After the 1996 Lok Sabha poll, Atal Behari Vajpayee, the leader of the single largest party, BJP was invited by the President to form the government at the center, and was directed to seek vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha. Many were surprised as to how there was not a single defection form the 13 party United Front formed under the leadership of Deve Gowda to support to BJP government. It must be realized that the national as well as the regional parties that were the constituents of the 13 party United Front had a firm commitment to secularism, federalism, social justice and economic equality. The solidarity of the UF could not press for a confidence vote and submitted his resignation to the Rashtrapatii.

The UF had no working majority in the Lok Sabha. The choice before the Congress was between forces of secularism and of communalism. Opting for a secular government, Congress extended support to the United Front government headed by Deve Gowda who was—unanimously chosen as the leader of the UF in Parliament by its constituents. Despite
periodical threats to the stability and survival of the UF government, it has sustained its stability. By the political compulsions of secular politics, altogether a different pattern of coalition government at the Center supported by CPI(M) and Congress from outside has evolved.

Alarmed by the experiment of the coalition which became inevitable in certain conditions, some political analysts attribute their failure to attain stability to the parliamentary system. They suggest adoption of the presidential system. In this context, it is well to remember that in the parliamentary system there might be less stability but it offers more accountability. Let us not forget that the founding fathers of our Congressmen, who trained the constitution in the most unstable conditions of communal violence and bloodshed, in the post-partition period, did not give primary to stability, but to accountability to make our democracy more meaningful.

Thus what is needed is not the dismantling of the system of parliamentary democracy, but introducing electoral reforms to lend more stability to the coalition governments in India. To reduce the gap between the votes polled by the parties and the seats secured by them, a German system based on a combination of the present electoral system as in India and a “list system” putting be encouraged. The evil influence of muscle and money power on the elections must be curbed and a state funding to parties linked up with the percentage of goods secured by them in the previous election should be introduced to reduce the large multiplicity of parties responsible for division of votes and consequent instability. With such a State funding to parties based on the votes polled, small splinter parties with extremely low percentage of votes will have the tendency to merge in large parties which are closest to them ideologically.

Under such dispensation, the stability of coalitions in India can be ensured through appropriate electoral reforms. Of course, for such electoral reforms, what is needed the most is a strong political will. The Cliché that India has acquired a new and distinguishing feature of coalition politics is only partially true.
In fact coalition began with the first general election in 1952 itself in the then Madras Presidency a broad non-Congress united front with T.Prakasam as the leader and undivided CPI as the main component won a majority in the Assembly elections C.Rajagopalachari on the instruction of Pt. Nehru was sent to break up the front and restore the Congress monopoly of power.

Non-Congress coalition government were formed aft the 1967 general election in Punjab, UP, Bhair, WB, Orissa, Tamilnadu and Kerrla with CPI and Jana Sangha coming together in Samyukta Vidhaykta Dals or DVDs in many States P.N. Haksar once caustically referred to these coalitions as Samyukta VD formations. These did not last long.

The Kerala experience was somewhat different. In 1957, the CPI led a non-Congress coalition government chief-Minister E.M.S. Namboodiripad, declared that though his party had won against the Congress, it would implement the Congress programme. The government was dismissed in 1959 but congress itself could not keep power for long. Alternatively, the Congress and the non-Congress parties won and lost elections. In 1969, however, a stable coalition government was formed with Congress CPI alliance as the core. With C.Achutha Menon providing exceptional and extremely leadership, this coalition lasted for two decades, carrying out radical agraman socioeconomic transformations famous as “Kerala Model” Since then UDF and LDF coalitions have won lost elections by margins but both have been guided by the 1969 Model. The Kerala Model has been somewhat narrowly interpreted as only appropriate for economic development in a relatively backward State. In reality, it shows the way for political stability and social advance for the country as a whole. The Congress programme is nothing but the programme of freedom struggle modified in the present altered circumstances. The essence of the Kerela Model and the experience is that the Congress programme has to be implemented by a coalition of parties in which the Congress is the main but not the exclusive force.

Kerala Model is needed by the whole of India because the Indian revolution proceeds even after the 1947 as a national revolution both requiring and reinforcing national unity, with the greater degree of differentiation in the country class wise, such unity cannot be during the
freedom struggle. Other parties have to be included, and they have to include themselves in this unity to make it effective.

The long unbroken spell of the CPI (M)’ governance of WB dose not disproves the conclusion drawn above. Stability in WB has come only after the CPI (M) gave up the attempted an alternative model in that State. Ashok Mitras exit meant an end to meaningless and costly experiments as also to the strategy of confrontation with the Center. The Left Front is now implementing what the Congress had promised but failed to implement. Its relations, with the Center, whether Congress or non-Congress, have been those of cooperation. As Jyoti Basu put it, he is not the Prime Minister of the independent republic of WB but the Chief Minister of the State of WB within the Union of India.

WB is not a model because of the obsessive, harmful and self-destructive anti-Congressism of the CPI (M) and its lack of respect for democratic norms. The all India congress leadership has also made no efforts to draw the CPI (M) into dialogue on national issues.

The present coalition is the continuation of attempts to eliminate the Congress from the center. This has failed as was only to be expected. But the Congress response since 1978 to restore its governance at the center or to seek only those allies who are opposed to the anti-Congress and non-Congress parties, too, has not succeeded.

The result is increase in political or, rather state instability which the nation simply cannot afford. One has to attempt to give political shape to the dialectical unity of opposites. We cannot achieve stability; much less advance, without national unity and such unity cannot be achieved on an anti-Congress or non-Congress basis. Also, it cannot be achieved by the Congress alone. What is needed is not polarization but reinforcement of unity and this not by anti-Congressism or non-Congressism. Polarization is to be eschewed but not differentiation. India is not characterized by unity and diversity but by unity expressed in diversity. Each needs the other through the interaction is within the parameters of the nation.
What is needed is not any kind of coalition but a nation reinforcing coalition, whatever be the exact political force in which it is expressed. With the United Front on the way out and the Congress on the way back all nationalist leader and thinkers wherever they are positioned have to reflect on all this and act appropriately.

The Fourth General Elections of February 1967 marked a turning, point in Indian politics in so far as they greatly weakened the monolithic character of the Congress rule. While at the center the congress Government, in six out of the coalition governments. Before we examine the nature of coalition politics in India it shall be desirable to understand its meaning.

The term coalition has been derived from the Latin word “coalition” meaning to go or to grow together. Thus interpreted the term coalition means an act of uniting into one body or alliance. It indicates the combination of a number of bodies or parts into one body or whole. In the political sense the term coalition is used for an alliance or temporary union between various political groups for the exercise or control of political power. Prof.Ogg defines coalitions in the *Encyclopedia of Social Science*, as “a cooperative arrangement under which distinct political parties, or at all events members of such parties unite to form a government or Ministry.” Generally such cooperative arrangement is made by the groups to make some gains and rewards of material and they psychic nature under certain circumstances ceases to exist. While entering into coalition the partners are expected to give up their rigid stand and make compromise in the spirit of mutual give and take. The parties to the coalition however 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 narrower the coalition may break up or some other groups may the coalition or lend support to it. But if the member groups of a coalition decide to merge them and from a new party, it ceases to be a coalition. For example when in January 1973 .....Sangh, congress (O), Bharatiya Lok Dal and Socialists decided to merge themselves and from the Janata Party they lost their individual identity. This combination of the various political groups was not a coalition but a new political party.
4.5: COALITION GOVERNMENT AT THE CENTRE: RECENT TRENDS.

Even before the eleventh general elections to Lok Sabha, the former President of India, R. Venktaraman had floated the idea of a coalition government at the center in view of the unlikelihood of any single party getting an absolute majority. Earlier, A.B.Vajpayee had also suggested the feasibility of a switch-over to the presidential system. Vansant Sathe, B.K. Nehru and J.R.D.Tata too favored a presidential system of a government according to Indian conditions because instability at the center would be disastrous and could pave the way for national disintegration.

Today there is large-scale criminalization of politics in India and money power and muscle power are vitiating the electoral scene. R.Venkataramans feeler of a national alternative to party government deserves utmost attention and consideration. He has been hinting at the establishment of a national government at the Center for the past one year.

According to political analysts, the 1989 Lok Sabha elections witnessed the end of one party dominance in Indian politics. The 1996 elections foreshadowed the multi-party government. The United Front (UF) formed the government after the collapse of the short-lived BJP government. It is quite relevant to note that State governments formed by parties which had a pre-election alliance had a longer average life span as compared to single party governments. The relative stability of coalition governments in WB and Kerela are indicative of this trend. Ranjni Kothari has rightly asserted: “The system has entered a period of rapid decline and erosion of an, normative content which is so crucial for a functioning democracy. As there is no ideological consensus any more, it is witnessing wholesale criminalization of politics; the increasing communal orientation of civil society and a highly corrupt system of govern. The need is for a new alignment of ideas, institutions and a structure of power that can produce the desired alternative”.

For the survival of any coalition government there should be a common minimum programme. The United Front, in its Common Minimum Programme, has rightly stressed that in any coalition there will be differences, but what is important is the manner in which
these differences are aired, discussed and resolved. The ministers should not violate the principle of collective responsibility. The coalitions provide the ideal setting for a system of collective leadership a. vital factor for the success of parliamentary democracy.

After the general elections of 1996 R.Venkataraman, N.A.Palkhivala, C. Subramaniam and Justice H.R.Khanna were in favour of a National government in view of the election results. They suggested that the Lok Sabha could elect a Prime Minister by means of a single transferable vote from among the candidates who need not be members of Parliament and who could secure support of 100 Lok Sabha MPs. The political parties were to be represented in the Council of Ministers in proportion to their strength in the House. A common minimum programme could be presented to the two Houses of Parliament for approval. A no-confidence motion to remove a Prime-Minister should take effect only when the Lok Sabha elects an alternative leader. The above system it was felt would ensure “stability of administration, cooperation of all parties and elimination of rancor in the governance of the country.”

The coalition governments are evolving slowly and once can safely presume that this will be the pattern of the central governments in the exist country. The United Front coalition government headed by H.D.Deve Gowda is like a chariot being pulled at times in different directions by 13 horses subsequently one more horse has been added. The chariot could roll-on and with the Congress fairing badly at the recent elections in Punjab, a long lease to life is given to the United Front government. But, there are personality clashes among the United Front leaders and because of this they lack cohesion. It looks as if ideology has taken the brake seat ego clashes are reining supreme.

The fact is that during the last six months, the United Front Steering Committee has become a super-cabinet and many of the coalition party leaders are trying to act as super Prime Ministers Laloo Prasad Yadav seems to be very unhappy with the United Front government now.
Dave Gowda is quite stubborn at times. He says that he did not come to New Delhi in search of a job. He will leave Delhi they do not want him to head this government. This is definitely Dave Gowdas biggest strength; he is walking on a tight rope.

Former Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil had suggested that for a successful coalition government, some prerequisites are essential. First, to form a government or to throw it out, two-third majority should be essential in the Lok Sabha. Secondly; the majority opinion should prevail in the Council of Ministers. Thirdly, in case of emergency, the council of Ministers can seek the opinion of the members of the ok Sabha. Fourthly, the anti-defecation bill has to be scrapped and members should vote according to their will and pleasure.

It is by now axiomatic that India is a vast, complex and plural polity with disparate groups struggling to co-exist and achieve a measure of cohesion and national integration. Even a large district in India is bigger than half the nations of the world. Several of the larger States in the country are bigger than 90 percent of the nations of the world. Uttar Pradesh would probably rank as the fifth biggest nation in the world, if it were to be independent. In addition, give the linguistic diversity, political fragmentation of society, the uneasy co-existence of several layers of India from the middle ages to the 21st century and the enormous immobility of the bulk of the Indian population, there is no other nation on other nation on earth that can really be compared to modern India.

4.5.1: Constitutional Spirit vs. Colonial Instruments

In the aftermath of partition, about 10 million people migrated across the newly created borders; a million people belonging to both faiths were butchered in the conflagration that ensued; 600,000 people were maimed and 300 thousand innocent women were raped. Given these cataclysmic events, it was but natural that the ruling elites, concerned as they were for the unity of the country and maintenance of stability and order, opted for governance structure which were largely a continuation of the British Raj.
The framers of the Indian Constitution were undoubtedly, men and women of great caliber, commitment and understanding. However, the cataclysmic events surrounding partition compelled them to continue with the time-tested instruments of governance. Many scholars have pointed out that there is about 80 percent congruence between the Government of India Act 1935, an Act of British Parliament that shaped the governance structure of India during the colonial era, and the Indian Constitution of 1950.

Our democracy is extremely flawed, and its poor design ensured its eventual breakdown. The preamble, the fundamental rights and most of the directive principles reflect universal human democratic values of modern civilization. However, the antiquated instruments of governance are largely unsuited to the challenges of today in a vast developing nation with a high proportion of population oppressed under the weight of poverty, drudgery and illiteracy. In the early years after independence, this conflict between constitutional values and colonial instruments of governance was camouflaged. The euphoria accompanying the transfer of power led to a general belief that the moment Indian leaders acquired power, things would automatically; improve even with the old instruments of governance. However, the subsequent events belied these hopes. In the two decades after independence, the aura of freedom struggle, the towering stature of the early leaders associated with that struggle, the hope of better things to come, and the inadequate understanding of the loopholes in the mechanics of governance ensured certain measure of stability, hope and harmony.

As all such hopes are dashed and as persistent rejection of the parties in power does not seem to result in any significant, tangible improvement, people are increasingly sullen and resentful.

4.5.2: Fragmentation and Politics as Zero sum Game

The complexity of India gave our Constitution a federal appearance, though with a pronounced unitary character. Continuance of Westminster model in our highly plural society led to increasing resort to coalition governments as the dominant national party declined eventually, and the governance system was not conducive to the emergence of a coherent political party structure. Federalism has to be examined from various angles, the political role
of the constituent states in shaping their own governing structure is important in a truly federal polity. In India, given the stultifying uniformity prescribed by the Constitution, various laws and executive orders, the rich diversity of the India Union is not reflected in the design of the political structure of the constituent States. The fiscal devolution is not commensurate with the enormous takes of governance and providing services including education and health care that the States are entrusted with. Over the years, however, the States are reasonably free to frame their own policies, the mechanism of the Planning Commission and the centrally-sponsored schemes made sure that the room for maneuvering is very limited. Most of all, true federalism should encompass genuine local self-governance. In this area, the failure of the Indian state has been extremely disappointing and debilitating to our democracy. Recent halfhearted attempts to bring about constitutional changes facilitating local self government amount to too little and too late.

The problems of flawed federalism have been complicated immeasurably in recent decades as the Indian social fragmentation is further accentuated by the political process. For some time now, there have been no national mandates in our parliamentary elections, and the national verdict is merely an aggregate of the State mandates. The electoral verdicts at the State level in turn have been largely plebiscitary in nature, and in most cases are motivated by a strong anti-establishment sentiment. This process is further complicated by the increasing caste and sub-caste consciousness in people’s voting patterns as well as in the state’s decision making. The Indian political process, for the past five decades has failed to encourage individuation. In any society, sectarian impulses have a potentially dominant influence on people’s voting behavior. However, the process of individuation, by which each citizen attempts to establish a nexus between his vote and his own welfare, acts as a countervailing influence on a well designed system, and keeps sectarian loyalties under check. In the absence of such individuation, the character and competence of individual candidates has become increasingly irrelevant in our electoral process, with the fragmentation of our polity, the political parties failed in their interest-aggregation function, with parties increasingly identified with one or more castes or communities. Such sectarian political loyalties translated themselves into a largely immobile vote in many States. The shifting vote, based on the voters’ perception of a party’s performance or promise, which is
so crucial in the electoral fortunes of political parties is slowly disappearing in India. Increasingly, primordial loyalties are dictating the voting behavior.

As a result, at the national level the electoral outcomes are fairly predictable and persistently indecisive; leading to unsuitable, weak and often incoherent coalitions based on the numbers game. In the States where caste divisions are kept under some check for historical reasons, there have been decisive mandates mostly based on anti-establishment feeling, with the two major parties or combinations sharing power alternately with almost unfailing regularity. Where there is a high congruence between caste and political preference, and where a majority combination has not emerged to acquire a decisive edge, there is persistent political stalemate with farcical consequences. The third, as yet incipient, outcome is the emergence of a strong, permanent, almost unbeatable majority combination of castes and communities with a stranglehold over the electorate.

As a result of this complex process of fragmentation, all politics and governance have been reduced to a zero sum game. Instead of creating a win-win situation by pursuing policies with the potential to enhance goods and services for all and to improve the quality of governance, a destructive and often counter-productive majoritarianism is coming to the fore.