CHAPTER-V

This chapter covers developments up to 2013.

The era of bi-party coalition/bi-polarity party system existed in this period. At least, at the time being, there are two main coalitions/alliances such as the UPA and the NDA, led by Congress Party and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), respectively. Of course, there are other players, such as the CPI (M) led Third Front, Fourth Front, BSP, TDP and AIADMK etc, and other regional parties,1 but have limited say on the Indian political system. These two formations are playing major role than others.

The outcome of 12th-1998, 13th-1999, 14th-2004 and 15th-2009 Lok Sabha elections respectively, revealed that most of the seats in the popular House, won by NDA and UPA (see table 5.1) and formed governments at the Centre as well as in most of the states. The mandate of 13th Lok Sabha in 1999 was fractured, as earlier one, having thirty eight political parties, represented in Lower House, twenty three of them having less than five members each, and thirteen had only one seat each. The NDA consisting of more than twenty four parties, secured a clear decisive majority in the House of People.2 The 13th Lok Sabha was, more or less a replica of 12th Lok Sabha, which seemed minor and very significant shift in the power of balance.

Table 5.1: Tally of Seats of NDA and UPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and Lok Sabha</th>
<th>BJP led NDA</th>
<th>Congress led UPA</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th Lok Sabha-1998</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th Lok Sabha-1999</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th Lok Sabha-2004</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th Lok Sabha-2009</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

∗ This chapter includes the formation of UPA-II in 2009 and further developments.
The NDA, first time took the taste of power for just thirteen days in 1996, as the BJP emerged as a single largest party, but did not enjoy majority in the Lower House. H. D. Deve Gowda was leading United Front in June 1996, an alliance of thirteen parties, formed the government with outside support of Congress Party. Inder Kumar Gujral led United Front, later formed the next ministry in April 1997, until the BJP returned to power. Under the leadership of Vajpayee, the NDA constituted ministry in March 1998, which consisted of twelve disparate parties, drawn from different states, remained in office only for thirteen months, then twenty four parties’ combination of NDA formed Union government in October 1999, which completed its full term.3

Likewise, the UPA-I government came into power on 22 May 2004, with the help of eighteen parties, which survived with the outside support of Left parties. The UPA-II formed Union government on 22 May 2009, with the help of eleven parties and unconditional outside support given by JD (S), RJD, BSP, SP and independents.4 With this background, there were qualitative and quantitative differences between the NDA and the UPA. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to compare and contrast the nature of alliance/coalition, institutional framework, such as office of Prime Minister and performance of the both the governments.

Nature of Alliance System: A Comparison of NDA and UPA

The life of multi-party system is dominated by alliances. The alliances among parties varying greatly in form and degree. Some are ephemeral and unorganized. Simply, temporary coalitions take place in order to benefit the parties concerned in the elections, in order to overthrow a government or to support one, from time to time. Others are lasting and strongly organized, so that, sometimes, they are like ‘super-parties.’ Therefore, some very strong alliances, are hardly distinguishable from parties, fundamentally divided into rival tendencies.

4 The Hindu, 21-22 and 23 May 2009.
The number of parties play determinant role in the formation of alliances. In principle, the “simple-majority second-ballot system”, encourage the formation of close alliances, proportional representations, encourage complete independence. In simple words, multi-party regime favours very strong alliances.\(^5\) In “single member district, simple plurality” (SMSP) electoral system, parties have to get a plurality of votes in a constituency to win seats and derivatively, a plurality to win a majority of seats at the state and national levels. However, it is always not a true case particularly in India. There are cases in which party is getting more votes, but get less seats. The Congress Party in 1996, 1998 and 1999, at national level getting more percentage of votes as compared to other parties, but less seats.

Generally, the parties have a strong incentive to aggregate vote through formation of alliances, based on sharing the total number of contested seats, so as not to split but to pool votes. This is because, a small addition of votes had potential to hugely increase or alternatively, decimate a party or coalition in term of seats. So that, there are even greater incentives to add on partners to increase, the chance of victory, so as not to take any chance of losing, without being too particular about ideological and programmatic compatibility, except in conditions of extreme incompatibility.\(^6\)

Moreover, the formal relationships between the allies are less important than the power relationship. Three principal elements are taken into account in defining the degree of inequality among allies: Their respective strength, their position on the electoral/political chess board and lastly, their internal structure. In fact, every alliance is unequal, and the largest party tended to determinate the smallest, almost entirely.\(^7\) The coalition building is an integral part of the process of acquiring state power, within democracy. The narrowly based political groups are likely to make extreme position in politics, whether in regard to ideology and policy or inter-group relationships. On the other hand, coalition-building for winning majority, whether in


\(^7\) Duverger, n.5, pp.343-344.
national politics or in the legislature, is likely to make for moderation in politics and policy.\textsuperscript{8}

The seven national elections held between 1991 and 2009 in India, did not produce an absolute majority for any single party or alliance formation. Consequently, minority or coalition governments formed at the Centre, were reflecting the expanding process of democratization, was based on spatial, and not ideological compatibility. This was the case with BJP’s NDA alliance in 1998, 1999 and 2004, as well the Congress led UPA-I and II in 2004 and 2009, respectively.\textsuperscript{9}

In a nut-shell, both the groups, the NDA and the UPA formed governments on the basis of pre-poll\textsuperscript{10} (pre-elections seats adjustment with allies) and post-poll alliance system.\textsuperscript{11} Both, the ‘alliance makers’, as the BJP and the Congress Party learned the basic lessons from previous elections and were moving towards alliance/coalition politics. The BJP experienced humiliation of being in office for only thirteen days and no other party came forward to support in 11\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha 1996. The BJP changed its strategy in 1998 and sought a wide range of alliance arrangements in its non stronghold states and shelved the religiously divisive agenda. In a way, the BJP operationalised pre-poll alliance with thirteen parties, which spread over nine states. The alliance strategy of Bharatiya Janata Party made possible to get majority in the House of People with the help of four post-poll regional and smaller parties. Similarly, the BJP led twenty four parties pre-poll


\textsuperscript{10} Pre-Poll Alliance:- It is based on the formula of ‘seat adjustments’, or seat sharing on the basis of relative strength of the party and Common Minimum Programme with partners, whereby parties agree not to contest elections against each other directly in a particular constituency. In a way, these adjustments enable parties to avoid dividing votes, that is, the political parties agree to divide seats on the basis of their support base, in their respective areas, in order to increase their vote bank, by clubbing the votes of the partners. For example, in Punjab, the BJP and the SAD (B) divided seats and agreed to contest 2009 general elections on three and ten seats respectively. It also enables parties to focus their electoral campaign on the relatively few seats that they are contesting. Moreover, India’s first-post-the-post electoral system awards a parliamentary seat to the candidate, with most votes in each constituency, even if that candidate receives far less than majority votes, in Sudha Pai, “The Indian Party System under Transformation: Lok Sabha Elections 1998”, \textit{Asian Survey}, Vol. XXXVIII, No.9, September 1998, p.838.

\textsuperscript{11} Post-Poll Alliance:- It is made after the declaration of election results by which party/parties want to achieve majority in Lower House. The UPA-I formed after the declaration of the results of 14\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha in 2004, when Left parties ensured to back the UPA-I’s Manmohan Singh government. It is based on acceptable terms and conditions of partners.
alliance (NDA) got majority in 1999 Lok Sabha. The BJP victory came due to it surfing alliance web better than any other party (using the computer language). The growth of Vajpayee majority began in 1998, as a jumble of pre-poll pacts and post-electoral adhesions.

As mentioned earlier, the Congress Party also erudite lessons from the defeat in December 2003 state assemblies’ elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. After these defeats, the INC realized that party could win only with alliance politics. In 2004, Congress Party (like BJP), led nineteen parties pre-poll coalition secured 222 seats and gained majority in the popular House with external support of Left parties. As compared with other parties, the Congress had wider range of choices than the BJP, when it came to selecting alliance partners. The CPI (M) and other Left parties consistently refused to ally itself with the BJP, as these smaller parties rely heavily on Muslim votes. The BJP selected its allies from remaining state parties. Sonia Gandhi made her best efforts to maximize party’s coalition possibilities by playing courtesy calls to the leaders of most important state and regional parties.

**Table 5.2: Tally of Pre-Poll Alliances and Post-Poll Alliances: NDA and UPA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lok Sabha</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NDA Pre-Poll Allies</th>
<th>UPA Pre-Poll Allies</th>
<th>Left Front/Third Front Pre-Poll Allies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>BJP, SAD(B), SS, HVP, TC, JNP, AIADMK, PMK, MDMK, LKS, BJ, TRS, SMT, Independents (Maneka Gandhi, Satnam Singh Kainth and Buta Singh)</td>
<td>ML, KC, RJD, RPI, Congress Party</td>
<td>CPI, CPI(M), FB, RSP, SP, TDP-N, TMC, DMK, JD, NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>BJP, JD(U), BJ, DMK, SS, TC, INLD, SAD-B, MDMK, PMK, HVC, MADMK, AB/TC, MSCP, SDF, AC</td>
<td>ML, KC, RJD, AIADMK, Congress Party, JMM</td>
<td>CPI, RSP, CPI(M), FB, BSP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Poll Allies</th>
<th>Post-Poll Allies</th>
<th>Post-Poll Allies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998 TDP, NCP, HLD(R), AC, MSCP, SDF, Anglo-Indian Citizen Common Front, RJP(Anand Mohan)</td>
<td>Not Required/None</td>
<td>Not Required/None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 TRS, NC, RLD</td>
<td>Not Required/None</td>
<td>Not Required/None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 Not Required/None</td>
<td>CPI, CPI(M), FBL, RSP, KEC, JD(S), IND(Left), SP</td>
<td>Supported UPA-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 Not Required/None</td>
<td>BSP, SP, RJD, LJP, JD(S), Nagaland People Front, Sikkim Democratic Front, Bodoland People Front and three Independents</td>
<td>Not Required/None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: - Bold entries indicate new allies.

# :- Joined NDA in last phase of 2009 elections at Ludhiana rally on 10 May 2009.
Most impressively, Sonia Gandhi made peace pact with Sharad Pawar’s NCP and tied-up with the DMK in Tamil Nadu. These alliance formations proved crucial both for the BJP as well as the Congress Party. In Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, the Congress gained maximum, whereas, in Kerala and Karnataka, the BJP vote share increased, but the lack of cohesion alliance prevented seat gains. Similarly, the BJP failed to ally with the leading state party in Haryana-INLD, led to debacle.\textsuperscript{16} In brief, the Congress and its allies, despite a slight loss in their combined votes share, did register big gains of sixty nine Lok Sabha seats. By contrast, the NDA lost eighty nine seats in 2004 parliamentary elections. This alliance system enabled Congress to form a ruling coalition, under Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister. But the NDA could not muster enough numerical strength in the Lower House.\textsuperscript{17}

With this background, there were qualitative and quantitative differences between the NDA and the UPA. There were over twelve parties, with twelve visions of India, economically as well as politically in the UPA-I government in 2004. The Comrades (Left), her true loyalists continue to see bogeymen of imperialism in market place; the red vision of ‘\textit{swadeshi},’ was certain to damage the economic reform agenda. Secondly, most of the UPA-I partners were chief opponents of the INC in the states, unlike the NDA. For example, the CPI (M) provided, ‘life-support system’ to UPA-I in New Delhi, but in Kerala and West Bengal, party was ‘enemy number one’, of the Congress Party.\textsuperscript{18} The RJD, SP and LJP were part of UPA-I, but organized themselves as Fourth Front, which fought elections against the Congress Party in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand in 2009 parliamentary elections.

The Indian National Congress (INC) changed its alliance strategy on the eve of 2009 national elections and emerged as a ‘new Congress,’ which was more assertive in its approach towards regional parties. It suddenly underwent a complete transformation from being mendicant (beggar) alliance partner to a ‘self respecting national party.’ Sonia Gandhi at AICC session, New Delhi, in November 2007, made clear that;

\textsuperscript{16}Steven I. Wilkinson, “Reading the Election Results”, in Ganguly, Diamond and Platter, n.12, pp.30-31.


Coalition means positive support from all sides. But, working in coalition does not mean we lose our political space. Such a coalition cannot be at the cost of revival of the Congress Party, particularly in states where its base had eroded.¹⁹

As a result, on 29 January 2009, there was no national level alliance with any party, but “state-specific alliances”, decided by Congress Working Committee (CWC). It was part of Congress strategy to regain its lost glory, particularly in the cow belt.¹⁹a That is why; the INC took tough stand against the regional parties in cow belt and did not sign any deal with Fourth Front. Even though, Congress Party did not change its mind towards Samajwadi Party (SP), which rescued Mammohan Singh government by supporting the ‘vote of confidence’ on 22 July 2008, when Left parties decided to withdraw the support from the UPA-I government on the issue of Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal.²⁰ Further, Mulayam Singh gave unconditional support to UPA-II, on the formation of federal government on 22 May 2009.²¹ The friendship gesture of Samajwadi Party (SP) did not change, the attitude of Congress Party, which continued with same alliance strategy, particularly in February 2012 assembly elections, in Uttar Pradesh. There was perception that there would be Samajwadi Party-Congress government in the region, leading to a national coalition too. But, the Congress Party struck an alliance with Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), a regional force with predominantly Jat support base party. In this context, Rahul Gandhi stated that;

The Congress Party will not support or join any other party to form the government, if it do not get majority on its own in the state (Uttar Pradesh).²²

¹⁹a Ibid.
²⁰ The ‘trust vote’ in July 2008 witnessed as many as twenty eight members (MPs), defying the whip of their parties and siding with opposition camps. The twenty one members belonged to the opposition parties and remaining seven to the government side (UPA-I). Of the twenty one opposition members thirteen voted in favour of the central government and eight remained absent from the Lower House. Of the seven from ruling side, voted with the opposition, six belonged to SP and one from Congress Party (Kuldeep Bishnoi), in Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, “Final Plunge”, Frontline, Vol.25, No.15, 1 August 2008, p.6 and Venkitesh Ramakrishnan “What Price Victory”, Frontline, Vol.25, No.16, 15 August 2008, pp.6-7.
It depicts that Congress Party went on its own way to capture old bastion, which was lost out of its fold. Once again, the SP and the BSP saved UPA-II government, with twenty two and twenty one Lok Sabha members respectively, walked out from the Lower House on the day of voting on the Bill for FDI in retail sector, which strategically helped the ruling Congress to pass the Bill. In Rajya Sabha, the fifteen BSP members voted with treasury benches, nine SP members, similarly walked out from the Upper House on 7 December 2012.

Behind the scene, there was lot of hard bargaining. Mayawati apparently, bartered her support for a favourable decision on the issue of granting reservations to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in promotions. The SP’s support hinged on a quid pro-quo in 2014 parliamentary elections. The Samajwadi Party was eying a bigger role for itself in 2014, but this would only be possible with the cooperation of Congress Party and hence, the “blow hot, blow cold”, attitude of the party’s supreme, Mulayam Singh Yadav.

On the whole, the BJP and the Congress, the two largest national parties adopted and pursued fundamentally different strategies, towards the formation of alliance in these elections. The BJP continued its persistent strategy to increase breath and extent of its alliances over the entire country. The BJP increased the number of its electoral allies from four in 1996 to nine in 1998 and to fourteen in 1999. (Researcher counted those parties that won at least one seat in Lok Sabha). Paul Wallace refers that the BJP led NDA headed by Vajpayee was a broad “catch all spectrum of parties” which included major regional parties. In contrast, the INC declined to adopt a broad coalition strategy, like BJP, in 1998 and 1999 mid-term elections, but later on changed its stand towards alliance politics. Actually, the

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23 Interestingly, 282 members of Parliament (MPs), expressed their opinion against FDI in retail sector in Parliament. But, the UPA-II was able to pass the Bill in the Lok Sabha, because half way mark came down from 271 to 251, due to forty three members of SP and BSP, walked out from the Lower House, in Purnima S. Tripathi, “Friend in Need”, Frontline, Vol.29, No.25, 28 December 2012, p.16.
24 The Tribune, 8 December 2012.
Congress Party was trying to form government at the Centre, on its own according to *Panchmarhi resolution* of September 1998.

The Congress Party erstwhile, continued its electoral cooperation in state of Kerala with Muslim League and Kerala Congress in 1998 and 1999 national elections. The INC gained new allies, such as the NCP in Maharashtra in 1998 and the RJD in Bihar. The INC changed its stand just before 2004 national elections and accepted the compulsion of coalition politics. The Congress’ strategy of alliance building consisted of teaming up with parties that defected from the NDA such as DMK, MDMK and PMK in Tamil Nadu, reaching out to former Congress splinter group (NCP) and making seat adjustments with two Communist parties of the Left Front, outside their respective electoral strong hold. The Congress was now, becoming “coalitional”, which put together a broad pre-poll alliance/coalition, which was covering several major states to take on NDA coalition.

In contrast, the BJP was in wrong company of AIADMK, which was not able to open its account in Tamil Nadu, the TDP got only five seats in Andhra Pradesh. They did not deliver on expectations in 2004 national elections. In 2009, the Congress twisted in its alliance strategy from flexible coalitional maker to ‘self respect national party,’ brought more seats for party. Consequently, only six party coalition of the UPA-II defeated the depleted NDA, much greater margin of 104 seats. The UPA attained 263 seats, whereas the NDA secured only 159 seats in 15th Lok Sabha of 2009. The UPA-II resembled the NDA in terms of the legislative coalition, including past electoral allies, constituted a considerable surplus majority and hence felt insured against defections by any ally.

From above, it appears that coalitions/ alliances were neither ideological nor had any common objective to cement them together. They were merely short-term tactical arrangements established by ambitious politicians and rooted in the exchange of mutual benefits and compulsion of power. In short, political parties underwent a gradual transformation from “policy-oriented parties to office seeking

29 Sridharan, n.6, pp.5418-5420.
parties.” The ideological differences between parties are now, minimal and hence, they are likely to adopt the same mixture of policies, when in power. These alliances are more pragmatic than ideological, which make boundaries of parties highly flexible and permeable.²²

**The Office of Indian Prime Minister in the Regimes of NDA and UPA**

From the period of Jawaharlal Nehru to Manmohan Singh, the office of Prime Minister experienced ups and downs in prestige and authority, under the influence of changing fortunes of political party in the office.³³ In parliamentary system, the Prime Minister (PM) is the real executive head and entire administration revolves around him. Richard Crossman terms it the parliamentary form of government, as ‘the prime ministerial form of government’.³⁴

The Prime Minister office underwent changes, in terms of strength, stature, influence and authority, during the last decade. It is because, the transformation of one-party rule to multi-party system and phenomenon of ‘hung Parliament.’ In coalition/alliance politics, Prime Minister remains under the constant vigil from the allies. Even though, he cannot select his own team (Council of Ministers) nor can reshuffle the Cabinet at his own will. The consent of the allies plays a key role in the formation of government and decision making process. In short, the power shifted from Prime Minister, to an “extra constitutional body.” For example, the Steering Committee of United Front, Coordination Committee of NDA and National Advisory Committee (NAC) of UPA acted or behaved like a ‘supreme commander’ over the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister worked as a chief executive officer, who merely endured the decisions of extra-constitutional body such as Steering Committee/Coordination Committee/NAC.³⁵

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²² Hasan, n.9, pp.246-248.
In other words, the supreme political power of Prime Minister, in practice, became subject to multi-party coalition, power sharing arrangements.\textsuperscript{36} No doubt, Atal Bihari Vajpayee emerged as consensual leader of the NDA in 1998 and 1999, who survived for almost a full term. But, it did not detract from the fact that Vajpayee faced lot of hiccups in managing the coalition government, because of differences in ideology, orientation, perspective and perceptions of the importance of one’s own political role in the political arena. These factors were the causes of growing difficulties within the NDA.\textsuperscript{37}

On the formation of Vajpayee government in 1998, Jayalalitha was making NDA coalition vulnerable, from day one, by demanding “specific portfolio (Finance Ministry) for specific person” on the one hand and action against her political rivals, on the other.\textsuperscript{38} A. B. Vajpayee forced by allies such as AIADMK and Trinamool Congress (TC), to perform two political dances, one in South and another in North-East. In South, Jayalalitha, Chief, AIADMK asked Vajpayee/BJP to remove the Karunannidhi government. In West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee would not be satisfied anything less than dismissal of Jyoti Basu ministry.\textsuperscript{39} Further, by dropping the name of Jaswant Singh as Finance Minister from Union Cabinet at last minute, showed that Vajpayee’s inability to induct somebody of his choice, in Council of Ministers. It revealed the pulls and pressures, he was subjected to. The allocation of portfolio to the alliance partners was a tortuous task for the PM, with an impossible tight rope to walk.\textsuperscript{40}

A.B. Vajpayee was not free from stresses and strains, in his second term despite having comfortable majority in 13\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha of 1999.\textsuperscript{41} The partners of BJP roughly contributed forty percentage Lok Sabha seats in the NDA kitty, began jockeying for plum Cabinet posts. The DMK, PMK, MDMK and ADMK (MGR), demanded five Cabinet rank ministers and four posts of minister of state. Besides, the DMK tried hard to get Communication and Petroleum portfolios. Mamata

\textsuperscript{37} Roy, n.17, p.18.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{The Indian Express}, 14 and 17 April 1998.
\textsuperscript{39} N.A. Karim, “The Pity of Prime Ministership”, \textit{The Indian Express}, 19 March 1998.
\textsuperscript{40} Editorial, “Portfolio Pragmatism”, \textit{The Indian Express}, 21 March 1998.
Banerjee was keen for Transport Ministry. The Shiv Sena also flexed its muscles to increase its representation in Council of Ministers. Atal Bihari Vajpayee initially planned to induct fifty five to fifty eight ministers, but under the compulsions of coalition politics, a ‘Jumbo Cabinet’, of seventy one members took oath of the office. Every fifth member of Parliament (MP) from NDA was a minister.

However, Vajpayee ministry got off an uncertain start, when, three Shiv Sena ministers refused to assume charge of their respective offices. Subhash Desai, Shiv Sena, spokesman stated that “they are not resigning, but will take charge until the desired portfolios to be allotted.”42 The Prime Minister pleased everybody, by accommodating as many as possible, as ministers. In a way, these circumstances betrayed the hope that Vajpayee would provide leadership that was driven by good sense rather than political expediency.43 Despite coalition hiccups, Vajpayee was the first Prime Minister of coalition government who completed its full term. He was determined to make the coalition experience successful. That is why; Vajpayee adopted a “strategy of adjustments and compromise”, in situation, where any coalition partner could bring down the government, if it felt ignored or unrewarded for its support to the coalition government. Therefore, Vajpayee adopted a mild, but ‘indeterminate style of functioning, better known as ‘Vajpayee’s functioning.’ The result was that on several occasions, he rolled back, what he announced publicly, presenting numerous examples of flip and flop.44

On the positive side, A.B. Vajpayee proved that he was a national leader worthy of prime ministership that he could influence, not always successfully, his Sangh Parivar (RSS) and managed to control alliance contradictions through accommodations and compromises. The heavy burden of his office, coupled with the task of sublimating his Hindutva hard liners. In December 2000, he advised to restrain Ayodhya agitationists, until the Supreme Court decided the matter. Of course, it was not easy for the BJP national leadership, particularly its Home Minister, L.K. Advani would ‘duumvirate’ Vajpayee, who managed a coalition of

42 The Telegraph, 10, 13 and 14 October 1999.
44 Roy, n.17, p.19.
large number of parties, big and small, which had very little in common by way of ideologies and policies.\textsuperscript{45}

In contrast, the Congress Party and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh dealt with lesser number of allies and supporters, than unwieldy twenty four parties’ strong conglomeration of Vajpayee. But, the task of UPA-I and II was not less difficult in 2004 and 2009. In the new dispensation, the asymmetry between bigger constituents, the Congress and the others were not as vast, as the case with the outgoing coalition of the NDA.\textsuperscript{46} The new big three allies of UPA-I, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Chief, RJD, Sharad Pawar, President of NCP and DMK, President M. Karunanidhi, had twenty one members of Parliament, nine members of Parliament and fifteen members of Parliament respectively, in the popular House, were lobbying for key berths in the Cabinet. Lalu Prasad Yadav demanded Defence Ministry and special package for Bihar. The other allies of Congress Party such as Ram Vilas Paswan and Shibu Soren, also put pressures on Indian National Congress (INC) for prestigious Cabinet portfolios.\textsuperscript{47} The partners of UPA-I desired more and more portfolios, on the one side, Congress President, Sonia Gandhi refused the post of Prime Minister, after 14\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections in 2004, on the other. Sonia Gandhi proposed, the name of Manmohan Singh as the Prime Minister of UPA-I, who was not even a light weight leader of the Congress Party. Manmohan Singh was in the office because of his ‘loyalty’ to party chief.\textsuperscript{48} In other words, Manmohan Singh became Prime Minister only because; Sonia Gandhi decided not to accept the highest post of the country, that rightfully belonged to her. The main reason for her renunciation was the unspeakably inflamed atmosphere, by the BJP stalwarts and some others created over the issue of her foreign birth.\textsuperscript{49} But, Sonia Gandhi, controlled government as well as party, by holding chairpersonship of NAC and the convener of two committees, that is, coordination committee of UPA-I and coordination committee of UPA and Left parties.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{47} The \textit{Indian Express}, 21-22 May 2004.
\textsuperscript{49} Inder Malhotra, “India’s Leadership Vacuum”, \textit{The Tribune}, 3 October 2008.
\textsuperscript{50} Arora, n.41, pp.83-84.
It deserves to be reiterated, that the office of the Prime Minister during UPA regimes, completely devalued. It is not only that Manmohan Singh owed his job to Sonia Gandhi, on the one hand, all Congress ministers looked towards party’s President for their continuation in office, but not towards Prime Minister (PM), on the other. Sonia Gandhi had power without responsibility and Prime Minister, was shouldering responsibility without real powers. The functioning of the central government was also affected by an unnatural ‘dual control system’, i.e. every ally or group in UPA looked towards Sonia Gandhi for final words. In this situation, the UPA allies were not following the principle of ‘collective responsibility.’ Every party or group, in the central government was considering itself as an equal partner of the Congress Party. Further, outside partner Left parties had differences with UPA-I government on economic policies, which influenced the functioning of the Prime Minister office. Consequently, newly formed Manmohan Singh government in May 2004, took first decision to disband Ministry of Disinvestment and placed under the Ministry of Finance under the pressures of CPI and CPI (M). The Congress Party in principle agreed with Left Front that disinvestment/ privatization would continue with human face (for detail see table 5.3). Consequently, the Indian stock market indices collapsed by six percentages, which was one of the sharpest, fell ever in a single day. On the whole, the UPA-I government stood for unprincipled alliance, which ran through “three remote controls”, firstly, super PM (Sonia Gandhi) secondly, CPI (M)/Left Front and thirdly, DM (‘dagi mantri’/tainted ministers) namely, M. Taslimuddin, M.A. Fatimi, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Shibu Soren etc.

The presence of ‘tainted ministers’, in the Union Cabinet fit badly with the indubitable (cannot be doubted) integrity of the Prime Minister, who unconvincingly attributed it to the requirements of coalition politics. In the past, the Communist parties found such elements unacceptable in politics, but they remained quiescent in order to keep the BJP at bay. The appearance of tainted ministers was testimony to the “criminalization of politics”, increasingly evident over the years with entry into

51 The Economic Times, 21 January 2006.
53 The Times of India, 14 December 2004.
The NDA promptly accused Manmohan Singh led UPA-I, plunging new depths in Indian politics, by making tainted people ministers in the Union government. The UPA retorted that NDA too had ministers, like L.K. Advani and M.M. Joshi, who were charge-sheeted in criminal cases. The issue gradually died down.

Further, much debated Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal, signed on 15 July 2005, dented the credibility of Manmohan Singh government. It was viciously opposed by both, within and outside the UPA-I. In the initial stages, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Defence Minister were explaining to Americans and others, that deal could not be operationalised, due to political differences among the coalition partners. In a way, the Congress Party was facing political isolation, because its allies were not ready to stand by the Civil Nuclear Deal at the cost of losing power at the Centre.

Later on, Manmohan Singh ministry decided to go ahead with nuclear deal despite threats of withdrawal of support from the central government by Left parties. The CPI, CPI (M) and others felt cheated by the UPA-I government conduct over the deal, and by the extent to which it deviated from Common Minimum Programme (CMP). In this episode, Indian polity took u-turn from ‘Mandal-Masjid’ brand of politics to non-emotive development related issues such as Indo-US Nuclear Deal occupied center stage, that is, it was about ‘bijli, sadak and paani’ (electricity, road and water). Digvijay Singh, senior Congress leader said;

\[\text{We are only trying to provide bijli (electricity) for our future generations, only if there is power, there can be development, why should anyone object to that.}\]

Finally, after a gap of three years, on 10 October 2008, India and USA operationalised Civil Nuclear Deal by signing 123 Agreement. The accord was legally binding on both sides as stated by Pranab Mukherjee, Minister for External

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55 Thakurta  and Raghuraman, n.52, p.82.
Affairs. The signing of deal was signal for the opening the door to import nuclear technology and fuel from the USA, after a gap of thirty four years. In simple words, it was first step towards civil nuclear cooperation and trade between India and America, which was paving the way for the entry of American companies into Indian nuclear market.\textsuperscript{58} The critics of the deal such as Left parties and the BJP argued that it would compromise the country’s sovereignty and its ability to develop nuclear weapon programmes.

The story did not end here, the other issues that rankled with Lefts was, Manmohan Singh government’s decision to vote against Iran in IAEA at time, when the Bush administration was exerting considerable pressure on Iran to stop developing its nuclear facilities.\textsuperscript{59} The Left parties considered it as pro-American stand and warned Manmohan Singh ministry to remain steadfast to its commitment to pursue an independent foreign policy. Moreover, Manmohan Singh government completed his first term from 2004-2009 with coalition hiccups. Not surprisingly, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s second term in 2009 was widely interpreted as a mandate for change and a style of governance, that placed a premium on probity, efficiency and progressive policies. It is interesting to note that, there was no surprise in the formation of UPA-II ministry in May 2009, which turned out to be a blend of experience and youth. The Prime Minister did not entirely had his way, was evident from public wrangling for Cabinet berths to inordinate delay in the formation of government in May 2009.\textsuperscript{60}

The Congress and its allies got almost clear mandate with 262 seats in 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections 2009, but the formation of Council of Ministers, was still tough and tedious task for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi. The principal partners of UPA-II as DMK and Trinamool Congress (TC), had eighteen and nineteen members of Parliament, respectively in the popular House, kept Congress Party on toes by seeking more and more ministerial berths. The DMK sought nine ministerial berths and Mamata Banerjee desired one more minister than


\textsuperscript{59} Thakurta and Raghuraman, n.52, p.102.

\textsuperscript{60} Editorial, “Blend of Youth and Experience”, \textit{The Hindu}, 29 May 2009.
the DMK. The TC further, demanded President’s rule in West Bengal.\textsuperscript{61} In other words, the ministry formation carried out the burden of unusually high expectations. After long negotiations between the Congress and the DMK, M. Karunanidhi accepted the INC offer of seven ministerial berths, including three cabinet berths, and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee got Railway Ministry.\textsuperscript{62}

\textbf{The Party Wise Berth in Council of Ministers of UPA-II}

![Pie chart showing the distribution of ministerial berths among different parties.]

\vspace{0.5cm}

By and large, the DMK and Trinamool Congress (TC) managed to get their men and women in Council of Ministers after hard bargaining. It was bound to happen, because no party got an absolute majority in the Lower House.\textsuperscript{63} In the war of berths in 2009, four southern states, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, got twenty six ministers out of seventy eight. Tamil Nadu topped the list with ten ministers, including P. Chidambaram and G.K. Vasan of Congress. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh did not get representation in the Union Cabinet but four persons were placed as ministers of state in Council of Ministers.\textsuperscript{64}

It shows the helplessness of Prime Minister and Congress President, in relation to the coalition partners, who could not control even their own party ministers (Congress). For example, no minister was removed from central government for non-performance or impropriety,\textsuperscript{65} except Natwar Singh,\textsuperscript{66} till the

\textsuperscript{61} The Times of India, 22 May 2009 and The Tribune, 22 May 2009.
\textsuperscript{63} The Tribune, 29 May 2009.
\textsuperscript{64} The Hindu, 29 May 2009 and The Times of India, 29 May 2009.
\textsuperscript{66}
Mumbai terror attack in November 2008. In a way, several coalition colleagues in Union Cabinet worked as Prime Minister for their respective ministries. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh could not exercise his power to review or disapprove the functioning of wayward nominee of a coalition partner. Some of the allies acted, if they had a licence to be indifferent to ethical considerations. It was just that these leaders did not feel, they had the ‘elbow room’ of Lok Sabha members to pull up on that errant minister.67

The 2G spectrum scam, which amounted to a fraud of 176 lakh crores (see table 5.5), showed that the Prime Minister was in poor light, reflecting how little control he had, on one side, and patriarch, M. Karunanidhi, met Sonia Gandhi to ensure A. Raja’s continuance in his ministry (Telecom Minister), on the other.68 The silence and inaction of Manmohan Singh against A. Raja was questioned by Supreme Court itself. In fact, it was an extra ordinary lenience showed to A. Raja, by way of delaying the probe against him for as long as fifteen months, that impelled the Supreme Court to raise questions about the conduct of Prime Minister.

Ashok Chawan, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, involved in Adarsh Housing Society scam, and A. Raja, Union Minister for Tele-Communication, forced to resign, when it became clear that there was no other way of protecting them in position of power anymore. Meanwhile, both the Houses of Parliament came to a standstill from first day of the winter session in December 2010,69 with the opposition parties demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe in the allegation on 2G spectrum allocation.70 Similarly, Karnataka Chief Minister, B.S.

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66 Natwar Singh was removed from Ministry of External Affair, because his name figured in food-for oil scam in August 2006 by Volcker Committee of UNO. He and his son Jagat Singh got lucrative contracts from Iraq government. Later on, they were expelled from Congress Party and joined Samajwadi Party.
67 Khare, n.65.
69 The winter session of Parliament washed out in December 2010, due to rigid posture adopted by both the UPA-II and the opposition parties, particularly the NDA over the demand to appoint JPC to probe 2G spectrum scam. The logjam caused a loss of 7.8 crores per day to the national exchequer. That means, nearly 172 crores of Indian taxpayer money went down to drains. The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha only managed to function for couple of hours on 9 November 2010, out of twenty three sittings. This was deeply disturbing because of the victim in entire episode was parliamentary democracy?
Yedurappa\textsuperscript{71} of BJP, the principal opposition party at the Centre, fought a fierce tactical battle to continue in office.

Manmohan Singh’s government was put on tenterhook by Mamata Banerjee, Union Railway Minister in UPA-II, who not only influenced major decisions of the Council of Ministers, but also froze them. Firstly, Mamata Banerjee violated the principle of ‘collective responsibility,’ by opposing Union Cabinet decisions to impose a ban on the Maoists and decided to deploy paramilitary forces in West Bengal. The furious Banerjee came out against the decision and asked her party’s central minister to visit\textsuperscript{72} Lalgarh.\textsuperscript{73} Apart from this, the ruling Congress was compelled to swallow the bitter pills, both at the national and international level, by shelving various important policies under pressure of Mamata Banerjee. She literally forced the Prime Minister to cancel the Teesta Water Sharing Treaty with Bangladesh, blocked \textit{Lok Pal} legislation and opposed FDI in retail sector as well as Pension Bill etc. Further, Mamata Banerjee, threatened to pull out of UPA-II, when central government announced hike in petrol and diesel prices in November 2011.

Recently, Trinamool Congress’, West Bengal government planned to rename the \textit{Indira Bhawan} to \textit{Nazrul Bhawan} in Kolkata, to honour a Bengali poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, which was objected by state unit of Congress Party.\textsuperscript{74} The worst movement for ruling coalition came, when Mamata Banerjee got Dinesh Trivedi of her party, Railway Minster sacked, without passing the Railway Budget. Dinesh Trivedi was sacked due to presenting reformative Railway Budget (increase railway

\textsuperscript{71} There were several allegations against B.S. Yeddyurappa, CM, Karnataka. One of the major allegation that his sons, B.Y. Raghavendra and B.Y. Vijayendra as well as his son-in-law, R.N. Sohan Kumar, received rupees twenty crores from a Bellary based mining firm as part of deal that involved the sale of a six-acre plot in high profile information technology park in Bangalore.

\textsuperscript{72} Bhambrhi, n.56, p.39.

\textsuperscript{73} The crossfire between joint forces and Maoists took place at Lalgarh, west Midnapore district, West Bengal, where law and order situation was deteriorating day, by day. Meanwhile, the genocide perpetrated by the CPI (M) cadre at Nandigram, took fourteen lives. Under the protection of police, CPI (M) armed cadres in police uniforms on 14 March 2007, raped number of women. Consequently, Mamata Banerjee raised her voice against injustice and aired the slogan ‘maa, mati and manush’ (mother, earth and men) against injustice and began her fight for land acquisition at Singur. She fasted for twenty six days against the acquisition of the multi-cropped 997 acres of agriculture land. The land grabbing action of Left Front affected mostly poor Muslim peasants. It appeared that after Nandigram carnage, the Left Front lost its credibility and led splendid victory for Trinamool Congress in 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha and later on state assembly elections, in Amiya. K. Chaudhuri, “Mapping a Political Challenge: West Bengal 2009”, in Wallace and Roy, n.3, pp.193-211.

\textsuperscript{74} Rajesh Ramachandran, “PM Stuck with the Wrong Ally”, \textit{Mail Today}, 5 January 2012 and Kalyani Shankar, “Allies in New Delhi, Rivals in Kolkata”, \textit{The Pioneer}, 6 January 2012.
fare). Mukul Roy became the new Rail Minister, who reversed some of the positive initiatives of previous minister and running the Railway Ministry from Kolkata until partnership between Trinamool Congress (TC) and Congress Party ended abruptly and bitterly on the issue of FDI in retail sector.\(^75\) Therefore, it was very difficult to assess whether Mamata Banerjee was in the opposition or in the Union government. There were no harmonious relations between the Congress and TC during the tenure of UPA-II, because, Congress being a national party wanted an upper hand, while, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, with her giant killer image, was equally assertive. The ego on the both sides was the basic reason for clash.\(^76\)

The National Conference (NC) Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah was sharing power with the UPA-II, put pressure on central government for lifting Armed Force Special Power Act (AFSPA) in Jammu and Kashmir.\(^77\) The NC expressed reservations over National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) establishment. Omar Abdullah stated that there was no discussion with the Centre on the subject (NCTC).\(^78\) The NCTC would be placed under Intelligence Bureau (IB), which was not covered under legislative control, the point raised by the leadership of non-Congress ruled states and others. Mamata Banerjee, another trouble maker ally of UPA-II, reacted sharply and went one step ahead by joining hands with six opposition Chief Ministers, such as Naveen Patnaik-Odisha, J. Jayalalitha-Tamil Nadu, Nitish Kumar-Bihar, Narendra Modi-Gujarat, Shivraj Singh Chouhan-Madhya Pradesh and P.K. Dhumal-Himachal Pradesh, opposed NCTC on the plea that it would violate the principles of federalism. Mamata Banerjee appealed to the Prime Minister to review and withdraw the decision.\(^79\)

\(^75\) Nirmal Sandhu, “Breaking the Coalition Logjam, Finally”, *The Tribune* (Yearend Special), 30 December 2012.
\(^76\) Shankar, n.74.
\(^77\) *The Tribune*, 28 October 2011.
\(^78\) The National Counter Terrorism Center was first proposed aftermath of November 2008 Mumbai attacks. The primary objective to establish NCTC was to curb terrorism and create coordination among counter-terrorism efforts throughout the country. It will have central council, which include Director and three joint Directors. The heads of the anti-terrorist organization of each state, will be represented in it. The officers shall have power to arrest and search suspected persons under section 43A of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967. There is provision for setting-up of inter-state intelligence support teams (INSIST). It can seek information, documents, reports transcripts, cyber info from any agency.
\(^79\) *The Tribune*, 18 and 22 February 2012.
In brief, the ministers and alliance partners, worked at cross purposes. The cohesiveness of UPA-II, as an alliance itself was in doubt. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) was not happy with Congress Party, because it attacked Sharad Pawar, President, NCP, and Union Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, over the issue of price rise of essential commodities. The Trinamool Congress and the DMK, too had its grudges with the Congress Party. The DMK was close to pulling out from the coalition in the wake of 2G scam arrests. Mamata Banerjee again put the Prime Minister in embarrassing situation by refusing to accompany him, on his visit to Dhaka.

Manmohan Singh expressed his helplessness on many occasions, by saying that “I do not have a magic wand to solve the problems of corruption or inflation.” Further, the growing rivalry between P. Chidambaram, Finance Minister and Pranab Mukherjee was distracting the government and de-moralizing the Indians. Chidambaram, in an interview to the Wall Street Journal, on 18 January 2011 said that;

There is indeed a governance deficit in some areas and perhaps there is ethical deficit. Under pressure, he clarified that, he was referring to a period before the UPA government.

The case of tussles between two heavy weight ministers of UPA-II, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Home Minister P. Chidambaram, on controversial office memorandum (note) on 2G spectrum issue, revealed inability of Prime Mininter Manmohan Singh to control his colleagues. The standoff between ministers could be overcome only by a strong political leadership. Thus, the Prime Minister was found wanting in taking remedial measures, but Sonia Gandhi’s intervention settled the score between the two. It is worthy to note that Pranab Mukherjee or Chidambaram or Arjun Singh, Kamal Nath, or Kapil Sibal etc were respectful

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towards the opinion and wishes of the Prime Minister due to Sonia Gandhi, who was supporting Manmohan Singh in his present position.

Furthermore, on 3 March 2011, the Supreme Court quashed the appointment of P.J. Thomas as (charge sheeted in a corruption case) Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC), which also, brought embarrassment for the UPA-II. The Supreme Court verdict was a serious indictment of the central government, at the highest level because, the selection of Thomas was made by a panel, which included Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister and P. Chidambaram, Home Minister, by overruling the objections made by third member of the panel—the Leader of Opposition, Sushma Swaraj. On 27 February 2011, a leading newspaper published a front page story, accusing officials of the Finance Ministry for leaking the Radia tapes, which too questioned the credibility of the UPA-II government.

The upshot of the above description is that the mood of the allies ranged from sullen (DMK), to angry (NCP), to contumaciously rebellious (TC). The SP and the BSP offered outside support, after the exit of Trinamool Congress on 18 September 2012 and DMK 19 March 2013 from the UPA-II. They had an opportunity to dictate an agenda that worked well politically for them. Both parties (SP and BSP), appeared as ‘wheeler-dealers’, extracting favour from the Congress in return for support to the central government. Therefore, the UPA-II regime at the Centre consisted of ‘disparate groups,’ which had nothing in common nor have any agreed common agenda of governance like previous governments of the NDA and the UPA-I for the country. It clearly indicated that the government was forced to work on the basis of “ad-hocism in governance.”

As far as, the Prime Minister is concerned, Manmohan Singh in his first term from 2004-2009, with his reassuring calm and ‘professorial gravitas’, lived up to his image as wise man of the East at global high tables. At home, his so called “inexperience in the dark arts of real politic,” was his selling point in a coalition

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83 Nayyar and Ray, n.80a, p.21.
86 Bhambhari, n.56, p.47.
dominated by reasoned political beasts. His second avatar, as Prime Minister was disastrous. Manmohan Singh had a huge letdown, failing to live up to the expectations he raised in 2009.\(^87\)

The UPA-II was anything, but a team that gave the civil war raging within the government, with ministers battling on the issues as climate change to Bt. Brinjal, to tackling the Maoist menace. The ‘joke’ doing the round in South Block was that the UPA-II was ‘infested’ with ministers, wanting to head another ministry, of ministers, who would rather be Chief Minister in their states, that is, no other government had nine former Chief Ministers in the Union Cabinet. But, they had nothing to show out of their experience, in this term of performance. Manmohan Singh competed with his own ‘halo of the men’, who freed the economy from the bondage of licence raj.\(^88\)

Manmohan Singh occupied the most powerful office of the country and his role provided enough room to exercise his discretion of powers. If, he was not to be included in the category of other Congress Premiers like J.L. Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and P.V. Narsimha Rao, on the one hand, on the other, Manmohan Singh did not belong to the category of “stop-gap Prime Minister”, such as Chandra Shekhar, H.D. Deve Gowda and Inder Kumar Gujral. If, Prime Minister were constrained by Sonia Gandhi’s role in politics and government, Manmohan Singh was only one, who emulated A.B. Vajpayee. After all, Vajpayee too was checked by the Rastrriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and other outfits of the ‘Sangh Parivar’ (RSS family). It was easy for Manmohan Singh to dismiss Advani’s charges as the weakest Premier of the country, by countering that how strong was L.K. Advani, who was forced to resign as President of BJP after his controversial remarks\(^89\) on Jinnah, at Jinnah’s Mausoleum in Karachi.

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\(^{89}\) L.K. Advani visited Jinnah Mausoleum, at Karachi, Pakistan, on 9 June 2005 and offering floral tributes to him by inscribing the message in the visitor book. Advani described Jinnah as an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, with references to his address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August 1947 was a classic, a forceful espousal of a secular state. In a way, similar type of statement went to electronic and print media. There was breaking news in India, Advani called ‘Jinnah secular,’ Advani described Jinnah as an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.
By and large, Manmohan Singh government’s was far more stable than the regimes of V.P. Singh, Chandra Shekhar, H.D. Deve Gowda and Inder Kumar Gujral. Manmohan Singh was now, the longest serving Premier in twenty five years. For a person often described as non-political, someone not born into the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, his achievements were his own. The critics within Congress and outside tried their best to target him. Such was his aura that those who attacked him, were decimated, whether it was Arjun Singh, senior Congress leader and HRD Minister during UPA-I or BJP’s L.K. Advani or even the Lefts etc.

Recently, the political ambitions of Manmohan Singh and AICC chief were at clash point and the equations were changed after nine years in government. The spiraling trust deficit between Prime Minister and Congress Party’s President, was widening which generated a crisis in government as well in the party. It came into picture, soon after, the resignations of Ashwani Kumar and Pawan Kumar Bansal, as Law Minister and Railway Minister, respectively. On this scene, Congress Party was quick to give credit to Sonia and Rahul Gandhi rather than to Manmohan Singh. The Congress leadership believed that Prime Minister became an electoral liability and need to be replaced. On 5 April 2013, during the Padam Shree Awards ceremony, at Rashtrapati Bhawan, Manmohan Singh told to media that he was neither conferring, nor ruling out another term, throwing his hat into the ring for an unprecedented third term in the office.

Finally, the ministries, headed by Manmohan Singh and A.B. Vajpayee were handicapped by acute dependence on regional players. Both the leaders, however, had the capacity to take others along and resilience to carry on with their coalition regimes for full term. Despite the fact, Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh enjoyed considerable respect from coalition partners. The two Prime Ministers, at time, had unity. It generated heated debate in the Indian media about Jinnah and his role in India’s freedom movement. On Pakistani side, the word secular is a slur. To a large body of Pakistanis, a secular state means, against religion or a state at war with religion, any religion. Ultimately, he resigned from party presidentship, in L.K. Advani, *My Country My Life*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co, 2008, pp.813-817.

Bhamhri, n,48, p.241.
Aiyar, n.88, p.20.
*The Sunday Guardian*, 3 June 2012.
*The Tribune*, 6 April 2013.
to roll back their policies and decisions under walkout threats held out by one alliance partner or another. Both, the head of governments, could not choose their teams, a prerogative of any Prime Minister, should enjoy in parliamentary form of government. Generally, the ministers were nominated by regional satraps and often undesirable elements found berth in the Union Cabinet, much to the discomfort of both Manmohan Singh and A.B. Vajpayee.  

**Political Governance and Economic Performance of NDA and UPA: A Comparison**

India witnessed frequent shift in public policies and programmes, as well as strategy for governance of the country since 1996. As a result, values and attitudes of those responsible for governance increasingly became unpredictable. The country was not a good experience and experiments of coalition/alliance politics and ‘good governance’ over the past one decade. The major problem facing today is, how best and in what way the new pattern of coalition government can be made, a better instrument for good governance.  

Today, good governance is the need of the hour. It is absolutely necessary to have good governance with well defined objectives around national agenda. Therefore, everybody has her or his own definition of what constitute good governance, which would include slew of issues such as greater transparency and accountability, greater federalism in polity and economy, better distribution of the benefits of economic growth among the weaker sections of the society etc. Whether coalition governments led by the NDA or the UPA delivered better political governance in India? It is not an easy task to answer this. The BJP headed NDA and Congress led UPA in their first innings in the government prepared National Agenda for Governance (NAG) and National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), respectively with the consultation of their partners

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97 Thakurta and Raghuraman, n.52, p.447.
respectively (see table 5.3). Both the national parties ensured their respective allies that they run administration according to the pre-fixed programmes.

Table: 5.3 A Comparison of Common Agenda of Governance of the NDA in 1998 and the UPA-I in 2004 Governments

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To give stable, honest, transparent and efficient government.</td>
<td>To provide a government, which would corruption-free, transparent and accountable at all time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fiscal Policy/ Capital Markets/ Economic Reforms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) The NDA agenda ensured that Indian economy would grow on the principles of “India should be built by Indian.” The government would reappraise and revitalize the reforms and give a strong ‘swadeshi thrust’. The GDP would grow at the rate of seven to eight percentage rate in sustained manner. (B) Increase saving up to thirty percentage of the GDP.</td>
<td>(A) The economy would grow at least seven to eight percentage rate in sustained manner. (B) Eliminating the revenue deficit of the Centre by 2009. (C) Introduce VAT. (D) The FII would be encouraged and SEBI would strengthen further. (E) The economic reforms need of the hour, which would be carried out in agriculture, industry and service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) The NDA government would earmark sixty percentage of the plan funds for and effect public investment in agriculture, rural development and irrigation etc. (B) The crop insurance schemes would be introduced. (C) Special effort would be made to boost animal husbandry and dairying.</td>
<td>(A) The public investment in agriculture research, extension, rural infrastructure and irrigation was stepped up. (B) To ease the burden of debt and high interest rate on farm loan. (C) The crop and livestock insurance schemes would be made more effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The NAG and NCMP were compiled on the eve of the formation of the governments (NDA and UPA-I) after taking partners into confidence. In 1999, the BJP led NDA contested elections on common manifesto, which was improved version of NAG. In 2009, Congress Party led UPA did not issue any CMP before and after the polls.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Policy</th>
<th>Water Resources</th>
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</table>
| (A) The NDA would adopt a national water policy, which will settle water disputes among the states and their time bound implementation. | (A) The assessment of the feasibility of linking the rivers of the country, starting with the south bound rivers.  
(B) The Cauvery water dispute would be settled amicably at the earliest.  
(C) To encourage harvesting of rain water. |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>‘Berozgari Hatao’</th>
<th>Employment</th>
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</table>
| Eradicate unemployment and generate more avenues for employment. | (A) The UPA-I planned to enact the National Employment Guarantee Act to provide a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment.  
(B) Revamp the functioning of Khadi and Village Industries Commission and launch new programmes for the modernization of coir, handlooms power looms and garments etc.  
(C) Expanding credit facilities, small scale industry and self-employment. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Security and Price Stability</th>
<th>Food and Nutrition Security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (A) The NDA would ensure food security for all; create a hunger free India in next five years.  
(B) Introduce reforms in the PDS as well as ensure price stability by necessary legislations. | (A) The UPA-I would work out a comprehensive medium term strategy for food and nutrition security.  
(B) To strengthen Public Distribution System (PDS), particularly in the poorest and backward blocks of the country.  
(C) To improve the functioning of the FCI. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Education</th>
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| (A) Gradually increase non-governmental and governmental spending on education up to six percentage of the GDP.  
(B) The primary education up to the level of fifth standard would be made free and compulsory. | (A) To raise public spending on education of six percentage of GDP, with at least half amount being spent on primary and secondary sectors.  
(B) De-communalization of education that set in past five year.  
(C) The National Commission on Education would be constituted. |

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<tr>
<th>Constitutional and Legal Reforms</th>
<th>Regional Development, Centre-State Relations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) To set up Commission to review the Constitution of India.</td>
<td>(A) To set up a new Commission to review Center-State relations, keeping in view with new changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(B) The NDA would take suitable steps to ensure harmonious Center-State relations in the light of the recommendation of Sarkaria Commission.
(C) To introduce necessary electoral reforms on the basis of Goswami Committee recommendations.
(D) The NDA would set-up National Judicial Commission, which recommend judicial appointments in Supreme Court and High Court and draw up a code of ethic for judiciary.

(B) To make National Development Council (NDC) more effective instrument of ‘cooperative federalism.’ Further, Inter-State Council would also be activated.
(C) To establish Backward State Grant fund that would be used to create productive assets in backward states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Assam.
(D) A flood prone area development programme/flood control mechanism would be started, fully supported by central government in the area of inter-state and international rivers.
(E) The UPA-I government was committed to redress growing regional imbalances in both states and within states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Security and Nuclear Policy</th>
<th>Defence and Internal Security</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) The NDA was committed to ensuring the safety and security of all citizens across the country.</td>
<td>(A) Modernization of the armed forces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(B) The government would re-evaluate the nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons.</td>
<td>(B) To maintain a credible nuclear weapon programme.</td>
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<td>(C) The issue of one-rank, one pension would be re-examined.</td>
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<td>(D) Repealing POTA, while strictly enforcing existing laws.</td>
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<tr>
<th>FDI</th>
<th>Industry/Public Sector</th>
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<tr>
<td>(A) To encourage FDI in core areas, so that, to supplement the national efforts and discourage FDI in non-priority areas.</td>
<td>(A) The FDI was continuing in areas of infrastructure, high technology as well as export, where local assets and employment would be created on significant scale.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(B) The economic reforms were continuing with human face.</td>
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<td>(C) The profit-making public sector companies not to be privatized.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(D) All privatization to be considered on transparent and consultative case by case basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(E) The ‘Navratana’ companies to be retained in PSUs while, they raised resources from the capital market.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(F) The UPA government would never take decision on Employees Provident Fund (EPF), without consultations and approval of the EPF Board.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lok Pal Bill</td>
<td>Administrative Reforms</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NDA government would enact the Lok Pal Bill, with adequate powers to deal with corruption charges against anyone, including the Prime Minister.</td>
<td>(A) To enact <em>Lok Pal Bill</em> into law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(B) The RTI would be made more progressive, participatory and meaningful.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(C) The Legal Aid service would be expanded.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(D) The Judicial reforms would be given a fresh momentum.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New States</th>
<th>New State</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The NDA government would give full status of statehood to Delhi, and also create Uttaranchal, Vananchal and Chattisgarh as new states.</td>
<td>The UPA-I would consider the demand for the formation of a Telangana state at appropriate time after due consultation and consensus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To prepare an appropriate legal framework for the protection of the environment.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women Reservation</th>
<th>Women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) The NDA would ensure thirty three percentage reservation of seats in Parliament and state assemblies for women.</td>
<td>(A) To introduce legislation for one-third (1/3) reservation for women in Lok Sabha and state assemblies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(B) The legislation on domestic violence and against gender discrimination would be enacted.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Social Security Measures</th>
<th>Social Security Measures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The construction of twenty lakh additional houses annually, ensures potable drinking water for all and strive to achieve health for all by diverse programmes; present a national charter for children and ensure <em>Samajik Nayay</em> (social Justice): National Charter for Social Justice for STs, SCs, and OBCs.</td>
<td>The mid day meal scheme would be introduced in primary and secondary level school, funded by central government; raise public spending on health to at least two to three percentage of the GDP; ensure availability of life saving drugs at reasonable prices; eliminate child labour, ensure facilities for schooling and extend special care to girl child; enactment of reservation act to codify all reservations. The eviction of tribal communities and other forest dwelling communities from forest area would discontinue, social security and other schemes for workers would be expanded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genuine Secularism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Panchayati Raj</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>(A) To uphold the Indian tradition of <em>sarva path samadara</em> (equal respect for all faiths).</td>
<td>(A) The funds given to states for Panchayats would neither delay, nor diverted. (B) The Gram Sabha to be empowered to emerge as the foundation of Panchayati Raj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Prasar Bharti’</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jammu and Kashmir as well as North East</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) To improve Prasar Bharti Act. (B) To restrict foreign equity holding in private television broadcasting up to twenty percentage.</td>
<td>(A) Article 370 to be respected in letter and spirit. (B) Holding dialogue with all groups and different shades of opinion in Jammu and Kashmir consultation with the state government. (C) Determined to tackle terrorism, militancy and insurgency. (D) The Northeastern Council would be strengthened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International Relations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foreign Policy and International Organization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) To promote peaceful relationship with all neighbour countries on reciprocal basis. (B) The NDA would be promoted and strengthen regional and civilian groups on the lines of SAARC and ASEAN. (C) The NDA would assert more robustly India’s national interests in WTO.</td>
<td>(A) To pursue an independent foreign policy, to promote multi-polarity in world relations. (B) Close tie-up with its neighbours especially in South Asia and strengthen SAARC. (C) To fully protect the national interests particularly of farmers in all WTO negotiations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Harmony, Welfare of Minorities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Implementation of the place of worship (special act) 1992. (B) Amend the Constitution to establish a commission for minority educational institution. (C) Adequate fund would be provided to the National Minorities Development Corporation to ensure its effective functioning. (D) To strive for recognition and promotion of Urdu language under Article 345 and 347 of the Constitution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science and Technology</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To introduce programme that strengthen</td>
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</table>
India’s vast science and technology infrastructure.

**Energy Security**
To enhance the country’s energy security in the area of oil.

and The Indian Express, 19 March 1998.*


**Notes:**
1. Three major issues of BJP as Ram Mandir (temple), Article 370 and Uniform Civil Code were not included in National Agenda for Governance (NAG).
2. The NDA fought 13th general election in 1999 on common manifesto under title “NDA Agenda for a Proud, Prosperous India: Lok Sabha 1999”; which was improved version of 1998 National Agenda of Governance.
3. In 2009 national elections, political parties in different fronts or alliances had their own election manifestos and commitments. Even Congress Party did not put out any common political programme before and after the polls.

From the above table 5.3, it is clear that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress Party, tried to appease their partners for the stability of their respective governments. That is why; the BJP dropped its core issues and emerged as a ‘new softer BJP.’ L.K. Advani, President, Bharatiya Janata Party, in his inaugural address in national executive meeting on 11-12 April 1998, at New Delhi stated that;

> The ‘New BJP’ will not be guided by the issues of yesterday, but the agenda of tomorrow…….The ‘New BJP’ will not only be the party in governance but the natural party of governance.\(^{98}\)

Therefore, the compulsion of coalition politics forced the BJP, to give up the idea of implementing its individual electoral manifesto, but to evolve a common programme for the NDA government. That is why; the BJP prepared a common minimum programme for governance, known as a National Agenda for Governance (NAG) (see table 5.3), which was acceptable to all partners of the NDA.\(^{98a}\) Similarly, the UPA did the same in May 2004 and made National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), which too appeased Left parties on the issue of economic reforms, particularly on the issue of FDI in various sectors. The NCMP included that privatization would take place on consultative, as well as case by case


\(^{98a}\) Ibid.
basis, that should increase competitiveness and not decrease, it. The NCMP kept in mind the sectional interests of the smaller constituents of the UPA. For example, to keep Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP) happy, the NCMP stated that UPA-I government would consider the demand for formation of separate Telengana state and special economic package for Bihar after its division in 2000, would be implemented expeditiously. Under the pressure of Left Front, Manmohan Singh government disbanded Ministry of Disinvestment, but it continued under the supervision of the Finance Ministry.

The NAG and the NCMP had some similarity on specific programmes/policies. The documents of both alliances fixed the target, to achieve seven to eight percentage GDP rate, increase investment in agriculture sector, raise spending on education up to six percentage of the GDP, agree to set up Commission on Centre-State relations, made commitment to enact ‘Lok Pal Bill’ and one-third (1/3) reservation for women in legislature (Woman Reservation Bill). Both the BJP and the INC were committed to maintain a credible nuclear weapon programme for the security and safety of the people, and pursue an independent foreign policy particularly, strengthen relations with neighbouring countries. Above all, the NDA and the UPA were in favour of FDI in various sectors including retail.

The fact is that the NCMP was a lengthy document, while, the NAG of 1998 contained eight-pages only. The constituents of the NDA and the UPA purportedly, signed the pre-fixed programmes (CMP), irrespective of ideological differences, on the one hand, and the smaller/ regional/junior partners of coalitions felt inconvenient and suffocated in the governments (NDA and UPA) on several occasions, on the other. The smaller/ regional parties alleged that major/senior partners did not care about the CMP and running administration on its own agenda or suitability. Even though, the opposition parties as CPI, CPI (M) and Congress Party alleged that the BJP as the major partner of the NDA government had a “hidden agenda”, for achieving its socio-political goals of Hindutva, because none of its regional partners

100 The Hindu, 28 May 2004.
ever contested elections on the Gandhi-Nehru frame-work of secularism, by
dubbing it as pseudo-secularism or pro-minorityism.\footnote{Bhambhri, n.48, p.169.}

There were large scale construction activities near disputed site in Ayodhya,
raised fear of hidden agenda to build the lord Rama Temple, revealed by Left parties.
But these allegations were denied by the BJP leadership,\footnote{Pai, n.10, p.851.} on the ground that party
still believed in genuine secularism, which found a place in the National Agenda for Governance.\footnote{Bhambhri, n.48, p.169.} The Left parties also blamed Congress Party led UPA-I government
for deviating from the NCMP and blindly followed pro-United States foreign policy
and economic reforms. The Trinamool Congress (TC) and Dravida Munnetra
Kazhagam (DMK), also expressed resentment against the UPA-II government. That
is why; many partners broke their alliances with the governments of the NDA and
the UPA. The National Conference (NC) and Lok Jan Shakti Party, withdrew
themselves from the NDA in 2002, blaming the BJP for its loss in Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections, and because of Gujarat riots, respectively.

The TRS pulled out of UPA-I in August 2006, on the issue of a separate Telangana state. In 2007, the MDMK announced its withdrawal from Manmohan Singh ministry, accusing it of neglecting the interests of Tamil Nadu in inter-state water dispute and failing to implement many central schemes in the state. The PDP fell out with the Congress over the ‘Amarnath Yatra’ (pilgrimage), row in 2008. Mufti Mohammad Sayeed’s Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) formally broke alliance from the UPA-I in January 2009, when the Congress allied with the NC, to form state government in Jammu and Kashmir.\footnote{Singh, n.19.} The Trinamool Congress, left UPA-II on 18 September 2012 against the decision to allow FDI in multi brand retail sector and other people related issues, particularly increase in the prices of diesel, petrol and limiting the subsidized number of gas cylinder (LPG) up to nine.\footnote{The Sunday Guardian, 23 September 2012.} In a similar fashion, the DMK, another most trusted and long standing ally of Congress Party walked out of the alliance on 19 March 2013 as Manmohan Singh Cabinet
failed to address the concerns expressed by it on the alleged human rights violation against Tamils in Sri Lanka.

The smaller/regional allies of both the NDA and UPA-I and II alleged that senior/larger partners (the BJP and the INC) deviated from Common Minimum Programme, putting important questions here and there, which need to be examined. Is NDA or UPA government showing any concern to implement the NAG and the NCMP and provide better governance? The first thirteen months rule of the BJP/NDA from March 1998 to April 1999, was very short to achieve goals. But, within two months, after assuming office, Vajpayee ministry conducted five underground nuclear tests at Pokharan range, between 11 and 13 May 1998. The BJP leadership claimed that the first and foremost task was to make India a nuclear weapon state—a vital commitment in every election manifesto of the party, which was fulfilled now. On this occasion, A.B. Vajpayee said;

_India is now nuclear weapon state...It is not conferment we seek, nor is it a status for other grants...It is India’s due, the right of one-sixth of humankind._

However, the Indian jubilations came to an end, when Pakistan followed suit and exploded her nuclear device at the end of May 1998. The United States, European Union and Japan, disapproved nuclear action of the NDA government and all of them imposed economic sanctions against nuclearised India. Consequently, India’s relation with major powers strained. But, the NDA government’s calculations that strained relations with the international community in the aftermath of the nuclear tests would be short lived, was later on proved true. The economic sanctions on India were counterproductive for the western countries.

The second major step taken by NDA’s Prime Minister was to normalize relation with neighbour country Pakistan. For that, A.B. Vajpayee visited Lahore

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106 The DMK chief was stepping up the pressure on central government (UPA-II) to move amendments to United States sponsored resolution on international probe into genocide by Sri Lankan troops against Tamils in the last phase of the anti-LTTE war in 2009, _The Tribune_, 19 March 2013.
107 Ibid., 20 March 2013.
108 Advani, n.89, pp.541-547.
109 Bhambrhi, n.48, p.201.
“by bus” from Amritsar to Lahore, on 20 February 1999, and signed the Lahore Declaration. However, the ‘peace bus’ was hijacked and took to Kargil War that was entirely due to the peculiar power dynamics in Pakistan. The intruders from Pakistan side were found occupying the high mountains within the Indian side of line of control (LOC) in Kargil sector of Kashmir. The Indian army launched ‘Operation Vijay’ (the counter-offensive) to liberate Indian territory. Finally, Indian soldiers achieved it on 26 July 1999, after seventy four days struggle. That day is celebrated each year as Kargil victory day or ‘Vijay Diwas’ (victory day).

Furthermore, the NDA released a brochure entitled “charter of commitments and our achievements”, which mentioned thirteen months achievements of the NDA government. It highlighted Vajpayee ministry firmed movement towards second generation reforms in the field of financial sector, infrastructure development and mobilization of additional resources through disinvestment, declicensing of 340 items of import by moving them from restricted list to OGL and constituted a Commission to Review the Constitution (NCRWC), to ensure harmonious Center-State relations etc.

Kandahar, Kargil and Kashmir exposed the severe limitations of India’s security apparatus, on the one hand and its crisis-management as well as decision-making institutions, on the other. On the whole, first NDA government became the victim of destabilization and 12th Lok Sabha dissolved in April 1999, after completing just over a year of its life.

In the second term, from October 1999 to May 2004, the NDA Cabinet had more time than earlier coalition government, to solve the problems of the country.

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111 Lahore Declaration was signed by Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his counterpart Premier Nawaz Sharif. It contained three points; (I) It reiterated the determination of both countries to implement the Shimla Agreement in letter and spirit, (II) It recognized that the nuclear dimension of the security environment of the two countries added to their responsibility for avoidance of conflicts (III) Pakistan agreed to join India in condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as well as affirming its determination to combat this menace. Furthermore, it started cross-border bus service between Lahore and New Delhi, visa relaxation, people to people contact and promote cultural activities etc. in Advani, n.89, pp.550-552.

112 Ibid., pp.563-565.


114 The five terrorist hijacked Indian Airline plane IC814 on 24 December 1999 caring 160 passengers to Kandahar, Afghanistan. The NDA ministry was forced to release three jailed terrorists in exchange for the hostages in what was widely seen as a humiliating surrender to terrorism by Indian government.

115 Kapur, n.110, p.206.
Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting presented updated version of the booklet, which highlighted the unique initiatives and landmark achievements of the National Democratic Alliance under the leadership of the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was completing his full five years uninterrupted term. It was the first non-Congress government to do so. The Prime Minister’s path-breaking visit to Pakistan, to attend the SAARC summit in India’s quest for peace, economy boom with GDP rising at rate of 8.4 percentage in second quarter of 2003-04 (see table 5.4), and foreign exchange reserves soaring past $100 billions, brought feel good factor across the country. Belying all apprehension about shrinking job market, the NDA ministry created eighty four lakhs employment and self employment opportunities every year.116

Apart from this, the NDA government continued trying to strengthen tie-up between and among major-powers. The American President, Bill Clinton’s five days visit to India in March 2000 and Indian Premier reciprocal visit to the United States in September 2000 threw the spotlight on a much improved bilateral relationship. A.B. Vajpayee delivered a speech to a joint sitting of two Houses of U.S. Congress, where he stated that his government’s objective was to reach annual growth rate of nine percentage117 (see table 5.4). On the eve of Clinton’s tour, the aforementioned controversy over Bill Clinton remarks, “most dangerous place on the earth” (Kashmir), even threatened to derail the tour, an otherwise successful trip. America quietly ceased blocking World Bank loan to India, while, retaining sanctions on U.S. supplies of military items; most other major powers resumed efforts to sell arms.

By the end of year 2000, things appeared to be returning to normal with the efforts of Vajpayee government. Russia and India concluded a large arms deal and issued a joint statement, calling for a multi-polar world, on Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit to India in October 2000. The deal included aircraft carriers, nuclear power submarines, nuclear reactors and weapons grade nuclear fuel delivery to India. In November 2000, senior Iraqi official visited New Delhi for the first time since Gulf War. This visit resulted in the country expressing displeasure with the

continuing sanctions on Iraq and concluded an arrangement to exchange ‘Indian wheat for Iraqi oil’ etc.\textsuperscript{118}

The NDA government in July 2001 further, took initiatives to normalize relations with Pakistan, by inviting military ruler/President, General Pervez Musharraf at Agra to restart peace process and to reduce tension between two countries. However, Agra summit failed to reach any conclusion, and both countries (India and Pakistan) even failed to issue a joint declaration, defining their differences. The relationship between two neighbours deteriorated after the attacks on Jammu and Kashmir Assembly and Indian Parliament on 10 October and 13 December 2001, respectively by Pakistan-based terrorist out-fits Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashka-e-Tayyaba.\textsuperscript{119} Besides, the terrorist attacks on World Trade Center, on 9 September 2001, dramatically altered the political landscape around the world, especial in South Asia.

Therefore, South Asia, became a centerpiece in efforts to eradicate terrorism. Vajpayee gave unconditional support for U.S. President Bush’s programme war on terrorism in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{120} The NDA government hoped that the aftermath of 11 September, would result in a closer relationship with Washington and would help to isolate Pakistan.\textsuperscript{121} The results of all these came as, the removal of sanctions that U.S. imposed on India, after nuclear tests in May 1998. It signalled a new trend in American foreign policy by giving priority to the issue of terrorism rather than non-proliferation.\textsuperscript{122}

The other crucial step taken by A.B. Vajpayee, was visit to China from 22-27 June 2003. More importantly, his tour signalled a potential rapprochement with China, notably with the intent to put contentious border issues aside, while, favouring areas of mutual economic interests by signing a joint declaration on “Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation between India and China”

\begin{footnotes}
\item[121] Swamy, n.119, p.174.
\item[122] Saez, n.120, p.187.
\end{footnotes}
on 23 June 2003. However, New Delhi failed to receive reciprocal Chinese recognition of India’s 1975 annexation of Sikkim like Tibet but both sides agreed to implement existing agreements on border issues including those that provided clarification of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).\textsuperscript{123}

On the domestic sphere, the BJP led NDA government tried to fulfill its promises, enlisted in the NAG by creating three new states-Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand in November 2000 and by granting full state hood status to Delhi. This legislation sparked off a new controversy not only from the opposition parties, but also within the ruling coalition in Uttar Pradesh, i.e., the questions was whether or not, Hardwar and Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh, be excluded or included in the proposed Uttaranchal hill state or not. To pacify alliance partner-SAD (B), the BJP accommodated some of the concerns of Sikh farmers belonging to Udham Singh Nagar, by exempting the proposed new state from the Land Ceiling Act applicable to the Hill state.\textsuperscript{124} Consequently, there were emergence of new alignments of political forces and new strong leadership after the split in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The leaders of ‘Janata Parivar’ (family) began to shape new political equations after the separation of a new state from Bihar. The parting ways of Ram Vilas Paswan and growing proximity between Lalu, Nitish and Sharad Yadav became inevitable in Bihar.\textsuperscript{125}

Furthermore, Vajpayee government put into action a key commitment made in NAG and the election manifesto of the NDA, by setting up a National Commission to Review the Working of Constitution, which was headed by former Chief Justice of Supreme Court M.N. Venkatachaliah. The critics argued that the review was unwarranted because the Constitution ‘stood the test of times’. The Congress Party and Communist parties, charged the BJP, for having a hidden agenda. According to them, the comprehensive review of the Constitution was designed to help the BJP, selectively tempering with Constitution and ensuring that party continued to remain in power, if the NDA coalition broke up in future. K.R.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., pp.327-328.
Narayanan, President of India, rightly pointed out “it is the Constitution that has failed us or whether it is we who have failed the Constitution.” However, the terms of reference of the Commission, left no scope for controversy. It was explicitly stated that the recommendation of the Commission would be within the framework of the parliamentary democracy, without interfering with the ‘basic structure of Constitution.’ The Commission went a step further by stating that its function was to review the working of the Constitution and not to rewrite it. One of the three of the important references of Commission was (a) political instability (b) changing Centre-State relations and (c) the pace of socio-economic changes and development. The Commission submitted its report to Prime Minister on 31 March 2002, hence doing a competent job in a remarkably short time.126

To secure the integrity and safety of country, Vajpayee government rejected Jammu and Kashmir assembly autonomy resolution,127 sponsored by ruling National Conference (which was also partner of NDA government at the Centre).128 To curb terrorist activities with firm hand particularly after the attack on Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001, the NDA government managed to pass the Bill: Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) from the joint session of both Houses-Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in March 2002. The opposition parties opposed the Bill on the ground that it was anti-minority/anti-Muslim.129 It gave sweeping power to police in investigation of suspected terrorist activities, including possibly compelling evidence from journalists.130

In order to achieve the target of seven to eight percentage GDP rate, mentioned in the NAG and 1999 election’s manifesto, the BJP distanced itself from the former plank of ‘swadeshi,’ that is, economic nationalism was not reinventing the wheels.131 The BJP made it clear in Chennai declaration,132 that the role of the

127 Jammu and Kashmir autonomy resolution passed by assembly with support of Congress Party and other opposition parties in the House. It sought pre-1953 status for the state. The posts of Governor and Chief Minister will convert into Sadre-e-Riyasat and Wazir-e-Azam, respectively, and Indian Parliament not to be empowered to amend the Constitution and procedure with respect to Jammu and Kashmir etc, in Gehlot, n.124, pp.291-293 and Swamy, n.118, p.97.
128 Ibid.
129 Advani, n.89, pp.637-640.
130 Swamy, n.119, p.168.
131 Jaffrelot, n.98, p.341.
state now transformed from a “controller to a facilitator.”¹³³ With this background, Yashwant Sinha’s, first budget during the NDA government was derided by the reformists, his second budget (February 1999) was one of the most pro-reform Budget and his Budget speech spoke of a ‘second wave of reforms.’ Soon after this, he rolled back from many of the proposals contained in his first Budget, Sinha was severely criticized for bowing to populist pressures.¹³⁴

However, in order to show its determination towards economic reforms, the Vajpayee government introduced Insurance Regulatory and Development (IRDA) Bill in December 1999, which made provision for the entry of private and foreign companies into the insurance business, ending the monopoly of the public sector, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and General Insurance Company (GIC). In February 2000, the Vajpayee Cabinet enhanced ceiling on foreign direct investments by twenty three to 100 percentage in eight sectors, including mining, film, drugs and pharmaceutical etc.¹³⁵

On the whole, notwithstanding the ‘swadeshi’ versus ‘videshi’ debate, within party and its affiliates, Vajpayee ministry was pressed hard to align the Indian economy with the world market, with some success. The ‘second generation economic reforms’ included privatization of public sector companies (except where security considerations were involved), more FDI, free trade zones, removal of quantitative restrictions on large number of tariff items, downsizing of government expenditure through voluntary retirement schemes (VRS) and fiscal restraints.¹³⁶

In 2000, the BJP led NDA government shifted towards new policy, to organize the role of sufficiently large amount of equity of Public Sector Enterprise (PSE), so as to allow the strategic partner, in the private sector to assume management control of enterprises. Under the single-minded and indefatigable leadership of Disinvestment Minister, Arun Shourie, disinvestment picked up speed

¹³² Chennai Declaration was adopted at BJP’s national council meeting in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, on 27-29 December 1999. The document spells out significant themes, reflective of the BJP’s adaptation to new market orientation, Harish Khare, “Mediating Economic Reforms: Party Politics from Bangalore to Chennai”, in Mehra, Khanna and Kueck, n.13, p.370.
¹³³ Ibid., p.371.
¹³⁴ Thakurta and Raghuraman, n.52, p.464.
¹³⁵ Jaffrelot, n.98, p.342.
¹³⁶ Dua, n.45, p.165.
between 2000-2001 and 2002-2003, a total of thirty three PSEs/PSUs sold off. These strategic sales brought in 113.15 billions to government coffers, an average 56.57 billion a year. The firms identified for privatization were two national airlines, Air India and Indian Airlines, Murti Udyog Limited, (a joint venture automobile manufacture partly owned by Suzuki) and several telecommunication companies in the row.

The other cases of strategic sale of PSUs/PSEs were BALCO, IPCL, VSNL, BHEL, NALCO (Bharat Aluminum Company, Indian Petro Chemical Corporation, Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited and National Aluminum Company, respectively) and two Centure Hotels in Mumbai. Further, the Cabinet Committee on Disinvestment proposed to sell off government equity in two public sector ‘oil companies’, HPCL and BPCL (Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, respectively). The NDA government preferred to reduce the government stake in HPCL and BPCL (fifteen percentage by offloading thirty four percent to strategic partners and two percentage at concessional rate to company employees, and thirty eight percentage stake through public offering and two percentage shares to employees respectively). However, these companies were not privatizing due to internal differences in the NDA Cabinet and Supreme Court also ruled that the HPCL and the BCPL could not be privatized without obtaining the approval of Parliament.

Hence, the disinvestment led to the creation of private monopolies. Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Prize winner for economics in 2001, highlighted the facts about dangers of creating private monopolies. According to the scholar, there are some important preconditions before privatization, which can contribute to economy’s growth, if these conditions are not adopted, then it led to private monopoly, i.e. privatizing the monopoly, before an effective competition or regulatory authority was in place, might simply replace a ‘government monopoly with private...

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137 Nayar, n.8, p.247.
monopoly’, even more ruthless in exploiting the consumer. For example, Reliance Industries, acquired a virtual monopoly over the petrochemical sector after the IPCL sold to it.\textsuperscript{141}

Furthermore, to attract more investments, the NDA government replaced Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999 with Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), having legal provisions, which confirmed liberalized market regime in foreign exchange. It allowed the banks and financial institutions to recover loan, to prevent money laundering, to promote market competition and to improve company governance. The value added tax (VAT) system introduced but not carried out on schedule, because of lack of cooperation on the part of some states.

\textbf{Table 5.4: GDP Growth Rate (at factor cost) during the Regimes of NDA (1998 to 2004) and UPA-I and II (2004 to 2012)*}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>7.6</td>
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<td>2000-01</td>
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<td>2001-02</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*The study covered GDP rate up to March 2012 and not full tenure of the UPA-II, because till the writing of study, data is available for the said period.

\textsuperscript{141} Bhushan, n.139, p.63.
A Comparative Graphic Chart of GDP Growth Rate (at factor cost) of NDA and UPA-I and II*

Source: Ibid.

*The study covered GDP rate up to March 2012 and not full tenure of the UPA-II, because till the writing of study, data is available for the said period.

The Indian economy demonstrated robust growth (see table 5.4), with little inflation and interest rates, were relatively low in the fiscal year, 2003-04. The foreign exchange resumed at over $ ninety billions. India became a net creditor to International Monetary Fund (IMF), with its contribution used in helping Brazil. The telephone network was expanding; the stocks were booming, and the corporate sector rolling huge profits. On the whole, there was steady stream of reforms in almost every sector, including banking, taxation, fiscal management, stock markets, pharmaceutical, industries and electricity etc.\(^\text{142}\)

Finally, between 1999 and 2004, the NDA government adopted more liberal posture to robust Indian economy by connecting with world market; strengthen relations with United States, Russia, Japan and China. The Vajpayee ministry also took number of initiatives to reduce tensions between India and Pakistan as well as,

\(^{142}\) Nayar, n.8, pp.246-251.
working on free trade area (FTA) with ASEAN. Three new states were also created under the regime of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It was the aura of Vajpayee that enabled India to blast into ‘nuke club’. Providing stability at a difficult time and leading the country to much needed resilience and statesmanship, was because of A.B. Vajpayee, who managed to keep motley (different type) and fractions of twenty four parties’ coalition for six years. However, the NDA government did its best, but the people found it was ‘not enough’.143

Despite these remarkable achievements, the NDA government failed to secure the mandate in 14\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha 2004. The falling interest rates, voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) and growing unemployment were the primary reasons for the BJP rout. These issues swayed away urban voters from the BJP. For example, a father was forced to accept VRS, whereas the sons and daughters were not finding any jobs. The Gujarat carnage, double spoke on Ayodhya issue and economic reforms, were adversely affecting the BJP’s fortune.144

The outcome of 2004 general elections presented a glooming picture of governance. With the exit of the NDA, the Congress Party led formation-UPA assumed power under the leadership of Manmohan Singh on 22 May 2004. By the time, negotiations about government formation also began, like NDA, in earnest among the constituents of the UPA, as well as the Left parties supporting it, on putting together the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP). However, the number of significant inclusion on economic policy issues and other issues, to set apart the Left-of-center policies of the Congress led UPA, from those that were followed by the NDA.145

The UPA-I government was committed to run administration according to pre-fixed programmes (NCMP). The Congress and its allies did better in urban areas as well as in rural parts of the country. Manmohan Singh presented UPA-I government report to the people on 22 May 2008, after completion of four years of

144 Rashmi, n.116, pp.85-91.
The presentation of report was setting a new standard for accountability and transparency in governance. Prime Minister claimed that the UPA-I ministry was implementing substantially the commitments, made in NCMP. The Manmohan Singh government launched various “flagship and other programmes” particularly Bharat Nirman (India build), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), modified Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) with expanded Mid-Day Meal (MDM)

146 The Tribune, 23 May 2008.
147 Bharat Nirman programme was developing infrastructural services in the field of rural roads, telephone, safe drinking water, rural development, electricity and irrigation. It broadly divided into six sub missions. Under this programme, the government of India approximately invested rupees 1,74,000 crores and allocated rupees 31,280 crores till 2008. From the starting of scheme, 2005 to 2008, over 17,000 habitations were connected by all weather roads, over 45,000 villages provided electricity under Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyuit Karan Yojana, over forty five lakh houses were constructed for the rural poor, over 3.5 lakh habitations provided safe drinking water and more than thirty eight lakh hectares of land, brought under irrigation. This programme was continuing under the UPA-II, and covered approximately 55,000 uncovered habitations, and provided safe drinking water to 2.16 lakh villages, affected by poor water quality, built additional 1.3 crores houses for homeless by central government funds, which allocated to Panchayats, increased rural telecom-density up to forty percentage as well as broadband connectivity. The Bharat Nirman Seva Kendra, was established for all 2.5 lakh Panchayats, remaining 3.5 million hectares of land brought under irrigation till 2012, in Achievements of Congress led United Progressive Alliance Government, New Delhi: All India Congress Committee and Jain Brothers, 2008, pp.21-23; http://www.bharatnirman.gov.in/page2.html and UPA Government Report to the People, 2004-08, http://www.pmindia.nic.in/upa_en_2004_08.pdf.

148 NRHM was launched on 12 April 2005, sought to provide accessible and quality health care to rural population, especially in vulnerable sections. The objective of the mission is making public health delivery system fully functional and accountable to community. The central government allocated 12050 crores to the scheme. By April 2008 over 4.5 lakh ASHAS (accredited social health activist) workers were positioned to villages, taking care of health needs of their community, Ibid., p.18 and http://www.nrhm.govt.in/indes.php/about-nrhm/nrhm-framework-for-implementation.

149 JNNURM:- It encouraged reforms and fast track planned development of identified cities including periphery-urban areas, outgrowths and urban corridors leading to dispersed urbanization. It consists of two sub mission: firstly, basic service to the urban poor, and secondly, the urban infrastructure and governance. The projects worth over 30,000 crores were under implementation in fifty four cities and more than ten lakh houses were sanctioned for urban poor by April 2008. The emphasis laid on provision of basic services to the poor, including housing, water supply, sanitation, slum improvement, community toilets/bath etc. under this programme, Delhi Metro rail project was successfully rolled out and also sanctioned phase-II and IIIrd Delhi Metro project approximate cost rupees 6395 crores and 41078 crores respectively. The other metro rail projects were being implemented in Bangalore (42.03 Km), Hyderabad (71.6 Km), Mumbai (42.94 Km) Chennai (45.5 Km) and Kolkata (14.67 Km). There were 185 projects out of 550 under the urban infrastructure and governance, and 338 out of 807 projects, under urban infrastructure development schemes for small and medium towns were completed and approved, respectively, from 2005-12. The Rajiv Awaas Yojana, was launched and funds were released to 195 cities for undertaking preparatory activities and slum free cities. The UPA-II government approved 14,873 crores in BE (Budget Estimate) 13-14 as against RE (Revise Estimate) of 7383 crores for various schemes. Recently, the project worth of rupees 41646 crores approved for the
programmes,
projecting itself as an architecture of ‘inclusive growth’. The eleventh five year plan ensured more regionally balanced development throughout the country. In addition to this, Manmohan Singh’s government waived off rupees 60,000 crores agriculture loan of the farmers by the end of 2008, which provided relief to four crore farmers. The other schemes as Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Surakha Yojana, Prime Minister’s new fifteen points programme for the welfare of minorities, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana for unorganized sectors, Janani Surasha Yojana, Krishi Vikas Yojana and e-governance projects etc, also started by the UPA-I government to solve the problems of aam aadmi.

The UPA-I government had another two major initiatives to its credit, one pertained to instituting a common system of value added tax (VAT), with the same rate of tax, i.e. four percentage and 12.5 percentage, with effect from 1 April 2006


Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):- This implemented in partnership with state governments to cover the entire country and address the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations. It sought to ensure children up to the age of six to fourteen years will get free schooling up to elementary level. Under the SSA, 2,76,903 new schools opened, and constructed 2,25,385 school buildings as well as 9,18,981 additional classrooms, provided safe drinking water facilities to 1,82,019 schools, supplied free textbook to 8.40 crores children and appointed 9.66 lakh teachers etc till December 2008. As a result, the number of out-of-school children ration was reduced from 320 lakh to seventy six lakhs. The plan outlay for children education was increasing rupees 7024 crores in 2002-2003 to 34,400 crores in 2008-09. The 11th five year plan allocated rupees 2,75,000 crores for SSA, which was more than five times. Later on, the framework of the SSA was revised, which incorporated the salient features of RTE Act 2009. Under the new programme, there was opening of 3,34,340 new primary and upper primary schools constructed, 2,84,032 school buildings and 16,42,867 additional classrooms, 8.32 crores children got free text books etc, were the major achievements of SSA/RTE till September 2012. The government of India allocated 27,258 crores for SSA/RTE in 2012-13, in Economic Survey of India 2012-13, New Delhi: Ministry of Finance, Government of India, p.284 and Achievements, n.147, pp.15-16.

MDM:- It is one of the world largest school feeding programme, by which 11.36 crores children, attending the classes up to eight standard, get cooked meal in 12.16 lakh schools including government, local body, government aided, national labour project schools across the country. The budget allocation of this programme is around rupees 8000-13000 crores every year. An amount of 8000 crores in 2009-10, 10868 crores in 2012-13 and 13215 crores in 2013-14 were sanctioned for the MDM. However, the death of twenty two children and more than fifty kids fell, ill due to eating contaminated mid day meal at a Government Primary School at Chhapra in Bihar, reflected the short-comings of the programme, Ibid. and The Tribune, 18 July 2013. Achievements, n.147, pp.1-54.
among the various states and other step was statutorily created NREGA,\(^{153}\) largely funded by the central government. Several states refused to adopt the radical change in tax system.\(^{154}\) Ashutosh Varshney argues that NREGA and twenty seven percentage reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) in government aided institution of higher education, including IIT and IIM were the anti-market steps. It was not surprising that targeted anti-market interventions on the behalf of lower social order, formed the centerpiece of Congress’ new political strategy. If, the BJP wanted to regain and hold power, it would have to resolutely move down the socio-economic ladder for support.\(^{155}\)

Further, there was enactment of Right to Information Act (RTI) 2005-a historical path breaking legislation. It made provisions that Indian citizen, now, enjoy “right to demand information”, if desired, and every public authority is liable to share information within specific period. It can bring a sense of empowerment among citizens by starting the process of transparent and inclusive governance.\(^{156}\) The UPA-I had creditable record of passing RTI, which ushered some transparency in administration. However, the UPA-II government was now proposing an amendment to take political parties out of the ambit of RTI Act. It is very strange that political parties, which aspired to form the government and pass laws affecting the lives of citizens of the country, was refused to be considered as public authority. On 3 June 2013, Central Information Commission (CIC) asked the political parties to create a mechanism to handle RTI queries by 15 July 2013, but directives were

\(^{153}\) NREGA/MGNREGA- It provides guaranteed 100 days employment in a financial year to a rural house hold, whose adult member volunteers to do unskilled manual work. On 2 February 2006, it came into force in 200 most backward districts, and then extended to cover another 130 districts in 2007 and Act covered almost all rural India with effect from 1 April 2008. Later on, the scheme was renamed as MGNREGA on 2 October 2009 on Gandhi Jayanti. It gave employment to 3.39 crores households in 2007-08 and four crores households got work in 2008-09, 4.90 crores in 2009-10, 5.3 crores in 2010-11 and 4.39 crores in 2012 -13. In other words, since its inception in 2006, the MGNREGA provided employment to nearly 600 crores persons, with total expenditure of around rupees 70,000 crores. On average, three to five crores household every year benefited from the programme. The rupees 33,000 crores approved for 2012-13 and against this, rupees 25,894 crores released till October 2013, in Pramathesh Ambasta, P.S. Vijay Shankar and Mihir Shah, “Two Years of NREGA: The Road Ahead”, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.43, No.8, 29 February 2008, p.41; [http://pmindia.nic.in/english-report-01-06-10.pdf](http://pmindia.nic.in/english-report-01-06-10.pdf); Economic Survey 2008-2009, p.14 and Economic Survey 2012-13, n. 150, pp.279-280.


ignored. The politicians knew that they were on weak legal grounds. So, instead of challenging the CIC order in the higher court, they chose to amend the RTI Act.\textsuperscript{157} (till the writing of study, RTI Act amendment is not passed)

On the economic front, P. Chidambarm, Union Finance Minister, on behalf of UPA-I claimed that an unprecedented average 8.9 percentage high rate of growth (see table 5.4) was achieved, it was 3.55 percentage in agriculture sector in the past four years (2004-2008). The UPA-I overhauled the moribund manufacturing sector that the NDA left behind. It increased business confidence, which was reflected in terms of investment, made by both domestic and foreign investors. P. Chidambarm stated that;

\begin{quote}
The UPA-I has a better record in term of collection of taxes and curtailment of wasteful expenditure. It started with 9.2 percentage at the end of 2003-04 and raised it to 12.5 percentage in 2007-08 and ratio was expected to reach thirteen percentage in 2008-09. In the six period of the NDA rule, the tax to GDP ratio was crawled from 9.1 to 9.2 percent.\textsuperscript{158}
\end{quote}

Apart from wide range of economic policies, Manmohan Singh government took various steps to boost trade and commerce with other countries. The UPA-I issued an ordinance in December 2004 on patent laws, liberalized norms in January 2005, relating to the Indian Company Veto (IVO), right over the expansion of the FDI, by external partners. The UPA-I also signed an open skies agreement, which allowed unlimited civilian flights between India and USA. Manmohan Singh administration also ordered to purchase of fifty Boeing aircraft’s for its international flights.\textsuperscript{159} These initiatives strengthened India’s relation with other countries, in general and United States of America in particular. The U.S. export to India doubled from $ four billions in 2002 to $ eight billions in 2005 and it exceeded $ thirty

\textsuperscript{157} Editorial, “A Retrograde Move, Parties Unite to Weaken RTI Act”, \textit{The Tribune}, 3 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{159} Nayar, n.154, p.96.
billions in 2006. Even, the security ties between India and United States were expanding faster.\textsuperscript{160}

In this connection, Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal was intended to boost the United States strategic partnership with India. It was a significant shift in American non-proliferation policy towards India and Manmohan Singh office quickly, acted on this opportunity to engage the United States.\textsuperscript{161} The Indo-US civil nuclear agreement for all practical purposes placed India in the rank of “de-facto nuclear weapon state.” It enabled India to freely participate in most forms of civil nuclear commerce and also put an end to its long global isolation in the realm of nuclear technology. Under the terms and conditions, India placed fourteen out of twenty two of its nuclear reactors under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, while the other eight reactors remained off limits.\textsuperscript{162} However, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was accused of selling out national interests to America by his partners, particularly Left parties. They thought that any improvement in Indo-US ties would compromise India’s sovereignty and the U.S. would bully India. They claimed that the alternative sources of energy could be found elsewhere.\textsuperscript{163}

A.B. Bardhan, General Secretary, CPI raised some doubts/points about this deal. What influence the agreement had on Indian foreign policy? Would the agreement have any impact on India’s nuclear programme including the strategic programme? What is the impact of Hyde Act on the 123 agreement etc?\textsuperscript{164} The Left parties raised other concerns as well, would India have ability to withdraw the reactors from International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards? What were the corrective steps that India could take if the fuel supplies would be interrupted by USA or Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) countries etc?\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{164} The Tribune, 29 August 2007.
\textsuperscript{165} Rajalakshmi, n.57, pp.10-11.
The other allies of UPA-I, particularly DMK, RJD and NCP saw the continuance of the government more important than nuclear deal. The BJP expressed that the party would be renegotiating the deal, if came into power and leadership wanted an assurance about retaining India’s credible nuclear deterrence.166 The regional parties as TDP, INLD and AGP opposed the deal. The Samajwadi Party (SP) leadership in dilemma,167 later on, Mulyam Singh Yadav supported the UPA-I. The BSP was on back track of discussion. The BSP, TDP and Left parties joined hands and formed United National Progressive Alliance (UNPA) soon after ‘trust vote’. The Left parties prevented the collapse of front after the SP desertion. They recognized that Mayawati might head the government formed by UNPA in future.168 It is pertinent to mention that H.D. Deve Gowda of the JD (S), and Ajit Singh of Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), changed their stance every few hours.169

Manmohan Singh, in his first term, garnered enough votes to save his government, but not before it was subjected to a spate of scurrilous accusations of bribery to obtain the necessary votes for non-confidence motion.170 In this episode, three members of Parliament (MPs) of the BJP, Ashok Argal, Faggan Singh Kulaste and Mahavir Bhagora showed bundles of thousands-rupee notes in Lok Sabha on 22 July 2008, during no-confidence motion debate. They blamed that money was given to them as a first installment of huge bribe to abstain from voting. The price of single member of Parliament (MP) vote (horse-trading) went up to twenty five crores, with bizarre story of rupees one crore currency notes being flaunted in the Parliament.171 The Wikileaks website/cable exposed that the UPA-I government sought to buy MPs to maintain its majority in the Lower House during vote of confidence over Nuclear Deal in 2008. The Wikileaks website/cable indicated that Satish Sharma, senior Congress leader and Nachiketa Kapur, youth Congress activist

170 Ganguly, n.162, p.47.
paid rupees ten crores each to four MPs of Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) to support the UPA-I government. The Wikileaks website also revealed that Prime Minister Mammohan Singh unsuccessfully worked on SAD (B), for its votes through Indian-American businessman Sant Singh Chatwal. Ajit Singh, Chief, RLD denied the allegation by saying that his MPs did not vote for government, and Wikileaks highlighted wrong facts as the RLD had three MPs, not four. Moreover, twenty six members of Parliament (MPs), defied the whip of their respective parties and sided with opposition camp; of which nineteen MPs belonged to the opposition parties and seven to the ruling side.¹⁷²

Prime Minister Mammohan Singh invested much of his energy towards successful conclusion of landmark Indo-US civil nuclear agreement by signing in October 2008, but implementation was contingent on resolving three technical and bureaucratic issues; (firstly) reprocessing agreement (secondly), setting up a Civil Nuclear Liability Regime and (thirdly) a written assurance by New Delhi, on non-proliferation as stipulated under US Department of Energy rule. Finally, Parliament passed the Civil Nuclear Liability Bill in August 2010 and completed other formalities related with deal.¹⁷³ In this way, Indo-US nuclear deal could be seen to provide some enhancement to India’s energy security needs.¹⁷⁴

India’s relations and cooperation with China and Russia as well as with other developing countries were distinctly on rise. The UPA-I government signed eleven agreements during three days high profile visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to New Delhi in April 2005. They agreed to upgrade relations between India and China by establishing a “strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity”.¹⁷⁵ The Chinese President, Hu Jintao’s November 2006 toured India, the enhanced trade between two countries. It reached twenty billions $ in 2006. The neighbours pledged to double bilateral trade to forty billions $ by 2010.¹⁷⁶ Manmohan Singh visited

¹⁷⁵ Nayar, n.154, p.98.
¹⁷⁶ Lavoy, n.160, p.118.
Beijing in January 2008, reduced tensions between the two countries and stressed the need for increasing cooperation between India and China. During Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit to India in December 2004, nine agreements were signed between India and Russia, that envisaged India using Russia’s global satellite navigation system. Once again Russia agreed to support India’s claim for permanent seat of Security Council. Similarly, India agreed to recognize Russia as a market economy and support membership for World Trade Organization (WTO).

India hosted sixth EU-India summit in September 2005 and carried forward to some extent the existing strategic partnership. Tony Blair, British Prime Minister during EU-India summit, endorsed the Indo-US agreement on civil nuclear cooperation, while Germany collaborated with India on Security Council reforms. Any positive development in Indo-Pakistan relations, were called into question in the wake of devastating terrorist attacked in Mumbai on 26 November 2008. The UPA-I government organized a summit of fourteen African countries in New Delhi, to woo Africa as a source for raw material and market.

In a nut shell, the UPA’s National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), touched very briefly on foreign policy. It contained only five paragraphs on the subject (see table 5.3). In practice, the UPA-I government, like NDA focusing on to maintain relations with United States, Pakistan and China. The rest of the foreign policy in NCMP did not get the kind of sustained intense attention devoted to relations with these three powers. Further, Manmohan Singh government (UPA-I), tried to give expression to multi-polarity by participating in two sets of triangular diplomacy, India-Brazil-South Africa and India-China-Russia, following the previous government lead. The UPA-I like its predecessor, paid relatively little attention towards small South Asian countries.

177 Ganguly, n.162, pp.50-51.
178 Nayar, n.154, pp.99-100.
179 On 26 November 2008, a group of ten terrorists struck various places, as the Nariman House (a Jewish cultural center), the Oberoi Trident Hotel, the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Leopold Café, the Chattrapti Shivaji railway terminus and the Bhikahji Cama Children’s Hospital. The carnage finally ended on 28 November 2008, 173 people lay dead and scores more injured, Ganguly, n.162, pp.48-49.
180 Ibid., p.51.
By and large, the NDA and the UPA were conducting foreign policy in different ways. The NDA was more realists in its focus on relative power and military instrument of influence, whereas the UPA-I was more Nehruvian in its emphasis on negotiations and diplomacy. It is important to underline the relative nature of previous statement: the NDA did not entirely ignore negotiations and diplomacy and the UPA was not altogether neglectful of power and force. For example, the NDA government followed a similar policy based, on show of strength followed by negotiations in 2001-02 after terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament. But the UPA-I did opposite. It took pragmatic view on China and continued to do business with it in spite of hardening of Beijing stance on border.\textsuperscript{182}

The Left parties provided life support system to UPA-I, alleged that Manmohan Singh government’s excessively pre-occupation with reshaping the Indo-US relationship, overriding over other vital issues.\textsuperscript{183} They complained that despite UPA-I was focusing on the NCMP, Manmohan Singh government kept deviating from it in letter and spirit.\textsuperscript{184} The UPA-I claims for the growth of infrastructure in urban and rural areas, were just a claim, it was all on paper, and nothing concrete was materialized as yet. Even if one refrains from taking a harsh view of ‘\textit{Bharat Nirman}’ project, there is no perceptible move till date to involve the people in it and breaking the bureaucratic shackles.\textsuperscript{185} In 2008, it was estimated that India lost agriculture food items worth rupees 58,000 crores due to lack of post harvesting infrastructures particularly cold chains, transportation and storage facilities etc. and this situation is still continuing.\textsuperscript{186} The national mainstream media now propagates a double myth. On the one side, they revealed the poor delivery of services and on the other, growing of world class services by private establishment. In simple words, there is glitter of ‘malls’, on the one hand and the sordid life in the urban slums that sustains at paltry cost of the lifestyle of affluent groups. There is

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., pp.99-100.  
\textsuperscript{184} Kamala Prasad, “Is the UPA Government Failing”, \textit{Mainstream}, Vol. XLIV, No.29, 8 July 2006, p.4.  
\textsuperscript{185} Editorial, n.183, p.3.  
\textsuperscript{186} Kamlendra Kanwar, “Time to Shift to Top Gear”, \textit{The Tribune}, 22 May 2010.
declining support for public health facilities and mushrooming of “super speciality hospital”, on the other.\textsuperscript{187}

The World Bank estimates that nine out of ten Indian workers, lack access to country’s rapidly growing services and high tech jobs. No doubt, the economy was flourishing under the regime of UPA-I and II (see table 5.4), but twenty nine percentage (350 million to 400 million) of Indian’s, nearly 1.1 billion people still live below poverty line; more than forty percentage of the population is still illiterate,\textsuperscript{188} despite various poverty reducing initiatives and flag ship programmes. According to Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report, rupees 51,000 crores allocated to various flagship schemes for development and poverty alleviation, was transferred to district authority, non-governmental organizations and autonomous bodies, but with no account of whether or how it was spent. These schemes did not fare well, less than half targets for village roads, rural electrifications and irrigation were met.\textsuperscript{189}

James Manor highlights another aspect of the schemes, that is, Congress Party and its allies reaped some electoral reward from these central government poverty initiatives in 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections of 2009.\textsuperscript{190} On the domestic front, the UPA-I government failed to forge a coherent strategy to confront rising tide of Naxalite violence, mangled the Amarnath land controversy in Jammu and Kashmir and proved ineffective in coping with growing ethno-religious violence in various parts of the country.\textsuperscript{191}

The reforms promised in 2005 were not taken off in any sector, be it pension, power, water or even the long-delayed Golden quadrilateral project. In fact, there were seventy bills stuck in Parliament during the tenure of UPA-I, ranging from the Women’s Reservation Bill, the Communal Violence Bill, Pension Fund Regulatory Bill, Banking Regulation Bill to Seed Bill etc.\textsuperscript{192} The one area, where Manmohan

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\textsuperscript{187} Kamala Prasad, “UPA’s Romance with the Common People”, \textit{Mainstream}, Vol. XLIV, No.34, 12 August 2006, p.17.
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\textsuperscript{188} Lavoy, n.160, p.124.
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\textsuperscript{189} Praful Bidwai, “Hung, not Hopeless”, \textit{Frontline}, Vol.26, No.6, 27 March 2009, p.103.
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\textsuperscript{190} James Manor, “Did the Central Government’s Poverty Initiatives help to Re-elect it?”, in Saez and Singh, n.174, p.25.
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\textsuperscript{191} Ganguly, n.162, p.52.
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\textsuperscript{192} Aroon Purie, Editorial, \textit{India Today}, Vol. XXXV, No.22, 31 May 2010, p.3.
\end{flushleft}
Singh administration got good grade was its handling of economy. The Indian economy proved resilient during the global financial crisis in 2007-09, returned to its pre-crisis growth rate 8.6 percentage (see table 5.4) in January-March 2010.\(^{193}\)

The UPA-II government carried out all the reforms, which were unable to carry out in the first term, because of its dependence on the Left parties. Manmohan Singh in his second innings was continuing most of the flagship programmes (as mentioned earlier) and started various new projects such as UID (unique identification) or Aadhaar,\(^{194}\) Rashtriya Madyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, (RMSA) Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, Mission Clean Ganga, Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission, Saakshar Bharat, Rashtriya Krishi Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaram Yojana, Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram and DBT\(^{195}\) (direct benefit transfer mode) till October 2013 for the nation.\(^{196}\) The UPA-II government announced another scheme in the field of higher education known as Rashtriya Ucchatar Shiksha Abhiyaan (RUSA), on the eve of assembly elections in five states, namely Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Delhi and Mizoram held in November/December 2013, to attract the young voters.\(^{197}\)

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\(^{193}\) Sharma, n.173, p.115.

\(^{194}\) UID or Aadhaar:- It is unique and multi-purposes biometric twelve digit number identity card, which is serving a variety of purposes, better targeting of government’s schemes, regulatory and security purposes, banking and financial sector activities etc. The UID was established by UPA-II government under interim budget in 2009 and launched in September 2010. Aadhaar based delivery system will benefit crores of peoples through direct transfer of cash in their bank accounts that will reduce the role of middlemen and bring down complaints of delay and leakage in government schemes. Therefore, Aadhaar was being made de-facto compulsory for various welfare schemes such as MGNREGA, PDS, pension schemes (old age and widow), subsidy of LPG gas cylinder distribution scheme etc. Interestingly, the two third of the population, not having aadhaar card, many are bound to be denied entitlements. Recently, the Supreme Court passed order that Aadhaar card was not mandatory and it was only optional, in R. Ramakumar, “High Cost, High Risk”, *Frontline*, Vol.26, No.16, 14 August 2009, pp.52; R. Ramakumar, “Identity Concerns”, *Frontline*, Vol.28, No.24, 2 December 2011, pp.4-10; *The Tribune*, 5 and 21 October 2013 and Reetika Khera, “Cash for Vote”, *Frontline*, Vol. 30, No.5, 22 March 2013, p.100.

\(^{195}\) DBT:- It stands for direct benefit transfer schemes, under which the subsidy money or amount of benefit being transferred directly to the bank account of the beneficiary. The direct cash transfer started in twenty districts across country as a pilot project on 1 January 2013. The Congress Party led UPA-II government believed that the scheme might become “game changer”, in 16th Lok Sabha elections 2014.


\(^{197}\) RUSA:- It is third centrally sponsored scheme in the field of education-first two being SSA and RMSA (discuss earlier). The RUSA approved worth rupees 99,000 crores to route funds to state
In addition to this, the UPA-II implemented Right to Education Act 2009 (the right of children to get free compulsory elementary education), introduced Direct Tax Code Bill in Parliament and passed Anand Karaj (marriage) Amendment Bill 2012. Another pending bill such as Anti-Rape Bill March 2013, Land Acquisition Bill August 2013, National Food Security Bill September 2013 (NFSB) and Pension Bill were also passed by the Parliament. These Bills were passed within few days seen as “game changer” initiatives of UPA-II like MGNREGA, in next 16th Lok Sabha elections 2014. Manmohan Singh government was in a hurry to promulgate food security schemes/programmes by an ordinance on 5 July 2013, which generated wide ranging criticism. Then, the UPA-II government launched food security scheme on 20 August 2013 accompanied by an advertisement blitzkrieg, even as the Bill was pending in Parliament, left no one in doubt that the move had a lot to do with “electoral security”, rather than ‘aam aadmi’ (common man).

government colleges and universities over the 12th and 13th plan periods. Under this programme, there is provision to create eighty new universities, 100 new colleges and convert fifty four existing colleges into model degree colleges in 12th plan and further creation of 278 new universities as well as 338 new colleges, by the end of 13th plan, in The Tribune, 5 October 2013.

Anand Karaj Amendment Bill:- It made provisions for separate personal law for Sikhs, which cover marriages, divorces, maintenance and succession, adoption and guardianship issues etc. Ibid., 23 May 2013.

Anti-Rape Bill:- The Manmohan Singh government presented a rigorous Anti-Rape Bill in the Parliament, which passed on 21 March 2013. It broadens the definition of the crime of peno-vaginal penetration and made provisions for striker penalties up to death. It also harmonized with Juvenile justice act to prevent criminalization of consensual sex between sixteen and eighteen age. The stalking, voyeurism was made bailable offence in first instance; non bailable in second time. There is provision for penalties against police officers, not registering case of stalking, voyeurism (get sexual pleasure by secretly watching other people having sex or taking their clothes off) deleted etc. in The Tribune, 19-22 March 2013. The bill was passed because the UPA-II government came under tremendous pressure when peaceful protests started against Delhi as well as central governments to take tough action against culprits of Delhi rape case and render justice to the victim.

Land Acquisition Bill:- It sought to provide just and fair compensation to the farmers while, ensuring that no land will be acquired forcibly. The payment of compensation is up to four times to the market value in rural areas and two times the market value in urban areas etc, Ibid., 30 August 2013.

Food Security Bill:- It guarantees five kilograms (Kg) of rice, wheat, coarse and cereal a month, to every member of eligible household at fixed price of rupees three, two and one, respectively. The government of India requires rupees 1,30,000 crores for the support of the Bill. Arun Jaitley, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, BJP stated that it is merely repackaged of the existing scheme, Ibid., 27 August, 2 and 3 September 2013.

Pension Bill:- It made the provision for investment of funds in equity market and opens the sector for FDI up to twenty six percentage. The legislation seeks to empower Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority, to regulate the new pension system, Ibid., 5 September 2013.
The National Food Security Bill (NFSB) was also seen as violating federal rights as it gave right to central government to notify date for reforms in public distribution systems (PDS). In fact, several state governments including AIADMK government of Tamil Nadu objected to unilateral manner, the coverage was determined by the Planning Commission, that is, the Bill proposed seventy five percentage of the rural population and fifty percentage of the urban population under the present ‘target public distribution system’ to be covered. Later on, the Bill was revised. The Samajwadi Party’s (SP) other key supporter of the UPA-II also alleged that the state government was totally bypassed. Further, the DMK, Trinamool Congress, SP and Left parties opposed Pension Bill on several counts, especially on putting the social security money in the volatile stock market and allowing FDI to manage these hard-earned funds. Interestingly, the Pension Bill was supported by principal opposition party BJP, on the ground that the country was staring at an economic crisis and also it was first conceived during NDA regime.

Despite of these pulls and pressures, the UPA-II government decided to go ahead with big bang economic reforms by firmly, allowing fifty one percentage FDI in multi brand retail sector, forty nine percentage in aviation and 100 percentage FDI in the cash-and-carry format business. In addition, Manmohan Singh government revised caps in broadcasting sectors from forty nine to seventy four percentage and the limit would stay at twenty six percentage in TV news channels, FM radio and content providers. The UPA-II government further, planned to sell its stake in four PSUs, namely Hindustan Copper, Oil India, MMTC and NALCO, which was expected to fetch around rupees 15000 crores. These economic reforms initiatives were greeted with a sigh of relief by many, but the BJP and other opposition parties charged that the FDI in retail trade would destroy India’s small business and traders, on which millions of poor and lower classes depend. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh pointed that this, as BJP’s arrogance and highlighted that UPA’s-I and II nine years (2004 to 2013 till the writing of study) record was better than NDA 1998 to 2004 rule (see table 5.4).

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205 The Tribune, n.203.
206 Ibid., 15 September 2012.
On the external front, Manmohan Singh administration took several initiatives to consolidate relations with neighbouring countries and major powers. The Indo-US ties entered into a new era when American President Barack Obama visited India on 6 November 2010. He made it very clear that his top priority was to strengthen Indo-US economic partnership by promoting trade, boosting exports and creating jobs at home. Obama signed trade deals with India worth $ ten billions. In his speech to Parliament, American President Barack Obama announced that India was not emerging, but “emerged” and United States was prepared to support India’s bid for permanent seat in UNO’s Security Council, also push India for its membership in number of key multilateral institutions, that control global trade in nuclear and “dual use technologies”, including the Nuclear Suppliers Groups (NSG) and Missile Technology Control Regime.208

India also consolidated its relationships with Afghanistan by signing a “Treaty of Cooperation and Friendship” in 2011. Manmohan Singh government participated forcefully in 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit held at Tehran, Iran in August 2012, despite U.S. strictures to scale down relations. The UPA-II ministry resolved several technical border problems with Bangladesh to underscore non-reciprocal basis of India’s relations with smaller countries in South Asia. Further, Manmohan Singh government strengthened economic and security relationships, with the Southeast Asian (ASEAN) countries and forged a strategic partnership as well as economic cooperation with Vietnam, despite opposition from Beijing.209

Manmohan Singh undertook five days trip to Russia and China from 20-24 October 2013, to consolidate relations with them. Five bilateral pacts were signed between India and Russia in the field of science, technology, innovation, and a treaty was also signed on transfer of sentenced persons. The Indian government sought the supply of two new nuclear reactors for Kudnamkulam, but legal teams on either side were not clear. The Border Defence Cooperation Agreement was among nine agreements, signed by India and China. Other important Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), signed between two countries to establish a hotline between two

208 Sharma, n.173, pp.120-121.
209 Chadda, n.207, p.58.
military headquarters, to ensure peaceful movement along LAC and three Indian cities and three from China, would be selected under ‘sister city programme’, that will allow them to connect and learn from each other.\textsuperscript{210}

The Indo-Pak negotiations more or less were moribund since 2008 Mumbai attack by Pakistan based terrorist outfits. Manmohan Singh took tough stand against his counterpart Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, at a meeting held on 29 September 2013 in New York, by insisting on the restoration of peace and tranquility, on Line of Control (LOC), as preconditions to move forward on the stalled dialogue process.\textsuperscript{211} The UPA-II government also gave nod to “Gas Sale and Purchase Agreement with Turmen Gas,” national oil company of Turkmenistan by TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) pipeline project, which will terminate at Fazilka, Punjab, to be operational in 2018.\textsuperscript{211a}

In brief, robust economy, inclusive growth, better delivery of governance and improved relations with a changing and challenging world, were the key achievements of the four years rule of UPA-II from 2009 to 2013. Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh emphasized;

\begin{quote}
Judge the government on the basis of performance, our work and our performance, were the best judge of what we have achieved. He further compared nine years rule of UPA from 2004-2013, with the six years of NDA’s rule from 1998-2004.\textsuperscript{212}
\end{quote}

The average growth rate of GDP was 7.9 percentage, including current period slowdown under the UPA-II tenure, as compared to six percentage of NDA’s six years rule. The growth rate of agriculture production and ally activities was 3.7 percentage, whereas in the NDA period, it was not more than 2.9 percentage. The aim of UPA-II was to achieve an average GDP growth of eight percentage, with four percentage growth in agriculture during the 12\textsuperscript{th} plan. The Congress leadership decided that the focus would continue to remain on “inclusive growth.”\textsuperscript{212a}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{210}T.V. Rajeswar, “Taking Stock of PM’s Visit”, \textit{The Tribune}, 31 October 2013.
\bibitem{211}Ibid., 30 September 2013.
\bibitem{211a}Ibid., 18 May 2012
\bibitem{212}Manmohan Singh, “Judge UPA by its Performance”, \textit{The Tribune}, 11 March 2013.
\bibitem{212a}Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
However, the economy indicators showed that economic growth story of the UPA-II was at an “end.” The GDP growth rate declined from 8.8 percentage in 2010-11 to 6.4 percentage in 2011-2012 (see table 5.4).\textsuperscript{213} It further slipped to 4.4 percentage in first quarter of 2013 (April to June).\textsuperscript{214} This economic crisis included rupee’s depreciation, which hit record low of 68.85 against the US dollar ($)\textsuperscript{215} and onion prices went up to rupees eighty to ninety per kilograms. The number of unemployed persons rose to 10.8 millions in January 2012 from 9.8 millions in January 2010.\textsuperscript{216} A weak rupee was a potent combination for inflation to rise, because of which both government expenditures and consumer budget also went up. The income of \textit{aam aadmi} (common man) was getting squeezed by inflation. Therefore, the people reeled under the impact of double digit food inflation and the UPA-II government contributed to stoking inflationary fire by frequently increasing the prices of petro-products, which was followed by sharp reduction in energy and fertilizer subsidies in the Union Budget. The hunger and malnutrition were still widespread and the level of deprivation in terms of access to education and health care were huge. For instance, the country was facing continuing agrarian crisis despite the improvement in growth rate of agriculture output in recent years. But the continuing suicides of farmers constituted to tragic manifestation of the crisis.\textsuperscript{217} In addition to this, the UPA-II government aggressive moved to open up the farm sectors to corporate, control under public-private-partnership (PPP) model were fraught with danger. They can lead to the worsening of the agrarian crisis and land grab by other means.\textsuperscript{218} On the whole, large populations have yet not benefited significantly from inclusive growth of the UPA-I and II like India shinng of the NDA. The UPA-II failed to address, even in a preliminary way, the issue of inflation, unemployment and inclusive growth, which were promised by Congress Party during 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections.

The Manmohan Singh regime reached the lowest point in its nine years tenure in May 2013, when another scandal ‘Railgate’ was exposed by media. \textit{India}

\textsuperscript{214} \textit{Business Line}, 31 August 2013 and \textit{The Tribune}, 31 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{215} \textit{The Tribune}, 29 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{216} Jayshree Sengupta, “Focus on Job Creation”, \textit{The Tribune}, 31 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{217} Editorial, “No Respite from the Crisis”, \textit{Frontline}, Vol.30, No.5, 22 March 2013, p.10.
\textsuperscript{218} Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, “Calling in the Corporates”, \textit{Frontline}, Vol.30, No.14, 26 July 2013, pp.4-5.
Today, opinion poll rated that UPA-II was most corrupt government of the last thirty five years. The issue of corruption was leitmotif of the UPA-II government, starting with Commonwealth Games, Adarsh Housing, CVC appointment, 2G,\textsuperscript{219} helicopter scam, Coalgate and then Railgate scams (see table 5.5).

Table 5.5: Major Scams during the Regimes of the NDA-1998 to 2004 and the UPA-I and II 2004 to 2013\textsuperscript{7}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Scams</th>
<th>Regime</th>
<th>Amount (in crore)</th>
<th>Main accused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>UTI</td>
<td>NDA</td>
<td>9500.00</td>
<td>Harshad Mehta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Ketan Parekh</td>
<td>NDA</td>
<td>3218.00</td>
<td>Ketan Parekh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Home Trade Cooperative Bank</td>
<td>NDA</td>
<td>1200.00</td>
<td>Sanjay Agarwal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Kargil Coffins</td>
<td>NDA</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>George Farnandis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Oil for Food</td>
<td>UPA-I</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>Natwar Singh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Scorpene Submarine Deal</td>
<td>UPA-I</td>
<td>16000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Cash for Vote</td>
<td>UPA-I</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>Amar Singh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>IPL</td>
<td>UPA-II</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>Shashi Thoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2G</td>
<td>UPA-II</td>
<td>177679</td>
<td>A. Raja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Adarsh Housing Society</td>
<td>UPA-II</td>
<td>200.00</td>
<td>Ashok Chavan, Vilasrao Deshmukh and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Fake Housing Loan</td>
<td>UPA-II</td>
<td>1000.00</td>
<td>Ramchandran Nair and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CWG</td>
<td>UPA-II</td>
<td>36000.00</td>
<td>Suresh Kalmadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>ISRO Spectrum Allocation</td>
<td>UPA-II</td>
<td>200000.00</td>
<td>G. Madhavan Nair and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Coalgate</td>
<td>UPA-II</td>
<td>186000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Copter Deal</td>
<td>UPA-II</td>
<td>3600.00</td>
<td>S.P. Tyagi and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Railgate</td>
<td>UPA-II</td>
<td>00.90 (lakhs)</td>
<td>Vijay Singla, nephew of Pawan Kumar Bansal (Railway Minister)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{7} the period included till writing of study.
In this connection, A. Raja, on 14 November 2010, Dayanidhi Maran on 7 July 2011 and Virbhadra Singh on 26 June 2012 quitted UPA-II Cabinet on corruption charges, on the one hand, Pawan Kumar Bansal and Ashwani Kumar resigned from Manmohan Singh government as Cabinet ministers on similar grounds, on 10 May 2013, on the other. Subodh Kant Sahai and M.S. Gill dropped from the UPA-II, Sriprakash Jaiswal and Salman Khurshid were under the scanner of various investigative agencies. So much so, the Prime Minister Office (PMO) itself came in the line of fire in case of inappropriate intervention in Coalgate scam, which was investigated by CBI.

One of the theme that got highlighted repeatedly in interactions within the Congress Party and outside, refer to ‘political and governance failures’, that resulted in new equations between CBI and the ruling dispensation. A repeating story about the CBI and the ruling dispensation at the Centre was that the latter used the investigative agency to rake up issues to target political opponents and state governments. But the Coalgate revelations, the UPA-II government seemed to be apprehensive about the motives and possible manoeuvres of the investigative agency. This growing aggravation had a severely damaging effect on governance and even the functioning of the Parliament. The stasis of governance and parliamentary functioning was in such a situation, where crucial legislation planned by different sections of the government was not getting passed.

The PRS Legislative Research underlined the fact that the UPA-II huffed and puffed to push ninety six Bills through, while, the UPA-I government managed to pass 173 pieces of legislations. The 15th Lok Sabha, in its last year (2013), went down as the most disrupted House in more than sixty years of Indian parliamentary
history. The study also noted that the neo-liberal political and economic policy paradigms, that resulted in the spate of unprecedented corruption, scandals and inappropriate administrative interventions.

Over and above, the Congress Party and its government seemed to have no plan to stem the rot. There were perceptions about a growing division between the AICC President Sonia Gandhi and the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on vital issues and this perception started percolating to the lower echelons of the party. In a way, the INC and the UPA-II, were now in the clutches of rank of ‘indecisiveness’. There was no commonality in approach even in covering up the tracks of wrongdoing perpetrated jointly and severally by many in the Council of Ministers.222

The story does not end here, Anna Hazare fast-unto-death in August 2011, for ‘Jan Lok Pal Bill’ (Ombudsman) brought the UPA-II government on its knees. Anna Hazare activated conscience of the nation and became the rolling point for collective anger of the people against the exponential magnitude of corruption in Congress Party led UPA regimes.223 The Congress Party debacle in four assemblies elections namely Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi and Chhattisgarh in November/December 2013 and stunning emergence of Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi, and once again indefinite fast by social activist Anna Hazare in December 2013, compelled the political parties including the BJP and the INC to work for the passage of much-stalled ‘Lok Pal Bill.’ Ultimately, Parliament passed the ‘Lok Pal Bill’ on 18 December 2013, which was supported by almost all political parties except Samajwadi Party (SP). Ramgopal Yadav, senior SP leader stated that his party opposed the ‘Lok Pal Bill’. He stated;

If Lok Pal Bill passed, it will push the nation towards administrative disarray. If it becomes law, no minister will sign the files. Then the whole country’s decision-making power will come to a standstill.224

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222 Ibid.
224 The Tribune, 13, 16, 17, 18 and 19 December 2013.
The UPA-II government was lurching from one crisis to another over the years, battling host of scams and scandals, a series of avoidable administrative gaffes, soaring food inflation and reeling under strictures from pro-active judiciary. Both, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress Party chief, Sonia Gandhi were looking decidedly ill-at-ease in their attempt to retrieve the government and party’s credibility. Their efforts to shake off the most corrupt tag, through the effective propagation of its pro-poor agenda, did not appear to have cut much ice.225

It is observed that the UPA-II did not have any guiding principles like Common Minimum Programme (CMP) and controlling mechanism as National Advisory Committee (NAC) and Coordinating Committee like previous coalition governments of the UPA-I and the NDA. Sudhir Kumar Panwar, President, Kisan Jagriti Manch and political observer points out that in the absence of CMP, there was no synchronization of government policies and there was an atmosphere of ‘ad-hocism’ in the governance. The lack of synchronization could be seen even within the Congress Party, not to speak of other constituents in the UPA.

Panwar adds that lack of an agreed policy and praxis framework made smaller parties in UPA-II mere “rent seekers”, who were happy as long as, they were allowed to do things of their choice in the ministry. Such rent seekers had no commitment in evolving public policy and driven by their limited political or even individual goals. This ad-hocism spreading across the country, allowed the UPA-II to survive and even sit prettifying the treasury benches. Therefore, different types of ad-hocism characterize different forces and streams in the opposition. The principal opposition party BJP was yet to regain its political and organizational moorings under new President and was pursuing its own form of ad-hocism.

The regional and small parties particularly the SP, RJD, TDP and BJD, were alternately warming up the idea of Third Front and getting cold about it. These regional forces and others like BSP opposed the UPA one day and support it another day. Clearly, this ad-hocism prevalent across the board helped UPA-II chug along

225 Ibid., 22 May 2011.
despite its devious failures and foibles. Whether the UPA brand of ad-hocism prevail over others, was moot question in relation to upcoming political battles.\textsuperscript{226}

From above discussion, the BJP led NDA and the Congress Party run UPA-I and II claimed in their report cards that they had considerable achievements during their tenure in the office. They tried to build a progressive and modern India. Here the question emerges, whether the promises enshrine in CMP or elections manifestos of BJP/NDA and Congress/UPA fulfilled or not? Broadly, three indicators adopted for investigation. (I) GDP- reflecting the economic growth rate of the country (II) Per Capita Income-broadly showing the improvement in the income of average person (III) Education- revealing government spending on social sector particular in education.

Both the UPA and the NDA pledged to achieve the target of seven to eight percentage GDP growth rate. From the table 5.4, the GDP growth rate ranged between four percentage to eight percentage during the six years NDA rule from 1998 to 2004. The average growth rate of GDP was 5.85 percentage, which was far behind the target. The Vajpayee government achieved eight percentage growth rate in the last year (2003-04). In contrast, Manmohan Singh regime attained 7.91 percentage average growth rate during nine years governance from 2004 to till March 2013, which was comparatively closer to the targeted growth rate. During the period, 2004 to 2008, the GDP growth rate varied from seven percentage to 9.7 percentages (see table 5.4). Then, the growth rate of GDP declined significantly from 9.7 to 6.5 in the next financial year 2008-09. But, it recovered very impressively from 6.5 percentage to 8.6 percentage in 2009-10 and slightly improved 8.8 percentage during 2010-11(see table 5.4). Now, the Indian economy decelerated from 8.8 percentage to 6.4 percentage in 2011-12 (see table 5.4).

It further slipped to 4.4 percentage in first quarter of 2013.\textsuperscript{227} Surjit S. Bhalla argues that the populist policies that were introduced by the UPA-I sowed the seeds of economic disaster that India witnessed since 2008. The Indian growth rate decelerated more than most other countries.\textsuperscript{228}

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{226} Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, “Adrift and Listless”, \textit{Frontline}, Vol. 27, No.12, 18 June 2010, p.6. \textsuperscript{227} Business, n. 214. \textsuperscript{228} Surjit S. Bhalla, “A Costly Morality”, \textit{The Indian Express}, 7 January 2012. \end{flushleft}
Table 5.6: Growth Rate of Per Capita Income during Regimes of NDA (1998 to 2004) and UPA-I and II (2004-12)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*The study did not cover full term of UPA-II, because till the writing of the study, data available for above said period.

A Comparative Graphic Chart of Growth Rate of Per Capita Income during Regimes of NDA and UPA-I and II

Source: Ibid.
The growth rate of per capita income during the NDA regime ranged from 1.8 percentage to 6.6 percentage, while it was varied between 4.7 percentage to 8.1 percentage under UPA-I and II (see table 5.6). On average basis, per capita income rate was 4.8 percentage under Vajpayee government, whereas, the average growth rate of per capita income was 6.45 percentage during the UPA governments from 2004-12 (the study did not cover the full term of UPA-II, because till the writing of the study data was available for the said period). Moreover, the growth rate of per capita income was fluctuating on year’s basis under Vajpayee government. In contrast, it was continuously rising in first four years from 4.9 percentage to 8.1 percentage in the UPA-I rule from 2004 to 2008. During 2008-09, growth rate of per capita income declined sharply from 8.1 percentage to 4.9 percentage, but it recovered in next year from 4.7 to 6.8 percentage and further to 7.2 percentage in 2010-11 (see table 5.6).

Table 5.7: The Expenditure on Education (Percentage of GDP) by NDA (1998 to 2004) and UPA-I and II (2004 to 2013) Governments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>2.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So far, expenditure on education is concerned, both the governments NDA and UPA were committed in their manifesto and CMP, to spend at least six percentage of the GDP on education, but did not stand on their commitments. The expenditure on education by NDA was around three percentage and it ranged between 3.1 percentage to 3.5 percentage. In contrast, expenditure on education by UPA-I and II was slightly less percentage of the GDP from NDA and it ranged between 2.6 percentage to 3.31 percentage. The average expenditure of Vajpayee government was 3.35 of the GDP during 1998 to 2004, while the average spending of the UPA-I and II government was only 2.89 percentage during 2004 to 2013. However, the UPA and NDA failed to achieve targeted goal in education. The UPA lagged behind the NDA on spending in the sphere of education.

In short, these trends indicated their inability to keep their political promises. The educational objective set out in the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) fall far short of new framework for achieving national and international goals. The
Indian policy making is increasingly becoming more about gaining political legitimacy than ensuring financial resources to educational sector.

The UPA-I did not set out any new policies, but was limiting itself in establishing a review panel of experts to rectify the communalization of the school syllabus. Era Sezhiyan argues that the UPA-II government failed miserably to come anywhere near the targets fixed for health and education. When the executive head of the UPA government was pained with crisis after crisis, and flogged with corruption and confusion, all the parts of the government was out of order in terms of its performance.

The Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress Party led NDA and UPA governments respectively, made best efforts or meet the goals particularly on economic front and their track record was satisfactory. They failed miserably in social welfare measures particularly in health and education. Both the governments (NDA and UPA), pursued almost similar kinds of new liberal economic policies and tactics, when, they were in office or in the opposition. The BJP opposed new economic policy of P. V. Narasimha Rao and United Front governments, but adopted same kind of economic policy when came into power in 1998. In simple words, the BJP earlier opposed the Insurance Regulatory Bill in 1997 but the Bill was passed by the NDA in 1999. In a similar fashion, the Congress Party criticized the NDA government’s economic policies and raised slogans against NDA, what aam aadmi (common man) got from the India shining story (growth story). The role got reversed, when UPA came into power in 2004 and BJP became the largest opposition party.

The UPA in his first term from 2004 to 2009, tried to stick with the NCMP by implementing MGNREGA and disbanded Ministry of Disinvestment under the agreement between the Congress party and Left parties. Later on, the UPA-I signed treaty with USA on Civil Nuclear Deal, despite the resistance of Left Front. The UPA-II in its second inning was more focused on ‘inclusive growth’ and allowed FDI in many sectors including retail. The BJP along with other opposition parties

opposed the decision of UPA-II, to allow FDI in retail sector etc and called *Bharat bandh* (all India strike). By and large, the differences between BJP and Congress were getting blurred on the economic issues.

Both the regimes (NDA and UPA) worked under great stress and strains and rolled back many decisions under the withdrawal threat given by one coalition partner or another. The regional parties as LJP, NC, AIADMK, DMK, Trinamool Congress held positions both in the NDA and in the UPA and Left parties (outside supporter of UPA-I), etc, put the Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh governments on tenterhooks for one issue (such as POTA, price hike of petroleum products and FDI etc) to another. In a way, these regional parties had no national perspective and thought in terms of power but not about common goals. They laid the roots of political instability. In the same time, the NDA and UPA administration strengthened their tie-ups with major powers as U.S., Russia and China, side by side, they tried to sort out issues/problems with Pakistan. Bill Clinton and Barack Obama visited India during the tenure of both the NDA and the UPA governments. Further, A.B. Vajpayee ministry conducted nuclear test, which made India nuclear weapon state. In contrast, Manmohan Singh government signed Civil Nuclear Deal with USA. The deal ensured that India was reckoned among the nuclear state.

Verily, the corruption cases and scandals eroded the credibility and legitimacy of the governments of A.B Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh. The NDA and the UPA were neck deep in various scams (see table 5.5). The people stunned, when 2G scam exposed by Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG). Prime Minister Manmohan Singh being portrayed as a tragic, lonely figure and the UPA as the most corrupt government by *Washington Post*. These exposes produced a powerful nationwide anti-corruption movement in 2011, vastly embodiment the opposition and seriously weakened the UPA.\(^{231}\) By and large, the scandals spoke volumes about the inaction of the governments of the NDA and the UPA-I and II. No political party was seriously talking about it. The politicians and their parties too were busy with day’s battle and have no times, to inclination to talk about real issues on public mind at the moment. The inflation, Naxalism, corruption, price rise, terrorism, internal and

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\(^{231}\) Chadda, n.207, p.52.
external security, poverty and hunger, still the real issues, which need to be addressed more strongly.