

Coalition Government and its Impact on Centre State Relations – An Empirical View

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study how **coalition government** coalition government is also a means of power sharing. Logically both federalism and coalition government should be complimentary to each other. As the object of sharing of power is common in both, a student of politics or law may gather the impression that coalition government is always supportive of federal form of government or constitution and sometime also gives more opportunity for expression of ideas and democratic rights to small and regional parties. In this way it seems that coalition government promotes democracy and representative administration. Political systems are classified into federal and unitary forms of governance based on the distribution or concentration of powers between the centre and the state or in the centre respectively. The word federalism is derived from the Latin word Foedus, which according to Lewis' Latin Dictionary means League or treaty or compact or alliance or contract or marriage contract. This word was first coined by the Theologians in the seventeenth century in order to describe the system of holy enduring covenant between god and man. But later on it became related to the theories of social contract and was associated with the desire to build political society. Thus, federalism is a concept applied to a political system characterized by two levels of government deriving powers and functions from an authority which is not controlled by either level of government. The upper level of government is the national or central government and the lower level of government may be called a province or state or canton.

Key words: Alliance, Elections, Democracy, Corruption, Stability, Government, Representation

Introduction

In such a situation there are two possibilities; either a single party gets absolute majority and forms the government or of coalition government in case no party gets majority. So the coalition is a process in multi-party parliamentary democracy when no single political party secures majority or two more political parties unite to form the majority government in parliament or state legislature. Etymologically, speaking the word coalition has descended from the Latin word 'Coalitio' which means to go together or to grow together. It is a temporary alliance among the various political parties for the exercise of political power.

Coalition is product of politics in parliamentary democracy. The term as it is generally used in political science is direct descendant of the exigencies of a multi-party system in a democratic set up.' Coalition Politics is common phenomenon in a multi-party democracy and became unavoidable in the following three situations. (a). When in a multi-party parliamentary democracy the election verdict is fractured and did not mandate any single political party to form government. (b). During the national crises when the nation demands unity on the part of political parties so as to thwart the national crises. (c).

When a deadlock exists between two political parties in a bi-party system, i.e., an even balance between the two parties, leading one of the two to ally with any minor group such as a neutral or defector. As for as the above situations are concerned, the first situation have occurred frequently in India since 1989 and continued till 2009. Multi-party system in India is a reflection of plural nature of Indian society, where electorates are divided on different lines such as different ideological orientations, caste preferences, regional and religious aspirations etc. However, due to the emergence of coalition governments this plural nature of the Indian society got also reflected in the governing structure, which made the Indian political system more inclusive and encompassing. Norman D. Palmer remarks: Coalition arise out of the structure of Indian society i.e. communalism, regionalism, lingualism, casteism. Division between north and south, between regional and linguistic groups, between literate and the illiterate, between villagers and towns people, between communal and caste groups, have a profound effect on political life and behavior. This vast disparity doesn't invite two party systems but a multi-party coalition governmen

Objective:

This paper intends to explore and analyze how in **India, coalition governments** are necessary for inclusive development as the idea of the “nation” is still taking shape. The pulls and pressures particularly in a multinational country like ours.

Coalition Government And Its Impact On Centre State Relations:

With the increase in the regional parties' participation the Indian government both at the centre and state has led to various changes and impact on Centre- State relation.

The impact of the Coalition government on Centre- State relations can be discussed under the following headings in light of the recent political developments:

1. The office of the Governor;
2. The increase in the demand for State autonomy.

1. Office Of Governor:

In the recent times the appointment of the governor has gone through a rough phase due to coalition form of government. Political compulsions to form the government especially at the national level solely guided by the majority gaining political party certainly results in deteriorating Centre- State relations. Further also it would make the office of Governor exposed to vulnerabilities of the political pressures. For example, recent wholesale removal, transfer and resignations of the Governors of Rajasthan, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Punjab, who were previously appointed by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government and more particularly the way in which the government of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) dealt with the Governor of Tamil Nadu by getting into a avoidable controversy of a political natures proves beyond any doubt that the politics in India has gone a long way to come within the grips of co-operative federalism.

The recent Tamil Nadu case in relation to the change of the governor, more particularly to satisfy the coalition partner from the state and that too against the will of the ruling party in the State of Tamil Nadu without substantial and reasonable grounds for such a drastic step gives proof to the fact that there is a requirement of strengthening the office of the Governor in India. Further this situation was more complicated with the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister moving to the Supreme Court by filing an affidavit which contained some excerpts from her conversation with the Home Minister, which the opposition and then the member of the Coalition Government at the National level argued that this was a violation of the OSA or Oath of Secrecy. Even though the controversy was subsided legally with the Supreme Court declining to grant interim relief to the government of Tamil Nadu in order restrain the Centre from transferring the governor without the consent of the Chief Minister of the State, has to a large extent effected the relations between Centre and the State. Also another example which can be cited here is, in order to prove that under coalition government the office of Governor is dictated by political compulsions is the UPA government's pressure to change the Governor of Bihar Rama Jois.

2. State Autonomy:

The participation of regional parties in the Centre has significantly impacted Indian federal structure. The formation of coalition government has resulted to a large extent deviation from the characteristic of Indian federalism with centralising tendencies. With regional parties emergence the demand for state autonomy has increased drastically.

The participation of regional parties has resulted in unstable, weak government at the centre. Every party to the coalition attempts to assert its own geographical, cultural and economic interests in the political process. The regional parties emphasis on the development of their region instead of focussing on the development of the nation as a whole.

It is true that the Indian did not have a very good experience with coalition Government experiments. But the Coalition Government in India is here to stay. In the light of above mentioned impact of coalition government on Centre State relations I would to suggest few reforms for the proper regulation of the Coalition form of Government.

Conclusion

It necessary at this point to note the recent demand of Tamil Nadu to fully give the power generated by a power station located in its state instead of allotting the power to the national grid and share power according to Central Electricity Authority gives a picture of the unusual demand of a regional party which overrides national priority. The Telangana is also one of the issues which affect the formation coalition government at the centre. Though UPA government at the centre has recommended creation of telangana state, the process looks difficult, because of coalition compulsions. The central government is in a state of fix whether to divide Andhra Pradesh into two states or not. Since if the central government will not agree for the division it cannot persuade Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) into alliance in 2012 general elections. This is how regional parties play a very crucial role in the formation of coalition government at the centre. The fact that India chose democracy and that for almost 70 years now we have worked a vibrant democratic system, is a major achievement. However, it is quite clear that we are going through a period of tremendous turbulence. The old consensus seems to have broken down; a new equilibrium has not yet been reached. The belief that the era of coalition governments, even at the Centre, some states already having undergone and others undergoing such an experiment, is here to stay in India is for sure. The study of coalitions is at a very infant stage and of recent advent in India. However, it may prove to be of enormous importance for our country. These coalitions are a necessary stage in the evolution of democracy. They might constitute a natural step in the process of transformation from a multi-party system to a bi-party system in India, a country where exist some hundred plus political parties. In India, the first-ever government formed by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, between 1946 and 1952, may rightly be described as a coalition government in which apart from the Congress, the Muslim League (until the partition), the Hindu Mahasabha, the Republican Party and other minor parties participated. After the First General Elections in 1952 the Congress retained the near monopoly of power, both at the Centre and in the States in the formative stage of independent India.

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