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Impact of Coalition of Political Parties in India

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ABSTRACT: A coalition government is a form of government in which political parties cooperate to form a government. The usual reason for such an arrangement is that no single party has achieved an absolute majority after an election, an atypical outcome in nations with majoritarian electoral systems, but common under proportional representation. A coalition government might also be created in a time of national difficulty or crisis (for example, during wartime or economic crisis) to give a government the high degree of perceived political legitimacy or collective identity, it can also play a role in diminishing internal political strife. In such times, parties have formed all-party coalitions (national unity governments, grand coalitions). If a coalition collapses, the Prime Minister and cabinet may be ousted by a vote of no confidence, call snap elections, form a new majority coalition, or continue as a minority government. In multi-party states, a coalition agreement is an agreement negotiated between the parties that form a coalition government. It codifies the most important shared goals and objectives of the cabinet. It is often written by the leaders of the parliamentary groups.

KEYWORDS-Coalition, Parties, Agreement, Multiparty, Parliamentary, Electoral, Legitimacy, Agreement

I. INTRODUCTION

A parliamentary republic with a multi-party system,^[229] it has six recognised national parties, including the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and more than 50 regional parties.^[230] The Congress is considered centre-left in Indian political culture,^[231] and the BJP right-wing.^{[232][233][234]} For most of the period between 1950—when India first became a republic—and the late 1980s, the Congress held a majority in the Parliament. Since then, however, it has increasingly shared the political stage with the BJP,^[235] as well as with powerful regional parties which have often forced the creation of multi-party coalition governments at the centre.^[236]

In the Republic of India's first three general elections, in 1951, 1957, and 1962, the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru-led Congress won easy victories. On Nehru's death in 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri briefly became prime minister; he was succeeded, after his own unexpected death in 1966, by Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi, who went on to lead the Congress to election victories in 1967 and 1971. [1,2,3]Following public discontent with the state of emergency she declared in 1975, the Congress was voted out of power in 1977; the then-new Janata Party, which had opposed the emergency, was voted in. Its government lasted just over two years. There were two prime ministers during this period; Morarji Desai and Charan Singh. Voted back into power in 1980, the Congress saw a change in leadership in 1984, when Indira Gandhi was assassinated; she was succeeded by her son Rajiv Gandhi, who won an easy victory in the general elections later that year. The Congress was voted out again in 1989 when a National Front coalition, led by the newly formed Janata Dal in alliance with the Left Front, won the elections; that government too proved relatively short-lived, lasting just under two years. There were two prime ministers during this period; V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar.^[237] Elections were held again in 1991; no party won an absolute majority. The Congress, as the largest single party, was able to form a minority government led by P. V. Narasimha Rao.^[238]

A two-year period of political turmoil followed the general election of 1996. Several short-lived alliances shared power at the centre. [5,7,8]The BJP formed a government briefly in 1996; it was followed by two comparatively long-lasting United Front coalitions, which depended on external support. There were two prime ministers during this period; H.D. Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral. In 1998, the BJP was able to form a successful coalition, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the NDA became the first non-Congress, coalition government to complete a five-year term.^[239] Again in the 2004 Indian general elections, no party won an absolute majority, but the Congress emerged as the largest single party, forming another successful coalition: the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). It had the support of left-leaning parties and MPs who opposed the BJP. The UPA returned to power in the 2009 general election with increased numbers, and it no longer required external support from India's communist



parties.^[240] That year, Manmohan Singh became the first prime minister since Jawaharlal Nehru [9,10,11] in 1957 and 1962 to be re-elected to a consecutive five-year term.^[241] In the 2014 general election, the BJP became the first political party since 1984 to win a majority and govern without the support of other parties.^[242] In the 2019 general election, the BJP was victorious again. The incumbent prime minister is Narendra Modi, a former chief minister of Gujarat. Droupadi Murmu was elected India's 15th president and took the oath of office .

II. DISCUSSION

The United Front was a coalition government of 13 political parties formed in India after the 1996 general elections.^[1] The coalition formed two governments in India between 1996 and 1998. The government was headed by two Prime Ministers from Janata Dal – H. D. Deve Gowda, and I. K. Gujral. N. Chandrababu Naidu of the Telugu Desam Party served as the convener of United Front.^{[2][3]} Headquartered at the Andhra Pradesh Bhavan at New Delhi.^[4]

The Indian general election in 1996 returned a fractured verdict. With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerging as the largest party, with 161 of 543 seats, it was invited first to form a government. It accepted the offer, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee was sworn in as prime minister. However, he was unable to muster a majority on the floor of the house, and the government fell 13 days later.^[5] At a meeting of all the other parties, the Indian National Congress,^[12,13,15] with a substantial 140 seats, declined to head the government and agreed to extend outside support to the coalition.^[6] Whereas Communist Party of India (Marxist), agreed to join the coalition with the Janata Dal at its head,^[7] named the "United Front". Other members of the front included the Samajwadi Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Asom Gana Parishad, Tamil Maanila Congress, Communist Party of India and Telugu Desam Party.

With the approval of the Congress and CPI(M), the sitting Chief Minister of Karnataka, H. D. Deve Gowda, was asked to head the coalition as Prime Minister after V. P. Singh and Jyoti Basu declined.^{[8][9]} His term was from June 1, 1996 – April 21, 1997.^[10] The Congress revoked its support to Gowda amidst discontent over communication between the coalition and the Congress. It compromised to support a new government under I. K. Gujral, who was Prime Minister from April 21, 1997 – March 19, 1998. Following the collapse of his government, fresh elections were called,^[11] and the United Front lost power.^[12] Later with the exit of N. Chandrababu Naidu as the convener of UF to extend outside support to NDA, United Front collapsed.^[13]

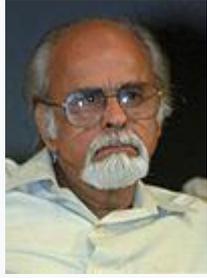
Electoral performance[17,18,19]

Year	Legislature	Coalition leader	Seats won	Change in seats	Percentage of votes	Vote swing	Outcome	Ref.
1996	11th Lok Sabha	N. Chandrababu Naidu	305 / 543	—	56.31%	—	Government	[14]
1998	12th Lok Sabha		88 / 543	▼ 217	20.98%	▼ 35.33%	Opposition	[15]

List of prime ministers [20,21]

No.	Portrait	Name	Term in office			Lok Sabha	Cabinet	Constituency	Party
			Start	End	Tenure				
1		H. D. Deve Gowda	1 June 1996	21 April 1997	324 days	11th	Deve Gowda	Rajya Sabha Karnataka	Janata Dal



No.	Portrait	Name	Term in office			Lok Sabha	Cabinet	Constituency	Party
			Start	End	Tenure				
2		Inder Kumar Gujral	21 April 1997	19 March 1998	332 days		Gujral	Rajya Sabha Bihar	

Coalition members[22,23]

Party	1996 (Post-poll alliance)	1998 (Pre-poll alliance)	Seat Change
Internal support			
Asom Gana Parishad	5	0	▼ 5
Communist Party of India	12	9	▼ 3
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	32	32	—
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	17	6	▼ 11
Janata Dal	46	6	▼ 40
Samajwadi Party	17	20	▲ 3
Tamil Maanila Congress	20	3	▼ 17
Telugu Desam Party	16	12	▼ 4
External support			
Indian National Congress	140		
Total	305	88	▼ 217

III. RESULTS

The Third Front in Indian politics refers to various alliances formed by smaller parties at different points since 1989 to offer a third option to Indian voters, challenging the Indian National Congress (INC) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).^[1] National Front (NF) was a coalition of political parties led by the Janata Dal, which formed India's government between 1989 and 1990. N. T. Rama Rao was the president of the National Front, and V. P. Singh was its convener. The coalition's prime minister was V. P. Singh, later succeeded by Chandra Shekhar. Nationally, the party was represented by Janata Dal and Indian Congress (Socialist). It was represented regionally by Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu, and Asom Gana Parishad in Assam. The non-member party Left Front supported them. The Leader of the Opposition, P. Upendra, was a General Secretary of the Front at its formation.[23,25]

In 1991, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha became a part of the Front. TDP split in 1995, with a minority faction siding with N. T. Rama Rao and the majority faction choosing to side with Chandrababu Naidu. The Front collapsed before the Lok Sabha elections of 1996 when NF tried to include both DMK and AIADMK, resulting in the DMK walking out. After N. T. Rama Rao died of a heart attack in January 1996, Janata Dal stood by Rama Rao's widow Lakshmi Parvathi while Left parties allied with Chandrababu Naidu.



After the 1996 elections, Janata Dal, Samajwadi Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Telugu Desam Party, Asom Gana Parishad, All India Indira Congress (Tiwari), Left Front (4 parties), Tamil Maanila Congress, National Conference, and Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party formed a 13 party United Front (UF). The coalition formed two governments in India between 1996 and 1998. The Prime Minister was first from Janata Dal - H. D. Deve Gowda, then later succeeded by I. K. Gujral, after Jyoti Basu, V. P. Singh declined to become the Prime Minister. Both governments were supported from outside by the Indian National Congress under Sitaram Kesri. N. Chandrababu Naidu of the Telugu Desam Party served as the convener of United Front.

The Indian general election in 1996 returned a fractured verdict. With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerging as the largest party, with 161 of 543 seats, it was invited first to form a government. It accepted the offer, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee was sworn in as prime minister. However, he was unable to muster a majority on the floor of the house, and the government fell 13 days later. At a meeting of all the other parties, the Indian National Congress, with a substantial 140 seats, declined to head the government and along with the Communist Party of India (Marxist), agreed to extend outside support to a coalition with the Janata Dal at its head, named the "United Front". Other members of the front included the Samajwadi Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Asom Gana Parishad, Tamil Maanila Congress, Communist Party of India, and Telugu Desam Party.[25,28]

With the approval of the Congress and CPI(M), the sitting Chief Minister of Karnataka, H. D. Deve Gowda, was asked to head the coalition as Prime Minister after V. P. Singh, Jyoti Basu, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav, G. K. Moopanar and M. Karunanidhi declined. His term was from 1 June 1996 – 21 April 1997. The Congress revoked its support to Deve Gowda amidst discontent over communication between the coalition and the Congress. It compromised to support a new government under I. K. Gujral, who was Prime Minister from 21 April 1997 – 19 March 1998. Following the collapse of his government, fresh elections were called, and the United Front lost power.

Third Front (2009)

The CPI(M) led the formation of the Third Front for the 2009 election.^[2] This Front was a collection of regional political parties that were neither in UPA nor the NDA. Parties like CPI(M), CPI, AIFB, RSP, CPI(ML)L, BSP, AIADMK, MDMK, PMK, BJD, JD(S), HJC, TDP, PWPI and some other small parties were the members of this Front. The newly formed alliance carried with them 109 seats before the 2009 election. After the election, the coalition won only 82 seats.[21,22,23]

Federal Front (2019)

Federal Front was an alliance of regional parties proposed by K. Chandrashekar Rao. But this proposed alliance was not materialized.^[3]

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The Janata Morcha ("People's Front") was a coalition of Indian political parties formed in 1974 to oppose the government of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her Congress (R) party. The coalition was an integral part of the popular movement against the Emergency rule of Indira Gandhi and the direct predecessor of the Janata Party, which defeated the Congress (R) in the 1977 Indian general election to form the first non-Congress government in independent India.^[1] It was formed by Jayaprakash Narayan and Morarji Desai, chief of the main opposition Congress (O) party. For the 1971 Indian general election, the Congress (O), Samyukta Socialist Party and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh had formed a coalition called the "Grand Alliance" to oppose Indira Gandhi and the Congress (R), but failed to have an impact;^[2] Indira's Congress (R) won a large majority in the 1971 elections and her popularity increased significantly after India's victory [23,25,27] in the war of 1971 against Pakistan.^[2] However, Gandhi's subsequent inability to address serious issues such as unemployment, poverty, inflation and shortages eroded her popularity.^[2] The Janata Morcha was formed by Jayaprakash Narayan and Morarji Desai as an alliance of political parties opposed to the Congress (R) and Indira Gandhi. The constituents included the Congress (O), Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Samyukta Socialist Party and the BLD. The Janata Morcha won a surprising victory in the elections held for the Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) of the Indian state of Gujarat on 11 June 1975.^{[2][3]} The next day, the Allahabad High Court judged Indira Gandhi guilty of electoral malpractices, invalidated her 1971 election victory and barred her from elective office for six years. This led Indira to impose a state of emergency on 26 June 1975.^{[1][2]} Indira's government used the state of emergency to clamp down on opposition and dissolved the newly elected assembly, preventing the Morcha from forming the government and taking power. During the emergency, the leaders and activists of the Janata Morcha were imprisoned. After the 1977 elections were called, the constituents of the Janata Morcha formally launched the Janata Party on 18 Janu-



ary 1977, determined to forge a united front of all opposition political parties. The Janata party replicated the success of the Morcha in Gujarat by winning the 1977 elections and forming the first non-Congress government of India[27,28]

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