



Verdict 2014: Possibilities and Apprehensions of Coalition Politics in India

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Abstract : *The history of politics has witnessed the changing nature of Coalition Politics. Therefore, to examine the causes and consequences of changing nature of coalition politics and to assess the opinion of the people of India about the future of coalition politics, a research work was undertaken. For this purpose, we administered a set of questionnaire to MLAs as well as common people and analyzed their answers for content analysis and generalizing facts.*

The necessity to bring good governance is firmly established in every democratic society. In India this need saw the emergence of a new era in 2014. This work intends to highlight the actual trends of voting behaviour in 2014 Lok Sabha elections. This work presents a comprehensive study of the concept of Indian political system with special reference to verdict 2014. The ultimate goal of the project is to study the voting behaviour of Indian people. Empirical study assures the project's relevance. It would encourage researchers and psephologists to investigate the factors responsible for a fractured mandate and the emergence of coalition trend or a non coalition era of transformative politics in Indian political system in the future.

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Introduction :

The term coalition is derived from the Latin word “coalito” which is the verbal substantive of coalescing. “Co” means together and “alescere” means to go or to go together. According to F.A.Ogg, “...the term “coalition” as employed in the political sense, commonly denotes a cooperative arrangement under which distinct political parties, or at all events members of such parties unite to form a government or ministry”. (Ogg 1957:600)

A **Political Coalition** or **Political Alliance** is an agreement for cooperation between different political parties on common political agenda, often for purposes of contesting an election to mutually benefit by collectively clearing election threshold or otherwise benefiting from characteristics of the voting system or for government formation after elections.

Basically, there are two classes of coalition theory. The first, power maximization theory and the second, policy-based theory of coalition formation and behaviour (Riker, Swaan 1973:54). The stability of a coalition government depends on the principles guiding its formation and its cohesion and capacity for democratic decision-making. A good first principle would be to exclude those who cannot accept this democratic development as being positive but more with the aim of proving its unavailability by destabilizing it to reinforce the case for a return to one party rule (Shashtri 1996:10). It is being questioned whether Parliamentary government and federal polity can at all co-exist with coalition politics (Narain 1971:30-50).

In India coalition politics started in the year 1967 when there was a mushroom growth of regional parties to challenge the hegemony of Congress as one party dominance model. But technically speaking, coalition government in India emerged in 1977 during the **Janata Party rule**

under the Prime Ministership of Morarji Desai.

In 1984, it was the last time, when the government was formed with full majority and after that, coalition politics prevailed in the country. But at that time, there was also a Single-party system. The Congress was the Pan-India party and to challenge it, there were left parties in more than one state. Jan Sangh and BJP had a limited presence. But, the scenario has changed radically after the elections of 2014.

The election of 2014 has been a turning point for Coalition Government which raises many questions that whether this Lok Sabha election will be the last one for Coalition Politics? Even the established political parties are so indifferent to their own sense of responsibility and accountability that they have only earned the wrath and ridicule of the electorate but also people are fast losing their faith in the political parties, political leaders and the political system (Verma 1998:06). Narendra Modi's splendid personality and widespread NAMO effect all over the country and even outside the country brought about a halt in the Coalition Government in India. Now, the question is that whether this halt will give a new beginning to India or the mantra of Coalition “**United we stand, divided we fall**” will continue to spread its effect. But the Party is also worried that it is not in majority in the Rajya Sabha. The Congress is still the largest party in the Upper House so new partners will be needed for the BJP in this context, and many more.

Hypotheses :

Our Research Study is based on following Hypotheses:

- The Coalition Politics in Indian political system has entered into a new phase after 2014 elections which will prove transitory.
- The BJP has broken the myth of being a sectarian Party.

Aim & Objectives :

This research was undertaken keeping in mind two important objectives:

- To examine the causes & consequences of changing nature of coalition politics.
- To find out the relevance of coalition politics in India in the present scenario.

Methodology :

This work was an empirical study based on both primary and secondary data. "For collecting Primary data we adopted Scheduled Interview technique". For this we prepared a set of 20 questions. Secondary data was collected from Books, Magazines, Newspapers and web links based on content analysis. Scheduled Interview method was used to administer the views of political leaders and Common people. Our sampling method was incidental cum purposive and sample size was 50. The universe of our project was Bailey Road, area of Patna, Bihar.

Result and Discussions :

Through this empirical study, view of common mass comprising people from all strata of social life as well as of MLAs were taken. On the issue of the possibility of one party dominance in India in near future, 46% turned affirmative and expressed their opinion, favouring continuance of one party dominance but this time of BJP rather than Congress. While analyzing the actual agenda before this election, it was found that 62% were of the view that the actual agenda before this election was anti-congress. People were fed-up with the corruption and scams in the congress regime. They really wanted relief from the increasing agony. So, if it was not the exclusive factor definitely, it was one of the strongest factors in the magic victory of BJP.

30% of people thought that this verdict shows an end of coalition era. 60% of them were not sure and believed that it was too early to jump into any conclusion. While most of the people agreed that it was necessary for BJP to form an alliance in this election, and even in future because India's electorate cannot be united absolutely for any cause, however respondents gave contradictory statements.

A majority i.e. 80% of people turned affirmative that the voting behavior of Indian people has shifted towards developmental issues rather than caste and religion. It is true because of the growing rate of literacy and more critical thinking of the electorate. Here the media has a very significant role to play as they create a hype of certain basic issues which otherwise would have been ignored. So, this is a positive change of the 21st century and government has to realize it now.

The final question was is there any chance of BJP with absolute majority at the centre to implement the Common Minimum Program (CMP) which now stands at the lowest ebb. 40% people are still hopeful and want to give sufficient time to the government. While others claimed that in a country like India the program of Uniform Civil Code, removal of article 370 from the section of the constitution and the making of Ram JanmBhumi can never be enforced and called it a political gimmick. Though people wanted BJP to come but they very well knew that CMP will never be implemented because government wants to stabilize itself before getting involved into such controversial issues. 56% of people were not in favour of CMP, they desired positive change in achieving societal goals and held high expectations from the present Modi Government.

While examining that whether electorate will always be united for a cause like this election in future we found that 92% people agreed that

electorate have always shown their unity as and when required. In 1977, electorate joined their hands together to remove Indira Gandhi from the Prime Ministerial seat and voted unanimously in favor of Janata Party comprising of many small splinters factions. This time it has done it with much force and vigour to oust Congress regime and most of them were optimistic that it will happen again in future.

Respondents believed that the two major political parties Congress and BJP along with Leftist parties will always be in the electoral fray. However, it cannot be asserted that India will have a Bi-party model like the two biggest democracies of the world U.K. and U.S.A. because of the diverse cultural heterogeneity of Indian political culture. The absence of a majority party makes it necessary to form heterogeneous cabinets based on a coalition or else minority cabinets (Gehlot 2000:202).

Discussion :

Anti-incumbency factor will also work as it had been the primary feature of Indian Democracy. Government at present is not focusing on CMP as promised and is busy with improving foreign relations which may dismay a class of electorate. This will definitely not guarantee votes in forthcoming elections. But of course in the guise of multi-party system, fortune of Indian polity will definitely swing between the two giants Congress and BJP. This is a transition phase where the Hindu community mobilization has played a significant role as a reaction against extreme form of appeasement policy followed by the Congress party. Corruption and good governance also became responsible factors for the absolute victory of BJP and one must not forget that the charisma of Modi percolated at the grass-roots levels. Expectations are too high from Modi. He has to be extra careful about his moves and strategies. He needs to woo elite and masses simultaneously and

he should be pragmatic enough to co-ordinate with allies. Prime Minister of coalition politics must serve as a catalyst, a mobilizer and integrator of public opinion forum. He must work on persuasion rather than cohesion and must be concerned with the problems of the people and must tolerate the even opposing views of their allies (Mesquita 1975:49-155).

A proper balance of power should be arrived at between Centre and States as the Indian voters are definitely pointing to a group effort of more than one party when they do not send a single party to power. They want better management of their fate by the government. There is no getting away with political opportunism by the parties as pre-electoral promises should be fulfilled and two political enemies of pre-election phase should not become an ally in post-election era to share power, otherwise electoral feel cheated as it happened in Bihar once when Congress canvassed against Lalu rule and later formed government with RJD chief. We had tested two hypotheses. One was approved that coalition will always be the guiding principle of Indian Government and politics and people said that coalition politics will continue in Indian Democracy in near future. And the second hypotheses we tested was partially disapproved. A segment feels that BJP still works on the lines of being a sectarian party.

Conclusion :

Parliamentary form of Government means Government by consent of public criticism ensuring election by popular vote and those who want majority rule to prevail they have satisfy legitimate aspirations of people.

India has got a taste of coalition politics at the state level when the left front comprising of Communist Party of India (CPI), CPI (Marxist) and others formed the first ever coalition government in India at West Bengal which till date hasn't been defeated. At the national level, the first ever coalition government was formed under the Prime

Ministership of late Morarji Desai which existed from 24th March 1977 to 15th July 1979 headed by the Janata Party. India entered into an age of coalition politics in the 1990s. Post 1970s emergency period saw the emergence of Janata Party and the weakening of the Indian National Congress, which was the undefeatable political party in India. Many a times this coalition government fails to exist for its full term but few landmark achievements of coalition government cannot be denied as well.

The latest 2014 election has been a benchmark for the coalition government in India. The result of election stated that this is the first time when any other party has stood up against the Congress as a Pan-India Party. The National Democratic Alliance, led by the Bhartiya Janata Party marvelously won a clean sweep victory taking 336 seats all over in which BJP itself won 31% of all votes and 282 (51.9%) of all seats which already crowns it the leading party with absolute majority vote.

This way the regime of Congress seems doomed and Narendra Modi's splendid personality and widespread NAMO effect all over the world led to the halt on the coalition government in India by bringing BJP as the single largest Party at the centre. Interestingly, within coalition frame and the results of state elections viz Maharashtra, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh shows the impact of Modi but however do not deny the possibility of coalition in future. Still people are hoping a lot from BJP led NDA government at the centre. Let us see to what an extent BJP will fulfill the aspirations of the people and lead India into a global map. **Performance affects decisions but mind set prevails ultimately.** Coalition is inevitable till Indians aspire for safeguarding sectional interests along with National Integrity. Diversity demands Coalition which will for many more years to come govern the ruling principle.

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