

COALITION POLITICS STRENGTHENING FEDERALISM IN INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

Indian federal polity has got changed during the last four and half decades with the coming of coalition trend into the forefront. The phenomenon of Coalition Government has brought significant changes in Indian federalism. It has led to the federalization of the regional political parties which have become central to the making or unmaking of the government at the union level. In this paper, I try to analyze the current relationship between political parties and democracy in India. The paper tries to answer the vital question: How do India's political parties currently facilitate or impede the work of democratic politics? The objective of the paper is to discuss the impact of coalition politics on the federal system in India. Relevance of the present study lies in the fact that it highlights the emerging trends of coalition politics in Indian federal polity and the changes in the Indian political system from the last decades of the present century.

Keywords: Federalism, Co-operative, Political Parties, Coalition, Centre-State Relations, Autonomy and Democracy.

Introduction:

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The present study focuses on the role and understanding of coalition politics at the extent of success of Indian federalism by describing post-independence developments and various federal institutions in a phased manner. The paper is divided into many sections and after beginning with the introduction (in Section I); the paper is structured as follows. In Section II, the paper briefly describes the theoretical nature of federalism and tries to answer how federalism as a constitutional model is best suited to Indian democracy. The significance of politics is that, with time and circumstance the nature of politics changes and this is applicable to Indian politics also. Before independence the nature of politics was different as it was dominated by single or Congress party system 1950 to 1967 and thereafter there occurred tremendous changes in Indian polity. Section III of the paper therefore discusses the political developments taking place in the working of Indian parliamentary and federal system of governance dismantled the monolithic structure of the party which is called the end of one party dominant system and the emergence of regional political parties and coalition era in Indian politics. Political parties are unavoidable necessities for every democratic polity. Their roles become further important in plural societies in which socio-cultural diversities seems to be decisive factors for both cultural integration and national unity. The Section IV of the paper is therefore discusses the impact of regional political parties and coalition politics on Indian federalism. After discussing both negative and positive aspects the paper looks and confirmed that coalition politics and regional political parties not only promote good leadership with inclusive regional development but also puts check on government authoritarianism. Up front, in Section V, the paper discussed the contribution of regional parties and coalition politics in Indian federalism and democracy. This Section of paper argues that Coalition Government not only have encouraged decentralization by ensuring consensus on issues confronting the common man but it also fostered a true spirit of cooperative federalism. The paper finally concludes in Part VI, with a statement that Coalition government is not only a great asset for Indian federalism but it is also a big resource for its democratic and diverse outlook.

Federalism in India: A Historical Socio-economic and Political Perspective

Federalism is an idea of contemporary modernistic democratic political system which is introduced through a network of institutions and structures, and appropriate division of power and administration between them. It is a uniquely modernist political phenomenon, in that it

seeks to ensure a distribution of powers and responsibilities within the politico-geographic boundaries of a political system. It is very well perceived as much in the manner of a political equilibrium, striking an appropriate balance between shared rule and self-rule.¹ As a modernistic approach, federalism is a constitutional model which would not only tolerate diversity but also foster and encourage it as an additional value for which the multicultural state stands. Thus, for a diverse country like India, federalism has been a proven method for accommodation of rising diversities in various parts of India. Further, federalism is regarded as a best mechanism for Indian governance which not only limit the governmental power in order to implement peace, liberty and justice but also include different communities to let them share in governmental power in a way that all groups and ethnicities can participate in order to govern and design themselves what is in their common interest.²

The founding fathers, drawing lessons from Euro-American traditions of constitutionalism and from their own collective wisdom and collective experiences with colonial administration, especially from the Government of India Act 1935, gave us a workable and serving Constitution and such a structure of polity and governance which during the last six and half decades has succeeded in creating a 'survival society' and stable polity in India. Primarily being a document of 'national self-actualization', the founding fathers set-in the three important objectives of the Constitution – unity and integrity, democracy, and social revolution. They thoughtfully prescribed a model of 'federal union', and 'federal nation', which truly symbolizing the universally acclaimed Indian principle of "unity in diversity."³ It is in this sense that the founders of our Constitution adopted federal form of government in order to implement the principle of diversity in unity. They perceived federalism essentially as a solution to a number of ethnic and linguistic problems, governance of Princely and British Provinces and increasing communal antagonism. Atul Kohli has rightly claimed that, "*among the political processes that have been contributed to the strengthening of democracy in India is the establishment of successful federal system. This has been essential in creating a degree of political cohesion among diverse ethnic regions.*"⁴

India is a classic plural society and massive federal polity which is practically apparent in every major aspect of its collective life, be it social systems, economic formations, culture-patterns; or

language-dialect groupings, religious communities, castes, sub-castes and sects or ethnic identities, regional alignments and sub-regional attachments and artefacts of life.⁵ The success of federalism in Indian can be said to be due to the nature of democratic politics in our country which has been best exemplified by Rasheeduddin Khan in the following words, “India as a classical traditional society is the most authentic and complex federal polity in the world. No other territorial sovereignty, with a continental dimension, at any point of human history has been as distinctly and positively federal in its socio-cultural composition as the India is today. This is evident from multiple lines of variations and diversities – ethnic divisions, cultural patterns, social customs, religious beliefs, languages and dialects, regional and sub-regional identities. While there is a pervasive sense of Indian unity, yet the existence of these socio-cultural diversities underlines the need to build a new viable federal national identity. That indeed is one of the main concerns and challenges of contemporary Indian politics”.⁶

Today, India’s political institutions are widely recognized as a vigorous albeit hybrid variant of the federal species. Self rule and shared rule have been combined in an unorthodox ways which have enabled the Indian Union not only to survive but also flourish and foster all its diversity. Federal evolution has been influenced by assertion of regional identities multiplicity of political formations, party competitions and coalitional governance and networking. This phase of India’s federal development is marked by the role of regional parties who not only have gained importance due to the gradual decline of Congress dominant system in our body politic but they also remain accountable to people for various issues as they are entrusted to govern at their respective level of administration.⁷ The political discourse in India has changed over the years where diversity of people is identified with caste, language, religion, region, minority and majority. Majoritarian dominance is now becoming negotiable in Indian democracy where other groups have emerged with their own rights and political ambitions. As a result, no single group is in a position to determine the destinies of the entire nation. Largest and smallest parties have also formed their different combined groups for making collective and cooperative efforts in governance. Political coalition has thus become inevitable reality in India due to the perpetuation of multiparty system and democratization process.⁸

Emergence of Regional Parties and End of Single Party Dominance in India

It is very difficult to describe precisely the nature of the Indian party system, because of the complexity of the Indian society. The important salient feature of our party system is the existence of various types of parties who are free to take birth and die as nothing is mentioned about them in our Constitution. With the dawn of independence, India emerged as a Democratic Republic with a strong constitutional political system. Drawing lessons from the experiences of Western Democratic Constitutionalism, India had come to adopt the Canadian model of federal system with an emphasis on a strong Centre and dependent States and a Centrifugal distribution of powers between the Centre and the States. The fact that the Indian National Congress, the sole organisation to fight for freedom earlier, had emerged as a ruling party holding power both at the Centre and in the States, had further tightened and reinforced the Centralised Constitutional and Political Culture. This phenomenon had continued from first General Elections 1952 to the Fourth General Elections in 1967, resulting in the non-performance of even the limited federal mechanism which had qualified the Indian method to be called a “Quasi-federal” political system by K.C. Wheare.⁹ Rajni Kothari asserts that the Congress Party, based upon a broad consensus, was able to accommodate diverse interests and factions within its fold and therefore he prefers to call the said phase as “One Party Dominance System” or “The Congress System”.¹⁰ However, this picture has entirely changed in 1967, when non-Congress regional parties came into power in some States. These parties not only challenged and criticized the dominant rule of the Central Government but demanded an overall review of the Centre-State relations and wanted greater independence of action.¹¹

This new development with the emergence of regional political parties and later the formation of coalition politics as their constituent partners after the 1967 elections became an important development of Indian politics. We have witnessed the existence of regional parties because of neglecting and imbalance of national government in social, cultural and economic development of different areas. Regional parties came into existence to take care of these problems so that their demands have been fulfilled and in this process these parties helped the country to strengthen the unity in diversity, notwithstanding the Congress I's claim that the so called regional parties will harm national unity and integrity. Regional parties, instead of posing danger to national unity, constitute the necessary concomitant factor of a federal system with emphasizing on integrating sub-regional identities into the political system.¹²

Analysis of Trends towards Multiparty-System and Coalition Governments

Coalition politics indicates the unity and combination of a number of bodies or parts into one body or whole. It is in fact a parliamentary game in which durability is balanced against political intrigues which is determined by the parliamentary bargaining conditions. Hence, an overall coalition of parties depends for its durability and working on a balance of power among different factions and different leaders of groups.¹³ In India, coalition politics is older than the Indian Constitution itself. The Indian National Congress, which spearheaded the freedom struggle, was a coalitional force. Undivided India had its first experiment with coalition in 1937 when elections to the provincial legislatures under the Government of India Act, 1935 were held in 1937. The Congress obtained a clear majority in Madras, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces and Orissa. The Congress had a tacit electoral understanding with the Muslim League when it was not confident of a decisive majority in the United Provinces Legislatures. But after the elections, the Congress refused to form a coalition with the Muslim League which later resulted in activation of the League.¹⁴

The credit for having the first ever coalition under the present Constitution goes to what was then Patiala and the East Punjab States Union (PEPSU). As no party could get a majority in the state assembly in the first election of 1952, a coalition of non-congress parties was formed in April 1952. Thus, the erstwhile States of Travancore-Cochin and PEPSU became the first two States in the country to form coalition governments in post independence.¹⁵ During 1953-67, three more coalition governments appeared first in Andhra Pradesh (1953-67), Orissa (1957-62) and then in Kerala (1960-64). Coalition experiment at the Centre can be traced to the first Non-Congress government led by the Janata Party (1977-80). The period of the first coalition government was of Janata Party from 24 March 1977 to 28 July 1979, when Marojai Desai was the Prime Minister of India, who ruled for 851 days. The Janata Party was the offspring of the continuous struggles made by the opposition parties to pull down the Congress from power. Frustrated by the authoritarianism of the Congress during the Emergency (1975-77) and many other reasons led certain opposition parties and groups to fight the next general election under a common banner and thus provide an alternative to the Congress. The initiative was taken by Jayprakash Narayan who provided moral leadership to Indian politics at the time, the Congress (O), the Jan

Sangh, the Socialist Party and the Bharatiya Lok Dal came together to undertake the challenge. They decided to fight the Lok Sabha elections unitedly under one flag and with one programme. Morarji Desai who became leader of the party announced the decision to go to the polls under the name of the Janata Party. The General Elections were held in March 1977 and the Non-Congress opposition could sweep the polls.¹⁶ This coalition government was then split into two factions by Charan Singh and he made alliance with the Congress-I to form a Second coalition government. Its period was 28 July 1979 to 14 January 1980 and Charan Singh government was in power for 137 days. Congress-I withdrew the support to Charan Singh and defeated the government. Because of the role played by Congress-I, the coalition government could not be there in power for the full term. The third coalition government was formed by BJP and Janata Dal with the alliance of all opposition parties during 1 December 1989 to 7 November 1990. V.P. Singh was the Prime Minister for the coalition government named as 'National Front Government' and ruled for 341 days.¹⁷

The Sixth Lok Sabha Elections (1977-79) which surprises the country by defeating the Congress as well as its leader Mrs. Gandhi at the hustings also witnessed many coalition governments at the States level. However, it was in the Ninth Lok Sabha Election (1989-90) that the onset of coalition politics started in the real sense, since then no party had got absolute majority in Lok Sabha, which had now culminated into an era of coalition government, which now seems inescapable and inevitable at least for a very long period.¹⁸ The elections of 1989 were held in an environment charged with emotions variously aroused by anti-corruption campaign, anti-Babri Masjid movement of BJP and the Sangh, and terrorist threat to national unity.¹⁹ The Ninth Lok Sabha Election (1989-90) had also changed the discourse of Indian party system apart from three larger parties – Indian National Congress (INC), Janata Dal (JD) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and emergence of smaller parties with regional standing – Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India – Marxist (CPI-M), Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), (AIADMK), etc., we have also witnessed various coalition governments at State levels ever since, namely Akali-BJP coalition in Punjab, National Conference-Congress coalition and later Congress-PDP coalition in J&K, Janata Dal-BJP and Lok Dal – BJP coalition in Haryana, Left Front coalition in West Bengal and Kerala, TDP-BJP coalition in Andhra Pradesh, S.P.-B.S.P. alliance in U.P., etc. Thus, Coalition governments at the

Centre in India have become a frequent event since 1989. Since then till last election Seven General Elections have been conducted with the same result i.e. no single party mustering absolute majority in Lok Sabha except in Last General Election.²⁰

The Eleventh Lok Sabha election April-May 1996 witnessed a severely fractured verdict with no one party or alliance being able to come anywhere nears an absolute majority. It was a multi-cornered fight, the BJP alone being able to give the semblance of an alliance. The Congress fought it alone with perhaps some electoral adjustments at the State level. The National Front (JD, TDP, DMK, TMC, SP, AGP, MPVC) and the Left Front (CPI, CPI(M), FB, RSP, which later formed the third front under the name of United Front and formally elected Deve Gowda as its leader) could not reach any agreement about a third front as a viable alternative to the Congress and the BJP. The main cause was the absence of any strong focal point or a leader who could bring them together. Finally, the BJP emerged as the single largest party with 160 seats as against 139 seats won by the Congress (I).²¹

In the 12th General Election midterm polls (1998) that followed there was no clear one party majority again. The BJP and the Congress retained their position as the two largest parties, and in 13th Lok Sabha Election in 1999, the BJP replaced the AIADMK by DMK and went to the polls in with other partners in the coalition intact under the label National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The formation of NDA with BJP at the centre stage and alliance with BJD (Orissa), JD(U) of Samata Party (Pre-dominantly Bihar), Lok Jan Shakti (Bihar), DMK (Tamil Nadu), Lok Shakti (Karnatka), Akali Dal (Punjab) etc. made a pre-poll alliance as well as a Common Minimum Programme (CMP) with a designated leader Vajpayee, who would become Prime Minister, in case the alliance comes to power, led to NDA rule at the Centre for five-year term i.e. from 1999-2003. The NDA under the same alliance fought the 14th General Election in 2004 also with a same CMP and under the same designated leader but the Congress having learned the lesson that there is no escape from coalition era also sought meaningful broad based alliances with Lok Jan Shakti, RJD, DMK, NCP and others to form United Progressive Alliance (UPA) under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi in 2003, leading to its victory in 14th General Elections with 145 seats followed by BJP with 138 seats from 2004 to 2009. These major combination or alliances and their stability also remains important developments in the 15th General Election -

2009 respectively when Congress got 206 seats followed by BJP with 106 seats. The Coalition Government again appear in recent General Election in 2014, when BJP gained 282 seats followed by Congress with 44 seats led the NDA's rule for next five years.²²

Impact of Regional Political Parties and Coalition Politics on Indian Federal System

Initially, India's view on coalition government is deeply coloured by what Benjamin Disraeli, the famous British Prime Minister observed about it, namely Britain does not love coalition. To an average Indian, the term 'coalition government', therefore, evokes an image of instability, indecisiveness and other attributes of such a negative colour.²³ However they have stabilized themselves with the passage of time and have brought significant changes in the working of the Indian federalism. It has led to the federalization of the regional political parties which have become central to the making or unmaking of the government at the union level. The present day coalition era has now seems to have become a practical and political necessity to avoid political instability and frequent elections. Assertion of various social segments and their manifestation in political formations are now existing realities which need further democratization, federalization and Consociationalism in governance. It would be pertinent here to have a look at the impact of Coalition Government on the drift through which the Indian federalism has been passed.

1. First of all, the rise of regional parties has contributed to the break-down of the one-party or dominant party system at the Centre and a total reversal of the authoritarian and centralized politics of Congress (I) leadership under whose tenure, the Congress (I) High Command was treating the Chief Ministers as though the Chief of Municipalities. The Congress (I) Prime Ministers never treated the Chief Ministers as equal partners in the running of federal polity of India. The Chief Ministers had to depend on the Prime Minister for survival in their office. In contrast to these past political cultures, the current Indian politics have been drastically federalized by the regional parties. The Prime Minister is no more as powerful as they used to be under One- party dominant system. The President and the Governors are no more rubber stamps endorsing the dictates of the ruling party rather they are conscious of their constitutional roles. The regional parties came to play major roles at the national level and also the key players in coalition government. This kind of change in political parties in India reflects the drastic change in politics of federalism, shifting from dominant federalism to cooperative Federalism. Changes

in the nature of party system from one party dominant system to multiparty system and coalition politics becoming a political reality in the contemporary political discourse have altered the contours of Indian federalism. Coalition governance is rated to be wide representative of diversity prevailing in a federal system²⁴.

2. Historically, India's political parties have played a major role in both the symbolic and actual integration of citizens into the democratic process. Indeed, because they have overwhelmingly respected and nurtured democratic norms, both in elections and in governance, they have helped establish the broad, inclusive, participative Indian state. India's political parties have helped, in Linz, Stephan, and Yadav's terms, to build India as a "state-nation." A state nation is one created by state institutions and policies that respect and protect multiple and complementary identities, beyond just ethno-linguistic federalism.²⁵

3. The birth of a coalition-based state governments marked the rise of a new phase in the context of state politics as much smaller and regional parties compared with the nationalist parties were able not only to win the popular support of the masses at the time of election to state assemblies but also were able to combine themselves with each other despite their differences in political ideology and form the government at the level of various states. It's true that their common anti-Congress ideology came to the fore in such activity but there is more to it than simple the much touted anti congress ideology. The causes for the emergence of this phenomenon may be enumerated as follows: discriminatory role of the Governors in the dismissal of Chief Ministers, reservation of Bills for consideration of the President, demand for repealing certain laws, dismissal of State governments under Article 356, non-implementation of central laws, deployment of CRP, use of All India Services by the Centre Government, alleged discrimination against States – Allocation of Central Projects, allocation of food grains, food for work programme, grants and loan meals, post ponement of Assembly by-elections on partisan grounds, use of mass media for partisan purposes, appointment of inquiry commissions against Chief Ministers, CBI inquiries, visits of Prime Minister/Ministers in the States.²⁶

4. The demands of forming political coalitions have ensured that particularly divisive, "anti-system" ideological agendas have been removed from governance agendas. The BJP, when it led the NDA coalition, was forced by secular partners to drop contentious issues that were

regarded as anti-minority (e.g., building a temple for Rama at the site of the demolished Babri Masjid, shelving of Article 370 that gives special status to Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir, and a uniform civil code that takes away minorities rights to govern themselves according to their own religious traditions). Similarly, the BSP, in its quest to come to power, has toned down its anti-upper-caste rhetoric and is now making successful efforts to create broad, multi-caste coalitions—its alliance with a section of upper-caste Brahmins has helped it secure a simple majority in the state legislature of Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state. The mainstream Communist parties too seem to have been tamed by the system and have long sought to work toward their policy goals within the constitutional framework.

5. Coalitions have reduced the sharpness of ideological differences as parties make compromises to win elections and form governments. Indeed, parties have over time learned “coalition dharma” or the norms and practices that enable diverse parties with disparate ideologies to function as a cohesive government which has enabled a greater variety of regional, ethnic and ideological interests to gain a share of power, thus, broader democracy and making governance more simple and coherent. Coalition politics has also rewarded and ensured a share in power for smaller parties, and hence, access to power for the social groups that form the basis of many parties in a regionalized and ethnicized party system. Because they play a key role in the formation and survival of coalitions, small parties have been able to extract important ministerial positions for their members or increased federal allocation of resources to their states. Thus coalition politics has further consolidated the “ethnification” of parties and the party system. It has, by extension, also reinforced the clientelistic relationship between such parties and voters in which parties channel patronage towards their (increasingly) ethnically defined social bases in what has been called India's “patronage democracy.”²⁷

6. In contemporary times, coalition politics presenting wide based representation by checking the tyranny during its policy formulation hence contributed in the criminalization of politics. In terms of the social realms present in the society, it can be said that coalition politics have been a harbinger for spread of real democracy much above the political sense of the term. The Coalition governance in India have brought in changes in the federalism from dominant federalism to co-operative or bargaining federalism, which may even have its impact on the

Centre-State relations. Finally, the experimentation with the coalition politics will go on and may emerge an alternative in the current political scenario.

7. Changed government opposition relations have reduced the possibility of misuse of Article 356 which caused harm to the federal system. For the smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy opposition's role is of utmost significance. But an analysis of composition of Lok Sabha being constituted after every election since 1989 demonstrates that most of the political parties are ruling at the centre and opposition in the states. In a situation of ruling party at the state level and coalition partner at the centre there is less possibility of centralizing tendency. Nowadays central government cannot dismiss any state government arbitrarily under article 356. This trend has ushered in an era of cooperative federalism. In a coalition set up constitutional and democratic institutions are secure because the ruling dispensation can neither amend the constitution too much and nor it can thwart democracy by imposing Article 356.²⁸

8. Coalition politics made our governance more responsive and responsible. The coalition government addresses the regional disparity more than the single party rule for which it became necessary for the adoption of cooperative federalism as the policy to ensure the support of the regional parties in a stable national government by catering to the development needs of the States. It paves way for healthy and cordial Centre-State relations and positive attitude towards the democratic system. Moreover, it prevents the unwanted and ultimately elections and provides representation for all states.²⁹

From above it seems that the Coalition governments now have become a practical and political necessity to avoid political instability and frequent elections. Assertion of various social segments and their manifestation in political formations are now existing realities which need further democratization, federalisation and Consociationalism in governance. It is true that coalition may remain vulnerable but it has also become inevitable in Indian political panorama. We should therefore explore alternative reforms and changes for enhancing efficiency and efficacy of the coalition polity and governance in contemporary India so as to ensure that it

provides durable, capable, stable and good governance, commensurate with the expectations of the people at the grass roots level.

Coalition Politics Fostering the Federal Process in India: An Analysis

Federalism is a permanent process in India with a strong centralised tendency by its Constitution itself and this same tendency has been continued by Congress Government since its rule and remained in power till 1967 at state and national level. After the emergence of coalition era at the state level in 1967 as well as the centre level in 1977, the conception of multi-party system has gained great importance and the pattern of Centre-State relations has changed to a great extent with granting autonomy to the states by the Centre Government. In consequence, change in the nature of party system from one party dominant system to multiparty system and coalition politics which became a political reality in the contemporary political discourse have altered the contours of Indian federalism. The 1980s and 90s came to be marked with a sense of renewed vigour and hope as no sooner had the emergency been lifted, democracy got restored with full strength and the federalism got a new charter of life and legitimacy. In a coalition government regional political parties have become stronger as the continuation of their vital support is essential for the survival of the government. This has provided regional political parties opportunities for broaden their horizons which has made Indian political system more federal. Therefore the nineties witnessed the new wave in favor of federalism owing to the multi-party system and resultant coalition governments. Participation of many regional political parties in the Coalition Government at the Centre, particularly from 1989 indicates the reinforcement of significant shift from centralised governance towards shared rule and federal governance.

If we look back in our history of Indian Politics, since the regional parties developed a stable role for themselves in their respective states then they very rightly stepped out and played a meaningful role in the national level politics too. As far as that experiment goes, though the life of the government at the Centre was indeed short, yet the treatment meted out to the regional parties both at the level of government and at the level of states was something which was both honorable and didn't smack of any partiality, be littleness or any kind of politicking, something unparalleled in the political history of our country. Thus, in the changed political scenario, the regional political parties not only dominated at the Centre, but also they were in power in many

states. This can also be viewed as healthy trend towards not only co-operative federalism but also towards national unity. Thus, participation of many regional political parties in the coalition indicates the significant changes in the federal set up in India.

Over the period especially after the nineties 1989-2013, the Indian federalism has moved towards greater federalization. The inability of the national political parties to form government on their own at the national level has allowed state political parties to determine the verdict of parliamentary elections as state level political players have become vital at the centre. It not only led to the termination of one- party dominance but also displays the significant shift from centralized governance towards shared and federal governance i.e. power shifting from the Centre to the States. The significant development was that for the first time the centre government acknowledged the need to review centre state relations. Common Minimum Programme (CMP) which was the base of functioning of the United Front government envisaged to advance the principles of political administrative and economic federalism. Keeping in mind the need for greater power to the states and to meet their developmental needs the United Front wanted to go beyond the recommendations of Sarkaria Commission. Common Minimum Programme (CMP) pledged that the states must be given the chance to fix their developmental priorities and chalk out their plans within the domain of national plans. It also urged in favor of suitable amendment in Article 356, shifting of centrally sponsored schemes to the control of the states and revitalize institutions like National Development Council (NDC) and Inter-State Councils (ISC) to generate mutual trust in centre state relations. Coalition Government could make possible the enactment of Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005 and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) 2005.

Recent political developments have also indicated that days of unilateral decision-making are gone and co-management is now the style of federal societies. This has resulted from the democracy changing its paradigm from being representative to participatory. Presently, citizens are not just passive consumers and users of governmental services but are becoming active partners, the shareholders and owners in the stock of government, actively sharing in the governance process. This desire to actively share in the governance of the country is the result of the unresponsive nature of the government and the desire of the people to make governments

responsive and responsible. The closest institutional approximation of the plural reality of our social life is a federal political system based on the principles of a shared government and a consensual approach to governance through political coalitions. Thus, Coalition Government not only have encouraged decentralization by ensuring consensus on issues confronting the common man but it also fostered a true spirit of cooperative federalism.

Conclusion

To conclude, I may now argue that coalition government of multi-party system with considerable clout of regional parties in government making and functioning has not only break-down the one-party dominant at the Centre and reversed the authoritarianism in the country but it has also drastically federalized the current Indian politics. Regional parties which represent the different regions of India make the government much more broad based leaving little room for complaint of uneven economic development. As far as our understanding about Indian federalism is concerned, cooperation instead of confrontation and coordination instead of war of words is visible in centre-state relations and finally the demand for state autonomy is not heard any more. The failure of the Centre in redressing the regional disparities in the context of allocation of resources by way of plans seems to be the important contributor to the growth of a feeling of much alignment and deep neglect on the part of the people and various state governments, who are then forced to take up the issue at the political level, which often have serious consequences for the political system. This has provided regional political parties opportunities for broaden their horizons which has made Indian political system more federal. The new role of regional parties has transformed Indian federalism significantly which has become a reality of Indian political system now days. This kind of change in political parties in India, reflect the drastic change in politics of federalism, shifting from dominant federalism to cooperative federalism. Coalition government in the country accordingly has proved as a pledge to resolving differences peacefully and democratically and attempts to transform diversity into a source of strength. Thus, Coalition government is not only a great asset for Indian federalism but it is also a big resource for its democratic and diverse outlook.

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