

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF COALITION POLITICS IN INDIA

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This thesis aims at understanding the political dynamics in India that have led to usher in an era of coalitional politics.

The framers of the Indian constitution had adopted the West-Minister Model based on Parliamentary Democracy keeping in view India's Cultural, linguistic, religious and caste diversities. The framers of the Indian Constitution preferred a federal system with unitary characteristics. The history of Indian culture is a history of interactions with varied civilizations, their accommodation ultimately leading to a synthetic culture reflecting unity in diversity and tolerance of one-another. A Parliamentary form of government provided a suitable political super-structure to this divergent and pluralist socio-cultural base.

Ever since Independence a number of experiments in Parliamentary Democracy were conducted at different intervals of time, and a state of stability with incremental change and development was maintained. The consolidation of a secular-democratic super-structure and its close identification with indigenous structures and institutions and their inherent ideologies and its gradual penetration at various levels into different segments have been the core processes through which the Indian Political System has achieved its present identity.

The gradual penetration of the West-Minister ethos to every nook and corner of the Indian society brought a total transformation in the socio-economic fabric resulting in the growth of a number of organizations and groups professing extreme varieties of the various 'isms' projecting the political syndrome of the Indian polity as a combination of secular, communal, casteist, regional, linguistic and other identities in their different forms.

With the exit of Indira Gandhi the heterogenous forces that were kept under control started asserting in the political calculations. The Congress which served as a federal entity for over four decades lost its identity as a federal unit. In normal and peaceful times democratic politics require more the efficiency of a collective leadership that is sensitive to the larger coalitional arena than the power of one who rides above it. The U. F. experiment can be explained in this background. Similarly the B.J.P. experiment with its 18 to 22 party coalition also explains the emerging trend in Indian Politics, which led many to believe that an era of coalitional politics has come to stay inspite of acute crises of smooth and stable governability.

An attempt has been made in the present thesis to understand the nature and relevance of political coalitions in the process of governance examining the trends that have emerged leading to coalition governance. The study also took into account, the questions and controversies raised with regard to the crisis of governability under a coalitional system.

With the help of extensive data an analytical attempt has been made in this thesis to document the trends and socio-political changes that have led to an evolution of coalitional system of governance in India, while highlighting its implications on India's Parliamentary Democracy and other socio-political institutions and the pluralist socio-cultural fabric of India.