Coalition Management in Indian Politics: A Study of Alliance National Democratic Alliance and United Progressive Alliance

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Abstract

Coalition government is a product of politics in a parliamentary democracy. It is a development due to the exigencies of a multi-party system in a democratic set up. Political scientists has aptly remarked that India has ethnically, linguistically, religiously, culturally and socially a diverse environment. This diversity has made India an excellent laboratory for studying coalition politics. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) had a two dimensional coordination management, which was not restricted merely to the political sphere alone but also included inter-ministerial collaboration. In the political sphere, it formed the National Agenda for Governance (NAG) and the Coordination Committee (CC) besides this, the alliance began to use extensively the all-party meetings and Chief Minister's conferences for consultation. At the governmental level it used the device of Group of Ministers (GOM) not only for administrative reasons and formulation of policy matters but also to settle the issues of Political significance. The basic management tool of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) was the CMP, prepared in constitution with partner after a study of their manifestos. The cabinet endorsement of the CMP as the national common minimum programme (NCMP) transformed it to a national commitment. Subsequently, ministries have been directed to prepare roadmaps along with legislative proposals for its effective and speedy implementation. The UPA instituted a power sharing formula for portfolio distribution. The bringing-together institution for the alliance is the UPA coordination committee (UPACC) which provides a platform for consultation and discussion. Continuing with the NDA tradition, the UPA has already set up more than 60 GoMs to deal with multiple issues.

*Keywords***:** *Coalition, Elections, Management, Parties, Politics*

I. Introduction

 Coalition government is a product of politics in a parliamentary democracy. It is a development due to the exigencies of a multi-party system in a democratic set up. It is a type of government formed or constituted

when no single party is able to secure majority on its own. Thus, in a democracy based upon a majority party system, such a situation enables a number of minority parties to come together and form a coalition government. Coalition of parties may take form either prior to the elections, called as pre-poll alliance, or after elections, called post- poll alliance.

In Indian politics, coalitions reflect an opportunistic power-driven mentality of various political groups. India, being a country of many diversities and pluralities though united, continues to be motivated by parochial and regional considerations.[1] And it is due to this character of Indian society that coalitions are extremely relevant to the country. So coalition is not merely the coming together of various political parties to capture power, it is also reflective of the fragmentation of social interests at the grass root level.[2]

The NDA Government was the first national coalition government in India to complete a full, five year term in office. The ability of the 24 party NDA to govern the whole term is one of the most remarkable contemporary events in the history of post independence politics in India.[3] In the 1999 NDA government came in Centre with its alliance and worked up to 13 May, 2004. The NDA was not dependent on outside support of any political party to carry out its programme. It was at the mercy of smaller allies within the coalition and therefore, its internal coordination mechanism had to be strong. The alliance put in place the most extensive and elaborates mechanism to coordinate between partners within and outside the government. The NDA had a two dimensional coordination mechanism, which was not restricted merely to the political sphere alone but also included inter-ministerial collaboration. In the political sphere, it formed the National Agenda for Governance (NAG) and the Coordination Committee (CC) besides this, the alliance began to use extensively the all-party meetings and Chief Minister's conferences for consultation. At the governmental level it used the device of Group of Ministers (GOM) not only for administrative reasons and formulation of policy matters but also to settle the issues of Political significance. The basic management tool of the UPA was the CMP, prepared in constitution with partner after a study of their manifestos.

After the completion of full five year term of NDA, the UPA came into power in 2014. It put in place a complex web of mechanisms spanning the political and governmental level attempting to plug the weak links

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1   W.S. Livingston, *Federalism and Constitutional Change,* Oxford, Claredon, 1956, p.2.
2   Bidyut Chakrabarty, *Indian Politics and Society Since Independence: Events Processes and Ideology,* New Work, Routledge, 2008, p.153.
3   The 24 members of the NDA coalition included 22 formal members of the alliance and two parties that supported the NDA from outside. The formal members of the NDA included the BJP, Indian National Lok Dal, National Conference, Shiromani Akali Dal, Shiv Sena, Sikkim Democratic Front, Biju Janta Dal, Lok Jana Shakti Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal, Akhil Bhartiya Loktantrik Congress, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Pattali Makkal Katchi, Tamizhaga Rajiv Congress, Manipur State Congress Party, Kerala Congress (Mani), Janata Dal (United), Samata Party, Anna MGR, Indian Federal Democratic Party, Janata Party The Parliamentary parties that supported the NDA alliance from the outside were the Telugu Desam Party and the All Indian Trinamool Congess the latter later joined the Government.

of previous experiments. Though it has yet to utilize mechanisms like all party meeting and chief minister's conference in a substantial way, it has tweaked the GoM mechanism to make in an instrument for both coordination and control.

The basic management tool of the UPA was the CMP, prepared in constitution with partner after a study of their manifestos.[4] The cabinet endorsement of the CMP as the national common minimum programme(NCMP) transformed it to a national commitment. Subsequently, ministries have been directed to prepare roadmaps along with legislative proposals for its effective and speedy implementation. The UPA instituted a power sharing formula for portfolio distribution. It was supposedly agreed to that for portfolio distribution. It was supposedly agreed to that for every three representatives, a party would be allocated on ministerial berth. This agreement signaled a move to establish some principles for portfolio allocation. The second step of this agreement was the actual distribution of office among allies. The bringing-together institution for the alliance is the UPA coordination committee (UPACC) which provides a platform for consultation and discussion. Continuing with the NDA tradition, the UPA has already set up more than 60 GoMs to deal with multiple issues. Exploring further, the UPA set up a national advisory committee (NAC). The NAC as constituted by the government included academics, economists and representatives of voluntary organizations among other. It is meant to act as an independent advisory body to the government and its recommendations were to be subject to the normal scrutiny and processing of government.

2. Importance and Relevance

For a student of Indian Politics it is quite important and relevant to study the theory and practice of coalition politics. The end of the Congress dominance on one hand and the failure of the BJP in assuming that status on the other hand caused the emergence of coalition politics in India. Even the Congress leadership which was earlier reluctant to have alliance with other parties had to change its stand after realizing the fact that it cannot oust the NDA Government without having alliance with regional parties. This explains why it decided to have alliances with DMK, RJD,TRS, NCP and some other regional parties.

In the given political scenario, the study of coalition politics in India is a timely proposition and academically attracts specific attention. Bruce Bueno De Mesquita has aptly remarked that India has ethnically,

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[4] When the NAG was released, the NDA had observed, that their was not a minimum programme like that of the UF. The UPA almost as if to defect criticism stated that the CMP was the foundation for another CMP- collective maximum performance, National Comman Minimum Programme, source http://pmindia.nic.in/cmp/pdf (accessed July14,2014)

linguistically, religiously, culturally and socially a diverse environment. This diversity has made India an excellent laboratory for studying coalition politics.[5]

3. Review of Literature

While making review of existing literature we find enough work of politics of coalition Management.

For detailed accounts of theories and practices of coalition politics see Barbara Hinckley, *Coalition and Politics*, HBJ, New York, 1981;William H. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalition*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1962; William A. Gamson, "Experimental Studies of Coalition Formation, in Leonard Berkowitz(ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Academic Press, New York,1964;An Experimental Test of a Theory of Coalition Formation", *American Sociological Review,* No.26, August 1961, pp. 567-573; "A Theory of Coalition Formation". *American Sociological Review,* No.26, June 1961; Seven Groennings, E.W.Kelley, Michael Leiserson, (eds) *The Study of Coalition Behavior: Theoretical Perspectives and Cases from four Continents*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1970;Lawrence C. Dodd, *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government,* Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1976;Theodore Caplow," A Theory of Coalition in the Triad", *American Sociological Review*, 21 (August) 1956; Theodore M. Mills, "Power Relations in Three-Person Groups", *American Sociological Review,* No.18, August, 1953, pp. 351-57; "The Coalition Pattern in Three Person Groups", *American Sociological Review, 19* (December, 1954), pp. 567-67 and "Developmental Processes in Three-Person Groups", *Human Relations,* No.9, 1957, pp. 343-55; John Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947; Abraham De Swaan, Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formations: A study of formal theories of coalition formation applied to nine European parliaments after 1918, Elsevier Scientific, Amsterdam, New York 1973; Eric C. Browne, *Coalition, Theories: A Logical and Empirical Critique* (London: Sage Publications, 1973, p.20; "Aspect of Coalition Payoff in European Parliament Democracies", *American Political Science Review,*No.67,1973; "Testing Theories of Coalition Formation in the European Context", *Comparative Political Studies*, No.3,1971,pp.391-410;Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, Yale University Press, London, 1980; *Electoral System and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty- Seven Democracies 1945-1990*,OUP, London,1994; *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty- Six Countries*, Yale University Press, London, 1999; *Thinking about Democracy: Power sharing and majority rule in theory and practice*, Routledge, New York, 2008. Vernon Bogdanor, *Coalition Government in Western Europe*, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1983;Vernon Bogdanor, David

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[5] Bruce Bueno De Mesquita, *Strategy, Risk and Personality in Coalition Politics: The Case of India*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press ,1975, p. 7.

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For detailed accounts of coalition dynamics see in India E.Sridharan(ed.) *Coalition Politics and Democratic Consolidation in Asia*, OUP, New Delhi, 2012; E.Sridharan(ed.) *Coalition Politics in India: Selected Issues at the Centre and the States*, Academic Foundation, New Delhi, 2014.;E. Sridharan, "The party system". In N. J. Gopal & P. Mehta (eds.), *The Oxford companion to politics in India,* OUP, New Delhi,2010;E.Sridharan, Coalition strategies and the BJP's expansion, 1989-2004. *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, 43*(2), 2005, pp.194–221; E Sridharan, Electoral coalitions in the 2004 general elections: Theory and evidence. *Economic and Political Weekly, 39*(51), 2004, pp. 5418–5425; E. Sridharan, Coalitions and party strategies in India's Parliamentary Federation. *Publius, 33*(4), 2003,pp.135–152;E. Sridharan, The fragmentation of the Indian Party System, 1952-1999: Seven competing explanations. In Z. Hasan (Ed.), *Parties and party politics in India* (pp. 475–503). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.2002; E. Sridharan, Principles, power and coalition politics in India: Lessons from theory, comparison and recent history. In D. Khanna & G. Kueck (Eds.), *Principles, power and politics,* Macmillan: New Delhi,1999,pp.270.290; E. Sridharan, Coalition Politics in India: Types, Duration, Theory and Comparison, Institute of South Asian Studies, Working Paper, No.50, 2008, pp.1-25; E.Sridharan, Why are multi-party minority governments viable in India? Theory and comparison, *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 50(3), 2012,pp. 314–343;E.Sridharan,(ed.) Coalition Politics in India: Selected Issues at the Centre and the States, Academic Foundation,2014,New DelhiSanjay Ruparelia, *Divided we govern: Coalition politics in Modern India*,OUP, New Delhi,2015; Rekha Diwakar (2017). *Party system in India*. OUP,New Delhi,2017; Balveer Arora,Negotiating differences: Federal coalitions and national cohesion. In F. Frankel, Z. Hasan, R. Bhargava, & B. Arora (Eds.), *Transforming India*, OUP, New Delhi,2010; Balveer Arora and K. K. Kailash. "Political Innovation in the Working of Indian Democracy: A Study of the Group of Ministers Device (1999–2014)." *Exploring Indian Modernities*. (Singapore: Springer 2018): 81-106; Balveer Arora and K K Kailash, "Strengthening Legislative Capabilities of the Indian Parliament: The National Advisory Council," Sudha Pai, and Avinash Kumar. *The Indian Parliament: A Critical Appraisal,* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2014): 189-230; "Competition and Coalition Formation in the New Party System," in E Sridharan (ed) *Coalition Politics in India: Selected Issues at the Centre and the States,* (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2014):71-106;Balveer Arora, K K Kailash, HKK Suan and Rekha Saxena, "Indian Federalism," in K C Suri (ed.), *Indian Democracy*, (New Delhi: ICSSR/OUP,pp.100-60.

4. Scope of the Study:

The proposed study will cover the coalition management aspect adopted by both NDA and UPA. This study is about the management of coalition government from 1999-2014

1. Development of a theoretical approach to coalition politics.

2. Examination of the factors responsible for the formation of BJP led NDA and Congress led UPA coalitions.

3. Analysis and evaluation of the factors responsible for instability of past coalitions.

4. Comparison of India's experiment in coalition government with international experiments.

5. Suggestion about the pattern of future coalition which could be speedy, cohesive, and stable and therefore, performance oriented.

5. Objectives of the Study:

The major objectives of the study are:

1 To examine the conceptual and operational dimensions of coalition management.

2 To examine the evolution and development of coalition management in   Indian politics

3 To study the structure and functioning of National Democratic Alliance and United Progressive Alliance.

4 To study various problems it faced and tried to resolve.

5 To assess the future prospects of coalition politics in India.

6. Research Problem

The term *Coalition* is derived from the Latin word *Coalesce* which means to grow together. According to the dictionary meaning, coalition means an act of coalescing, or uniting into one body, a union of people, states or an alliance. It is a combination of body or parts into one whole. In the strict political sense the word *coalition* is used for an alliance or temporary union for joint action of various powers or state and also of the union into a single government of distinct parties or members of distinct parties.[6] Coalition refers to a group of people who come together to achieve some goal, usually on a temporary basis. In politics, it signifies a parliamentary or political grouping of different parties, interest groups or factions for making and/ or influencing policy decisions or securing power.[7] According to William A. Gamson, it is the joint use of resources to determine the outcome of the decision in a mixed situation involving more than two units.[8] Coalition, commonly denotes a co-operative arrangement under which distinct political parties or all members

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[6] William Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalition,* New Delhi, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., 1970, p. 12.

[7] Raghuveer Singh, " Coalition Politics: Some Considerations,"in:K.P. Karukaran (ed.),*Coalition Government: The Problems and Prospects*, Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1975, p. 47.

[8] William A Gamson, " Coalition Formation", *Encyclopedia of Social Science*, Vol.III, New York,Macmillan Co.,1963, 530.

of such parties unite to form a government or ministry.[9] N.C. Sahni, has pointed out that the coalition is a product of politics in a parliamentary democracy. It is an astonishing course of discords, though outwardly a coalition appears to be on solid mass, inwardly it is ridden by party foibles and frantic party fervous bickerings.[10] So coalition politics is that politics in which distinct political parties combine their resources on the basis of the some minimum joint common programme to capture the reigns of power to achieve some desired goals. The experiment of the coalition politics in India, is a product of the circumstances created by the result of the fourth general elections, when the congress party failed to get majority on its owner with the help of the Indian states where the elections were held.

The coalitions are not only formed for forming the government but also for capturing power. These may also be formed for doing the role of opposition. It is also pertinent to state here that the nature and composition of opposition in coalition government differs from one party government. In coalition government there are large number of parties on the government side and a single national party with small parties in opposition, whereas in a single party government only one party has power, the opposition plays spoil a negative role by trying to wean away some of the members of the ruling coalition. A Coalition Government has to face not only the parliamentary opposition, the attempt of ruling coalition trying to allure the opposition by offering some influential post position.[11] In India one-party dominance emerged, we had single party governments of the Congress from 1952 to 1977 in the centre. The coalitions emerged at state level after the 1967 elections to the state Legislative Assemblies but single party governments continued in the centre. In 1977 in the form of the Janata Party, a coalition of parties was formulated by anti-emergency sentiments. The fragility of this coalition lacking in ideological programme became visible immediately after the death of Jay Parkash Narayan. The combine eventually split up in 1979. This led to the restoration of the single party government of the congress (1) in the 1980 parliamentary elections. However, V.P. Singh led National Front Coalition Government was formed in center after the 1989 parliamentary elections with the outside support of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on the one hand and the Communist Parties on the other. Though the basic plank of the government was social justice, yet it was soon out powered in 1990 due to the ideological contradictions of the participating political outfits. On the other hand, succeeding Chandrashekhar led coalition government which succeeded was one party minority government supported by the Congress (I). It was replaced in 1991 by P.V. Narsimha Rao led minority government of the Congress (I) having issue based support from the AIADMK. The eleventh Lok Sabha elections of 1996 repeated the story of the ninth Lok Sabha elections of 1989. With the outside support from the Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), H.D. Deve

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[9] Frederic A. Ogg, "Coalition" *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences,* Vol.III, New York , Macmillion Co.,1963,p. 600.

[10] N.C. Sahni, *op*, *cit*.,n.42, p.17.

[11] D. Sunder Ram, *Role of Opposition Parties in Indian Politics: The Andhra Pradesh Experience,* New Delhi, Deep and Deep Publications, 1992, p. 7.

Gowda of Janata Dal constituted a working majority consisting of 13 political parties in the Parliament. This United Front government could not complete even two years (even with the changed leadership of I.K. Gujral) and came down crumbling in 1997,[12] precipitating fresh elections in February–March 1998. In 1998, the BJP shelved its overt Hindu nationalist agenda to strike explicit or tacit alliances with a range of state-based parties, both regional parties and others, many of them earlier with UF, a strategy that it consolidated after its victory.[13] BJP strategy was certainly helped by the fact that Congress had toppled UF government and was the principal opponent of the constituents of the UF in several major states. This catapulted BJP to power as it emerged once again as the single largest party (Congress got only 141 seats) and led the single largest pre-election alliance.[14] A BJP-led 12-member minority coalition government consisting of 11 pre-election (including two independents and one from a one-Rajya Sabha MP party) and one post-election ally, and dependent on the support or abstention in confidence votes of at eight post-election allies and pre-election allies who opted out of the ministry, assumed power in March 1998. In 1999, essentially the same BJP-led pre-election coalition fought Congress-led coalition, the latter being a more tentative coalition with state-by-state agreements but no common national platform. The 21-party BJP-led alliance was formally christened National Democratic Alliance (NDA); Congress alliance was much smaller, the main difference being that the BJP was now allied to DMK in Tamil Nadu while Congress was allied to AIADMK. NDA won a more decisive victory getting 299 seats, with the BJP alone getting 182 as in 1998. With post-election adherents the number went up to 303 seats. Congress got a lowest-ever 111 seats, and only 134 with allies. However, in terms of vote share, BJP alone declined to 23.8% while Congress rose to 28.4%, remaining the single largest party. NDA formed the government with the 29-member TDP and five other smaller pre-election allies opting to support it from outside. In 2004, the incumbent BJP-led NDA coalition contested against the newly-formed Congress-led coalition, called United Progressive Alliance (UPA) after the election, and lost. The major change was that Congress party became "coalitionable" in a significant way for the first time following a conscious decision to adopt a coalition strategy. Congress-led alliance consisted of nineteen parties. This meant the addition of eight new allies—including DMK-led alliance in Tamil Nadu—since the 1999 elections, and the dropping of two old allies. Congress-led alliance won 222 seats and 36.53% votes (or only a whisker ahead of the NDA in vote share) but 33 seats ahead. With the external support of the Left parties (61 seats) it gained a majority in the Lok Sabha and formed a government.UPA also enjoyed the unilateral external support of two other significant parties (with whose support it could potentially retain a majority even if Left withdrew), i.e., Samajwadi Party (36 seats) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) (19 seats). The major difference between 2004 and earlier elections was the success

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[12] S.R. Maheshwari, " Coalition Government: 1946-96," in: Subhash C. Kashyap (ed.), *Coalition Government and Politics in India,* New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House, 1997, pp. 56-61.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid*

of the Congress' coalition ability, which was critical to its universally unexpected victory.[15] In 2009, the UPA coalition defeated the depleted NDA by a much greater margin with Congress winning 206 seats on its own and 263 with its pre-electoral allies, of which, compared to 2004, it had lost Left as a partial seat adjustment partner in Jharkhand, A.P. and Tamil Nadu, and lost RJD, LJP, TRS, PMK, MDMK and PDP, but added Trinamul Congress and NC. The NDA suffered major-ally depletion with the loss of TDP, BJD and the split in Shiv Sena but added the AGP, TRS, and RLD. Congress-led UPA formed a 6-party government of Congress, Trinamul Congress, DMK, NCP, NC and Muslim League but excluded some pre-electoral [JMM, Bodoland People's Front, Kerala Congress (Mani)] and all post-electoral supporters who consisted of 9 parties and 3 independents totaling 59 MPs. This coalition resembled NDA in that the legislative coalition including post-electoral allies constituted a considerable surplus majority and hence provided insurance against defection by any ally, rendering no ally pivotal, and also from the fact that BJP numbers, down to 116, made it like Congress during NDA, in being too small to form a viable alternative coalition given that several parties like Left, SP, RJD, TDP and BSP would not be prepared to ally with it due to differences on secularism and their need for religious minority votes. In 2014, NDA consisting of the same parties except for the additional of DMK in Tamil Nadu and a host of minor parties, defeated UPA and formed a majority government which was an oversized coalition in which the BJP alone had a narrow majority of seats (52% of the seats based on 31% vote share, 38% for the NDA) After seventeenth Lok Sabha election 2019 once again BJP was successfully reached majority mark, and formed government under the Prime Ministership of Narendra Modi. In the elections of 2014 and 2019, Congress secured only 44 and 52 seats respectively, its worst electoral showing since independence.

7. Central Questions:

1 What were the factors which contributed towards the genesis of Coalition politics in India?

2 Which were the factors leading to the formation and maintenance of NDA and UPA?

3 What type of coalition were NDA and UPA?

4 Which strategies were adopted for power sharing in NDA and UPA?

5 What were the role of the coordination committee of NDA and UPA?

6 What were the role of the Group of Ministers of NDA and UPA?

7 Which were the achievements of NDA and UPA coalition?

8. Concepts and Methodology:

The study has made use of a number of methods, such as the historical, comparative, content analysis, descriptive and analytical.

Sources

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[15] *Ibid.*p.88.

Primary and secondary sources have been used in the present study. The primary sources include first hand information in different forms like government reports, parliamentary debates and other related government documents.

Secondary data has been collected from books, journals, articles and newspapers etc.

9. Tentative Chapterisation and work plan

The proposed study will be divided into the following tentative six chapters:

1 Theoretical Aspect of Coalition Management

2 International Experiences of coalition politics

3 Coalition Management in Pre- National Democratic Alliance Era

4 Coalition Management during National Democratic Alliance Era

5 Coalition Management during United Progressive Alliance Era

6 Future Prospects of coalition politics

10. Conclusion

India's party system created a distinctive coalition formation pattern in which geography and   territory played a significant part. Consequently, India's coalitions primarily involved the coming together of two types of parties, polity-wide and single-state parties. While polity –wide parties contested and won across the country, single –state parties were basically confined to a particular state. Given the strong-centre framework, coalition become the key mechanism through which single-state parties could have say in national level decision making. At the same time for polity wide parties, coalition helped plug territorial gap and also increase support in terms of number in parliament. While on one hand, the interest of the two type of parties matched, on the other hand, there is also a tussle for the steering wheel. The federalized pattern of party system competition, the institutionalization of a coalition system and the requirement of a bicameral parliament make it difficult for polity- wide parties to wish away coalition, there is no stopping them from undermining coalition. At the same time, the increasing strength of single-state parties and their interest in maintaining the coalitional system is likely to act as a buffer against any rude shock. For the multiple reinforcing reasons first, it is ironic but not surprising that the BJP majority has come when a coalitional system has actually been institutionalized. In an institutionalized coalition system, alliances and coalitions are normalized as parties are conscious that they may not be able to win elections, come to power or run a government on their own. A mixture of electoral and/or post-electoral calculations was a key element in the overall strategy of almost all political **parties** in this election. As in the previous two general elections, there were three players, the two coalition fronts, United Progressive Alliance and National Democratic Alliance and a host of unaligned parties. While the fronts leveraged pre-electoral calculations, the unaligned reckoned post-electoral factors. Second, the territoriality of party strength, a key feature of post-Congress polity has not gone away. Barring Congress and BJP no other party has won from more than four states. At the same time, these two polity-wide parties are marginal players in more than 100

seats. This paradox increases the potency of key State-based parties and the importance of alliances. The BJP's success has come from its traditional mainstay States in the north and west. Even here, in the two big States of Bihar and Maharashtra its alliances with LJP and SHS are crucial. In these elections the party not only had pre-electoral alliances with more than 20 parties across the country but also spoke of post-electoral calculations continually through the campaign. In the east and the south, BJP is dependent on allies. It is important to note that BJP is actually unattractive at least as an electoral partner, to key players who matter in some States. In the past, in a competitive two-party situation, BJP was a useful ally in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Orissa. However, with CPI (M), DMK and Congress ceasing to be competitive forces, the attractiveness of BJP to AITC, AIADMK and BJD has also reduced. Third, the First Past the Post System (FPTP) of electoral laws that is used in India is advantageous to parties that have concentrated bases of strength. The BJP's muscle and the success of State-based parties, like AIADMK, TDP, AITC, SHS and SDF is primarily a result of how the FPTP translates votes into seats. Thus the Congress with 19.3 percent of the votes got only 44 seats whereas AIADMK with a substantially lower 3.3 percent of votes managed 37. This is because the Congress is thinly spread across the country and the states in which it still has a robust presence have a low seat share in the Lok Sabha. The spatial distribution of party support plus the incentives in the FPTP system will continue to keep electoral alliances attractive. Fourth, an election is not a single shot game but part of a larger process. It would be foolhardy for anyone to assume that they do not need allies. Parties form and run governments and governments have to legislate. The incongruence between the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha in terms of party-support, another feature of post-Congress polity, will persist and therefore alliances and coalitions with payoffs at different levels are not going anywhere. The success of BJP is the beginning of the end of coalition politics is only a Chimera. Congress will know that dominance and legitimacy are not only fragile but are also politically constructed. They depend a great deal on political and historical circumstances and events.