

Module-6

Coalition Government

Structure

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6.1 Introduction:

In the political system of India, getting absolute majority by a political party becomes difficult. This has led to new form of governance called Coalition Politics. This form of government depends on the principle of co-operation than competition. Swim together and sink together is the philosophy of this form of government. Different political parties join hands in forming the government. Let us understand the concept in detail.

6.2 Learning Objectives:

This Module deals with:

- Meaning of Coalition Government
- Pre Poll coalition and Post Poll coalition
- Features of Coalition government.
- Examples of Coalition – Union and State level
- Merits and De-merits of Coalition Government.

6.3 What is a Coalition Government?

It is a system of governance by a group of political parties or by several political parties. When several political parties collaborate to form a government and exercise the political power on the basis of a common agreed programme or agenda, we describe it as Coalition Government.

Such a Coalition government is organized when no party is in a position to get a majority

in the parliament, and some parties form a coalition group or an alliance to form a government.

6.3.a. Pre-poll Coalition: Before an election several parties form an alliance or a coalition group, and which after getting a majority or after emerging as the single largest group in the legislature, forms a government in which all coalition partners find a berth in the Council of Ministers. A pre-poll coalition group always contests elections on the basis of a common manifesto or an agreed programme and policies behind which all the coalition partners are united through a consensus. When the coalition group as a whole secures a majority in elections, it gets the mandate to rule and implement its agreed programme and politics. Consequently, it forms a government in which every coalition partner has a share and the coalition government exercises power for giving effect to the agreed policies and programmes. In other words, a coalition government means, the formation of a government by a group of political parties and coalition politics mean the collective exercise of power by a group of political parties as coalition partner.

6.3.b. Post-poll Coalition: In the general election if no political party get a majority, some parties come together and form a coalition government and exercises power in the agreed policies and programmes.

The Coalition group/alliance selects a coalition leader and coalition government is organized under the leadership of such person.

6.4 Features of Coalition Politics:

1. Coalition Politics is a collaborative-cooperative effort in which some political parties together exercise political power i.e., form a government to make binding decision for a whole society.
2. A coalition government is organized by two or more political parties.
3. At times some political parties form a pre-poll alliance and contest the elections collectively by fielding common candidates in various constituencies. After getting a majority in the elections, the coalition partners collectively form a government.
4. At times when no party is in a position to get a majority some parties form a coalition for organizing a government. The coalition partners then share the exercise of power of the state.
5. Before or after the organization of a coalition government, the coalition partners prepare a common programme, which incorporates a set of mutually agreed politics and principles. The exercise of power is undertaken for implementing the agreed policies and programmes. In case the coalition alliance or group is organized before the elections, a common election manifesto is prepared, adopted and released.
6. The coalition group/alliance either elects or selects a coalition leader in advance or elects such a leader after the elections. The coalition government is organized under the leadership of such a person.
7. Coalition government is always based upon a compromise or agreement. In

decision-making all the coalition partners try to practice decision making by consensus. Each coalition partner has to accommodate the wishes, desires and politics of other partners.

8. A coalition government has usually a large sized Council of Ministers because all the coalition partners have to be given a berth in the Ministry.

6.5 Examples of Coalition at the Union Level

In January 1977, four political parties – Bhartiya Lok Dal, Congress (o), Jan Sangh and some rebel Congressmen united to form the Janata Party. It was designed to bring at one platform all anti Congress parties and to work for the defeat of the Congress in the next elections, under one symbol and a common manifesto. In this elections, Congress (I) suffered a defeat and Janata Party and its supporters won as many as 300 seats in the Lok Sabha and formed the first coalition government.

In 1989, several congressmen resigned their memberships and formed a Jana Morcha to oppose the Congress and provide an alternative to it. Jana Morcha leaders joined hands with some other parties like Janata Party and Lok Dal. A National Front was formed to contest 1989 elections, particularly for opposing the Congress. In these elections, no party was in a position to win majority and yet National Front emerged as a potent political force. It formed the government at the centre with outside support from the BJP and the Left Parties. This was the second coalition government formulated.

However, in a real and effective way, the beginning of the politics of coalition government took place after 1989, when the era of hung Lok Sabhas emerged in the Indian Political System.

The National Front government (1989) was a coalition government, which came into power with outside support from the CPI, CPM and the BJP. In 1990, a minority government of the Congress took office, but was in a position to transform itself into a virtual majority government in 1994. Between 1996-98, the two United Front governments were coalition governments and similar was the nature of the BJP-led government of 13 political parties which remained in power between March 1998 to September 1999. On 13 October 1999, a BJP-led 24 party coalition – the National Democratic Alliance came to power and ruled the country between October 1999 and May 2004. In May 2004, the Congress-led UPA Coalition came to power and it continues to rule the country till date.

6.6 Coalition Politics at State Level:

At the State level the Coalition politics started after the first general elections (1952) when the Congress formed a coalition government in Kerala.

In 2004 elections to Karnataka Legislative Assembly, no party was in a position to secure majority. BJP got 79 seats and emerged as a single largest party. The Congress came 2nd with 65 seats followed by Janata Dal (S) secured 58 seats. 17 seats were bagged by others. The Congress and JD (S) formed a coalition under the Chief Ministership of

Shri. Dharam Singh. The Congress and JD (S) however could remain in power only till February 2006. A revolt in JD(S) led to the fall of this coalition government. It then led to the formation of a new coalition government JD(S) and BJP coalition under the Chief Ministership of H. D. Kumara Swamy with BJP leader B.S. Yediyurappa as the Deputy Chief Minister. This coalition government was in power only for 20 months after which the alliance failed paving way for general elections in Karnataka.

This political system has helped all the political parties to learn the art of exercising power in a shared way as well as in understanding and reconciling several different views.

6.7. Merits and De Merits of Coalition Government

Merits	De-Merits
1. Common administration	1. Lack of Co-operation
2. Co-operation – Swim together or Sink together philosophy.	2. Unnecessary delays in taking decisions.
3. Better Governance	3. Opportunistic
4. People's friendly laws	4. Disputes as an integral of Governance.
5. Expertise of different politicians of different political parties can be utilized	5. Results in temporary government because agenda of different political parties seldom matches.

6.8. Summary:

Coalition government is a system of governance by a group of political parties or by several political parties. When several political parties collaborate to form a government and exercise the political power on the basis of a common agreed programme or agenda, we describe it as Coalition Government. Such coalition may be established before the elections – which is called as Pre-poll coalition or after the elections – known as post poll elections. The Coalition group/alliance selects a coalition leader and coalition government is organized under the leadership of such person.

Coalition politics started after the first general elections (1952) when the Congress formed a coalition government in Kerala.

6.9 Self Assessment Questions

- _____ is a system of governance by a group of political parties.
- Coalition before Election is known as _____.
- Coalition after Election is known as _____.
- What is the name of Present Coalition Government.
- What was the name of BJP led Coalition Government?

6.10 Terminal Questions

Answer the following in a word or sentence each. Each carries One marks.

1. What is a Coalition Government?
2. What is Pre-poll Coalition?
3. Define Post-poll Coalition
4. What is the philosophy of Coalition Politics?
5. State an example for Coalition Politics at the state level?

Answer the following in a Paragraph each. Each question carries five marks

1. Explain the features of coalition government.
2. What are the advantages or merits of coalition politics?
3. Narrate the disadvantages of coalition politics?
4. Give examples for Coalition government at national and state level.

Answer the following question in detail. Each question carries fifteen marks

1. What is coalition government? What are its Merits and Demerits?
2. Explain the features of Coalition Governments and give some examples for Coalition government at National and State level.

6.11 Answers

Answer for one mark questions

1. Refer to sub section 6.3
2. Refer to sub section 6.3. (a)
3. Refer to sub section 6.3.b
4. Refer to sub section 6.1
5. Refer to sub section 6.6.

Answer for five marks questions

1. Refer to sub section 6.4
2. Refer to sub section 6.7
3. Refer to sub section 6.7
4. Refer to sub section 6.5 and 6.6.

Answer for 14 marks questions.

1. Refer to sub section 6.3 and 6.7
2. Refer to sub section 6.4 , 6.5 and 6.6

Answers for Self Assessment Questions.**Module 1**

1. Territory and Sovereignty
2. Government
3. Nehru Report.
4. 2nd September 1946.
5. Dr. Rajendra Prasad.
6. Preamble.
7. Socialist, Secular and Integrity of the Nation.
8. 395, 12, 22.
9. Secular State.
10. 44.
11. Article 14
12. Article 17.
13. Article 21A
14. 11.
15. Directive Principles.

Module 2

1. Lok Sabha
2. 10 %
3. Question Hour.
4. Speaker.
5. 6 months.
6. 14 days.
7. 12
8. 6 years.
9. The Vice-President of India.
10. A legislature which has two houses is known as bi-cameralism legislature.
11. 6
12. Bill
13. Speaker of Lok Sabha.
14. 29th April 1997.
15. Committee on Public Accounts.

Module 3

1. The President.
2. 35 years.
3. Rashtrapati Bhavan.
4. The President of India.
5. 356.

6. Prime Minister.
7. Prime Minister.
8. Those who hold an independent ministry or port folio.
9. Governor.
10. Chief Minister.

Module 4

1. 26th January 1950.
2. 65 years.
3. Supreme Court of India.
4. 32
5. Public Interest Litigation.
6. The High Court of Culcutta (Kolkata).
7. Allahabad High Court, 95 Judges.
8. Judicial Review.
9. Lok Adalats.
10. Habeas Corpus.

Module 5

1. Federal Government.
2. Union List.
3. Finance Commission.
4. New Delhi.
5. United Nations Development Programme.
6. Article 24.
7. 1961.
8. Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act passed in 1956.
9. Secularism.
10. Universal Adult Franchise.

Module 6

1. Coalition Government.
2. Pre-Poll Coalition
3. Post Poll Coalition.
4. UPA (United Progressive Alliance)
5. NDA (National Democratic Alliance).