

Coalition Government in India: Polity Notes for UPSC

New era in politics led to many developments that were even controversial and involved conflicts. After assassination of Indira Gandhi, five major developments under the Rajiv Gandhi's government made a long lasting impact on Indian government. All these dimensions are important for competitive examinations like IAS, IPS, IFS etc. Considering this, the Testbook provides the best quality notes for UPSC Exams. Study major topics of Indian Polity from the perspective of the [UPSC Exams](#).

Recent Update: Maharashtra Political Crisis

- The political situation in Maharashtra has grown fluid, with Sena veteran Eknath Shinde revolting against the party leadership and signalling plans to join forces with the BJP.
- As the Maharashtra political crisis persists, the Governor's constitutional authority to call for a floor test takes centre stage.
- The Supreme Court is hearing a case filed by dissident Shiv Sena MLA and Minister Eknath Shinde against the disqualification notice issued by the Deputy Speaker to him and 15 other members.
- The Supreme Court gives notice to the Deputy Speaker, among others, in response to petitions filed by Eknath Shinde and 15 dissident members contesting their disqualification processes.
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What is meant by Coalition Government?

- The word "coalition" comes from the Latin word "coalitio," which meaning "to develop together."
- Thus, coalition technically refers to the process of combining pieces into a single body or whole.

In politics, a coalition is an alliance of several political parties.

- A coalition government is one in which political parties work together to establish a government.
- It is a government created by more than one political party working together.
- Following a General Election, parties may elect to establish a coalition administration if there is a hung parliament in which no one party has a clear working majority.

Why are Coalition Governments formed?

- A coalition government may also be formed during a period of national difficulty or crisis to provide a government with a high degree of perceived political legitimacy or collective identity.
- It may also play a role in reducing internal political strife.
- A coalition government is one created by the alliance of two or more parties.
- The government is formed when a party receives the majority of votes in an election.
- When no one party has a clear majority, a coalition government is created through the partnership of two or more parties.

Coalition Government in India- Background

- End of Congress system: Congress party was defeated in 1989 elections and lost its centrality even though it enjoyed a [Majority](#) with 415 seats in 1984 elections.
- Rise of Mandal issue: disputes between supporters and opponents of Mandal Commission grew due to implementation of its recommendations to reserve jobs in the Central government for other backward classes.
- New economic reforms: Rajiv Gandhi initiated various structural adjustment programs in 1991.
- Demolition of babri masjid in December 1992: It initiated the issue of nationalism and secularism of India and led to rise of BJP and Hindutva politics.
- Assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991: It was done by Sri Lankan Tamil during election campaign in Tamil Nadu that caused transfer of leadership to Narasimha Rao.

Study [Important Articles of the Constitution of India](#) Here.

Features of Coalition Government in India

- A coalition agreement is a negotiated agreement between the parties that constitute a coalition government in multi-party nations.
- It codifies the cabinet's most essential common aims and objectives.
- It is frequently written by legislative party leaders.
- A coalition system's core basis is the simple fact of temporary convergence of specific interests.
- Coalition politics is a dynamic affair in which coalition actors and organizations can dissolve and create new ones.
- Coalitions are divided into two types: internal coalitions and external coalitions.
- Internal coalitions are made up of people who already work in an organization, such as a workplace.

Era of coalitions

Domination of Congress

- The Congress party had sway in a democratic setting.
- The origins of the Congress party's unprecedented success may be traced back to the heritage of the liberation fight.
- The Congress brought together various organisations with frequently contradicting goals.
- At the time of independence, the Congress had evolved into a rainbow-colored social alliance that represented India's variety in terms of classes and castes, faiths and languages, and diverse interests.
- Congress's coalition-like nature gave it remarkable strength. Actions are groups within a party with opposing beliefs.
- Some of these divisions were founded on intellectual reasons, but the majority of them were founded on personal aspirations and rivalries.

Decline of Congress

- [Congress](#) was defeated in 1989 from National front (Janata Dal and regional parties).
- Decline of Congress started an era of multi party system where no single party secured majority in elections from 1989 to 2014.

Alliance politics

- Many parties represented Dalits & OBC and emerged through the United front government in 1996 which received support from Congress.
- In 1989, the National front government received the support from BJP and the left to keep Congress out of power.
- But in 1996, the Congress and the left supported the National front to keep BJP out of power.
- In 1996, BJP emerged as the largest party and formed a coalition government to come into power from May 1998 to June 1999 and re-elected in October 1999 with Atal Bihari Vajpayee as [Prime Minister](#).
- A phase of coalition government began after 1989 elections as there have been 11 governments at the centre that were either in coalition or minority governments supported by others.

Check the Other [Lok Sabha Speaker](#) for Competitive Exams here.

Political rise of Other Backward Classes

Many members of Janata Party like Bharatiya Kranti Dal and Samyukta socialist party had powerful influence among OBC communities.

Mandal Commission

- National front government decided to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission which helped in mobilizing OBCs in politics and providing opportunities in education and employment.

- During 1977-79, the Janata Party demanded reservation for backward classes in North India and at National level.
- A new policy of reservation was introduced in Bihar by Karpoori Thakur (CM of Bihar).
- In 1978, the Central government appointed a Commission to recommend ways to improve conditions of backward classes and named it the Second Backward Class Commission (SEBC).
- Bindeshwari prasad Mandal was its chairperson and hence it is known as Mandal Commission.
- Its role was to identify the extent of educational and social backwardness and ways to identify backward classes with recommendations to end this backwardness.
- It recommended 27% seat reservation in the educational and employment sector along with land Reforms improve conditions of OBCs.
- The recommendation of reservation was implemented by the National Front government in 1990.
- This decision was challenged in the Supreme Court and came to be known as the 'Indira Sawhney case' causing political fallouts.
- In 1978, BAMCEF formed as a trade union of government employees took a stand in favouring political power to SC, ST, OBC and minorities.
- Later Bahujan samaj party (BSP) was formed from Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti under Kanshi Ram's leadership.
- It received support from Punjab, Haryana, UP and emerged as a major political player in state due to the Dalit voters.

Check out UPSC notes on [Parliament of India And its Functions](#) here!

Emergence of new consensus

Lok Sabha Election 2004:

- Congress entered into a correlation known as UPA with the support from left front parties.
- There was negligible difference between votes polled by Congress, BJP and their allies.
- Four major parties emerged in political competition including Congress coalition parties, BJP and its alliance, Left front parties and others.
- Growing consensus and among severe competition and conflicts, a broad agreement emerged among many parties on:
 - Agreement on economic policies.
 - Acceptance of political and social claims of backward classes.
 - Acceptance of state level parties' role in governance.
 - Emphasis on pragmatic consideration than ideological positions and alliance.

Coalition Government - Advantages and Disadvantages

There are various advantages and disadvantages of the coalition government. Some of them are discussed below:

Advantages

- The government's operation accommodates a variety of interests.
- A coalition government is a vehicle for meeting and addressing the needs of various parties.
- The federal fabric of the Indian political system is strengthened by coalition politics. This is because a coalition administration is more receptive to regional requests.

- Despotic control is less possible with a coalition administration. Because the government's activities are not dominated by a single political party. The coalition's members are all participating in the decision-making process.
- A coalition government is made up of a variety of political parties, each having its own ideology and objectives. On the other hand, government policy necessitates the cooperation of all coalition partners. As a result, a coalition government encourages political consensus.
- India is a vast country with a wide range of interests. [Cultures](#), languages, castes, religions, and ethnic groupings are all present. This means that the coalition government is more representational of the electorate and reflects public mood.

Disadvantages

- They're either unstable or on the edge of becoming so. The government can fall apart due to differences of opinion among coalition members.
- The Prime Minister's leadership is a fundamental principle of the parliamentary system of government. In a coalition government, this principle is constrained because the Prime Minister must consult with the coalition partners before making key decisions.
- Regional leaders participate in national decision-making by bringing regional realities to the fore. They put pressure on the alliance's central executive to comply with their requests, threatening to depart if they don't.
- Members of the coalition government refuse to take responsibility for administrative shortcomings and blunders. To avoid assuming personal and group responsibility, they may conduct blame games.
- The smaller constituency of the coalition government could play a "king-maker" role. They demand more than just parliamentary strength.
- The coalition partners' Steering Committee or Coordination Committee serves as a "Super-Cabinet," undermining the cabinet's role and position in government operations.

Read more about [Appointment of Chief Minister](#) here!

Reasons Of Growth Of Coalition Politics In India

- Coalitions are disliked by commentators, financial experts, and armchair economists because they may allow political concerns to override smart economics.
- When the economic record of such coalition administrations is compared to that of previous single-party governments, a different picture emerges.
- The legislature under India's parliamentary democratic system has limited means to function as an effective check on executive authority, particularly since the passage of the anti-defection statute.
- Single-party majorities are not compelled to discuss and create policies, nor are they exposed to serious political risk if policy actions fail. This might account for the Indian experience.
- Furthermore, the administration would have faced significant political danger in the aftermath. Coalition allies may have caved in to public pressure and withdrew their support.
- Historically, single-party administrations have been more likely to waste political resources on policies that harm the economy.

History of Coalition Government in India:

| Period | Coalition | Prime Minister (Party) |
|-----------|--------------|------------------------------|
| 1977-1979 | Janata Party | Morarji Desai (Congress (O)) |

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|--------------|--|--|
| 1979-1980 | Janta Party (Secular) | Charan Singh (Janata (S)) |
| 1989-1990 | National Front | V.P Singh (Janata Dal) |
| 1990-1991 | Janata Dal (Socialist) or Samajwadi Janata Party | Chandra Shekar (Janata Dal (S) or Samajwadi Party) |
| 1996-1997 | United Front | H.D Deve Gowda (Janata Dal) |
| 1997-1998 | United Front | I.K Gujral (Janata Dal) |
| 1997-1998 | BJP-led Coalition | A.B Vajpayee (BJP) |
| 1999-2004 | National Democratic Alliance (NDA) | A.B Vajpayee (BJP) |
| 2004-2009 | United Progressive Alliance (UPA) | Manmohan Singh (Congress) |
| 2009-2014 | United Progressive Alliance – II (UPA-II) | Manmohan Singh (Congress) |
| 2014-2019 | National Democratic Alliance (NDA) | Narendra Modi (BJP) |
| 2019-present | National Democratic Alliance (NDA) | Narendra Modi (BJP) |

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