

SUBJECT: POLITICAL SCIENCE V

COURSE: BA LLB SEMESTER V

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MODULE: V, COALITION GOVERNMENT

Structure:

- Formation of Coalition Government

FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENTS

In the first four Lok Sabha elections (1952, 1957, 1962 and 1967), the Congress party secured the required majority to form the government at the Centre. Even though there was a split in the Congress party in 1969, the minority government of Indira Gandhi managed to continue with the outside support of the CPI, the DMK and other parties. Again, the Congress party won the 1971 elections and formed a single-party government. However, the dominant Congress party was badly defeated in the 1977 elections. Since then, there have been a number of coalition governments at the Centre.

First experience of coalition in free India at the union level goes back to 1977 when non congress forces united under the leadership of Morarji Desai in the name of janta government. Ram Monohar Lohia In 1963 had propounded the strategy of Anti-Congressism or non congressism. He was of the opinion that since in the past three general elections the Congress had won with a thumping majority, there was a feeling among the masses that the Congress could not be defeated and it had come to stay in power for ever. Lohia invited all the Opposition parties to field a single candidate against Congress candidates so that the non congress votes won't get divided and common masses could come out of the illusion that congress can't be defeated. This formula of Dr. Lohia saw success in the 1967 general elections with the Congress party defeated in seven States and Samyuktha Vidhayak Dal governments formed by the Opposition parties of the time. Lohia's formula sowed the seeds for coalition politics in India. The first coalition was formed under the experience of Morarji Desai .He was the oldest man to become prime minister of India. The four party janta government remained in power for about two years i.e, 1977-1979.the power struggle struggle in the government did not allow Desai to continue anymore. Once the no confidence motion against Desai was discussed in the lower house mr.Desai tendered his resignation. The Janta government collapsed like a house of cards in July 1979 when floodgates of defections opened with the departure of various group leaders like George Fernandes ,H.N.Bahuguna ,Biju Patnaik and Mudhu Limaye .

Second coalition, a new coalition was formed with Mr. Charan Singh as the prime minister in October 1979. He was the only prime minister who didn't face the parliament. This coalition had the support of CPI(M) and the CPI. On paper Charan Singh had the absolute majority. But, once President asked him to seek a vote of confidence in the house within three weeks time. Mr. Charan Singh tendered his resignation before facing the house. Hence became the first Indian prime minister who did not face the house.

Third coalition was formed in the name of national front under the leadership of V.P. Singh in December 1989. V.P. Singh government was supported by BJP and the then single largest party Congress which did not form the govt. as a political strategy. National front government had also the support of CPI, CPI(M), The RSP and the Forward Block. But, the period was short lived when BJP withdrew its support to V.P. Singh on the eve of Advani's arrest on the backdrop of his Rath Yatra from Somnath to Gujarat despite BJP's warning to withdraw support if Advani is arrested. Though national front government remained in power only for 11 months. The then Indian president R. Venketaraman observes, "it is my impression that if V.P. Singh had headed a government with a clear majority instead of depending on a conglomeration of parties mutually destructive to each other, he would have given a good administration to the country. Being dependent on parties with different objectives and ideologies, he could not withstand pressures from discordant groups"