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# **EVOLVING DYNAMICS IN THE ERA OF COALITION POLITICS: NEXUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Coalition politics emerges in democracies, particularly in India, when no single party can obtain a majority. Like governance creates a compromise between competing interests, ensuring inclusivity while also introducing challenges like as instability and policymaking delays. The shift in India from single-party dominance to coalitions has impacted democratic ideals and human rights. Coalitions can help to promote democracy by giving regional and minority parties a platform to express their various viewpoints. However, compromise leads to inefficiency, corruption, and reduced accountability. Choices may be motivated by political survival rather than national interest, undermining transparency and public trust. Human rights policy are determined by coalition politics, with minor parties supporting minority rights but hindering development due to competing agendas. International institutions and civil society organizations have essential roles as a watchdog, pushing for openness and accountability. In strengthening oversight mechanisms, open data policies, ensuring safety for journalists and activists, and enhancing coalition governance, improvement is suggested. Thus, this article delves into the aspects of the coalition.

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Politics in a democracy is all about establishing a balance between various interests and perspectives, and one of the most fascinating parts of this balancing act is coalition politics. When elections fail to result in a clear majority for any one party, coalition politics occur, requiring many parties to join forces to establish a government. This strategy guarantees greater representation, but it also has drawbacks, such as instability, alterations in policy, and internal conflicts.

As one of the biggest and most varied democracies, India has witnessed a significant transition over the years from one-party rule to coalition governments. Human rights policies, democratic principles, and governance are all significantly influenced by coalition politics. Making decisions becomes more difficult when several parties work together, and sometimes concessions on crucial topics—like social justice and individual rights—are unavoidable.\

There are both benefits and drawbacks to coalition politics in India. Positively, it allows regional parties to influence national policies, increasing inclusiveness and diversity in governance. Additionally, it promotes cooperation between various political parties, resulting in policies that take into account a variety of viewpoints. However, it can also lead to frequent elections, slow down decision-making, and cause instability. Political incentives frequently take precedence over what is ultimately beneficial for the nation since coalition governments depend on ongoing discussions. Furthermore, since there are numerous parties involved and each one is promoting its own agenda, there is always a chance of corruption and inefficiency, making government a difficult balancing act.

When a government is run by a variety of parties with diverse ideologies, human rights policy may take either direction. It is beneficial when smaller parties advocate for issues like social welfare and minority rights. To avoid upsetting their allies, coalition administrations may get trapped and delay making difficult choices. This has previously occurred, with authorities remaining mute on significant concerns such as flaws with the legal system, journalistic freedom, and religious violence.

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<sup>1</sup> *Just a moment...*, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01402382.2023.2249316>.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK<sup>2</sup>

This article implements a diverse collection of thoughts as a frame to guide it to look into the relationship between democratic structures and fundamental rights within coalition governments in order to thoroughly examine the complex link between coalition politics, democracy, and rights.

### 1. Democratic Principles and Coalition Politics

Important principles including the rule of law, the separation of powers, free and fair elections, freedom of speech, and accountability form the basis of democracy. In the end, they guarantee that citizens have a say in policymaking and that no authority is concentrated in one place. Depending on how they function or evolve, coalition politics can either reinforce or undermine these values. Let's examine this in more detail to see how it is interconnected and how both operate.

- **The rule of law:** All individuals, including governmental leaders, must be held accountable by the law in order for there to be a rule of law. When political concessions put the rule of law at risk of partial implementation, coalition governments have the potential to either strengthen it by ensuring greater debates and discussion about the legislative or harm it. It may be more difficult to implement the law fairly if coalition partners have conflicting interests, particularly if a specific statute has adverse impacts on a coalition partner's main voter base.
- **Separation of Powers:** A strong democracy avoids abuse of power by distributing authority across the three levels of government. Considering that there are many distinct parties playing various roles in the government, coalition politics might help in managing that balance of power. Coalition politics have the potential to undermine the separation of powers when unstable coalitions attempt to corrupt legislative processes or overflow into the judiciary in an attempt to maintain their hold on power.
- **Free and fair elections:** The foundation of democracy is elections. By allowing minor parties to join the government, coalition politics can increase election competition. In

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<sup>2</sup> Sarah Teresa Schøller, (Apr. 3, 2018), <https://www.humanrights.dk/files/media/migrated/political-parties-and-human-rights-2018.pdf>.

order to get votes, coalition parties make unrealistic election promises throughout the election process. However, these pledges prove to be unachievable after the election, leading to instability following the election. Election fairness may be impacted by coalition partners controlling election regulations for their own benefit.

- **Freedom of speech:** Freedom of speech is essential to the survival of democracy. When multiple parties support free speech, coalition governments can maintain this. However, in order to prevent internal conflict, coalition partners may restrict free expression when they cannot agree on basic issues. To maintain coalition unity, governments may sometimes try to suppress media criticism.

## 2. Human Rights and Coalition Politics

For a society to be just and equitable, human rights are necessary. Global guidelines for defending individual liberties are established by the international human rights framework, which includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Depending on their aims and structure, coalition governments have the power to either improve or reduce human rights.

- **Protection of the Rights of Minorities:** Coalition governments have the advantage of typically having smaller regional and minority-focused parties, which is one of their biggest advantages. These parties support laws that protect minority rights, affirmative action, and cultural representation, among other measures. For political stability, however, policies may be neglected or abandoned if a coalition relies on the support of a party that does not care about minority rights.
- **The Right to Freedom of Expression:** In a democracy, the right to free speech is crucial, and coalition governments can either protect or restrict it. When multiple parties with opposing viewpoints are in power together, it can promote free speech and open discussion. To keep their partners from arguing, coalition governments may also restrict free speech by banning or restricting the media. For example, in order to avoid internal conflict or public outrage, governments have occasionally manipulated the media narrative.
- **Social and Economic Rights:** In order to appeal to a wide variety of voters, coalition

governments usually focus on social development and welfare programs. Coalition parties may prioritize labor, healthcare, and education policies in an effort to show that they are working for the people. However, if coalition members cannot agree on welfare and spending programs, economic decision-making is likewise delayed and ineffective. This could cause important programs to be delayed, which would affect social and economic rights.

**The State's Role in Protecting Human Rights:** The state is in charge of protecting human rights. Since different parties advocate for different social issues, having a stable coalition government may lead to more effective human rights protections.

### 3. Coalition Theory

It is necessary to examine theories of coalition formation and stability in order to fully understand coalition politics. To explain the formation and operation of coalition governments, political scientists have created a number of theories. The theories are as follows:

- **The Minimal Winning Coalition Theory**, which states that parties should form coalitions with as few power-sharing partners as possible and only as big as is required to secure a majority. **The Broad Coalition Theory** is a second paradigm that suggests a stable government can be formed by a number of parties, even if it has more partners than is actually necessary. The choice between these models is determined by election outcomes, party beliefs, and political conditions.
- **Sharing of Power and Negotiation** Continuous discussion is an essential component of coalition governments since each party wants policies that serve its interests. Considering a variety of viewpoints before making a choice can lead to well-considered and balanced policies. However, the government may slow pace and important policy choices may be delayed as a result of discussions. Strong disputes among coalition partners may result in policy deadlocks, where many measures are hanging in uncertainty because of political differences.
- **Impact on the Outcomes of Policies:** The kinds of policies that coalition governments implement depend on how they function. Coalitions can develop solid, well-thought-out policies that benefit a large number of people if they are cooperative and stable.

Policies are often unpredictable and based on political compromises rather than long-term national interest when the coalition is weak and unstable. To please the other parties, coalition governments also prioritize immediate gains, which leads to ineffective policy.

The connection between coalition politics, democracy, human rights, and governance is emphasized in this article. When properly run, coalition governments can strengthen democratic principles and human rights safeguards. But they can also lead to problems like instability, delayed policies, and weakened government. Analyzing how governments operate in complex political contexts is made easier with an understanding of coalition politics.

### **Analysis of the Nexus**

By means, coalition governments include a complicated interaction between the interests of politics and upholding basic democratic values and human rights norms. The following article examines the practical implications of these processes, looking at how coalition agreements impact external parties, challenge democratic norms, and change policy.

#### **1. Impact on the Implementation of Policy**

Coalition governments usually lead to compromises that have a direct impact on the creation and implementation of policies, particularly ones that concern human rights. Let's understand or certainly study.

- **The Dynamics of Policy Negotiation:** Agreements between opposing policy agendas frequently include agreements. For example, a coalition may agree on policies that balance environmental protections with the demands of economic growth, leading to rules that represent a diplomatic balance. The extent and effectiveness of human rights safeguards may be drastically altered by this process.

Although compromises frequently lead to benefits, such as the creation of accommodating policies that reflect the many interests of the coalitions, they can also result in the weakening or deterioration of human rights standards. Policies that prioritize political expediency over the protection of fundamental rights may arise from the need to maintain coalition stability.

- **The Impact on Minority Rights:** Coalition policies frequently target minority populations disproportionately. Laws that hurt specific groups may be passed as a result of the presence of parties with discriminatory views. However, alliances between parties committed to minority rights can lead to significant advancements in social inclusion and legal protection.

Examining the coalition's demographic makeup and how it affects the policies created is crucial.

## 2. Challenges to Democratic Principles<sup>3</sup>:

Despite being a practical need in many political environments, coalition governments have the potential to seriously strain the basic principles of democratic governance. These arrangements' inherent weakness and the necessity for compromise may promote an atmosphere in which fundamental principles are actively undermined rather than just questioned. Let's understand this in detail:

- **Rule of law:** The basis of every working democracy is the rule of law, which can be a flexible principle in coalition politics. "Backroom deals," which are hidden and motivated by simplicity, may overcome the established legal system. Laws that are meant to apply consistently to everyone fall victim to the moods of coalition agreements, in which political survival is exchanged for special treatment and exemptions.

When political influence permeates judicial nominations and rulings, the judiciary's independence and objectivity may be undermined.

- **Accountability:** With coalition governments' complicated framework, accountability the foundation of democratic governance is disappearing. Because of the unbreakable conceal of collective decision-making created by the division of responsibilities among different parties, no one can be held accountable for policy failures or violations.

In order to maintain political survival at the expense of public trust, coalition partners

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<sup>3</sup> Bush Center, <https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/declaration-of-democraticprinciples/>(<https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/declaration-of-democratic-principles/>)[3].

frequently cover for one another, rendering oversight institutions which are meant to promote accountability and transparency ineffective.

- **Transparency:** The essential foundation of democratic governance, transparency, is often sacrificed for coalition stability. Since maintaining unstable relationships necessitates secrecy, policy decisions are hidden under an unbreakable cover up of confidentiality.

Since coalition agreements are made in secret, citizens are kept in the dark about the decisions that affect their lives, which limits public access to information, a fundamental right in a democratic society.

**The decline of public trust:** The public becomes more suspicious and negative as a result of the idea of "backroom deals" and the lack of transparency. The idea that political power is being exercised in secret, away from the public eye, calls into question the legitimacy of democracy itself. It can lead to political indifference or even ideology as individuals believe that the political process is controlled and that the average person has no voice.

- **The collapse of Democratic Processes:** A climate of constant uncertainty and instability might threaten democratic institutions due to the inherent weakness of coalition governments. The ongoing threat of governmental collapse undermines public confidence in the political system and undermines the rule of law.

Institutions meant to be long-lasting and stable are being challenged by the frequent policy changes and the shifting parties in government.

As a practical solution to political breakdown, coalition governments may actually encourage the decline of democratic norms by prioritizing the interests of politics over accountability, transparency, and the rule of law.

### 3. Case Studies of Important Indian Coalition Governments

India's varied political environment has resulted in numerous coalition governments. Here are a few noteworthy examples:



**UPA (2004–2014):** The UPA alliance, led by Congress, prioritized social welfare initiatives like NREGA and economic reforms. But UPA-II lost popularity as a result of policy impasse and corruption scandals.

**NDA (1998–2004, 2014–present):** Under the BJP's leadership, NDA-I instituted nuclear tests and economic reforms. NDA-II (2014–present) introduced Swachh Bharat and "Make in India" policies. Coalition politics became less necessary after the 2019 election victory.

**Front United (1996–1998):** This coalition, which included both progressive and regional parties, introduced the Ninth Five-Year Plan but was unstable because of internal disputes.

**1989–1991: Janata Dal Government** Under the leadership of V.P. Singh, this coalition put the Mandal Commission report into effect, allowing reservations for OBCs, although it was met with strong opposition and political unrest.

**The Third Front (1996)** was a brief regional alliance backed by Congress that disintegrated because of instability. In order to balance the state's disparate interests, regional parties such as the PDP and National Conference created coalitions in Jammu and Kashmir, however they frequently had stability issues.

**Tamil Nadu Coalitions:** To stay in power, major parties like the DMK and AIADMK have teamed up with minor parties that prioritize social justice and regional identity.

India's coalition governments show the benefits and drawbacks of power sharing. They guarantee varied representation, but they also have to deal with policy changes and instability. Talking about other countries that is a number of nations provide information about how coalition politics affect democracy and human rights. For example, because of well-defined agreements and organized negotiations, coalition governments in Germany have upheld strong democratic norms. Coalition politics, on the other hand, have led to uneven policies and poor governance in several emerging countries, which has impacted democratic stability. A more comprehensive understanding of how coalition politics might influence governance can be gained by examining various approaches.

#### **4. The Roles of Civil Society and International Organizations:**

International organizations and civil society become near critical lights of hope in the often dark world of coalition governments, where deals are made behind closed doors and power is a never-ending game. They are the ones who are seeking some light on what is truly happening, frequently up against powerful forces who would rather keep things in the dark.

##### **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):**

The last line of defense against the approaching form of rule of law is typically independent opposition groups and human rights organizations. They are the ones who, despite the risks, have the guts to tell the truth to those in positions of authority.

They never stop working to expose the hidden goals of political elites, human rights abuses, and corruption. Even though the odds are stacked against them, they are trying to hold the powerful accountable.

They take on the role of the voiceless, giving people ignored and dispossessed by the political elite an opportunity to speak. They're trying to raise awareness of the screams of those who are being silenced by the political system.

The only people who can expose the "back room deals" that are common in coalition governments are them.

##### **International Organizations<sup>4</sup>:**

The only people with the power to force coalition governments to take action are typically international bodies like the UN and regional agencies. They have the authority to impose penalties, withhold aid, and publicly humiliate governments that violate human rights. They make an effort to enforce global norms and standards, typically on governments that would rather ignore the problem. They're trying to remind these governments that they have obligations to fulfill as members of an international community.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01402382.2023.2249316>.

When domestic systems fail, they take on the role of judges and arbiters.

They serve as a continual reminder that bad behavior has repercussions and that the world is watching. These organizations are frequently the only ones willing to defend the weak in a society where governmental power is frequently utilized to defend the powerful. They seek to reveal the darkness and hold the strong responsible, acting as the little lights in a pitch-black room.

In short or In order to ensure that coalition governments uphold democratic values and human rights, civil society organizations play a crucial role. Additionally, foreign groups influence coalition politics by exerting pressure on governments to comply with international human rights norms. In countries ruled by coalitions, their intervention can help protect democratic values.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

The persistent support for human rights and the majority opinion on equality highlight a crucial point: people everywhere are demanding a more accountable and engaged form of government rather than renouncing democratic ideals. However, the current human rights agenda's state-bound shortcomings, particularly in dealing with international issues, emphasize the need for contextbased initiatives. This is especially important in coalition governments, where power dynamics and structural compromises may make upholding democratic values and human rights much more difficult.

**Implications for Governance in Coalition Politics:** Although frequently required, coalition governments have long-term effects on democratic governance and the defense of human rights. The possibility of "backroom deals," decreased accountability, and decreased openness can undermine democratic institutions and weaken public trust. The state-centric character of the human rights framework, which finds it difficult to address problems across national borders, makes these problems worse.

- **Long-Term Implications:** Coalition governments' inherent instability makes it attainable for policy responses to be predictably uneven, particularly when it comes to human rights, leading to a collection of protections that vary with the political storms.

The need for compromise can result in diminished human rights standards, which

impact marginalized communities that rely on robust protections, putting the system that protects the most vulnerable at the highest risk.

The social contract is broken and democratic legitimacy is undermined when public trust is lost due to the sense of transparency, which can lead to political indifference or extremism.

- **Possibility of Institutional Reform:** To counteract these negative effects, institutional reforms that promote resistance to coalition dynamics' demands are required.

The main goals of these changes should be to strengthen accountability mechanisms through independent oversight organizations, increase openness through open data programs and robust freedom of information laws, and safeguard the judiciary's independence through secure tenure and open appointment processes.

Recognizing the transnational category of global challenges, it is also critical to include international perspectives within national human rights frameworks.

### **Recommendations:**

Particularly in the setting of coalition governments, specific recommendations are crucial to ensuring that democracy fulfills its promise of a fair and free society. This calls for an integrated approach that takes into account both domestic and international concerns. Let's look into some of the recommendations:

**Promoting Transparency and Accountability:** Strategies for transparency and accountability are crucial because they create an environment of openness that deters corruption and the abuse of authority.

This involves allowing citizens to hold governments accountable for resource use and strengthening citizen monitoring of state budgets and spending on human rights ensuring that people will have a true say in determining their own futures by encouraging free access to information and a culture of public participation in decision-making.

- **Strengthening Democratic Governments:** To uphold the rule of law and protect

human rights as a check on the misuse of power by the executive, a strong and independent judiciary is essential.

Press freedom serves as an essential check on governmental power and must be preserved to guarantee accountability and openness.

The development of international interdisciplinary movements, which unite human rights organizations and activists worldwide to form a coalition against human rights abuses, ought to be prioritized.

Since they are the future of democratic participation and their contributions are essential to creating a more just and fair world, younger generations must be involved in such campaigns.

- **Improving Interdisciplinary Movement Building:** International interdisciplinary movement building is essential for building cross-border cooperation given the globalized nature of human rights issues.

By exchanging efficient procedures and promoting voices that are underrepresented, this strategy encourages cooperation between human rights advocates and groups in the global north and south. Additionally, technology makes it possible to spread human rights education globally, cultivating a culture that values human dignity.

- **Making Use of Existing Frameworks:** Human rights must be promoted by frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which serve as a guide for equitable and sustainable development.

However, it is crucial that these frameworks be implemented in ways that respect human rights and empower local populations rather than being converted into technocratic checklists.

To guarantee that human rights duties are carried out as directly stated by the world's inhabitants, it is critical to strengthen the capacities of both grassroots human rights defenders and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).

- **Protection of Reporters and Human Rights Defenders:** To create a secure

atmosphere for investigative reporting, journalists who report on state repression and violations of human rights need to have more safety.

To keep cyberspaces open and available to everybody, it is also necessary to support citizen-based monitoring of internet freedoms.

To enable citizen-centered monitoring of state budgets and provide them the means to hold their government's responsible, technical assistance must be given to CSOs and human rights defenders.

In summary, we can improve democratic governance and guarantee the enjoyment of human rights for all by tackling the shortcomings of the state-centric human rights framework and putting tailored reforms into place, especially in coalition circumstances. To create a more just and equitable world, governments, civic society, international organizations, and citizens from all around the world must work together.

## **Conclusion**

Most democracies have coalition governments, especially multicultural countries like India. They have to work together when no party receives enough votes. This can bring different perspectives to the government, which is good, but it also creates problems. The biggest issue is that parties have to compromise in order to maintain the alliance. Human rights and democratic principles may occasionally suffer as a result of these compromises. "Backroom deals," in which important choices are made behind closed doors, have become commonplace. It becomes harder for people to trust their government. Additionally, it becomes challenging to hold people responsible when anything goes wrong.

Coalitions aren't always terrible, though. When functioning well, they can produce more equitable laws that help a greater number of people. Making sure there are sound regulations in place is the trick. We have to make sure that governments are open and truthful. We have to make sure that everyone, including underrepresented groups, is heard. Here, civil society organizations and international organizations are crucial. They keep an eye on what the government does, acting as watchdogs. They speak for those whose rights are being infringed. They support better laws and policies.

We need to take various steps in order to make coalitions work for the people:

**Increase government transparency:** People need to know what their government is doing. We have to make information easily accessible.

Increase government accountability by holding leaders responsible for their actions. To prevent corruption, we need strict regulations.

**Help people cooperate:** We need to support groups that bring people together to defend their rights.

**Make use of existing resources:** To promote better human rights, we can make use of resources like the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Protect those who speak out:** In order for journalists and activists to continue their work, they need to be safeguarded.

Coalitions can, in my opinion, be advantageous to the populace despite their potential mess. Although it takes work, it is possible. We need to put in place sound procedures that guarantee equal treatment for everybody. We have to make it possible for people to be heard. Governments must remember that they are there to serve the people, not the other way around. We can turn coalition governments into a force for good if we take these steps.