



## “Regionalism and Coalition Politics: An Analysis”

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### ABSTRACT

The emergence and expansion of regional parties can be largely attributed to the presence in Indian society of a number of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, and caste groups. These parties have attempted to implement their programs and policies by forming governments in several states.

A coalition government means the coming together of more than one political party or group on the basis of common understanding or agenda. This is because no major party seems to be getting any decisive vote after a general election.

This research paper discusses the advantages and disadvantages of regionalism and coalition in politics keeping the state of Maharashtra in mind. The power struggle and further frenemy relationship between Shiv Sena- the regional power and the BJP- the central power party. The extensive history of their relationship along with current standing is taken into consideration in order to understand what coalition and regionalism actually is and their ups and downs.

### I. INTRODUCTION

A coalition is a group of advisors in a legislative administration formed when different political parties agree to work together to manage a country or community's government and execute its laws. Coalition governments are often a strategic and transitory partnership formed when rival political parties choose to collaborate rather than win by a clear majority.

People who live in or are associated with a specific place have a great sense of pride and loyalty to that region. This is referred to as regionalism. It usually contains the desire or will to rule oneself.

The Shiv Sena and the Bharatiya Janata Party have been rivals but partners in a 35-year alliance. Despite having a very ineffective organization in the state at the time, the BJP was

included in the coalition. At the time, she was just four years old. Bal Thackeray used the electoral emblem of the BJP to field Shiv Sena candidates in the 1984 election after coming to an agreement with the BJP leadership, which included Lal Krishna Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The Sena and the BJP have been at odds for some time. Their electoral alliance, with Hindutva as their common bond, was only established in 1989. Although the Sena consistently won a large number of Assembly seats, the BJP initially won more Lok Sabha seats than the Sena. Due to their mutual dependence on one another, they both developed strength. As long as the Sena could raise its profile nationally, the BJP was willing to help the saffron party gain ground in the state.

The two parties went on to rule the state for two terms totaling nine years and seven months, demonstrating the alliance's success. The Shiv Sena was the most powerful partner from 1995 to 1999. However, the BJP, led by CM Fadnavis, assumed power beginning in 2014.

For the first few decades, the alliance's dominant partner was the Sena, indicating that the arrangement between the two parties was successful. At the time, leaders of the BJP like L K Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee did not hesitate to comply with the demands made by the Sena.

However, in 2009, when the BJP won 46 seats—two more than the Sena—to become the larger alliance partner, the dynamics began to change. The party was given the position of Leader of the Opposition that the Sena had previously held.

After Bal Thackeray's death in 2012 and Narendra Modi's rise to power in India, their relationship changed even more. After his two closest rivals left the Sena seven years earlier, Uddhav Thackeray took over as leader.



Hindutva served as the unifying force that kept them together and represented them to Maharashtra voters as a single entity in each election. In Maharashtra, the ordinary voter does not distinguish between the Shiv Sena and the BJP at the state and federal levels because they believe they would merge after the election, even if they run as independent candidates.

### Research Objectives

- 1) To understand what is coalition in terms of politics and how far it has evolved in India with respect to the Maharashtra State Government.
- 2) To understand Regionalism and its effect on the formation of any coalition Government.

Key Words

Coalition, Regionalism, BJP, Shiv Sena and Maharashtra

### Research Questions

- 1) What is coalition politics and how has it evolved in India?
- 2) How does Regionalism affect coalition politics and the formation of any Government?

## II. Research Methodology

In order to collect information and perform research for this research paper, secondary sources of data have been taken into consideration such as - research papers, data from relevant government sources, and literary works inclusive of books by renowned writers. A qualitative analysis of the available material has been made in order to analyse data from multiple resources in a flexible and open-ended manner; however, a personal interpretation of the data collected has also been made. Deductive reasoning method has been taken into consideration in order to advance a supposition for the said topic and to derive an appropriate reasoning from the stated facts relevant to the topic.

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following material has been used to make this research paper:

### 1) The Vernacularisation of Hindutva: The BJP and Shiv Sena-

By Thomas Blom Hansen

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/006996679603000201>

The article claims that the Shiv Sena and BJP were able to successfully adopt the narrative of "aggressive Hindus" in a region with long-standing communal

tensions and growing hostility to unsuccessful Congress policies. As a result, the region became a stronghold for the two parties, which had previously been based in cities.

### 2) Rise of Regional Parties and Coalition Politics and Its Pitfalls-

By RNP Singh

<https://www.vifindia.org/2018/may/28/rise-of-regional-parties-and-coalition-politics-and-its-pitfalls>

This research Article gives us an insight on the history of Regionalism in India. It also shows us how Coalition politics has evolved in India. It tells us the advantages and disadvantages of having a coalition government.

### 3) A Brief History of Shiv-Sena BJP Alliance of 23 Years-

By Rishabh Mishra

<https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/politics/a-brief-history-of-shiv-sena-bjp-alliance-of-23-years.html>

This newspaper article takes us through the history of both parties' alliance. Right from the beginning till the end. It talks about the initiation, history and current scenario.

## HISTORY OF REGIONALISM AND COALITION IN INDIA

There are numerous political parties in India. An estimated 2100 registered political parties have emerged in India since independence. Currently, just six national parties and thirty regional parties are active in central and state politics. Regional parties were unable to play a substantial role at the Centre prior to the Congress Party's supremacy. However, the rise of regional parties has posed the greatest significant danger to India's "One Party Dominant System" in recent years. Regional parties with more political appeal have formed since 1967 and now govern the majority of state politics. They established themselves as a powerful force and made substantial contributions to the establishment of Central administrations.

Despite focusing on only a few areas and a few objectives, regional parties have been influential in state and national politics. By establishing governments in a number of states, these parties have attempted to put their policies and programs into action. Several regional parties have partners in the Centre-led coalition government.

No longer is regionalism regarded as an opposition to nationalism or nation-building. The regional parties have added a new dimension to the



process of nation-building and integration. As a direct result of the constructive contributions made by local political parties, regionalism has lost its adversarial tone. Leaders of regional political parties have begun to actively and systematically influence the composition of the central government. Twenty-three regional parties have shared national power since 1996. They appear to be shifting their perspective on Center-state interactions away from confrontation and conflict toward a trend of cooperative bargaining.

Regional parties have also become active players in the Indian political system in this new era of coalition politics. Coalition politics have existed in Indian politics since 1996. This new dynamic has demonstrated that national parties must collaborate with regional parties in order to gain more power and influence in the Indian political system. All parties in a coalition government work under a framework. This is because no major party appears to be receiving votes that could make a difference after a general election. In the years following India's independence, the state of Kerala saw the formation of its first coalition government. The first non-Congress coalition government won power in the Centre in 1977. This alliance was made up of non-member groups that had power against Congress.

#### **SHIV SENA- THE REGIONAL PARTY & BJP- THE CENTRAL POWER**

**SHIV SENA:** The Shiv Sena was allegedly founded in June 1966 by Bal Thackeray to protect the rights of local youth in Maharashtra. Mumbai, Maharashtra's capital, was becoming overcrowded, according to reports, particularly due to the influx of ethnic immigrants. The Shiv Sena's alleged primary objective was to persuade Marathi (Maharashtra native) youth to expel non-Marathis from their state and city. This campaign primarily targeted Muslims from Mumbai and Gujaratis, who live in the western Indian state of Gujarat.

The organization entered politics shortly after its founding and launched a campaign to transform the city. In the Mumbai Municipal Corporation, Shiv Sena members played important roles. The Shiv Sena formed alliances with the BJP at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. Since 2005, the Bharatiya Janata Party has been a national party that has been a part of the Indian central government on a number of occasions. It has also played a significant role in the state assembly elections, which are held to choose the state government. The group is said to have developed over time into a Hindu fundamentalist party with strong anti-Muslim sentiments.

Political experts attributed the Shiv Sena to a number of economic growth-oriented changes in the 1990s. The BJP-Shiv Sena state government in Maharashtra implemented several reforms. This included the completion of the Mumbai-Pune expressway, which connected Maharashtra's two most important cities, the construction of several flyovers in Mumbai to ease traffic congestion, improved water and irrigation supply in a number of Maharashtra's urban and rural areas, and the establishment of a safe haven for the elderly.

**BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY:** The Hindu nationalist party known as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was the largest and most powerful member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government that ruled India from 1999 to 2004 and after the general elections in 1990. The BJP still has a lot of political power in the populous north and west of the country, but it is less powerful in the south and east.

As the successor to the Bharatiya Janata Sangh (BJS), which was established in 1951 by Shyama Prasad Mookherji, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was established in 1980. In the 1980s, the Hindu nationalist-led newly formed BJP returned to Indian politics with new policies, led by party president Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who went on to become prime minister.

The BJP was forced to make pragmatic electoral decisions despite its ideological Hindu nationalist roots. As a result, tensions emerged with ardent Hindutva organisations that provide labour for election campaigns and enthused Hindu voters. Despite repeatedly advocating for a strong modern Indian state, the RSS historically preferred not to engage in political activities but rather to collaborate with civil society to reform Hinduism.

#### **REGIONAL COALITION WITH BJP AND SHIV SENA**

The saffron parties officially joined the NDA led by the BJP when they participated in the Lok Sabha elections together in 1989. They shared a cause: Hindutva. On the other hand, Balasaheb Thackeray, a political cartoonist, established the Shiv Sena party in 1966. The party's initial focus was on assisting the Marathi Manus (man), but as time went on, their perspective changed and they began promoting Hindutva philosophy. After participating in BMC elections since their inception, they joined the BJP in 1989.

While the Shiv Sena-BJP coalition was in opposition, the two parties fought for the position of Leader of the Opposition. The Shiv Sena won 52 of the 183 seats it was up for in 1990, while the BJP won



42 of the 105 seats it was up for in 1990. The BJP had a higher rate of strikes at the election's conclusion.

The two parties competed for the position of Leader of the Opposition while the Shiv Sena-BJP coalition was in opposition. Even in 1990, the BJP won 42 of the 105 seats it was up for, while the Shiv Sena won 52 of the 183 seats it was up for. At the conclusion of the election, the BJP had a higher rate of strikes.

Manohar Joshi, who was one of the Shiv Sena candidates who won on the BJP symbol in 1984, was elected as the Leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly. Additionally, he advanced to the position of Opposition Leader. Chhagan Bhujbal, a fellow leader of the Shiv Sena, rebelled and eventually joined the Congress. The BJP was given the position of Leader of the Opposition at the conclusion of the conflict.

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Manohar Joshi rose to the position of opposition leader in the Maharashtra Assembly in 1984. He ran as a candidate for the Shiv Sena and won on the basis of the BJP's symbol. Additionally, he rose to the rank of Opposition Leader. Leader of the Shiv Sena Chhagan Bhujbal rebelled and eventually joined the Congress. Following the conclusion of the conflict, the BJP was given the position of Leader of the Opposition.

The BJP and the Shiv Sena fought for the position of Leader of the Opposition for fifteen years. Bal Thackeray ridiculed the BJP's goal of winning all of Maharashtra at the time. Bal Thackeray once stated that the Shiv Sena was the only group responsible for the blooming of the BJP's election symbol in the state.

However, the BJP was successful in achieving this position in the 2009 assembly election when, for the first time, it won 44 more seats than the Shiv Sena. It came to the realization that it had long desired to lead the Opposition. The Shiv Sena was enraged and dissatisfied by their allies' expansion in Maharashtra.

By 2014, the BJP was well on its way to granting Pramod Mahajan's wish to run for the Maharashtra Assembly by himself. With 63 MLAs to the BJP's 122, the Shiv Sena came in second place. The election was won by the Shiv Sena.

During the 2019 elections for the Maharashtra assembly, the Shiv Sena claimed that they had been promised a 50:50 cabinet. The BJP, on

the other hand, claims that no such assurances were given to the party. The BJP received 105 Assembly seats, while the Shiv Sena, NCP, and Congress each received 56, 54, and 44 seats, respectively.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this lengthy research, the Regional Coalition has played a critical role in the growth of a country or state in this scenario. However, this progression comes with its own set of ups and downs. This 35-year relationship was productive, but it eventually collapsed.

Since the Babri Masjid controversy, Hindutva has served as a common basis for this alliance. Both parties have been pro-Hindu, which has led to accusations of revolts against them.

When both parties were in control, they built several roads, railways, government committees, and other infrastructure for the growth of Maharashtra.

When it came to this coalition, regionalism was overwhelming. The Shiv-Sena began with the goal of revolting anyone who wasn't a Maharashtrian and drove them away from Maharashtra.

At the end of this research, one can conclude that 90% of coalitions are backed by regional parties.

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