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# Coalition Government of PDP and BJP formation of government and Their Common Minimum Program in Jammu and Kashmir

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**ABSTRACT**

*The present research paper attempts at the understanding of the system of coalition and an evaluation of its implications for society. Coalition politics is based on 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/agenda we can describe such a system as coalition politics or coalition government. Such a government is usually organized when no party is in a position to get a majority in the parliament or state legislature and some parties form a coalition group or an alliance and thus forms a government. A coalition government is a collaborative or cooperative effort, in which several political parties or some political parties in association with some independent representatives form a government.*

*The coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir during 2014 Assembly elections, generally acknowledged to be fair, and helped build some kind of confidence in the electoral institutions and processes. Till now, the formation of government and its sustenance in power was more dependent on the support of the Centre rather than the mandate of people. The electoral politics therefore was quite distanced from the popular responses. Breaking the hegemony of the single dominant party also brought an alternative to the PDP-BJP coalition power. The reality on the ground, even if complex and complicated, needs to be faced politically not numerically. That is the real challenge the PDP and the BJP have decided to bring together their common minimum program, political initiatives and*

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*legislative resources to convert this complex challenge into an opportunity*.

**KEY WORDS:** People's Democratic Party, Bharatiya Janata Party, Coalition, Jammu and Kashmir, Elections, Government, Common Minimum Program etc

## INTRODUCTION

The term coalition is derived from the Latin word coalition which is the verbal substantive of coalesce co-together and alesere to grow up which means to go or to grow together. According to the Oxford English dictionary, 'the word coalition means an alliance for combined action of distinct parties' persons or state without permanent incorporation into one body.

In the recently concluded J&K State assembly elections, 2014, the people of the State have voted overwhelmingly and in favour of the democratic system. This shows a growing recognition and acceptance among people that participating in the free and fair electoral process is the only option. The results of these elections have been judged as fractured and indecisive by everyone. The reality is that it is not the mandate of political parties that is fractured; it is the polity of J&K that is fractured. Instead of being judgmental about these electoral results, the PDP and the BJP have made efforts to understand the verdict in all its complexity. Both parties have agreed on a Common Minimum Programme (CMP) for the state. Here is the full text of the Common Minimum Programme.

This document set out the Agenda of the Alliance between the J&K People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). It will be the guiding framework for governance of the coalition government in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) for the next six years.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To realize this goal that Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party calls for very specific action that must be taken and standard that must be set.
- To examine the Common Minimum Programme policy.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study makes an attempt to examine the coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir during 2014. This study is based on secondary sources of data which includes, Assembly debates, Daily News Papers, Internet, Manuals, Periodicals and

Articles published in Journals etc. Hence this study is based on the Descriptive and Historical approach.

## BACKGROUND AND CAMPAIGN

The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly election, 2014 was held in Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir in five phases from November 25 to December 20, 2014. Voters elected 87 members to the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, which ends its six-year term on January 19, 2015. The results were declared on December 23, 2014. Voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) along with EVMs was used in 3 assembly seats out of 87 in Jammu Kashmir elections. Before the election,, Indian National Congress broke its alliance with Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and contested on all seats in the assembly. Campaigning before the elections was aggressive and robust. Following the huge victory of Bharatiya Janata Party in the Indian parliamentary election, the BJP turned its attention towards J&K and campaigned on the promise of 'development'. This included a visit from the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi in support of the local BJP campaign.

## BOYCOTT CALLS

- Hardline separatist All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani had appealed to people of Kashmir to boycott the 2014 Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections completely, arguing that "India has been holding elections in the Valley using the power of gun and so such an exercise is not legitimate." He added, “My appeal to the youth in particular is that the sacrifices rendered by the people must be safeguarded and, hence, in no way should vote during elections.”
- Separatists were propagating the poll boycott campaign through video clips on social networking sites and applications, including Face book and Whats App.
- A four-minute video clip has gone viral on social sites with messages of chairmen of both hardline and moderate factions of Hurriyat Conference and Dukhtaran-e-Millat chief Asiya Andrabi. The video message sent through WhatsApp and shared on Face book and Twitter asked the people to boycott the coming polls.
- Video also showed Hurriyat hawk Syed Ali Shah Geelani addressing a

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gathering via phone urging youth not to undermine the mission of 'martyrs'.

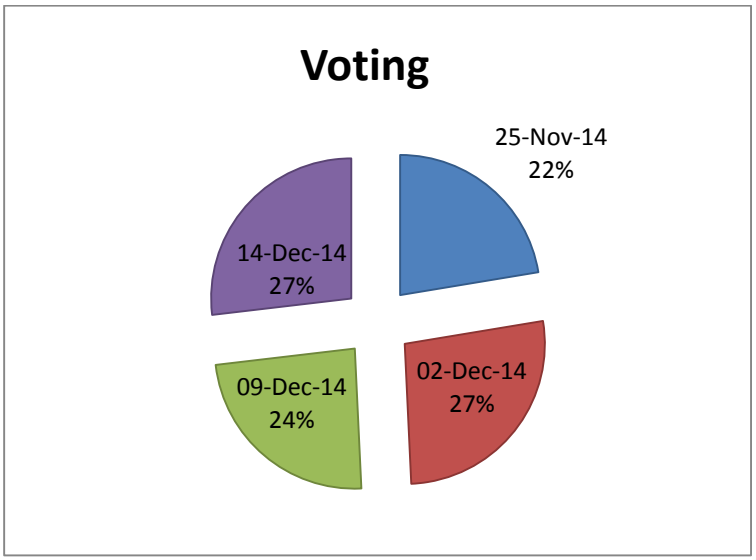
- Moderate Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is seen posing for the camera with the appeal those polls must be boycotted 'en masse'.

**VOTING**

The polls were carried out in five phases. Despite several boycott calls by Hurriyat leaders, elections recorded highest voter's turnout in last 25 years. Voter's turnout was more than 65% which is higher than usual voting percentage in other states of India.

| Date | Seats | Turnout |
|---|---|---|
| 25 November 2014 | 15 | 71.28% |
| 2 December 2014 | 18 | 71% |
| 9 December 2014 | 16 | 58.89% |
| 14 December 2014 | 18 | 49% |
| 20 December 2014 | 20 | 76% |
| **Total** | **87** | **65.23%** |

Source: Electoral Commission of India



The European Parliament on the behalf of European Union welcomed the smooth conduct of the State Legislative Elections in the Jammu and Kashmir. The EU in its message said that, "The high voter turnout figure proves that democracy is firmly rooted in India. The EU would like to congratulate India and its democratic system for conduct of fair elections, unmarred by violence, in the state of Jammu and Kashmir". The European Parliament also takes cognizance of the fact that a large number of Kashmiri voters turned out despite calls for the boycott of elections by certain separatist forces. However, elected Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed said, "If God forbid the Hurriyat and the militants tried to disrupt the elections these would not have been as participative as they had been. They (Pakistan) also allowed these elections to take place." Ruling Party president Mehbooba Mufti also defended Mufti's remarks while taking dig at Mufti's statement former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said that, "In fact, Pakistan and militant groups tried their best to destabilise the democratic process in the state.

**Summary of the Jammu and Kashmir state assembly election results 2014.**

| Party | Flag | Seats | Previously | +/– | Vote % | Vote Share |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People's Democratic Party. |  | 28 | 21 | +7 | 22.7% | 10,92,203 |
| Bharatiya Janata Party. |  | 25 | 11 | +14 | 23.0% | 11,07,194 |
| National Conference. |  | 15 | 28 | -13 | 20.8% | 10,00,693 |
| Indian National Congress. |  | 12 | 17 | -5 | 18.0% | 8,67,883 |
| Jammu & Kashmir People's Conference. | | 0 | 0 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communist Party of India (Marxist). |  | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.5% | |
| Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Front. | | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Jammu & Kashmir National Panthers Party. |  | | 3 | | | |
| People's Democratic Front. | | 1 | 1 | | - | - |
| Jammu & Kashmir Democratic Party Nationalist. | | | 1 | | % | |
| Independents. | | 4 | 11 | | % | |
| **Total** (turnout 65.23%) | | **87** | **87** | | **-** | **-** |

Source: Electoral Commission of India

PDP became the single largest party with 28 seats. BJP became the second largest party with 25 seats. Omar Abdullah resigned as a chief minister on 24 December 2014.

**GOVERNMENT FORMATION**

The PDP was the single-largest party with 28 seats, followed by the BJP with 25 seats. The assembly was hung in the evening of December 23; The INC announced its intention of supporting the PDP, which the PDP refused. The following were the options for government formation:

1. PDP + BJP = 28+25 = 53.
2. BJP + JKN + JKPC + Independents = 25+15+2+3 = 45.
3. PDP + INC + Independents + Others = 28+12+3+2 = 45.
4. PDP + JKN + INC = 28+15+12 = 55.

Three days after the results, the JKN approached the BJP for a meeting for government formation. As part of the deal, Normal Kumar Singh was to be the CM, and JKN's senior most MLA Ali Mohammad Sagar was to be his deputy, and the government was slated to take oath on January 6. The deal fell through after a revolt in the JKN, following which Omar Abdullah left for London. The BJP also rejected this deal, citing morality issues.

In the following days, the JKN also announced its intention to support the PDP

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from outside by submitting a letter to the Governor, after the dialogue with the BJP fell through. The PDP refused.

A week after the results, the PDP and the BJP officially started talks for government formation. Both parties had a 2-member team to form a Common Minimum Programme (CMP). The PDP was represented by Naeem Akhtar and Haseeb Drabu, while Ram Madhav and Nirmal Kumar Singh represented the BJP. Minister of State in the PMO, Jitendra Singh, supervised the dialogue.

The two parties are ideologically apart. The BJP was for the removal of Article 370, continuation of AFSPA, anti-Hurriyat and against reconciliation with separatists and Pakistan, the PDP was the other way round. Critics of both parties feared compromise on their principles. There were many controversial issues to be dealt with, like Article 370. Meanwhile, Omar Abdullah resigned on December 24. The Governor accepted his resignation, but asked him to continue as caretaker Chief Minister until the formation of the government. President's rule was imposed on January 2, 2015.

After dealing with issues, both parties turned their focus to the composition of the Cabinet. The PDP was initially reluctant for a 3-year rotation of the CM's post, but later agreed, with both parties getting 3-3 years each. There were also issues related to the joining of the government by separatist-turned-politician Sajjad Lone. In the run-up to the elections, he met PM Narendra Modi, and praised him by calling him "big brother". The BJP reciprocated, by not launching a candidate against Lone on the Handwara seat, from where he won, and got elected to the assembly for the first time.

Both parties announced on February 25 that the CMP was almost ready, and was being given final touches, in a joint press conference called by BJP national president Amit Shah and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti followed by their meeting at Shah's residence in Delhi. They also stated that the ideological differences had been "ironed out", and both parties were now working on the Cabinet formation. The dialogue between both parties ended successfully on February 28 - two months and 5 days after beginning of talks.

The new PDP-BJP government took oath in the afternoon of March 1, 2015, in the Zorawar Singh Stadium of Jammu, with Mufti Mohammad Sayeed as CM for the full term of 6 years, and Nirmal Kumar Singh as his deputy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi

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graced the occasion by his presence. 12 cabinet ministers from each party were also sworn-in. This also marked the first time in the history of the state that the BJP was a coalition partner in the state government. Sajjad Lone and independent MLA for Udhampur, Pawan Kumar Gupta was also sworn-in as cabinet ministers from the BJP's quota.

The CMP was released in a press conference by the newly elected government, hours after the swearing-in ceremony. The CMP gave a vision of "all-round development of Jammu and Kashmir" and "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" (Development for all, by everyone). Contentious issues like Article 370 and AFSPA would be referred to a high-power committee, with representation from both parties, and the civil society. The PDP also agreed to join the NDA government at the Centre, with Mehbooba Mufti's induction into the union Cabinet, at a later date, and also support the Modi government in both houses of Parliament. The PDP has 3 MPs in the Lok Sabha. It also contested the Rajya Sabha elections in partnership with the BJP (this election took place before the government formation). The PDP won 2 seats, and the BJP won 1.



Elected Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Mufti Mohammad Sayeed with Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi after government formation in Jammu and Kashmir.

**PDP-BJP COALITION GOVERNMENT**

In forming a coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir following the 2014 assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) resolved to reconcile key points of divergence through a common minimum programme (CMP). Amongst the key issues' dividing their constituents was the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). While PDP representatives vowed during the election season to work towards the provisions revocation from the state as a whole the BJP suggested it would

allow the army to decide on the law's continuation. Reconciling these positions in the CMP, the coalition partners offered to "examine the need for de-notifying disturbed areas." In other words, the parties resolved to consider removing the disturbed areas tag from relatively peaceful parts of the state. Since AFSPA is only in force in an area so long as it features in the disturbed areas list the CMP essentially offers to fulfill a prerequisite for AFSPA's phased withdrawal from parts of the state. Towards this end, the BJP and the PDP will have to ask: Which disturbed areas in Jammu and Kashmir are genuinely disturbed and where is such designation less relevant.

This essay examines the extent, nature, and distribution of militancy-linked disturbance in Jammu and Kashmir, as expressed through data covering the five year period from 2010 to 2014. It is important to note at the outset that this is an exercise of potentially limited practical utility. For one, there is no guarantee that the BJP-PDP combine will act on its stated intention to reassess conditions in the state.

Its resolution could merely represent a political tactic meant to enable coalition formation, without initiating any meaningful movement on the issue. Even if the parties do proceed to explore AFSPA's phased withdrawal, deliberations will inevitably be guided by factors beyond the state of militancy over the past five years. In deciding for or against AFSPA, the security establishment is also likely to consider future projections, asking whether patterns of disturbance in the state might change in the near to mid-term. For instance, some observers have expressed concern that a decreased demand for battle hardened fighters west of the Durand Line in Afghanistan might prompt an invigorated militant campaign east of the Line of Control. The final section outlines some of the factors complicating de-notification, even of Jammu and Kashmir.

This document set out the Agenda of the Alliance between the J&K People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). It will be the guiding framework for governance of the coalition government in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) for the next six years.

In the recently concluded J&K State assembly elections, 2014, the people of the State have voted overwhelmingly and in favour of the democratic system. This shows a growing recognition and acceptance among people that participating in the free

and fair electoral process is the only option. The results of these elections have been judged as fractured and indecisive by everyone. The reality is that it is not the mandate of political parties that is fractured; it is the polity of J&K that is fractured. Instead of being judgmental about these electoral results, the PDP and the BJP have made efforts to understand the verdict in all its complexity. The reality on the ground, even if complex and complicated, needs to be faced politically not numerically. That is the real challenge. The PDP and the BJP have decided to bring together their political and legislative resources to convert this complex challenge into an opportunity.

## COMMON MINIMUM PROGRAMME

After a two-month-long wait and suspense, Jammu and Kashmir finally got a People's Democratic Party-Bharatiya Janata Party government with Mufti Mohammad Sayeed being sworn in as the state Chief Minister for the second time. Both parties have agreed on a Common Minimum Programme (CMP) for the state. Here is the full text of the Common Minimum Programme:

## PURPOSE OF THE ALLIANCE

The PDP and the BJP have entered into a "Governance Alliance" based on an agreement and agenda which is an effort towards seeking a national reconciliation on J&K. The purpose of this alliance is to form a coalition Government that will be empowered to catalyse reconciliation and confidence building within and across the Line of Control (LoC) in J&K thereby ensuring peace in the state. This will, in turn, create an enabling environment for all round economic development of the state and prosperity of the people.

In a situation where socio-political aspirations and grievances of the people have wide ranging differences, economic development on its own can neither bring about peace nor prosperity. Nor can a political process get us where we want to be if it is unaccompanied by tangible material, economic and financial initiatives, resulting in sustainable economic development. As such, sequencing the two and striking the right balance between them will create a virtuous cycle of peace and prosperity that will accord a normal life to the coming generations, especially those regions who have lived in perpetual strife and conflict. While recognising the different positions and appreciating the perceptions BJP and

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PDP have on the constitutional status of J&K, considering the political and legislative realities, the present position will be maintained on all the constitutional provisions pertaining to J&K, including the special status in the Constitution of India.

## TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

To meet these objectives and deliver economic growth with regional balance and social justice in the state, it is important to create an environment of peace, certainty and stability within which development can be engendered.

## GOVERNANCE REFORMS

The State Government will be transformed into a Smart Government which will be proactive, transparent and accountable. It will be reformed and redesigned to be an enabler for business and a strategic partner for long term private sector growth. It shall be the mission of the coalition government to be the most ethical state in the country from the present day position of being the most corrupt state. For this new governance systems shall be introduced with national support and international expertise to provide honest, effective inclusive governance and service delivery. The governance framework envisaged will include institutional capacity building and people-public- private partnership. This will enable the state to seek national and international financing for its developmental plan and projects for foreign investments in sectors like power, infrastructure, education, agriculture, horticulture, tourism and medical services. Simplify doing business in the state by reducing regulatory complexities and costs, easing bureaucratic barriers and simplifying registration processes and clearances. This will also bring down the size, scale and spread of corruption in the state significantly. The overall economic policy will align the economic structure of J&K with its own resources, skills and society. The economic policy will not be formulated for government's own activities but for private businesses and enterprises.

It will be ensured that powers and decentralization of decision making is in practice devolved to three tier Panchayats, Municipalities and Corporations. The third tier of governance will be empowered to discharge their statutory functions effectively and efficiently by giving them functional roles, fiscal responsibilities. Ensure genuine autonomy of institutions of

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probity, which include: State Accountability Commission, Vigilance Commission, which will be re-designated as Transparency Commission, and an organization which deals with the Right to Information Act.

## POLITICAL INITIATIVES

The Union Government has recently initiated several steps to normalise the relationship with Pakistan. The coalition government will seek to support and strengthen the approach and initiatives taken by the government to create a reconciliatory environment and build stakes for all in the peace and development within the subcontinent. The same will be pursued by taking confidence building measures, such as, enhancing people to people contact on both sides of the LoC; encouraging civil society exchanges, taking travel, commerce, trade and business across the LoC to the next level and opening new routes across all three regions to enhancing connectivity. The earlier NDA government led by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had initiated a dialogue process with all political groups, including the Hurriyat Conference, in the spirit of "Insaaniyat, Kashmiriyat aur Jamhooriyat".

Following the same principles, the coalition government will facilitate and help initiate a sustained and meaningful dialogue with all internal stakeholders, which will include all political groups irrespective of their ideological views and predilections. This dialogue will seek to build a broad based consensus on resolution of all outstanding issues of J&K.

## SECURITY MATTERS

The situation in the State has improved vastly and to build greater public confidence in its sustainability, people of the State must be able to get the peace and normalcy dividend. In this context, the coalition government will thoroughly review the security situation in the state with a view to examine the need and desirability of all the special laws being applied to the state in view of the situation which is improving.

While both parties have historically held a different view on the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and the need for it in the State at present, as part of the agenda for governance of this alliance, the coalition government will examine the need for de-notifying 'disturbed areas'. This, as a consequence, would enable the Union Government to take a final view on the continuation of AFSPA in these areas. All lands other than those given to the security

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forces on the basis of lease, licenses and acquisition under the provision of the Land Acquisition Act shall be returned to the rightful legal owners, except in a situation where retaining the lands is absolutely imperative in view of a specific security requirement. In any case, monetary remuneration, be it in the form of rents or compensation should be made fairly at market rates.

**DEVELOPMENTAL AGENDA**

In order to address the real source of J&K's fiscal problem and pave the way for making J&K a fiscally autonomous state, the State Government will work with the Union Government to:

A) Explore modalities for transfer of Dulhasti and Uri hydro power projects to J&K as suggested by the Rangarajan Committee Report and the Round Table reports.

B) Secure a share in the profits of NHPC emanating from J&K waters to the state government.

C) Revise all royalty agreements.

D) Allot a dedicated coal mine in Madhya Pradesh to J&K with coal reserves of not less than 150 MMT for setting up a pit head thermal plant with equity support from Government of India.

E) Restructure and strengthen the Chenab Valley Power Projects Limited as a holding company for all hydro power projects in the state.

F) Ensure J&K a share in one of the six Ultra Mega Thermal Power Projects.

**SOCIAL & HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVES**

Protecting and fostering ethnic and religious diversity by ensuring the return of Kashmiri Pandits with dignity based on their rights as state subjects and reintegrating as well as absorbing them in the Kashmiri milieu. Reintegration will be a process that will start within the State as well as the civil society, by taking the community into confidence. For the deprived groups, the Coalition Government will: Work out a one-time settlement for refugees from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir of 1947, 1965 & 1971.

Take measures for sustenance and livelihood of the West Pakistan refugees. Extend all benefits accruing to the people living on the LoC to the people living on the International Border. Make the families of the victims in cross border firing qualify for benefits given under SRO-43. Construct

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shelters in vulnerable areas on the LoC and the International Border to prevent loss of life. Give ST status to Kollis, Chopans and Paharis. Create a Scheduled Tribe Ministry for the welfare of the STs. Constitute a Delimitation Commission for the delimiting of Legislative Assembly Constituencies as required by law.

## CONCLUSION

In the Legislative Assembly election of Jammu and Kashmir during 2014, the National Conference occupied the main opposition benches. The People's Democratic Party and Bharatiya Janata Party coalition Government led by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was in power. The Coalition culture is not alien to India. V.P.Singh ex-PM has rightly remarked, "India herself is a coalition". The above analysis of coalition governments in Jammu and Kashmir clearly reflects that the emergence of regional parties in state has given birth to coalition politics. The rise of a regional outfit like PDP has posed challenge to one dominant party system led by National Conference. The ideologies like Autonomy and Common Minimum Programme of both parties BJP and PDP were only aiming to wining the hearts and minds of the people. For the better development of the state all political parties have to work according to wishes and aspirations of people of Jammu & Kashmir.

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