1. C. Rajagoplachari's efforts to build an anti-Congress front was significant chapter in India's post-independence political history. Do you agree? Critically comment.

Approach:

It expects student to write about - C. Rajagoplachari and Swantantra party - then write about significance of Swatantra party as anti-Congress front in post-independence - in last write lacunas / shortcoming of Swatantra party.

Introduction:

C. Rajagopalachari was a freedom fighter, politician, an associate of Gandhi and the final governor general of India. Rajagopalachari parted ways with the Congress in 1957 after being disillusioned by the path it was taking. He founded the Swatantra Party in 1959, which favoured classical liberal principles and free enterprise.

Body:

Significance of Swatantra party as anti-congress front:

- The Swatantra Party stands for the protection of the individual citizen against the increasing trespasses of the State. It was an answer to the challenge of the so-called Socialism of the Indian Congress party. It was founded on the conviction that social justice and welfare can be attained through the fostering of individual interest and individual enterprise in all fields better than through State ownership and Government control. It was based on the truth that bureaucratic management leads to loss of incentive and waste of resources.
- The new party opposed the trend of the ruling Congress Party to adopt the ways and ideals of the Communists in its eagerness to prevent the Communists from going forward. The Swatantra party believed that going over to the enemy is not defence, but surrender.
- The Swatantra Party, apart from the ideology was a real opposition to the Congress Party so that parliamentary democracy may be properly balanced. The absence of a true opposition has led to the rapid deterioration of democracy into a kind of totalitarianism. Voices have been heard from all quarters calling for a strong opposition and the new party is supplying a felt want.
- In the 1962 general election, the first after its formation, Swatantra received 6.8 percent of the total votes and won 18 seats in the third Lok Sabha (1962–67). It emerged as the main opposition to the dominant Congress in four states—Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Orissa. By the next general election in 1967, Swatantra had become a significant force in some parts of India; it won 8.7 percent of the votes and became the single-largest opposition party in the fourth Lok Sabha (1967–71) with 44 seats.
- Swatantra party demands finally led to LPG reforms of 1991 and economic liberalisation of country:

However, inspite of this, Swatantra party not emerged as strong anti-congress front because:

- Swantantra party was considered as inner branch of congress like pre-independent congres within various ideologies.
- After death of C. Rajagoplachari in 1972, his party lost its glory and its influence in polity also declined.

Conclusion:

Despite criticism, Swatantra party provided important impetus to anti-congress front in post-independence period.

2. What impact did Soviet Union's disintegration have on India's foreign policy? Critically analyse.

Approach:

It expects students to write about - in first part in short write about factors which led to disintegration of USSR - in second part write about its impact on India's foreign policy.

Introduction:

The Soviet Union was established in 1922 by a treaty signed between Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia Soviet Socialist republics and Trans-Caucasian Federation. It later constituted fifteen smaller states. Notwithstanding its achievements, the USSR met its fateful decline in 1991 mainly due to Mikhael Gorbvachev's economic and political reforms- Perestroika and Glasnost respectively. This led to the end of the cold war between the two superpowers USA and USSR. It was marked by events like the fall of the Berlin Wall and power shift from Soviet centre to the republics. The breakdown of USSR made USA the sole global power, ending the bipolarity in the world order.

Body:

Factors which led to the disintegration of the USSR:
- Economic Weakness
  - The weakness of the economy was the major cause of dissatisfaction among the people in USSR. There was severe shortage of consumer items. The reason for economics weakness were the following.
    - Huge military spending.
    - Maintenance of satellite states in Easter Europe.
    - Maintenance of the Central Asian Republics within the USSR.
- Political Un-accountability
  - The communist party regime (single party rule) for around 70 years turned authoritarian. There was widespread corruption, nepotism and lack of transparency. Gorbachev's decision to allow elections with a multi-party system and create a presidency for the Soviet Union began a slow process of democratization that eventually destabilized Communist control and contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- Gorbachev's reforms
  - Once people started to enjoy freedom under Micheal Gorbachev's reforms, they demanded more. The demand grew into a big force which turned difficult to control. The people wanted to catch up with the west quickly.
- Rise of nationalism
  - Rise of nationalism among countries like Russia, Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Ukraine, Georgia etc is the most important and immediate cause of disintegration of the USSR. The national feeling was strong among the more prosperous areas in USSR and not in Central Asian

republics. Ordinary people among prosperous republics didn't like to pay big price to uplift the backward Central Asian republics.

Impact of the disintegration of the USSR on India's foreign policy as follows:

- India had opened its economy to private sector and foreign investors after 1991. Which helps a lot to India finally starts to grow as world class economy. It's only after liberalization of economy that India could become the IT hub of the world. Also domestic industries also start flourishing resulting to India's advance towards a powerful and self-sufficient economy.
- Upto 1991 India's defence procurement was about 80% from USSR. After the disintegration of USSR, India started to diversify its defence procurement. Which resulted in competitive bidding and also negotiation power of India increased. Now India had multiple sources form it's needs.
- In the Soviet era although India was officially neutral and was not part of any block. But India's foreign policy was tilted towards USSR. Due to which USA and other members of west block are very reluctant to help India or cooperate India in defence or economic matters. This policy of west also starts changing after the disintegration of USSR. And finally India's foreign policy starts to balancing itself between east and west. And India starts to transform into a global country from a close socialist one.
- Before the disintegration of USSR India's opinion on different topics was often considered soviet influenced although it was unbiased most of the times. For example, India was trying to highlight Pakistan sponsored cross border terrorism at international forums including UN. Post disintegration of USSR India's image of neutral country improves and so India's audibility at international level.
- India also had been closely monitoring the turn-around development taking place in East Asia. India then devised the "Look East" Policy by improving its relationship with the "Asian Tigers" which were predominantly Export led markets.
- India did not forget its All-weather partner Russia and continued working with it especially in the areas of defence procurement & Russia's abundance of Natural gas endowments. Later, in the 21st century, the goodwill that India had enjoyed with Russia was translated into improving our relationship with countries in Central Asia owing to its abundance of fissile material resources & capabilities.

Conclusion:

Hence, the disintegration of the USSR resulted in a phase of USA's dominance in world politics. Countries like India maintained good relations with Russia post-disintegration and shared the idea of having a multipolar world order. India's position also improved at international and regional level not in a hegemonic way but as a responsible and powerful country.

3. Formation of the Northeastern states has contributed greatly to stabilise India's politico-geographical integrity. Elucidate.

Approach:
The directive here is elucidate, it is expected to explain in detail, as a cause effect relationship is given in the question. In the introduction part one can explain the importance of North-eastern states from the perspective of India as the Union of states or one can also explain how does the formation of North-eastern states took place in India. In the main body part one needs to explain the reasons for destabilisation of India's politico-geographical integrity in North-east. Then one can explain how does formation of North-eastern states stabilised these destabilisation factors. In the conclusion one can explain the importance of North-eastern states or can show the feature and state how they have the potential to contribute for India's bright future. For value addition one can highlight the map of North-eastern states in India.

Introduction:
North East India is the region situated in the eastern-most part of India comprising of the eight states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. After Indian Independence from British Rule in 1947, the North-eastern region of British India consisted of Assam and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura. Subsequently, Nagaland in 1963, Meghalaya in 1972, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram in 1987 were formed out of the large territory of Assam. Manipur and Tripura remained Union Territories of India from 1956 until 1972, when they attained fully-fledged statehood. Sikkim formed part of the North Eastern Region as the eighth state in 2002 and is referred to as the only brother of the seven sisters.

Body:
North-east is linked with Indian heartland through the 21 km wide Siliguri Corridor, which is commonly known as the chicken neck, created by the Radcliffe line. The corridor is flanked by Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Following Map 1 shows place of North-east in India.

Map 1: Highlighted region of North-eastern states in India
Reasons for destabilisation of India's politico-geographical integrity due to North-east:
- According to the Report of the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission the Northeast represents a state of stable anarchy where the rule of law and other

institutions of governance are subverted directly or through collusive arrangements to serve personal or partisan ends of the militants.

- Regional issues: The inter-tribal conflicts, the youth unemployment and the inability to compete with non-tribal businesses, illegal migration from neighbouring States and countries leading to the competition of resources and land have led to various conflicts and demands of secession/ autonomy.
- Gaps at national level: The broad racial differences between India and its Northeast and the tenuous geographical link (the chicken neck Siliguri Corridor) contributed to a sense of alienation, a feeling of 'otherness' that subsequently gave rise to a political culture of violent separatism.
- Ethnic tensions: Northeast India is home to more than 50 ethnic rebel groups – a few demanding complete secession from India, others fighting for ethnic identities and homelands and some running the insurgency as an industry to spin easy money without any political ideology.
- Militants in their formative years voiced genuine grievances of the people such as poor governance, alienation, lack of development and an apathetic attitude from the central government in New Delhi. However, with time and opportunist motives, these have taken forms of insurgencies across the region.
- Also Border disputes between Assam and its neighbouring States based on ethnicity have led to emergence of violent regionalism demands in the North-east region. For instance, Assam has had a boundary dispute with Mizoram for decades and several rounds of talks have been held since 1994-95 to solve the issue.
- Different ethnic groups have caused conflicts and insurgency due to tribal rivalry, migration, control over local resources and so on. E.g. inter-tribal conflict between Kukis and Nagas, insurgent groups like NSCN etc.,
- Geographical reasons: North east region is not well connected with present Indian mainland. Which creates a feeling of alienation in the citizens. Also, About 99% of the region has international border along Bangladesh, Myanmar, China and Bhutan which create complications in international diplomacy.
- Developmental reasons: North-east region is poorly developed due to lack of fund from Center/States. Which also led to increasing wide disparities in the states between North-east and in the other parts of India.
- The region has over 160 scheduled tribes and over other tribal and sub-tribal communities and groups. The varied culture creates alienation from the mainland and hinder development. The region is predominantly rural with around 84% of the population living in the rural areas.
- Military reasons: 50 years ago, on 22nd May 1958, in the face of rising political dissent in the North-east, India decided to add to its laws -the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. This act created a sense of fear among the inhabitants in the North-eastern region.

Formation of North-eastern states and subsequent effect of stabilisation to India's politico-geographical integrity:

- Nagaland, being a part of the larger state of Assam, it was the first to experience militancy in pursuit of a grant of autonomy. Under the leadership

of the Naga National Council (N.N.C.), headed by A.Z. Phizo, Nagas declared independence around 1951.

- However, In 1963, the State of Nagaland was formed by taking the Naga Hills and Tuensang area out of the state of Assam. This was done to satisfy the movement of the hostile Nagas.
- In Tripura migration of Hindus from the British-ruled East Bengal is believed to have been responsible for reducing the indigenous tribal people in the state to minority status; this development sparked a violent backlash among the indigenous people. In Manipur, Militancy originated in protest against the forcible merger of the former Manipur Kingdom with India. Whereas in Meghalay, The rise of aspirations of tribal autonomy led to the emergence of several insurgent groups in the state, like Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) and Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC).
- The two union territories of Manipur and Tripura and the sub-state of Meghalaya got statehood. The Meghalaya state was carved out of the Assam state, with an aim to address the unique needs of the major tribes in the region: the Garos, the Jaintias and the Khasis. Also the statehood granted to Manipur proved to be a solution to eliminate the discrimination faced by people of Manipur.
- Mizoram was a part of the state of Assam before it was granted statehood in 1987, experienced militancy after the Union government failed to respond positively to its demand for assistance during the massive "Mautam famine".
- However, the union territory of Mizoram was conferred the status of a full state as a sequel to the signing of a memorandum of settlement (Mizoram Peace Accord) in 1986 between the Central government and the Mizo National Front, ending the two-decade-old insurgency.
- Neighbouring countries like China and Myanmar are accused of promoting insurgency in the region. However, pacifying the regional aspirations of the states through fulfilment of their demands led to eliminating trust deficit between Centre and North-eastern states,
- The issue of Bangladeshi refugees and immigrants has become one of the pivotal importance when it comes in picture with Assam and surrounding states. However, not only the formation of state but exercises like NRC which fulfilled regional aspirations of people of Assam have also contributed for the maintenance of politico-geographical integrity of India. These exercise have also helped to have cordial and peaceful relations with Bangladesh.
- Also some of the military operations with that of neighbouring countries like Myanmar have helped to tackle the problem of insurgency. However, Bhutan remains the only country that successfully dislodged several militant camps of the insurgent groups through a military operation launched in December 2003.

However, some of the following problems still persists in North-eastern region such as:

- The state response has effectively curbed violence in North-east. The political nexus have helped them carry out their illicit works. In return, run extortion

rackets and all types of other illegal trades and get right to operate within limits with impunity.

- This results in dismal law and order situation in these areas. It is this absence of rule of law that these groups are still operating. Chances of a political settlement are bleak because of the kind of diversity it holds.
- While the government's military options have achieved only minimal results, lack of development continues to alienate the people of the region further from the mainstream.
- The region has also received little attention from either the national or the international media. Achievements by a separate ministry created by the Indian government for the development of the region remain minimal.

Hence, Enhancing communication and connectivity, infrastructure improvement for better integration of the region with the mainland, stringent law and fast criminal justice system for quick disposal of insurgents attack cases, greater coordination between central forces and state forces for better tactical response becomes of critical importance to ensure a greater political-geographical integrity of India.

Conclusion:

North-eastern states due to their strategic location in the geopolitical scenario hold an immense potential to give real shape to the 'Act East policy' besides showing great potential to India's development due to its large talent pool. Over the period of time, formation of states in North-eastern region proved to be beneficial for maintaining political-geographical integrity of India. However, if addressed the current challenges then it will prove to be one of the main engine drivers for the development as well as for maintaining integrity of India.
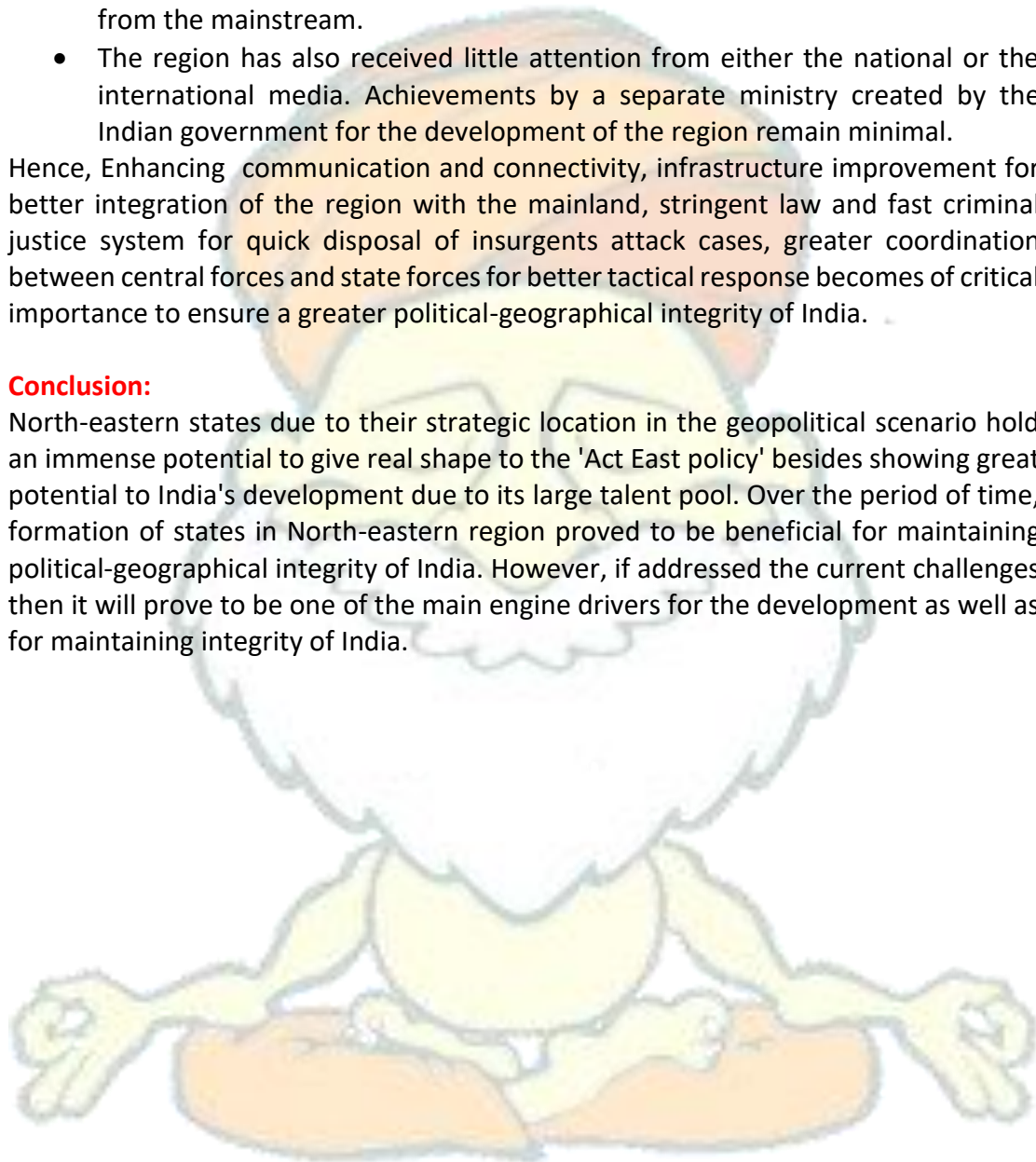
4. The decade of the 1980s was marked by a surge in technological advancements and economic modernization. Illustrate.

Approach:

It expects students to write about the economic modernization as well as technological advancements in the decade of 1980 with focus on surge in the same and illustrating the same with relevant examples.

Introduction

The 1980s are considered to have fundamentally altered India's landscape where the maturing of Indian democracy was witnessed along the rise of the middle class which became a dominant economic and political force. This rise of a new class coupled with consumer explosion, symbolised by the vast emerging urban landscape planted the seeds of an economic revolution as well as technological progress.

Body

Economic modernization refers to a change of outlook towards earning profit, rational economic activity, frequent use of sophisticated technology and consistent effort to bring about innovative changes in the production system. This also involved technological advancement such as the large-scale application of modern technologies and energy, the mechanization, electrification, and automation of production models, etc.

Consequently, the technological advancements in 1980's can be seen from the following points -
1. Telecommunication: Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) was established in 1984 to develop state-of-the-art telecommunication technology. Public call office (PCO) booths to connect even the rural areas to the world outside. MTNL was established which helped in the spread of telephone network in 1984.
2. Computerization in India: India's supercomputer programme initiated in the late 1980s. This resulted in India setting up C-DAC in 1988, which in 1991, unveiled the prototype of PARAM 800, benchmarked at 5 Glops.
3. Information technology-enabled services (ITES): This sector includes software development, business process outsourcing (BPO) and Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO). The first software export zone, SEEPZ – the precursor to the modern-day IT park – was established in Mumbai. The companies started solving Y2K issues.
4. Technological upgradation by government policies: The EVMs were first used in 1982 in Kerala. Agni missile test fired in 1983.
5. Medical technology in India: 1980-90's, Indian pharmaceutical industry had emerged as one of the most export-oriented sectors in Indian pharmaceutical industry with more than 30% of the production being exported to the foreign market.

6. Automobile sector: In 1983, the first Maruti car rolled off the assembly line in Gurgaon. The government finally signed a joint venture with Suzuki of Japan to produce the vehicle. The Maruti 800 and the demand for it signalled the rise of a new Indian middle class.

At the same time, Economic modernisation in 1980's is reflected from the following points:

1. The main objectives of the Seventh Five-Year Plan were to establish growth in areas of increasing economic productivity and generating employment through "Social Justice". The plan laid stress on improving the productivity level of industries by upgrading of technology.
2. New Electronics Policy (NEP) unveiled in January 1984 had main objectives facilitating technology transfer in the electronics industry, import of computers for government departments, establishing "science cities"/science parks to encourage expatriate Indian technicians to return to country, etc.
3. National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986 to modernize and expand higher education programmes across the country which involved installments of large scale computers in IITs, IIMs, and CSIR etc.
4. The Foreign Trade Policy for 1984–1985 contained a software exports shall also be permitted through satellite-based data links with overseas computers. The significance of this policy change was felt soon after.
5. New Computer Policy (NCP-1984) offered a package of reduced import tariffs on hardware and software, reduction of up to 60% was seen. It was announced in 1984 for removing the institutional barriers to "transforming the industry into a 'virtuous circle'.
6. Modernization in capital and financial market: Indian government relaxed capital markets in 1982-83 to get more foreign money, particularly from non-resident Indians. Government created the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in 1988. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) was constituted in 1982. 5 banks were nationalised in 1980s.

Adverse Issues with regards to above developments:
- Modernisation and advancement created regional economic disparities with the prosperous zones such as Mumbai-Pune, Bangalore-Chennai, and Ahmedabad.
- The 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy brought to fore the real possibility of industrial accidents on a massive scale and importance of regulatory oversight.
- New politically-influenced lending decisions led to crony capitalism.

Conclusion:

Technological and economic modernisation brought social transformation as newly emerged middle class, new nuclear family system, mass migration and economic transformation such as string of measures aimed at boosting the economy's competitiveness, removal of price controls, initiation of fiscal reform which led foundation for India economic liberalization in 1990's.

5. Do a critical assessment of the coalition era in India's electoral politics.

Approach:

It expects students to write about the coalition era in India's center and state politics and do critical assessment of its implications.

Introduction:

In India, after independence, Congress was the dominant party at the national and states level until 1990s. At the national level, Congress as ruling party formulated policies and states implemented those without contention. The dominant party system proved unable to fulfil the desires of the different region. Thus, the centralized nature of the government created a gap between the local aspirations and national policies. In the absence of the decisive clear majority for a single party, Coalition politics became the way forward since 1990's.

Body

In India, coalition politics entered in two phases.
- Janata Party coalition experiment: From 1977 to 1979 it was a period when the Congress lost power at the centre. The Janata Party formed government. It was coalition of various parties. However, the coalition failed to completes its tenure.
- Multiparty Coalition Model: 1989 was the benchmark year when the one-party dominance system shattered and the Congress lost power at the centre. The year changed the fate of Indian politics. In India after 1989, multi-party coalitional model has emerged at the national level. Since then the regional parties also formed government with the centre and national parties provided them out-side support in state. It also affected the nature of Indian federalism. Electoral politics indicates that the masses accepted the alliance strategy of national and regional parties. In different regions, people voted according to the alliance combinations.

Coalition politics broke the powerhouse image of centre as regional parties dominated in this era.
Implications of coalition era in Indian politics
- Impact on International relations: Regional parties give more importance to their own regional, geographical and economic interest overriding national interest. Examples, Tamilians influence with long-standing Indo-Srilanka relation. West Bengal influenced the Indo-Bangaldesh water sharing agreements. Left front withdraws its support to govt for opposing the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement 2007.
- Slow Decision Making: It has slowed decision-making. Various cabinet committees and E-GoMs have failed to fast-track decision making in a coalition

govt. Policy making at the national level was limited to Common Minimum Programs and indecision has affected the economic growth.

- Unstable government: It has led to unstable govt. Most of the energy of the govt. goes into keeping itself into power and this might lead to policy paralysis.
- Politicization on Narrow Issues: Competition has increased in the coalition era with new parties mushrooming up. The politicization was emerged based on narrow interests of the masses like caste, religion, region and language. Manifestos of the parties have become myopic and long-term development was discarded for immediate political gain.
- Regional Party dominance: Coalition with the regional parties sometimes resulted in dominance of regional parties in centre. Party to assert its own geographical, cultural and economic interests in the political process instead of focussing on the development of the nation as a whole.
- Mandal-Mandir Politics: These entire sequences of events all the way develops new political structure in India. When one party was trying to appease OBC section of voters the other were focused on religion which completely changed the socio-political structure of India.
- Decline in Ethical politics: India have huge background of freedom fighter as politicians for whom morals were above the politics. Coalition changed this as parties to remain in power, leaders end up making all sort of compromises, even going to the extent of accommodating leaders with questionable credentials.

Thus, it can be said that though the coalition form of Government brings lot of turf between the Centre and State, it was also opportunity to different Socio-Cultural and Economic parties to participate in the Governance of the Nation.

Advantages of the coalition era:

- Highest economic growth period: This era also saw huge economic growth due to historical political decisions. India's average economic growth between 1970 and 1980 has been 4.4%. The major political decisions of structural changes and opening India's economy led to an impressive average growth of 8.8% between 2000 and 2010. Market liberalization changed the fiscal relations b/w centre and states thus making states to compete for investments
- Bommai case and Article 356: Supreme Court issued the historic order in this case, which in a way put an end to the arbitrary dismissal of State governments under Article 356 by spelling out restrictions. The verdict concluded that the power of the President to dismiss a State government is not absolute. It further invented new era in centre state relations with cooperative federalism.
- Inclusive Politics: Coalition politics is inclusive by nature. It has led to progressive social reforms such as implementation of Mandal Commission recommendations, adoption of RTI and RTE legislations, and social security schemes such as MNREGA.
- Decentralised development: It has led to progressive politics. Decentralisation of power to grassroots by the adoption of 73rd & 74th Constitutional amendment acts.

- Recognition of regional aspirations: It has led to recognition of regional aspirations, as regional political parties have been able to take part in national govt.

Conclusion:

In Indian politics after 1989, multi-party coalition model has emerged at the national level. Thus, at the central level regional parties articulated the plurality of the country. It is evident from the electoral politics, local forces in the coalitions have become dominant hence, federal practices of the Indian constitution have become more effective. So Centralized nature of Indian federal polity moved towards cooperative federalism.