Role of the Governor after Polls

What is the issue?

\n\n

Karnataka assembly elections has brought focus for a clearer definition on role of a governor after polls.

\n\n

What happened in Karnataka?

\n\n

- The Karnataka assembly has 225 seats out of which 224 are elected members and one is the nominated member from Anglo-Indian community by the governor of the state.
- In the recent assembly elections candidates from three major political party contested in the polls and BJP secured 104, Congress 78, JD(S) 37 and others 6 seats respectively.
- After the polls BJP approached the governor of the state to call their party to form the government on the basis of single largest party in the state.
- At the same time the opposition parties got majority of seats by forming collation government, hence approached the governor to give a call to form the government.
- But the governor ordered the BJP candidate to form the government and provided him 15days of time to prove his majority.
- Against this decision the opposition parties approached the SC, in this case SC ordered for a floor test which was to be telecasted live.
- In the end, the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP’s) gambit to turn a hung assembly in Karnataka into victory failed.

\n\n

What is the reason behind SC’s decision?

\n\n

\n
- The Supreme Court did not allow enough time for the BJP party to peel away members of the other two legislative parties, the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular).
\n
- In any case morale in the newly created post-poll coalition seemed high.
\n
- Transcripts of phone calls released in the media exposed BJP’s move to bribe newly elected members of the Karnataka legislative assembly to stay away from their respective parties.
\n
- SC gave a strong blow to BJP’s effort to engage openly in underhand means, when the opposition appeared newly energetic.
\n

\n\n

How political parties misuse the powers of the governor?

\n\n

\n
- The office of the governor has been made dull by some of its occupants as the ruling parties in the centre used to freely misuse the governor’s powers.
\n
- Depending on the outcome of state elections, various political parties have expected the governor to do different things, and call on different leaders to “prove” their mandate on the floor of the assembly.
\n
- Earlier Congress wanted the governor to call on it, as the largest-single party, in Goa and Manipur, for example.
\n
- This kind of inconsistency is not supportive of constitutional morality.
\n

\n\n

What measures need to be taken?

\n\n

\n
- Pre-poll alliances take precedence over post-poll alliances, which, in turn, supersede individual parties in terms of numbers.
\n

- The role of the governor in appointing speakers and scheduling the vote of confidence also needs to be spelled out.
  \n
- If politicians do not step in and define a clear set of guidelines for the governor on the occasion of a hung assembly, then the Supreme Court will have to do so.
  \n
- Proper political consensus need to be evolved on this matter and the Supreme Court has already addressed the subject on various occasions. Click here to know more.
  \n
- By this the faith of the electorate in the democratic process and in the power of votes would be restored.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Business Standard

\n

