

## **The Reorganization Of The States In India And Challenges**

### **Ahead**

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**Abstract:** According to the Article 1 of the Indian constitution, India is a union of states. It is also well-known fact that at the time of independence in 1947, India consisted of 571 disjointed princely states and the grouping of states at the time was done on the basis of political and historical considerations rather than on linguistic or cultural divisions, but this was a temporary arrangement. Consequently the demand for separate statehood were raised from time to time on account of the multilingual nature and differences that existed between various states, there was a need for the states to be reorganized on a permanent basis. In this perspective, in 1953 the first linguistic state of Andhra for Telugu-speaking people was born. After that on the basis of the recommendations of linguistic commission Bombay was as important state divided into Gujarat and Maharashtra. The process continued and in 2014 Telangana was formed as a new state and the total number of the states reached at 29. But in August 2019 Jammu and Kashmir was divided into two union territories and thus, presently, India has 28 states and 9 union territories. Moreover, demand for Harit Pradesh, Bundelkhand, Gorkhaland etc. is in process on the behalf of the respective communities. In future, the number of states and union territories may increase. Moreover, there are some challenges ahead and for the sake of the unity of the state it is urgently required that centre government should make every effort to pacify demand of separate state. The present research paper makes a review of the re-organization of the states in Indian federalism and also points out some challenges in the way of federal system.

**Keywords:** Linguistic State, Statehood, State Reorganization Act, Demand for Separate States.

**Introduction:** We know the fact that most of the States of India were originally formed as a result of historical accidents and circumstances. After independence there has been a growing demand for reorganisation of the States on more rational basis, in the context of not only from financial, economic and administrative management of independent India but also due to the growing importance of regional languages. For the first time, the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was constituted in 1953 to go into this problem and to recommend the principles and broad guidelines on which the States can be reorganised. The Commission submitted its report in September, 1955. To give effect to the scheme of reorganisation which emerged from the consideration of the proposals contained in the Report, the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, was enacted by the Parliament under Article 4 of the Constitution of India. The new States formed as a result of the reorganisation of States in 1956 are Andhra Pradesh, Bombay Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Mysore, Punjab and Rajasthan.

Consequently, thereafter the Parliament had also enacted various Reorganisation Acts from time to time i.e. the Bombay Reorganisation Act in 1960; The Punjab Reorganisation Act in 1966; the State of Himachal Pradesh Reorganisation Act in 1970 and North-Eastern States reorganisation Act in 1971. The latest in this category are the Reorganisation Acts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar which were enacted by the Parliament in November, 2000. Furthermore the state of Telangana was formed in 2014 and likewise the state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated in August 2019 into two union territories. Thus the Indian federalism has 28 states and 9 union territories.

The reorganization of the states based on language, a major aspect of national consolidation and integration, came to the fore almost immediately after independence. The boundaries of provinces in pre-1947 India had been drawn in a haphazard manner as the British conquest of India had proceeded for nearly a hundred years. No heed was paid to linguistic or cultural cohesion so that most of the provinces were multi-lingual and multi-cultural. The interspersed princely states had added a further element of heterogeneity. The case for linguistic states as administrative units was very strong. Language is closely related to culture and therefore to the customs of people. Besides, the massive spread of education

and growth of mass literacy can only occur through the medium of the mother tongue. Nehru appointed in August 1953 the States Reorganization Commission (SRC), with Justice Fazl Ali, K.M. Panikkar and Hridaynath Kunzru as members, to examine 'objectively and dispassionately' the entire question of the reorganization of the states of the union. Throughout the two years of its work, the Commission was faced with meetings, demonstrations, agitations, and hunger strikes.

Different linguistic groups clashed with each other, verbally as well as sometimes physically. The SRC submitted its report in October 1955. While laying down that due consideration should be given to administrative and economic factors, it recognized for the most part the linguistic principle and recommended redrawing of state boundaries on that basis. The Commission, however, opposed the splitting of Bombay and Punjab. Despite strong reaction to the report in many parts of the country, the SRC's recommendations were accepted, though with certain modifications, and were quickly implemented.

Here it to say that the States Reorganization Act was passed by parliament in November 1956. It provided for fourteen states and six centrally administered territories. The Telengana area of Hyderabad state was transferred to Andhra; merging the Malabar district of the old Madras Presidency with Travancore-Cochin created Kerala. Certain Kannada-speaking areas of the states of Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad and Coorg were added to the Mysore state. Merging the states of Kutch and Saurashtra and the Marathi-speaking areas of Hyderabad with it enlarged Bombay state.

Furthermore it may be pointed out that the strongest reaction against the SRC's report and the States Reorganization Act came from Maharashtra where widespread rioting broke out and eighty people were killed in Bombay city in police firings in January 1956. The opposition parties supported by a wide spectrum of public opinion—students, farmers, workers, artists, and businesspersons—organized a powerful protest movement. Under pressure, the government decided in June 1956 to divide the Bombay state into two linguistic states of Maharashtra and Gujarat with Bombay city forming a separate, centrally administered state. This move too was strongly opposed by the Maharashtrians. Nehru now vacillated and, unhappy at having hurt the feelings of the people of Maharashtra, reverted

in July to the formation of bilingual, greater Bombay. This move was, however, opposed by the people both of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The broad-based Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad led the movements in the two parts of the state. In Maharashtra, even a large section of Congressmen joined the demand for a unilingual Maharashtra with Bombay as its capital; and C.D. Deshmukh, the Finance Minister in the Central Cabinet, resigned from his office on this question. The Gujaratis felt that they would be a minority in the new state. They too would not agree to give up Bombay city to Maharashtra. Violence and arson now spread to Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat. Sixteen persons were killed and 200 injured in police firings. In view of the disagreement over Bombay city, the government stuck to its decision and passed the States Reorganization Act in November 1956.

As a result, the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was set up in 1953 with Syed Fazl Ali, H. N. Kunzru and K. M. Panikkar as its members. It recognized four principles on the lines of Dhar and JVP Committee reports which it felt were important in laying down the recommendations for the reorganisation. These were preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India, linguistic and cultural homogeneity, financial and administrative efficiency and the successful working of the five-year national economic plans. Moreover, the Commission also preferred criteria such as financial viability, political unity, stability, and regional coherence in its recommendations. But even after the SRC submitted its report in 1956 and several states having been reorganised on its basis, the following decades witnessed demands for reorganisation of other states. Maharashtra and Gujarat were created in 1960, Haryana and Punjab in 1966, Nagaland in 1963, several states in the north-east during the years 1970-80 and Goa in 1992 and lastly Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand in 2000.

**Constitutional Provisions:** Constitution of India provides all basic demands of the citizens in form of laws and also empowers the Union government to create new states out of existing states or two merge one state with other. This process is called reorganisation of the states. The basis of reorganisation could be linguistic, religious, ethnic or administrative. Article 3 provides the following procedure:

- Presidential reference is sent to State Assembly.
- After presidential reference, a resolution is tabled and passed in Assembly.
- Assembly has to pass a Bill creating the new State/States.
- A separate Bill has to be ratified by Parliament.

**Dhar Commission:** This commission was formed in 1948. Actually the integration and merger of princely states was purely ad hoc arrangement and there was need for reorganization of states on a permanent basis on account of the haphazard growth of provinces, disparity between various states and multilingual nature of the states. In 1948, the government appointed commission under S K Dhar, a judge of the Allahabad High Court, to examine the case for the reorganization of states on the linguistic basis. Admitting the importance of the reorganization of states on a linguistic basis, the commission, however, attached more importance to historical, geographical and economic considerations. It favoured reorganization on the basis of administrative convenience rather than linguistic considerations.

**JVP Committee:** Like the Dhar commission, in December, 1948, Congress appointed a committee under Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabh bhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya (known as the JVP Committee) to examine the issue afresh. The committee, in a report submitted in April, 1949, dismissed the idea of reorganization on a linguistic basis. However the committee stated that the problem may be re-examined in the light of public demand.

**First Linguistic State:** It is a well-known fact that in 1953, the government was forced to create a separate state of Andhra Pradesh for Telugu-speaking people following the long-drawn agitation and death of Potti Sriramulu after a hunger strike for 56 days. Thus, the first linguistic state of Andhra Pradesh was created under pressure and it became the first powerful state of the Indian federal system.

**Fazl Commission:** This commission was appointed to lead to the demand for creation of states on linguistic basis from other parts of country and on December 22, 1953, Jawaharlal Nehru announced the appointment of a commission under Fazl Ali to consider this demand. The other two members of the commission were K M Panikkar and HN Kunzru. The commission submitted its report after taking into account the wishes and claims of people in

different regions. It recommended the reorganization of the whole country into sixteen states and three centrally administered areas. However, the government did not accept these recommendations in toto. While accepting Commission's recommendation to do away with the four-fold distribution of states as provided under the original Constitution, it divided the country into 14 states and 6 union territories under the States Reorganization Act 1956. The states were Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Mysore, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The six union territories were Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands, Manipur and Tripura. The Act was implemented in November, 1956.

**Shah Commission:** This commission belongs to the partition of Punjab into two parts. In 1966, the Parliament passed the Punjab Reorganization Act after an agitation for the formation of Punjabi Subha. This step was taken on the recommendation of the Shah Commission appointed in April, 1966. As a result of this act, the Punjabi-speaking areas were constituted into the state of Punjab and the Hindi speaking areas were merged with the adjoining state of Haryana. Likewise, Chandigarh was made a Union Territory and was to serve as a common capital of Punjab and Haryana. The two states were also to have a common High Court, common university and joint arrangement for the management of the major components of the existing irrigation and power system. With the division of Punjab, the strength of states rose to seventeen at that time in 1966.

**Demand for the New States:** In spite of many protests in different parts of India, demand for the new states has been raised on different occasions. For example in 2011, then UP Chief Minister and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief, Mayawati, passed a resolution in the Assembly to split UP into four smaller states – Purvanchal, Bundelkhand, Awadh Pradesh and Paschim Pradesh – in the interest of providing better administration. The resolution later got stuck with the Congress government at the centre.

**Harit Pradesh:** This area lies in the western part of Uttar Pradesh. It consists of agriculturally dominated districts of Western Uttar Pradesh. On many occasions local leaders of western UP have raised voices for the formation of Harit Pradesh.

**Purvanchal:** It is a geographic region of north-central India, which comprises the eastern end of Uttar Pradesh state. It is bounded by Nepal to the north, Bihar state to the east, Bagelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh state to the south, the Awadh region of Uttar Pradesh to the west. Purvanchal comprises three divisions – Awadhi region in the west, Bhojpuri region in the east and the Baghelkhand region in the south.

**Bodoland:** For the creation of Bodoland many agitations have occurred on different occasions. Actually, it is the land of the Bodos which are the largest ethnic and linguistic community in northern Assam. The agitation for the creation of a separate Bodoland state resulted in an agreement in 2003 between the Government of India, the Assam state government and the Bodo Liberation Tigers Force. According to the agreement, Bodos were granted the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), within the State of Assam under Sixth Schedule.

**Saurashtra:** For the formation of this state or the movement for separate Saurashtra state was initiated in 1972 by Ratilal Tanna. Lack of better water supply to the region, lack of job opportunities and subsequent youth migration have been cited as major reasons for the demand of statehood. Saurashtra is also linguistically different from the rest of the state.

**Gorkhaland:** It is a proposed state covering areas inhabited by the ethnic Gorkha (Nepali) people, namely Darjeeling hills and Dooars in the northern part of West Bengal. However, many agitations have occurred in this part of India for the separate statehood but in vain. The demand is still pending. However in future it may emerge as a new state of India.

**Challenges Ahead:** However, Government of India has taken positive steps and formed new states. For example recently in August 2019 the state of Jammu and Kashmir has been divided into two Union territories. Moreover, there are some challenges before the federal system of India in the perspective of the new statehood. Some of them are as under:

- It may lead to the hegemony of the dominant community/ caste/ tribe over their power structures.
- It can lead to emergence of intra-regional rivalries among the sub-regions.

- The creation of new states may also lead to certain negative political consequences like a small group of legislators could make or break a government at will.
- There is also possibility of increase in the inter-State water, power and boundary disputes.
- The division of states would require huge funds for building new capitals and maintaining a large number of Governors, Chief Ministers, Ministers and administrators as the case in division of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (establishment of new capital at Amravati).
- Creation of smaller states only transfers power from the old state capital to new state capital without empowering already existing institutions like Gram Panchayat, District Collector, etc. rather diffusion of development in the backward areas of the states.

**Conclusion:** Now we can conclude that for the sake of strong federal system, economic and social viability rather than political considerations must be given primacy and parent states that lose out in terms of physical and human capital may be adequately compensated. There should be certain clear-cut parameters and safeguards to check the unfettered demands. It is better to allow democratic concerns like development, decentralisation and governance rather than religion, caste, language or dialect to be the valid bases for conceding the demands for a new state. Apart from this the fundamental problems of development and governance deficit such as concentration of power, corruption, administrative inefficiency etc. must be addressed. To conclude we can point out that the formation of the new states in Indian federalism may be a very crucial demand on some occasions. That is why centre should be very strong for the sake of unity of the country.

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